



1. Information = Power

- Read, read, read. Seek out new channels for information to inspire fresh ideas. Ask team members what they are reading, listening to and watching, and where they find their inspiration.
- Invest in a robust research department.
- Understand your competitive position.
- Use this information in strategic planning.
- Become the go-to company/organization for information in your industry and community.
- Provide multiple internal and external educational opportunities for your team.

2. Be an expert

- Be a leader in key local, statewide and/or national industry associations. Encourage your team to do the same.
- Make a habit of sharing best practices with your networks. Email links to good online information, make book suggestions or offer referrals to experts in other fields.
- Speak/present to community/civic groups on emerging trends, issues facing industry or the community at large, and how your business is helping to make a difference.
- Use social networking as an extension of your professional network: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn,
- YouTube and others. Make it impossible for people NOT to follow you.

3. Community connectivity

- Support community and nonprofit programs by providing your team with opportunity and encouragement to participate or volunteer.
- Encourage 100 percent participation in the United Way campaign.
- Create social opportunities for employees to get to know one another and engage in team building.
- Provide employees big-picture insight on the mission your organization serves and on the community at large by scheduling periodic tours/briefings of cultural, business, government, etc. locations across the region.
- Host lunch-and-learns featuring various community leaders, organizations, projects, etc.
- Empower your team to design community connectivity strategies at a grass-roots level.

4. Creative work spaces

- Design or redesign your work spaces to facilitate and encourage creativity, innovation and collaboration.
- Gather ideas from your team on how to improve work spaces.
- Actively seek input and feedback from your most creative team members.
- Feature local art and photographs to inspire and build community pride.

5. Internal communication

- Avoid becoming “silo-ed” and disconnected by being intentional about communication.
- Create a regular internal communication to keep your team informed

on major initiatives, organizational wins, media stories, etc. Include personal messages from CEO.

- Share “kudos” from clients, customers or vendors, and recognize employee achievements, work anniversaries, career milestones, etc.
- Share major economic and community development wins to instill civic pride.
- Recommend interesting articles, books, videos, etc. that complement your organization’s mission and encourage big thinking.

6. Wellness

- Design a health insurance plan that maximizes wellness promotion incentives and rewards healthy behavior.
- Host wellness lunch-and-learns.
- Participate in Live Healthy Iowa.
- Make it fun.

7. Digital ambassadors

- Draft a group of social media active volunteers representing your strongest market segments.
- Feed them information relevant to your product or service to share with their individual social and industry networks.
- Provide this information in a way that is relevant both to them and to their networks.
- Make it as easy as possible for them to share in a timely fashion.
- Provide them regular incentives for their participation.

8. Say it on video

- Combat society’s ever-shrinking attention span by putting your message on mobile-friendly video.
- Develop a video library of your most competitive messages, services, products or events to access when you need.
- Train staff to shoot, produce, edit and share video messages.
- Incorporate video into your social media and online platform strategies.
- Invite your audience to contribute to the video strategy.

9. Government relations

- Develop strong relationships with local, state and federal elected officials and staff.
- Invite elected officials to tour your facilities and meet with your team members.
- Provide elected officials with information on key issues and projects impacting your organizations.
- Participate in the government relations activities of the Greater Des Moines Partnership and your local chamber of commerce.

10. Emerging trends

- Stay on the leading edge of trends in your industry and around the globe.
- Evaluate and reposition your key strategies as they relate to key emerging issues, such as global connectivity, technology, startups, sustainability, wellness, social media, etc.

Randy Edeker - CEO, Hy-Vee Inc.



1. Innovate from your core strengths first
 - The best innovation comes from improving or enhancing what you are already very strong at, rather than seeking new opportunity. Innovating from your established successes lowers risk and enhances what customers or elements have already made a strength for you.
2. Treat your customers like clients
 - You should treat your customers every day as if they are clients with whom you need to forge a relationship, not as customers or shoppers who randomly selected you.
3. Always know the true source of your profit
 - Develop the true cost analytics to know the source of your profit. Many times we feel we are doing well when we are not by not assigning or assessing cost correctly.
4. Allow those closest to your customers to be empowered to always do the right thing
 - The strongest service and satisfaction can be delivered by empowering your people to react to the situation at hand. Autonomy demands well-aligned, clear goals; fanatic communications; and complete trust in your people.
5. Organize your listening
 - The most valuable and impactful way to bring a sense of engagement and inclusiveness to your people is to listen to them. We organize, plan and make time for most responsibilities, but this one, we think it will happen organically. I contend you must schedule, plan and organize opportunities to clearly hear the thoughts, hopes, dreams and concerns of your people.
6. Maintain an eclectic interest in the lifestyles of your customers
 - As the landscape of business constantly evolves, you must always plan to evolve with it. By constantly studying lifestyles from a broad, eclectic view, you can find where your customers expect you to be next.
7. Be sure to always reward what you value the most
 - Constantly review what message we are sending by how we structure compensation, awards and even public moments of praise. Sometimes the effect we meant to have is undermined by the true result.
8. Spend as much time analyzing what you should do, as you do analyzing what you should stop doing
 - We devote so much time to planning what is next, how to evolve and innovate, and little time on what we need to stop doing.
9. The fastest way to kill a bad business is great marketing
 - Your marketing message should not oversell or raise an expectation that your operation is incapable of delivering. When you raise the expectations beyond ability, your customers' satisfaction will be greatly diminished.

10. Always lead with a true sense of humility

- Always say please; always say thank you. Put yourself last when people want you to be first. Sit in the back when they want you to be in front. Humility is best when put into action and not simply words.

Steve Lacy - CEO, Meredith Corp.



1. Wellness program

- Can be very simple – doesn't have to be complex.
- Leads to a happier, healthier workforce.
- May save a few lives.
- Ninety-nine percent of insured employees and spouses completed the program last year. Employees must participate to receive their choice of medical plan options.
- Saves money for the company and employees. From 2004 to 2006, our medical plan costs increased 18.5 percent. Since we initiated the wellness program in 2006, costs have remained steady, with an average increase of only 2-3 percent per year.
- Awards received:
 - Platinum-Level Well Workplace from the Wellness Council of America.
 - Platinum-Level Fit Friendly Company from the American Heart Association.
 - Well-Deserved Employer Wellness Award from UnitedHealthcare.
 - Silver-Level Bike Friendly Business from the League of American Bicyclists.
 - Promising Practices in Worksite Health Promotion Award from the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease.
- For ideas or help getting a wellness program launched, contact Wellness Council of Iowa.

2. Apprentice program

- Meredith works with Drake and Iowa State to hire apprentices.
- Their work tenure is longer than that of interns – so they can really learn the business. This benefits the students and their managers.
- We have a liaison at each school that helps select the best student candidates each year.
- Apprentice coordinator at Meredith assigns them to departments that want apprentices, and ensures that relationships are smooth.
- Goal is to help them develop a portfolio so they will be more employable. Meredith has hired many of them.
- Apprenticeships more frequently lead to full-time employment than internships due to the long-term relationships developed.

3. Creative excellence awards

- Awards recognize the best marketing and editorial/design projects at Meredith over the past year.
- Every editor-in-chief and marketing manager nominates the best project of the prior year.
- Industry experts select five editorial/design winners and five marketing winners.
- All nominees are celebrated with an email to all employees and physical displays.
- Winners are announced at all-employee meetings to achieve important peer recognition.

- Each winning team receives cash prize to split among nominees.
4. All-employee meetings
 - Long tradition dating back to early 1970s, when Ted Meredith and Bob Burnett were chairman and CEO, and president and chief operating officer; respectively.
 - Today, CEO and key managers travel to every Meredith location.
 - They provide business updates and answer questions from employees.
 - Employees can ask questions in advance or submit them in advance.
 - Every question is answered.
 5. Bellringers
 - Started by former CEO Bob Burnett when he was an advertising director in the early 1960s.
 - Receptions to celebrate major sales or other victories.
 - All employees invited.
 - Brief programs feature ringing of the historic brass bell, sales teams discussing new business won and executives saying congratulations.
 6. MeredithNEXT
 - Gatherings for early-career editors and designers.
 - Speakers focus on topics that will be beneficial as they advance in their careers.
 - Networking after each meeting.
 7. Woman-to-woman mentor program
 - Pairs young aspiring women with senior female leaders.
 - Mentees learn about the mentors' success and career paths, and explore ways to achieve career goals while maintaining work-life balance.
 8. Long-range strategic planning meetings
 - Focus on major long-term goals.
 - Key executives meet with business leaders monthly to monitor progress.
 - Agendas vary each meeting.
 - Provide opportunity for dialogue in between annual strategic plan presentations.
 9. Meredith activities committee
 - Plans fun activities for employees.
 - Past events include sports tailgates, golf leagues, Adventureland Day and more.
 - Also maintains employee discount page on our intranet site.
 10. Summer hours
 - Great employee morale booster.
 - Employees can reduce their work hours by one half day per week between Memorial Day and Labor Day.
 - All employees must notify and get approval from their supervisors in advance.
 - No more than one full day of summer hours can be used in a single two-week period.
 - Our offices must remain open for normal business hours.
 - Summer hours need to be taken in either a half-day or full-day block.

Andrea McGuire -

President & Chief Operating Officer,
Meridian Health Plan



1. Communications-have a plan
 - Communications about vision and goals need to be at every level of the company.
 - Communication needs to be heard multiple times.
 - Use many different forms of communication: intranet, electronic newsletter, staff meetings, one-on-ones and directly from the CEO at every opportunity.
 - All communication should be consistent; mixed messages are worse than not communicating at all.
2. Develop your people
 - To be successful, developing your people needs to be an active priority.
 - Make development a goal on everyone's personal performance plans.
 - Make development a goal on leadership performance plans.
 - Talk about development at staff meetings and share success stories.
 - Reward leaders who strive to develop their people.
3. Networking with a purpose
 - Take networking to a new level.
 - Network with like businesses to understand how others view like struggles in your particular business, then report back what you have learned.
 - Network with similar industries to expand how you think about your business and possible new related businesses, then report back and discuss.
 - Network with very different industries. By looking at your business through the lens of a very different business, you may learn or see opportunities that would not have been obvious.
4. Encourage community/charitable involvement
 - Give paid time off to employees for community/charitable endeavors.
 - Have set activities to bring employees together over involvement such as food drives or donating educational items at the start of school.
 - Promote involvement through contests between teams, such as who can donate the most food, and publicize in the newsletter.
 - Make giving to those less fortunate a part of all your activities.
5. Strategic thinking (dream of the future as it could be)
 - Coach your leaders to take a few minutes every day to think about where you need to go, and take a check on whether you are taking the right actions to achieve that future.
 - Look at your schedule and discuss leaders' schedules. Are we spending our time on priorities to achieve success? Reflection needs to be constant so priorities stay in focus.
 - Take time to discuss with leaders their thoughts about other areas in the company; e.g., sales will understand operations limitations if they are put in their shoes.
6. Change: Like it
 - Many of us found ourselves wasting time worrying about changes and the consequences they might have. Now we analyze the

situation before the decision is made and discuss the possible consequences up front. After the alternatives are discussed and a decision is made, we consciously move forward and embrace. This is a team sport, and if you develop a culture of embracing the change and moving forward toward your goals, it makes change less challenging. It is important that the leader is driving this behavior and rewarding the change culture and discouraging the change-resistant talk.

7. Listen

- Listen to everyone. Make listening an active practice.
- Listen to what isn't being said. Who is not enthusiastic about a project, unspoken messages, people not engaged.
- Listen to everyone. Not just those close to you. Make a point of drawing out those who might not normally give you feedback.
- Make feedback an expectation. Listening is easier the more you honestly listen and take action on what you hear.

8. Teamwork toward success

- There is a reason we like sports. We like the competition and we like to win. We have integrated this idea into our everyday culture for achieving our goals.
- Post goals everywhere.
- Have interval goals to break down the larger goals, and set interval celebrations for reaching those goals.
- Celebrate with the whole team.
- Repeat again and again, with many visual clues as to where we are with respect to our goals.
- For events helping get to these goals, have high fives or ring a bell or dance.

9. Nothing is impossible

- A process we have is to say, "To accomplish this goal, what would have to happen?" This makes people think tactically rather than thinking they can't possibly attain the goal, which just stops any creative thinking.
- Once you start to think this way, you can break the goal down into parts and knock those parts down. The key is to not get derailed by barriers. The leader's job is to help remove barriers.
- If the leader believes they can do it, the team will believe and nothing is impossible.

10. LEAD-ership

- Even though we all pull together and collaborate on projects, don't forget the word Lead in Leadership. If you clearly state your goals and lead your team every day toward those goals, that is what makes you the leader. People want a leader with a clear vision of what the company and the employees can achieve. A leader who will make the tough decisions to move toward those goals, and will lead in an ethical way that puts people first. That Lead-ership is key to success not only in business but in all aspects of our lives.

Mary O'Keefe -

Senior Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer,
Principal Financial Group Inc.



1. Think big. Start small

- How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. Always begin by knowing the ultimate destination, but start one step at a time. Few of us have the resources we need to get to our goal in one huge project. Going through each step allows us to adjust along the way.

2. Ask, So what? Then what? Now what?

- Before you propose an idea, start by asking, "So what?" Who will find it truly relevant? Next ask, "Then what?" What will happen if you're successful? Too often, we're satisfied with a tactic, like someone opening a digital message. Think beyond that. Follow the trail of "then what?" to make sure you're driving toward your desired ultimate outcome. Once you know what ultimate behavior you're trying to drive, ask, "Now what?" That's the action plan to achieve the objectives.

3. Fail fast

- When you begin any initiative, establish interim measures to see if you're on the right path. Too often, we keep doing something long past the point of when we know the product is not a winner. If you don't fail now and then, you're not trying enough new ideas. But it's better to pull the plug quickly than to continue to invest precious resources in an ultimate failure. Being agile requires experimentation and adjustment.

4. See something, say something

- If you hear or see something you aren't aware of — or something that doesn't make sense to you — speak up. Chances are, others on your team aren't aware either. You could save a customer or save the day.

5. Know your business

- Knowing your business includes knowing your customers so well you can build solutions before your customers ask for them. In this way, you can turn ideas into relevant offerings. You'll win new customers and keep existing ones.

6. Simplify

- People are overwhelmed with information. And they're confused by jargon and extraneous details. Confusion causes inertia – people simply stop taking action. If we break any topic into smaller and simpler bites, it improves our chances of breaking through the clutter and motivating them.

7. Content is king

- Today, our customers and employees are always on, connected with thousands of media channels. Loyalty can only be created by offering relevant analysis, information and insights to add value to their lives. Connecting people with the information they need, when they need it, is today's competitive advantage.

8. Act like you know what you're doing

- Don't ever guess or make stuff up. But there are times you need to

put on your game face. A leader needs to show confidence (not to be confused with arrogance). The most important person positively impacted by confidence may be you.

9. Be curious

- Listen and ask questions. You'll learn about your business, your co-workers and your customers, and you may uncover unmet needs or untapped potential. A simple observation can be the beginning of a new way of looking at something that leads to a new idea. That new idea can turn into a better process or offering. In a world rich with data, what we need more of is insight.

10. Say thank you and celebrate victories

- And do it in a way that appeals to employees. Some people love public recognition; others not so much. Ask employees what inspires, motivates and rewards them. Keep a list and customize recognition and celebrations as much as possible.

Suku Radia - President & CEO, Bankers Trust Co.



1. Corporate responsibility

- Bankers Trust's mission statement is "reasonable profit, ethically earned." We believe that by maintaining this standard in all areas of our business, we not only protect and grow our reputation, but strengthen the perception of our industry. A strong community produces strong businesses. Bankers Trust annually contributes more than \$1 million to area nonprofits, and 98 percent of our employees contribute to our United Way campaign.

2. Employee engagement

- Employees are the lifeblood of any organization, and it is critical to an organization's success to understand this. Employees may spend equal or more time interacting with their job as they do their family, so creating a positive work environment is incredibly important. At Bankers Trust, we offer competitive benefits and encourage our employees to be active in their communities. The bank maintains an impressive attrition rate of 2 percent. We recently launched a volunteer time off program with great success, and our employees contribute more than 14,000 hours of volunteer service annually.

3. Accessibility to leadership

- It is important that every member of the Bankers Trust team feels as though he or she can approach the bank's leadership. Great ideas are not always "born at the top," and we believe that our employees should feel confident sharing their thoughts, ideas and concerns with the bank's leadership.

4. Diversity

- "The only thing we all share is that we are all different" is a phrase I am fond of saying. Our organization thrives because we cherish the varying backgrounds and perspectives each member of our team brings to their job.

5. Creating experts in the field

- We believe in continuing education and training so that employees

remain experts in their chosen field. It is this level of expertise that allows our customers to make financial decisions with confidence. Last year, our employees completed more than 12,000 hours of training.

6. Strategic visioning

- Bankers Trust is Iowa's largest independently owned bank. We are positioned, thanks to our stakeholders, to approach business decisions from a long-range perspective instead of focusing primarily on quarter-to-quarter performance.

7. Accommodating customer needs

- Bankers Trust is focused on delivering tailored financial products to our customers. Because we make decisions at the local level, we are able to better understand the needs of our customers and develop solutions to those needs quickly.

8. Respect for our competitors

- We know that our customers have options when it comes to their financial needs. We respect our peers and competitors and understand that through mutual respect we contribute to what makes Central Iowa a rewarding place to live and do business.

9. Expect more

- I am very proud of the work and growth the bank has demonstrated over the past several years. I learned early that you can always do more. It is important that we as an institution recognize the successes of our staff, but encourage them to use those successes as a future benchmark.

10. Transparency

- It is important for all stakeholders to understand how and why an organization makes its decisions. We strive to keep our employees, customers and shareholders knowledgeable. From social media to internal communications to drive-through stuffers, Bankers Trust is committed to keeping our stakeholders informed.

Bob Ritz - President,
Mercy Medical Center - Des Moines



1. Maintain a shared vision of the future for the leadership team and staff

- Helps to understand where the organization is trying to be in five years.
- Statement should be strategic.
- Outline desired state.
- Serve as a guidepost for allocation of resources and decision making.

2. Develop and implement a culture improvement plan.

- It is critical to understand the role and value of a solid culture when attempting to advance the organization.
- Culture is the way people think and act in the organization.
- Culture will advance or kill strategy 100 percent of the time.

- Bad culture is cancerous.
3. Develop innovation center
 - This can help assess and launch new business initiatives/ opportunities.
 - Innovation center can incubate ideas.
 - Creates a culture of exploration and entrepreneurialism.
 - Can result in growing talent pool.
 4. Implement organization wellness program
 - Improves the health and pride of the organization.
 - Can make the organization more attractive.
 - Should reduce the cost of health care and lost days.
 5. Develop and maintain a leadership accountability model
 - Hold monthly operational accountability meetings.
 - Develop incentive compensation system to reward staff for performance better than formal goals and objectives.
 6. Integrate brand strategy
 - Unites all members of the organization with the brand promise.
 - Make direct connection with mission, culture and brand.
 - Educate everyone internally on the importance of the brand.
 7. Use digitalization technology
 - Can improve image, operational efficiency and pride.
 - Using state-of-the-art technology (in balance) can produce added value.
 - Ensure that investment in technology is used to replace manual processes.
 8. Use frequent communications with all audiences
 - Improves the organizations overall position.
 - Monthly memos, bi-directional forums, internal blogs.
 - Builds a clear awareness of the business.
 - Integrates the organization with key audiences.
 9. End all meetings with a list of reasons to celebrate
 - Builds pride.
 - Highlights key events and staff achievements.
 10. Use monthly leadership meetings off-site to build a more effective team
 - Allows the team to focus.
 - Builds a stronger team.
 - Offers focused time for strategy sessions.

Connie Wimer - Chairman,
Business Publications Corporation Inc.



1. Annual planning retreat
 - Carve out time for the entire management team to sequester themselves for a day-long retreat.
 - Utilize advance preparation so you can optimize the time together, including requesting input from each employee throughout the

company.

- Incorporate and encourage a candid SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats).
- Brainstorm and prioritize which projects will be added/dropped for the next year's program of work.
- Leave with specific assignments for lead responsibility on each new initiative.

2. iTF - internet Task Force

- A long-standing committee created years ago as the "Internet Task Force" to explore opportunities through innovation; morphed to more updated "iTF" name.
- Create opportunity for non-management staff involvement in brainstorming on new ideas afforded through electronic publishing.
- Increase interdepartmental collaboration and communication, both formal and informal, on fresh concepts.
- Gain grass-roots support for new initiatives, since they're the ones involved in their creation.

3. BHAGs – Big Hairy Audacious Goals

- Each department establishes two or three Big Hairy Audacious Goals for the year.
- Like any goal-setting exercise, they are specific and measurable, and have a timetable for completion.
- BHAGs are above and beyond the typical, more obvious goals for a team; something that is a stretch and will significantly contribute to moving the needle in an area of opportunity.

4. All-staff meetings to share company financial performance

- Quarterly report to the entire staff by the business manager on how the company is performing toward budget and compared to previous year's numbers.
- Departmental updates by each team on how their progress toward their BHAGs for the year.
- Q & A with publisher.

5. Internal e-newsletter on company and employee news

- Monthly "BPC Inside Scoop" email newsletter to employees that lets the right hand know what the left hand is doing with multiple projects, initiatives, community feedback, and upcoming events, but mixed in with lots of personal news from employees, too: e.g., wedding plans, children's accomplishments, travels, etc.

6. Create new "Director of Strategic Partnerships" position

- Provide focused attention on where and with whom the company should be exploring mutually beneficial opportunities more effectively achieved through collaboration.
- Increased community engagement with organizations with similar goals.
- Disengage a top manager from internal day-to-day responsibilities so they can shift that focus to discussions and brainstorms with external partners on how we can better serve them.

7. Beer:Thirty

- Occasional, spontaneous employee celebration at 3:30 on a Friday afternoon or after a particularly harried deadline close.
- Bring some beer and munchies into the conference room and let folks unwind.
- Great way to say thank you and build informal conversations to share that "feel good" feeling at the end of some strong efforts.

8. Employee votes on benefits options

- When possible, employ “democracy in action” by letting staff vote on various options for benefits. People love choices, and they better understand that although a small company can’t always provide all the benefits of a larger company, they do get a say into which ones are most important to them.
- The company benefits by knowing the same dollar investment is getting more “bang for the buck” through a more enthusiastic support for that option.
- Employees get what they want AND they love feeling they’re working for a company that is making decisions based on their input.

9. Welcoming new staff

- Wow them when they walk in the door on their first day, e.g., welcome sign at their desk, or balloon, or Post-it notes all over their cubicle from co-workers with short welcome messages.
- Carve out time for lunch with some co-workers (on the company, of course!) on their first day.
- Schedule what we lovingly refer to as “forced socialization time” to get to know other departments via an orientation schedule for their first couple of weeks. Create a checklist of items to cover so they leave with an understanding of who works there and what they do.

10. Create additional opportunities for vertical mobility, learning

- Have a strategy to overcome the disadvantage of small companies that don’t normally have enough opportunities for vertical advancement.
- Facilitate new learning and leadership opportunities by creating new management title and responsibilities for particular projects/products.
- Create levels within positions that reflect experience and time with the company, e.g., Graphic Designer to Graphic Designer II to Senior Designer to Art Director; Account Executive to Senior Account Executive; Staff Writer to Senior Staff Writer.

Steve Zumbach - Partner, Belin McCormick P.C.



1. If there is only one thing you get right, build the right team. Hire people who:

- Will work together in a collegial way.
- Performed at the highest level academically.
- Are problem solvers.
- Have a commitment to giving back.

2. Focus on the long term and getting it right; don’t obsess with the short term.

3. Client service is the highest priority on a day-to-day basis. There should be nothing the team will not do to satisfy a client.

4. Stop. Achieve the first three priorities, and the business will succeed.

5. Set a compensation system that rewards performance based upon measurable objectives. The primary metric to determining lawyer

compensation is cash brought in from hours billed by the lawyer and collected, rather than subjective factors.

6. Develop a financial reporting system that tracks progress toward achieving measurable firm objectives and communicates that progress in an easily understandable format. Even lawyers can learn accounting.

7. Limit the time spent by lawyers on firm committees and firm meetings. The focus should be on serving clients.

8. If members of the team are not performing, quickly make the needed changes. Do not live with your mistakes.

9. Recruit lawyers who have interdisciplinary backgrounds. In particular, in the commercial area, recruit lawyers who (i) have undergraduate business degrees; (ii) are CPAs or M.B.A.s; or (iii) have experience in business or business consulting. Team members with interdisciplinary backgrounds are better problem solvers.

10. Be family-friendly and adapt work schedules to permit team members to satisfy personal and family commitments.