

Let's Get Practical

Leadership is Always About the People

Episode 46: Interview with Chris Sarles

As a leader, talk is cheap. Action is what counts and practice makes a difference. Below are practical steps to improve performance.

- **Your team already has the answers, so go get the answers.** Former Oregon Fruit Products CEO Chris Sarles attributed much of his success to this in Episode 46, so go meet with the people in your organizations who have the answers instead of thinking you need to bring them yourself. That collaborative nature will increase buy-in because you've created the plan together. Don't fall into the trap of thinking you need to bring the answers yourself.
- **Leave your ego at the door as you transition from one phase to another.** Whether it's within the organization, from one company to another, or to the post-career next season of your life. Enter each new phase with humility, curiosity, and a willingness to learn.
- **Build a great support system around you.** Identify coaches wherever you can find them in your life to support you by helping point out your blind spots, because even CEOs have blind spots.
- **Be open to learning.** If you're not open to learning, you're not open to hearing your blind spots, which only ensures those blind spots will continue to hinder your success wherever you go. Feedback is your friend, so remain open to it even when it stings a little.
- **Create Vision for the business AND the people.** We know you're already keeper of the Vision for the business, but have you thought about and created a Vision for your employees as well? Don't underestimate how important the people are to you and the business, which means don't neglect creating a Vision for how you'll develop and grow them personally and professionally. You're going to need them if you hope to execute that business Vision.
- **Make sure you're living the Values.** Few CEOs command respect when they don't live company Values, and CEOs who lack respect aren't CEOs for long. And if, by chance, those Values are only inferred and have never been written down, write them down, and write the behaviors that bring them to life so everyone understands what living the values really means.
- **Onboard new employees with a tour of learning.** Few things are more frustrating to CEOs today than losing the war for talent, so when you DO land a new employee, consider a structured tour of learning that new person can embark on to accelerate their understanding of the company, expose them to as many new people as possible, and

Let's Get Practical

Leadership is Always About the People

Episode 46: Interview with Chris Sarles

provide them with a greater end-to-end understanding of the business. Chris spoke about this in Episode 46, so be sure to listen for specific ideas how to do this.

- **Don't just hang out at your own level.** Here's another idea Chris spoke about during Episode 46, extolling the benefits of getting out and meeting the people to develop strong relationships throughout your organization. Don't just hang out with leaders in the C-Suite, and don't let your Executive Team do that either.
- **Create a culture of "We Care".** Whatever that looks like for your organization, make it your priority. It doesn't guarantee there won't be issues, but as Chris eloquently put it in Episode 46, "A culture of "We Care" enables people to put 100% of their energy toward their work." It's as simple as just showing them how much you care.
- **Let your Core Values guide you as you create your exit plan.** Here, we're talking about your own personal Core Values as opposed to the company values. If you tap into what's most important to you, then whatever you step into in the post-career "give-back phase" will align with who you are and what matters most to you.
- **Work to be approachable.** While you're at it, add 'affable' to the list so employees become more comfortable talking with you. Get out, meet the people where they work, find out about their families, and take an active interest in what matters to them. For that matter, while you're doing this yourself, set the expectation for your Executive Team to follow suit.
- **The highlight of your leadership career should be the impact you had on other people.** The people are what really matter, and you wouldn't be CEO without them. If you can't say that the people are the highlight of your career to this point, ask yourself why that's the case and how might you change that.
- **Every encounter is an opportunity to learn.** Those learnings can be big things or some of the littlest things, but any of them could be a slightly different take on what you already know. Additionally, those encounters are opportunities for you to show people through interaction that you care about them by listening and hearing what they have to say. It might amaze you what you walk away with if you pay close attention in those encounters.
- **Sincerity and consistency build trust.** These two qualities don't always hang out together, as some executives are known for being sincerely inconsistent and/or consistently insincere. Trust is hard to build, but you'll make strong inroads by coupling sincerity and consistency in your interactions with others.



Let's Get Practical

Leadership is Always About the People

Episode 46: Interview with Chris Sarles

To listen to this Episode again and tune in to episodes that you may have missed, go to <http://www.thefrustratedceo.com/>.