

**Bruce Poon Tip** 



Clive Beddoe









# The life lessons that lead to corporate culture success

LEAD Continued from SC1

**Q** What did your first job teach you about culture and leadership?

A What not to do. I learned everything I didn't want to do at a young age: looking at people as employees, not treating people as partners in your business.

**Clive Beddoe, founding** shareholder and chairman of the board of directors, WestJet: Lifetime **Achievement** 

Q How, as founder and CEO, did you promote and sustain

**A** I spent about 40 per cent of my time with employee groups every day. I spent 90 minutes with every new hire group throughout my entire history of being CEO, sharing how we were going to achieve and succeed in an industry where 98 per cent of new airlines fail. Also, you lead by example. Sometimes I would turn up at the maintenance operation at midnight, put on some overalls and help with maintenance tasks. I would sling bags with the baggage handlers. Every flight I took, I would help clean the cabins, which is something I still do to this day, and so does my family and so do senior executives and board members. If we all do whatever needs to be done, we have an unstoppable enterprise. I remember hearing the story of one of our baggage handlers. It was a 30-below day, his car stalled and he was four miles from the airport. He ran all the way there to make sure he didn't disappoint his colleagues.

**Q** What role has technology played in advancing and sustaining culture?

A Social media, video conferencing, these technologies allow people from around the world to participate in discussions, hear from the CEO and to share some of the stories that happen every

**Q** What impact has culture had on WestJet? **A** One of the best examples

is when 9/11 happened. That morning, when I went into the office, I saw a team of people who had collectively come together to collaborate without someone telling

and operational.

**Q** What are you reading? A I just finished reading David Frum's book, Trumpocracy: The Corruption of the American Republic.

**Q** What did your first job teach you about culture and leadership?

A My first professional job was with an old firm in London, England, that was extremely hierarchical. It showed me that you don't get the best out of people when you treat them like

Mandy Rennehan, founder and Blue Collar CEO  $^{TM}$ , Freshco.ca: Growth

**Q** How do you promote and sustain culture?

A I don't need a PhD in psychology to tell you people want respect and equality. Our culture is fun, refreshing, completely unconventional. Freshco isn't just an amazing company, we're a movement to redefine blue collar and change the answer to 'what do you want to be when you grow up?' The happiest people in the world work in skilled trades and yet we have a skilled trades shortage. My people are ambassadors of that movement every day.

**Q** What role does technology play in sustaining and advancing culture?

A Freshco was named one of the most innovative companies in Canada on the Growth 500 list. We were the first company to work with Lockheed Martin to bring the exoskeleton suit to Canada. A 110-pound female can put this suit on and she's able to do the same physical work as three strapping males. These are the types of innovations that Freshco as a small boutique firm brought in so our people could work smarter, which is what millennials want. I have an incubator department that looks at how technology can help us work better. It all ties back to putting people first. You put people first and the customer second and the customer always wins. Big time.

**Q** What impact has culture had on Freshco? A Excitement is infectious. We're growing between 30 per cent and 40 per cent year over year. We now have 80

at the data that supports people in the trade industry being happy, they are always moving. In my position right now, I don't have that luxury. High-intensity workouts have changed my world.

**Q** What did your first job teach you about culture and leadership?

**A** My first job was when I was 10 and a fish broker on the streets. I learned early what it took to motivate people to come with me to catch these fish.

John Betts, president and CEO, McDonald's **Restaurants of Canada Limited: Enterprise** 

**Q** How do you promote and sustain culture? A Our culture has its roots with founder Ray Kroc, who had a saying, 'None of us is as good as all of us.' Our people strategy is one of our three pillars. We are constantly engaging and collaborating with the owner-operators and employees, aligning with them around the changes we're making and why they're important. We have something we call the Gold Standard Launch to bring certain new initiatives to light. For example, when we launched bagels last year, that required everyone in the system to understand what we are trying to achieve and receive training in order to execute. It has been cited as a global best practice and has allowed us to achieve superior results.

**Q** What role does technology play in sustaining and advancing culture? **A** It's changed everything: how we market, how we engage our employees, the way orders come in. Four vears ago, we just got orders from the front counter or the drive-through; today, you can place an order from a front kiosk in the dining room, from Uber Eats. Employees get their work schedules on their smartphones.

**Q** What impact has culture had on McDonald's Canada? A It allows us to operate a step above other businesses and other McDonald's markets. We're one of two countries that has had positive guest and sales counts every year over the last 11 years. We achieve our plan every year and we don't just achieve it we exceed it

A My first job was at McDonald's as a crew employee. I remember how good I felt when someone recognized me for doing a good job. I learned early on who were good and not good managers. It was an early display of recognition and teamwork, the importance of discipline, showing up on time. I've kept that all along the way.

Jim Spatz, executive chairman, Southwest **Properties Ltd.: Mid-Market** 

Q How do you promote and sustain culture? A If you want to be a great customer-facing organization, you need to be a great employee-facing organization, because how people are treated where they work dictates how they will treat people they come across. People pick that up when they enter a place. The first day of work. The first day interfacing with a company as a tenant. It started a long time ago with my father, who founded this company. You want to create a community in a building with people who care about how you are doing. The same for our staff. It's always easier when people believe they are part of an effort that allows them to be excellent at what they do.

**Q** What role does technology play in sustaining culture? A We've always believed in the value of technology to neip us de detter at what we do and strengthen relationships. We are the first multi-unit LEED developer in Atlantic Canada. In our LEED buildings, we have motion detection in the units. If you're on vacation and you forgot to turn off the lights or TV, we'll have done that for you.

Q What impact has your  $corporate\ culture\ had\ on$ Southwest Properties? A Having good people who love what they are doing is the most significant determinant of how a business will do.

**Q** What are you reading? A I just read a Harvard business case about a Swedish bank, Handelsbanken, and how it's been successful expanding outside Sweden because of its corporate culture, which empowers people at the local branch level.

Kathy Kinloch, president, **British Columbia Institute of Technology: Broader Public** Sector

**Q** How do you promote and sustain culture?

A We exist to serve the success of learners and employers. That's our mission. The culture and how we advance is all tied to our purpose or mission. In our new strategic plan we've declared values that are key to the development of our culture: achieving excellence, embracing innovation to the point of currency, championing diversity and inclusion, pursuing collaboration, engaging with respect. I need to role-model every day what we are about. We were one of the first postsecondary institutions in Canada to champion a sexual assault policy. We have a research project called Diversity Circles that is pursuing the topic of what is diversity and how can we embrace it more within BCIT. We are sponsoring the eco city conference this fall and we're looking at our own sustainability and how we are integrating that across all we do.

Q What role does technology play in sustaining culture? A As a technology institute, everything we do is about technology; it's threaded through our education model and culture. We make sure we are on the leading edge of new technologies but we also make sure we don't lose sight communication, critical thinking, collaboration and teamwork and empathy.

**Q** What impact has culture had on BCIT? A Our mirror of how we are doing is industry's willinghess to hire our graduates. Ninety-six percent of our students are employed within six months of graduating.

**Q** What book would you recommend?

A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix. It's about when you are in a situation and you're really struggling, you have to stay true to your moral compass.

 ${f Q}$  What did your first job teach you about culture and leadership?

A I started my career as a nurse. When I graduated, I was hired to the open-heart surgical unit at the University of Alberta Hospital. Every aspect of the health

## (anada's Most Admired Corporate Cultures

GROWTH

■ A Thinking Ape Entertainment Ltd. (Vancouver) ■ Bath Fitter Distributing Inc. (Saint-Eustache, Que.) ■ Copeman Healthcare (Vancouver) ■ Copperleaf (Vancouver)

■ Financeit (Toronto)

■ Insurance Insight Inc. (Oakville, Ont.) Jan Kelley (Burlington,

■ Litwiniuk & Company

(Calgary) ■Nurse Next Door

(Vancouver)

Rocky Mountain Soap Company (Canmore, Alta.) ■ Wealthsimple (Toronto)

#### MID-MARKET

■ BlueShore Financial (North Vancouver)

**■** Cowan Insurance Group (Cambridge, Ont.)

■ ecobee (Toronto)

goeasy Ltd. (Mississauga, Ont.)

**■** Great Little Box Company (Richmond, B.C.) KUBRA (Mississauga,

**■** Lakeside Process Controls (Mississauga, Ont.)

Nicola Wealth Management (Vancouver)

■ Nordia (Laval, Que.)

■ Questrade (Toronto) ■ Southwest Properties Ltd. (Halifax)

### **ENTERPRISE**

■ Baxter Corporation (Mississauga, Ont.) ■ CBI Health Group (Toronto)

■ Cineplex (Toronto)

■ Corus Entertainment (Toronto)

■ Go Auto (Edmonton) ■La Coop Fédérée

(Montreal) ■ Longo Brothers Fruit Mar-

kets Inc. (Vaughan, Ont.)

■ LoyaltyOne (Toronto) **■**PCL Construction

(Edmonton) Plenary Group (Canada) Ltd. (Toronto)

#### BROADER PUBLIC **SECTOR**

■ Alberta Blue Cross (Edmonton)

■ BC Assessment (Victoria,

■ Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (Toronto) City of Surrey (Surrey

■ The DMZ at Ryerson University (Toronto)

■ Edmonton Public Library (Edmonton) ■ Medavie Blue Cross

(Moncton, N.B) ■ Opportunities New Bruns-

wick (Fredericton, N.B.) ■ Plan International Canada

(Toronto) Saint Elizabeth Health Care (Markham, Ont.)

> CANADA'S MOST ADMIRED CEOS OF 2018

**Broader Public Sector** 

Kathy Kinloch, president, British Columbia Institute of Technology Growth Mandy Rennehan,

Founder and Blue Collar CEO, Freshco.ca Mid-Market Jim Spatz,

executive chairman, Southwest Properties Ltd. Enterprise John Betts, president and CEO, McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Limited