

CORE VALUES

What are they? Verne Harnish says the rules are our 'cult' or culture.

Some like to call them the 'unwritten codes' or 'the way we do things here'

ELECTRICIAN EXAMPLE



Bruce is an electrician who has trained a number of apprentices over the last 30+ years.

Bruce feels something has changed. These later generations coming through just seem to think quite differently about things like when to come to work, respecting authority, moral and ethical standards.

Some say this coincided with taking physical consequences out of education and a generation that seems to feel that life owes them the living and not the other way around. The 'ME' generation seem too alive and kicking. Then again maybe Bruce is just old. None the less this is Bruce's story.

Bruce is a popular and active man in the community serving on a few organisations and each year attends a careers night at the local high school, talking to potential future electricians. He never seemed to have trouble attracting applicants and has been spoilt for choice each time. His recruitment approach is to ear mark students 6 – 12 months before he needs them and encourage them to study hard at school and live positive community focused lives. Oh and yes they needed to do well in

Maths and Science and English was always a plus. It wasn't unusual for Bruce to know some of these young people's parents and this also affected his judgment from time to time.



In 1998 Bruce needed a new apprentice. He hadn't had one for about a year as he didn't take another one on after the previous chap finished his and work had been a little tight.

Lately things had become quite busy and qualified staff hard to come by, expensive and Bruce being a bit particular about some things always liked to train staff to do things his way so apprentices were always of appeal. Bruce being Bruce he selected Sam who used to deliver his paper and Bruce's wife and Sam's mum were in Guides together.

Sam was thrilled to get the opportunity and even though funds were tight Bruce generously decked Sam out with a full kit of brand new tools and gave him 18 months to pay them off interest free. Sam would with pride engrave his name on all of his tools and know exactly where each one was and kept his van absolutely spotless. At times Bruce even felt a bit embarrassed when he compared them and would make comments like "when you've done as much as I have this week your van will look more like mine"

Sam was what you might say a 'typical apprentice' for his generation and had things a lot easier than Bruce's apprenticeship days. Bruce could remember how he was given the boss's old hand me downs for tools and had to save to buy a new anything. He even remembers

one day when he made a really dumb electrical error that could have had serious consequences. His boss at the time Albert shook with rage and threatened him with his job, family and even his very life. Albert was one tough guy but Bruce's father was no saint either so Bruce kind of knew that that was the way things were done in those days.



Sam seemed clever for his age and was quick to make suggestions to Bruce about alternative ways to look at things almost from day one. The confidence was quite impressive to start with and at times even entertaining. Bruce would often smile and think to himself 'cheeky young buck' and carry on without a fuss.

Sam was a quick learner and a good electrician. He was respectful with clients although pushed his luck with them far more than Bruce would have at the same age. Occasionally Sam's confidence got the better of him or but all in all he was a very good electrician.

Once out of his time Sam changed. In fact both Bruce and Sam changed. They were almost equals in terms of what they did but Bruce was still the boss and did all the quoting. If Bruce ever over looked something Sam could cut up rough and at times be plain disrespectful. This became worse when another apprentice started.

Bruce remembers their relationship taking a step back when Sam got married and bought his own home. He started doing work on it and charging up lots of materials even non electrical items on Bruce's account and kind of assumed it could be paid off. He started making comments

about client's homes and what he thought they should be doing with it as if it were his.

Despite his resentment growing Bruce never really addressed it as Sam's electrical work was very good. Sam won a local award for 2 years in a row. Bruce would hear Sam make a smart comment and just go into his cave and think things like 'he thinks I don't know anything, he won't listen, what's the use in arguing'.

One day just after Sam had been with company 10 years and given an all expenses paid weekend away Sam and Bruce had a debate about a trivial client complaint. To be fair the client was probably being a pain but Sam did not want to call back to sort the issue out. The conversation escalated and Sam gave Bruce an ultimatum. Bruce stood his ground and Sam quit.



Bruce is left wondering "Where did I go wrong".

He knows he taught a great technician who someone else will now benefit from.

Did he hire the wrong guy? Did he spoil him?

There were unwritten codes or values that Bruce has carried for years that were undefined, even in his own mind and after 12 years he never communicated to the very staff that he had the ultimate opportunity to impart and influence forever. Sam didn't get it and maybe never would have but did he get the chance or was it expected to happen by accident?