

## **Praise for *Leadership Lessons from a UPS Driver***

“UPSers believe in the principle that your mission throughout your career is to leave the company in a better state than when you arrived. Ron Wallace did that at UPS. If you follow Ron’s leadership insights in this book, you too will leave your company in a better state.”

—**Scott Davis, retired Chairman and CEO, United Parcel Service, 2008–2014**

“Ron Wallace writes about the values and leadership that helped establish a culture so that UPSers around the world understand that we are all part of something bigger than ourselves.”

—**Mike Eskew, retired Chairman and CEO, United Parcel Service, 2002–2007**

“Terrific job by Ron Wallace in capturing the leadership characteristics and bed-rock principles of UPS and the people of UPS. Many of us can relate to Ron’s examples because we have been there ourselves.”

—**Jim Kelly, retired Chairman and CEO, United Parcel Service, 1997–2001**

“Early in your career, in midcareer, or sitting on top, *read this book* if you want to be a more effective leader. It draws on the thoughts and principles of past UPS leaders as well as the experience of author Ron Wallace, whose strong business credentials cannot be denied.”

—**Kent C. “Oz” Nelson, retired Chairman and CEO, United Parcel Service, 1989–1996**

“Ron Wallace has been there, done that, and now we have the book to prove it. *Leadership Lessons from a UPS Driver* has more practical wisdom than a Harvard MBA or an entire library of business texts. Wallace has produced a paint-by-numbers set for the aspiring executive. As a bonus, it is a practical bible on how to live a more fulfilling life.”

—**The Honorable Frank McKenna, former Canadian ambassador to the United States and former Premier of New Brunswick**

“You can never read enough about inspirational life stories, just as you can never read enough about great leadership. This book has both!”

—**Herman Cain, President and CEO, THE New Voice, Inc., and former Republican presidential candidate**

“No matter what industry or field you work in, *Leadership Lessons from a UPS Driver* will change your approach to leadership in a most significant way. Ron’s pragmatic and highly effective leadership skills will help you take your game to a completely new level. You’ll achieve remarkable results if you use the easy-to-follow steps outlined in this book. I guarantee it.”

—**Kent G. Callahan, President and CEO, Investments & Retirement Division, Transamerica**

"The powerful way Ron's personal experiences have been interwoven with inspiring and profound leadership truths is brilliant. I'm a better author and consultant from reading this book—I guarantee you will be a better leader! Saddle up and get ready for a great ride!"

—**Chip R. Bell, author of *The 9½ Principles of Innovative Service***

"When someone has been a key leader for one of the world's most respected organizations, and it has over 400,000 employees, and he writes a book about the lessons he learned, it should be a must-read. UPS is the company, Ron Wallace is the man, and *Leadership Lessons from a UPS Driver* is the book. Thanks, Ron, for sharing your wisdom with the world!"

—**Mark Miller, Vice President, Leadership Development, Chick-fil-A, Inc., and coauthor of the international bestseller *The Secret***

"Reading a book by a man who started at the bottom and worked his way up, as Ron did, interests me. A workhorse myself, I feel a strong kinship with him. He makes it clear that his book is for us workhorses. If you aspire to be effective, this book is for you. It is not for show horses. No matter your level of responsibility within your organization, his advice is applicable. If you are prepared to learn, you have found a good teacher."

—**Jimmy Collins, retired President and COO, Chick-fil-A, Inc., and author of *Creative Followership***

"For decades, Ron Wallace displayed unique leadership abilities at UPS. This would ultimately lead him to being responsible for thousands of employees who had to get things done in complex situations every day. Whether you're a beginning or an experienced leader, Ron's book, *Leadership Lessons from a UPS Driver*, can change your life as well as the life of your organization. It's a leadership must-read."

—**Mark Levy, author of *Accidental Genius***

"*Leadership Lessons from a UPS Driver* is a must-read for leaders at all levels as well as those who aspire to be leaders. The proven principles that worked for Ron Wallace in his exemplary career are detailed in a very practical manner. Ron's stories bring his leadership principles to life. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from an outstanding leader as you pursue a career of excellence."

—**John R. Patterson, innovative service consultant and speaker and coauthor of *Wired and Dangerous***

"Finally, a book that hits the heart of doing what's right. A straightforward, no-holds-barred approach to leadership principles. A refreshing wake-up call for anyone leading others."

—**Emily Thomas Kendrick, President and CEO, Arrow Exterminators, Inc.**

# **Leadership Lessons from a UPS Driver**

**If you enjoy this excerpt...**

consider becoming a member of the reader  
community on our website!

[Click here for sign-up form](#). Members automatically get 10% off  
print, 30% off digital books.



# LEADERSHIP LESSONS

— *from a* —

# UPS DRIVER

DELIVERING A CULTURE OF WE, NOT ME

RON WALLACE

FORMER DELIVERY DRIVER AND PRESIDENT,  
UPS INTERNATIONAL



Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.  
*a BK Business book*

Copyright © 2016 by Number One Group, LLC

UPS, the UPS brand mark, and the color brown are trademarks of United Parcel Service of America, Inc., and are used with the permission of the owner.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed "Attention: Permissions Coordinator," at the address below.

**Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.**

1333 Broadway, Suite 1000

Oakland, CA 94612-1921

Tel: (510) 817-2277 Fax: (510) 817-2278 [www.bkconnection.com](http://www.bkconnection.com)

**Ordering Information**

**Quantity sales.** Special discounts are available on quantity purchases by corporations, associations, and others. For details, contact the "Special Sales Department" at the Berrett-Koehler address above.

**Individual sales.** Berrett-Koehler publications are available through most bookstores. They can also be ordered directly from Berrett-Koehler: Tel: (800) 929-2929; Fax: (802) 864-7626; [www.bkconnection.com](http://www.bkconnection.com)

**Orders for college textbook/course adoption use.** Please contact Berrett-Koehler: Tel: (800) 929-2929; Fax: (802) 864-7626.

**Orders by U.S. trade bookstores and wholesalers.** Please contact Ingram Publisher Services, Tel: (800) 509-4887; Fax: (800) 838-1149; E-mail: [customer.service@ingrampublisherservices.com](mailto:customer.service@ingrampublisherservices.com); or visit [www.ingrampublisherservices.com/Ordering](http://www.ingrampublisherservices.com/Ordering) for details about electronic ordering.

Berrett-Koehler and the BK logo are registered trademarks of Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America

Berrett-Koehler books are printed on long-lasting acid-free paper. When it is available, we choose paper that has been manufactured by environmentally responsible processes. These may include using trees grown in sustainable forests, incorporating recycled paper, minimizing chlorine in bleaching, or recycling the energy produced at the paper mill.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Wallace, Ron (Ronald G.), author.

Title: Leadership lessons from a UPS driver : delivering a culture of we, not me / Ron Wallace.

Description: Oakland, CA : Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., [2016] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015045482 | ISBN 9781626566880 (hardcover)

Subjects: LCSH: Wallace, Ron (Ronald G.) | United Parcel Service. | Chief executive officers—United States—Biography. | Express service—United States—Management. | Leadership.

Classification: LCC HE5903.U545 W35 2016 | DDC 658.4/092—dc23

LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2015045482>

First Edition

21 20 19 18 17 16 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Cover/Jacket designer Radosław Krawczyk

*Dedicated to UPS people around the world.*

*Words could never express what I feel for my many  
colleagues, mentors, and friends from UPS with whom  
I've had the privilege to serve over the years, and which  
ultimately led to the writing of this book.*





# Contents

	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
CHAPTER 1	<b>Delivering a Culture</b>	<b>5</b>
CHAPTER 2	<b>Building a Successful Team</b>	<b>16</b>
CHAPTER 3	<b>Divine Intervention</b>	<b>27</b>
CHAPTER 4	<b>Developing Your Team's Unique Talents</b>	<b>36</b>
CHAPTER 5	<b>Targeting the Most Critical Information</b>	<b>44</b>
CHAPTER 6	<b>Cultivating the X Factor</b>	<b>55</b>
CHAPTER 7	<b>Maintaining an Ethical Environment</b>	<b>67</b>
CHAPTER 8	<b>Fostering Positive Interactions</b>	<b>78</b>
CHAPTER 9	<b>Moving Forward</b>	<b>91</b>
CHAPTER 10	<b>Prepare for Places Unexpected</b>	<b>105</b>
CHAPTER 11	<b>Signed, Sealed, and Delivered</b>	<b>118</b>
	<b>A Study Guide for Leaders and Their Teams</b>	<b>125</b>
	<b>Endnotes</b>	<b>133</b>
	<b>The "We" (It's Not Just Me!)</b>	<b>135</b>
	<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>137</b>
	<b>Index</b>	<b>139</b>
	<b>About the Author</b>	<b>145</b>



# **Leadership Lessons from a UPS Driver**



# Introduction

**T**his book is about *delivering*. It's what UPS does every day of the week around the world.<sup>1</sup> Our friendly drivers in their sharp brown uniforms are the front line of our business. I can't tell you how many times I've heard people say that they love their UPS drivers and how much they look forward to receiving the packages the drivers deliver each day. The entire company—from the part-time employees to the chairman of the board—dedicates a tremendous amount of time and effort to support the endgame: the driver delivering the package.

Founded in 1907 and thriving more than ever, UPS is a very large family with a unique business culture. I am certain this distinctive culture is the reason for the company's remarkable success and is what keeps us in the number one spot for our industry even today.

I am proud to say that I was a UPS driver. Over the years, I worked my way up the ladder and eventually became president of UPS International, where I was responsible for UPS's operations in more than 220 countries and territories—directing thousands of managers at all levels. At different times, I served as chairperson or cochairperson of 33 boards of directors of highly successful companies across the globe. I was also one of a handful of people on the corporate management committee, responsible for the day-to-day operations of UPS and our more than 435,000 employees.

## Leadership Matters

If I've learned anything during the long course of my life in business, it's this: leadership and a values-based culture matter. They are the key components that set great organizations apart from the pack. As the president of UPS International, I worked alongside many types of leaders from around the world, and I learned important lessons in leadership from each of them. The great ones, the less successful ones, and those who failed all taught me something. Whether they were in charge of small companies or international conglomerates, I witnessed firsthand what they did right and what they did wrong. I took to heart what those experiences taught me.

*Reading a lot of theory is not why I buy books. I want facts, true stories, and sharp insights on leadership.* To me, the most encouraging moments in life do not involve overly complicated, untested

*To build a high-performance team, use simple principles within a basic structure that everyone can easily understand.*

ideas. Rather, they are natural, timeless, and orderly progressions marked by accountability. Leadership is not rocket science. To build

a high-performance team, use simple principles within a basic structure that everyone can easily understand.

I have certainly made more than my share of mistakes through the years, and I'd like you to be the beneficiary of what I've learned from them. I hope that the lessons in this book will keep you from stepping on some of those same land mines and help propel you further and faster toward the attainment of your goals. If you've committed to venturing into the realm of leadership, you should know up front that your journey will take you down a winding road of small advances, painful setbacks, and even bigger victories.

The fact of the matter is that I learned the most important leadership lessons from people within my own company, UPS. As I discovered, a great recipe always means that certain ingredients simply cannot be substituted or left out.

## **What Brown Did for Me**

One of the biggest things Brown did for me (UPS is affectionately known as “Brown,” after the Pullman-brown paint color of the company’s vehicles) was to give me a PhD in teamwork. The values-driven culture at UPS provided me with both a platform and a regimen for personal growth. It consistently stretched and strengthened my development as a leader. I knew that I’d arrived at UPS whenever I’d hear someone say, “You bleed Brown.” Believe me, that’s high praise.

It is the dedicated people who made the company successful, day in and day out, in the trenches, and often under some of the most adverse business and political conditions in the world. These hardworking men and women deserve the credit for the success we achieved.

UPS is a no-nonsense, no-frills company. Our objective today is the same as it was when the company was started: to provide the best possible service at the lowest possible rates. The UPS mentality is to be thrifty and keep an eye on the bottom line. We know it’s the little things that make a big difference—like turning off the lights when we leave a room to reduce energy costs.

The UPS culture of treating one another as family has served us very well over the years. When leaders look at their team members in this light, the importance of using their influence to serve those with whom they work comes into sharp focus. Priorities turn into sincere concern for the well-being of others and foster the desire to motivate everyone to bring his or her



very best to work each day, helping the organization to reach its full potential.

Unfortunately, many people promoted to leadership positions don't know where to begin, how to fight through the middle, or how to finish strong. Novices, and even some veterans, often lack an understanding of what it takes to be a leader. Perhaps you fall into this group and firmly believe you are capable of leading others, but you're not quite sure how to go about it. You begin to ask yourself questions like: *How do I influence others? Why do some leaders seem to soar, while others barely get off the ground? How do I get started and maintain an upward trajectory that will lead to professional and personal growth?*

This book has the answers. The leadership style described in *Leadership Lessons from a UPS Driver* is simple, it's direct, and it works. It's from the front line and reflects the values those of us in the UPS family hold dear. The straightforward and easy-to-understand lessons I present will enable you to get on your feet and then ride out the inevitable storms.

Just as the laws of physics describe the universe around us, there are core principles that give shape to the leadership world. If you adhere to them, they will lead you to the success you desire. And although the core values that guide you should remain true and unchanging—your North Star—there are always new things to be learned.

At the end of this book, you will find a study guide that you and your team can use to dive deeper into the key points presented in each chapter. Together, you will discover ways to get better at “delivering” what you do.

## CHAPTER 1

---

# Delivering a Culture

### **From \$100 Startup to Global Company**

I began my UPS career as a package delivery driver in northern Idaho and served in that position for six years before being promoted to supervisor. Each time I assumed a higher level of responsibility, my view of leadership changed. What never changed, however, was the imperative to *deliver*. That was always at the center of everything we did at UPS.

Before we examine the unique culture at UPS, let me tell you a little bit about the company itself. I don't believe it's possible to truly understand how a culture like this exists and thrives unless you know something about its origins. UPS began as the American Messenger Company on August 28, 1907 by two teenage boys named Jim Casey and Claude Ryan. They started with one bicycle and \$100.00 they borrowed from a friend. Their six-by-seven-foot office was rented for \$15.00 per month and was located in the basement of a saloon in Seattle, Washington. In 1919 the firm adopted its present name, United Parcel Service (UPS).

The group's initial vision was to build a small messenger service with just a few people delivering messages on foot, by streetcar, and by bicycle. Times were tough—so bad, in fact, that legend has it there were intense discussions about how to justify the purchase of a one-cent stamp.

Fast-forward to the present, and the stark difference in the business scale and sheer size of our far-flung operations is almost beyond comprehension. Today, UPS is a worldwide company

serving more than 220 countries and territories with approximately 435,000 employees. It has more than 100,000 vehicles, 540 airplanes, and nearly 28,000 facilities. UPS delivers on average more than 18 million packages and envelopes a day, which translates into a rate of about 37,500 per minute or 625 per second. In addition to the package side of the operations, UPS has a growing supply-chain management solutions business that features services like logistics and distribution, transportation and freight (i.e., air, sea, ground, and rail), forwarding to and from 195 countries, international trade management, and customs brokerage. In the United States, UPS is the leading provider of less-than-truckload services coast-to-coast, using 5,800 vehicles and 20,000 trailers.

The UPS package car (*never* called a truck at UPS) and those heroes in brown uniforms (and socks) who deliver the packages each day are the first images that come to mind for most people when they think about our company. Although the uniforms worn by UPS drivers are similar around the world, the vehicles are not. For example, we use airboats in Vietnam, in some remote areas of Alaska packages reach their destination by dogsled. As you might imagine, gondolas are loaded with UPS packages in Venice; in Taiwan and Bangkok, tuk-tuks filled with UPS packages are a common sight throughout the crowded city streets.

## **A “Culture of We”**

The UPS culture that we know today comes from a well-established, values-based environment formed in the company’s early years. It was built on discipline, accountability, and the utmost respect for others at the outset. In 1929, our founder, Jim Casey, added to the company’s policy book that UPS people would always be addressed by their first name. Jim was never too

busy to talk to fellow employees at any level of the organization, and that practice quickly filtered down to the department managers and into their daily routines.

Greeting people, looking them in the eye, and listening to their concerns were things Jim loved to do, and he went out of his way to do them regularly. In Jim's view, the porter or car washer was just as important as the company's top-level executives. He had a genuine interest in people; whenever he met someone, he wanted to hear their stories and ideas for making the company better. He would never rush a conversation and would give the person his full and undivided attention. He openly described how he loved to learn from others and often incorporated their ideas into the business. *Servant leadership* is a popular term today. Serving others came naturally to Jim more than a hundred years ago, and he made it the cornerstone of our culture. He was all about "we" when it came to his UPS family.

My first encounter with Jim was in our UPS building in Seattle. It was late in the day, and I was the only person around. I was focused on hooking up a charger to a dead battery in one of our package cars when I suddenly felt someone standing next to me. I turned, and there he was, Jim Casey himself. I couldn't believe my eyes, and I'm sure he saw the look of shock on my face.

He stuck out his hand and said, "Hello, my name's Jim. What's yours?" Fortunately, I could remember it.

Then he said, "Here, let me help you. I'll hold the cables if you want to try to start it."

For a few seconds, I thought I was dreaming. Here was Jim Casey, our founder, a legend, and a man I idolized, getting his hands dirty while working alongside me at the very end of the day.

After the car started, Jim asked if I could take a few minutes to talk with him. He motioned toward a bench, where we sat and talked for about thirty minutes. During this conversation, he

## HOW LEADERSHIP LOOKS FROM HERE

**Leaders Walk the Talk**

Funny, isn't it, how the most memorable moment of my professional life came down to a thirty-minute conversation on a bench in a maintenance shop. The vivid memory of the main man and little ol' me, just sitting around talking like members of one big, happy family, is forever burned in my brain. And, as it turned out, *we were* family.

asked me what I thought about “our” company and what ideas I might have to help us better serve our customers and become more efficient in our operations. Jim treated me as if I was *his* mentor, instead of the other way around. It was a day that I’ll never forget and an experience that shaped my approach to leadership for the rest of my career.

Those who knew Jim best often observed that he was a walking contradiction. He was a dreamer, but he was also a doer. He was magnetic, but he avoided attention. He was confident, yet humble. He respected tradition, but change excited him. He was urgent and sometimes intense, but he always seemed calm and at peace. He was a visionary who could see the big picture but also a perfectionist who could zoom in on a misplaced comma.

The contradictions were vintage Jim Casey. However, he was, first and foremost, an avid learner and a devoted teacher. He wanted to better understand and be able to explain things for the sake of improvement.

Former UPS CEO George Smith said Jim taught him that the essence of leadership is just four basic things: to teach, to coach, to be taught, and to learn. Honestly, can it get any simpler than that?

## Founding Principles That Have Endured

As unbelievable as it may seem, Jim Casey and his partners created policies, principles, and values in the early 1900s that continue to guide the company well over a hundred years later. As a constant reminder of this living heritage, the UPS policy book is referenced often today. In fact, it's still read at the start of staff meetings in UPS offices around the world. Our culture and founding principles are also frequently discussed in daily pre-work communication meetings with employees.

To be truly effective, a company's culture has to dwell in the hearts and minds of the people charged with delivering its mission. They have to live and breathe their culture every day. It can't be reduced to some slogans plastered on a wall or a mission statement mounted in a nice picture frame. Rather, it must embody the soul of teamwork. It is up to the leaders to not only talk with their team members about those principles but also to live by them. To sustain a unique culture, all the components need to be present in the right proportions.

Creating an environment like this requires consistency and discipline. To succeed today and long into the future, you need to establish a culture based upon sound principles and policies that align with the values of your organization. At UPS, that strategic alignment is demonstrated in the following bedrock principles.

*Establish a culture based upon sound principles and policies that align with the values of your organization.*

### **People: Treat Everyone Equally**

At UPS, we take a sincere interest in the well-being of our team members and treat everyone equally. In the words of Jim Casey:

The policy of impartiality means that everybody is treated equally; everybody has an equal opportunity; one person is on a par with all others; one can advance only because of more capability than others.<sup>2</sup>

A major factor in providing everyone with an equal opportunity to grow and rise in the ranks is the practice of not hiring relatives or friends, avoiding the potential for favoritism. In addition, our culture is built upon the belief that our people come first. For example, there is an open-door policy that gives all workers access to their managers.

UPS does not believe in titles per se and, as I mentioned, encourages everyone to be on a first-name basis. That is the expectation for our managers, although there are some other exceptions due to cultural considerations in countries outside the United States. We try to be as informal as possible whenever it's appropriate. Accordingly, as I alluded to earlier, it is not unusual for a car washer to call the CEO by their first name and vice versa. It's the family culture upbringing. Although UPSers have different responsibilities, we are still all in it together, working toward the same goals.

Once the people you deal with recognize what you do springs from an honest heart, they will be surprisingly strong in their support of you.

- They will believe what you say.
- They will do what you want.
- They will give you their loyalty.
- They will trust and follow you.<sup>3</sup>

### **Pride: Show Pride in the Company and Pride in the Work**

Someone once asked me to pick one word that best describes why UPS is so special. The answer was easy. I had lived it every day as

an employee, and I still live it today. That word is *pride*. We show pride in the company and pride in the work that we do.

Of course, pride can be instilled in many different ways. At UPS, it comes from professionalism, quality service, and the quest for perfection in everything we do. For instance, our appearance standards help us present an image that UPSers are proud of and yield something tangible and continuous that the public depends on. It's hard to quantify exactly why something so simple is so inspiring in its own understated way, but the results confirm that professional appearance matters.

*We show pride in the company and pride in the work that we do.*

Our customers often say that they know they can trust UPS because of our reputation. A big part of that comes from the pride within our ranks and the way we consistently perform so well in all the small things.

### **Appearance: Make a Positive Visual Impression**

Quality is largely a matter of appearance. People judge us by the visual and mental impression they get. If those impressions are to be favorable, we must have the appearance of doing a good job.<sup>4</sup>

From the beginning, UPS decided it would be a company that would send customers a strong message of assurance and quality by making a positive visual impression on the public. This belief, and the resulting emphasis on making positive impressions, extends not only to uniforms for drivers but also to sparkling-clean package cars, offices, and buildings. Just as they did more than one hundred years ago, today's drivers must meet these strict appearance standards, including good personal hygiene, cleaned and pressed uniforms, and shined shoes.



When a store executive sees one of our cars with dented fenders, or a scratched body, or a car in need of paint, what kind of impression does that create? And whose fault is it? The driver's? No. It's the fault of someone higher up for failing to have an inspection system that will detect such defects immediately and have them corrected before the car goes out on the road.<sup>5</sup>

Simply said, it is the leaders' job to "see it—own it—solve it—do it" when they encounter a problem or an opportunity to improve something.

### **Communication: Build a "Culture of We"**

UPS employees gather for a daily meeting (known as a pre-work communication meeting, or PCM) with their supervisor prior to starting work, where they hear current company news and other topics of interest that may relate to their particular group.

During the PCM in the operating centers, managers have an opportunity to inspect their drivers to ensure they meet the company's appearance standards. Although these meetings usually last about three minutes, they keep employees informed about

*Keep employees informed about significant company news.*

*significant company news.* Open communication helps to avoid unpleasant surprises and workplace rumors. Keeping employees informed and engaged in these quick pre-work meetings is an excellent way to start the day.

### **Owned by the Managers, Managed by the Owners**

UPS's managers (and many of the company's employees) own UPS stock. This ownership structure has produced a tremen-

dously positive effect on the day-to-day operations as well as on the company's long-term goals of growth and financial stability.

## **Promotion from Within**

UPS believes that managers who start with the organization and rise through its ranks are likely to be more committed, aligned, and knowledgeable than those brought in laterally from the outside. We promote from within to ensure that the company can pass on our legacy and culture seamlessly from one generation to the next.

When we invest in people, we're looking at it as a lifetime decision. This is why the hiring process is so important and should never be rushed. We look for people who want a career with us, not just a job for a limited time. This is a huge part of the success formula at UPS.

The part-time loader in a hub could well be the future CEO, and UPS's strategy is to hold on to people who show potential throughout their careers. Most new hires start as part-time employees and work their way up through the ranks.

Following our tradition, the management team at UPS, including the CEO and management committee, started as drivers, part-time loaders, car washers, and clerks. As part of the promotion process, all must spend time as package car drivers or as driver helpers to understand the heart of our business. With an active succession plan, we always know where we'll draw the next level of leadership from within the company.

## **Constructive Dissatisfaction**

No matter how successful a company is, its employees should never be satisfied. Once we do something well, we should start over and

figure out how to do it better. Good companies adapt to changing conditions; great ones stay ahead of them. They don't deny that perplexing conditions exist, nor do they pretend that markets will never be uncertain or unkind. In fact, they embrace those realities and the potential for a storm by staying nimble and agile. They are "constructively dissatisfied." Leaders make conditions; they don't become victims of them.

It is always the little things in business that matter most, and one of those "little" things that Jim Casey noticed and remarked on remains true for most organizations today. It went like this:

I think we should test and check many of our present practices. Some of the things can be eliminated, and some can be improved. Among other things, I think we are using many useless reports. I think we are filling out forms that don't need to be filled out. I think we are doing a lot of work that accomplishes nothing, and we ought to study that and dispense with it as quickly as we can.<sup>6</sup>

Managers should not be *reporters* of problems; they need to be *fixers* of problems and take corrective action on the spot. If they need help, they should sound the alarm. No one should turn his or her back on anything that is not up to strict company standards.

Although UPS isn't perfect, it may be worth noting that 88 percent of the companies on the Fortune 500 list in 1955 are now dead and buried. So how can a company that traces its roots back to 1907 still be going strong today? How has UPS managed to place at the top of almost every list for best places to work, strong management, and quality of investment, year after year?

The answer is a combination of factors, but recognizing our shortcomings and being "constructively dissatisfied" would have to be towards the top of that list.

Thank You For Reading

Did you like this excerpt? Tell us your thoughts:  
**[bkcommunity@bkpub.com](mailto:bkcommunity@bkpub.com)**

**Berrett-Koehler Publishers**

Copyright © 2014, All Rights Reserved.