

Hiring to Firing Podcast — From Forest to Fortune: Navigating Workplace Ethics With Robin Hood

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Guest: Jordan Hayes

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Tracey Diamond:

Emily, for today's topic of ethics in the workplace, we are using some excerpts from the classic Disney movie, *Robin Hood*. That got me started thinking about all the other Disney movies that I've seen and loved throughout the years, particularly when my kids were young, and I was curious what your favorite Disney movie is.

Emily Schifter:

It's so hard to narrow down, but I think my favorite from growing up was either *The Lion King*, which is the first movie I ever saw in theaters, or *Beauty and the Beast*, because Belle loved to read, and I loved to read, so I really could relate to her. I have to say, now that I have a toddler son, I've been introduced to some of the more stereotypically boy friendly movies. We watched a ton of the Pixar Car movies. It's a lot of different exposure to Disney movies, even while into adulthood. What about you?

Tracey Diamond:

It's really interesting to see how the animation has gotten so much better over the years. But my favorite of all time has always been *The Little Mermaid*. I remember seeing it as an adult, I'll have to admit, when it first came out and it made me cry, when she's swimming around and talking about how she just longs to be out in the world with the people, she's really hit me, my soul for some reason. I have no idea why, but I just love that movie.

Emily Schifter:

They age well.

Tracey Diamond:

Yeah. They do. Thank you so much for listening in today, listeners, to our subject of ethics in the workplace with excerpts from *Robin Hood*.

[INTRO]

Tracey Diamond:

Welcome to *Hiring to Firing* the Podcast. I'm Tracey Diamond, a partner with Troutman Pepper Locke, and I'm here with my co-host and partner, Emily Schifter. Together, we tackle all employment issues from *Hiring to Firing*.

Emily Schifter:

Today, we're so excited to have as our guest, Jordan Hayes, Director of People and Culture at Cathedral Holdings. The company's business is raw materials distribution. They work across the country and even internationally in the personal care, household, industrial cleaner, cosmetic and related industries. It's also a company that is 100% employee-owned. Jordan, why don't you tell us a little bit more about the company and your background and your role?

Jordan Hayes:

Absolutely. Thanks, Tracey and Emily. Great to be here. A little bit about myself, originally from California. I think maybe that's how HR got in my blood, because I know that's a big topic in [inaudible 0:02:10] pro-organizations out in California. I've been in Georgia with my wife and three kids for the last 10 years or so. Georgia is definitely where I call in. Started my HR career in financial services, spent some time in the software world. Most recently, I never thought it would end up in chemical distribution. I don't know that anybody does. But as Emily shared, we've got our hands in a lot of areas of chemical distribution. Like many industries, it has been incredibly fascinating and a fun one to learn about.

What I'd say really makes Cathedral Holdings special is the purpose and culture of a company. We originally founded in 1996, as Emily shared, became 100% employee-owned in 2011. That's a big part of our story and something I'm sure we'll talk about a little bit more today. It's a rich culture in this purpose of being a blessing and inspiring others to be a blessing. It's unique. It's what draws so many of us to the organization at the same time. It's weird in this chemical distribution space. It guides so much of what we do and how we do it. I'm excited to be here today and to unpack a bit more about that.

Tracey Diamond:

It's been so interesting getting to work with you over the years, Jordan, seeing the chemical distribution industry. You're right, it's one where people think, huh, sometimes, but you realize just how many products you touch, how much of people's lives you touch, how many businesses that you're really in. Then on the same token, the company really touches a lot of its employees' lives from what I've seen in a really good way. It is a good complement.

Jordan Hayes:

Absolutely. I know part of coming here, I thought, chemical distribution, what does this have to do with anybody's lives? Then I started saying, we've got a wall where we showcase some of the end user products that our items end up in. I thought, oh, that detergent, right? We're in that detergent, or we're in that cleaner, we're in that soap. Can you realize how many hands and

players go into the things that you and I use every single day? Again, I'm a big believer in the power of knowing that my work, it's not just pushing papers, it's not just hiring and firing people. It really is having an impact on others and it helped me see what that looks like on an end user basis.

Tracey Diamond:

Well, as usual, we're kicking off our discussion today with a movie. Today, we are taking inspiration from the classic story of *Robin Hood*. Of course, this story started out as a novel written in the 1880s and has been adapted many, many times over the years. As we are all likely familiar, *Robin Hood* tells us the tale of a noble archer named Robin, who becomes an outlaw in Sherwood Forest after a conflict with the corrupt sheriff of Nottingham. In the forest, he gathers a band of Merry Men to fight back against the sheriff, all the while pursuing his romantic interest, Maid Marian.

Today, we are using the classic Disney animated version from 1973, which you know what? I don't think I ever actually saw in its entirety, believe it or not. I'm not sure how I got away with that with three young kids. Anyway, in typical Disney form, this version depicts Robin and the characters as animated and anthropomorphic animals, complete with musical numbers. In our first clip, well, let's listen in as Robin and his sidekick Little John discuss the ethics of the quintessential Robin Hood keeper stealing from the rich to feed the poor.

[CLIP 1]

Little John:

You know something, Robin, I was just wondering, are we good guys or bad guys, you know? I mean, Robin the rich to feed the poor? Rob, that's a noisy word. We never rob. We just sort of borrow a bit from those who could afford it.

Robin:

Borrow? Boy, are we in debt.

[END OF CLIP]

Emily Schifter:

Then Friar Tuck, another of the merry men, offers his opinion. Robin Hood isn't an outlaw. He's just someone who is outside of the law because of the time that he lives in.

[CLIP 2]

Friar Tuck:

Oh, for heaven's sake, son. You're no outlaw. Why, someday you'll be called a great hero.

Robin:

A hero? Do you hear that, Johnny? We've just been pardoned.

Little John:

Ho-ho, that's a gas. We ain't even been arrested yet.

[END OF CLIP]

Emily Schifter:

We've seen the characters in *Robin Hood* wrestle with the questions of right and wrong in their world, but that's not really on first blush connected to HR. What do you think? Is there any translation to the workplace? What does it mean to have an ethical workplace, or ethical culture?

Jordan Hayes:

Yeah, that's a great question. Like many organizations, we have core values, right? We spent time refreshing those a few years ago to really make sure that those – they weren't just nice sounding phrases that we stuck up on the wall, and we thought about once a year during performance conversations, but they really were a reflection of both who we were, but who we aspired to be on a day-to-day basis. We went through a great process where we pulled an input from every team member of the organization and ultimately settled on five. One that I think was just so important was do the right thing.

What I love is you'll hear that kind of a value from many organizations. I think there's this shared that we want to be integrity. We want to have a match between what we say and we do. We want to be the kind of business that we'd like our kids to work out. What I love is we gave a definition to each of those and it says, we do the right thing even when it's hard, or counterintuitive. Because it's the right thing, yeah, it might be nice if it generates ROI, it might be nice if it makes its way into the marketing materials at some point, but that's not actually the driver. It simply is because we have a purpose that's higher than that bottom line on a day-to-day basis. That, again, goes back to our purpose of being a blessing.

I think a great example for us with a counterintuitive example of doing the right thing has been our living wage program. This is, hey, I've been trained in HR market competitive compensations. You've got to link it to ROI and business value. There's a case to be made for that. Really, it started during COVID when our senior leadership team spent some time taking care packages around to every team member's house. We had about 70 or 80 team members in the Atlanta area. The founder and the chief operating officer at the time split up the 40 bags and they spent time. Candidly, what they saw is not everybody goes home to the same kind of house in the same neighborhood.

These are people, when they show up, I assume they've got food on the table, that their roof doesn't leak, that they're right there, relatively comfortable situation. What they experienced

was, no, we go home to very different worlds. There was just this shared sentiment of what can we do about this? They had to wrestle with it, right? Because we wanted to do it in the right way, in a way that's sustainable and not when helping hurts. What we came to is we want every person under the care and watch, who is an employee-owner of Cathedral to earn a living wage. We pulled in the data and we looked at some other companies who were doing similar things and ultimately, what we came to is it. We looked at MIT data and for every county they show, what does it take for, let's say, two working parents to have a living wage for two kids in the county? Every year we evaluate what that is and that really becomes a floor for the earning opportunity for our team.

What I love is it's a great example of our values in action. This is counterintuitive. It's expensive for the bottom line. It grows up every year. What I will say is when you see the impact on our team members, when you hear the stories, when you hear the frontline team that who no longer has to work a second job in the evenings, they can be home and have dinner with their kid every evening, because they earn living wage and affords them that, that's worth, it's absolute weight and gold. I think that's an example of what it's looked like for us.

Emily Schifter:

It's so interesting that you say, you want to look to ROI and it does seem counterintuitive. If we raise pay, obviously that's going to cost us some money. Clearly, you're seeing benefits to that as well in terms of maybe employee retention, employee happiness. I imagine that translates to their productivity as well, maybe harder to measure on a balance sheet, but you still aren't getting that return for investment, it sounds like.

Jordan Hayes:

Yeah, 100%. This is where we don't do it for the metrics and the retention, right? I'll go back. If it's a value, you do it because it's the right thing to do and then you figure out the business implications on the back-end. Yeah, Emily, since I've been here for the last three years, we've had somewhere between 4% and 5% turnover on average, right? In an industry where you'd most likely see triple, or quadruple that.

Gosh, our warehouse associate team has not had a voluntary turnover in the last three years. The stability, the knowledge, the capability that enables in an organization, especially as we go through this graying out of many organizations in America where there's this high turnover, there's this high succession, we're able to do that in a healthy, planful, intentional way, versus operating very reactively.

Let me link it to another one of our core values, because I think they all tie together. It's a hundred-year mindset, right? I don't know about you. If you're like me, I have a hard time thinking out, maybe past the next month, my next vacation, or maybe Christmas this year. We really try to stretch ourselves to think and operate and behave and make decisions as if we're trying to build a hundred-year company. That's the core. We want to build a company that not only lasts a hundred years, but is worth lasting for a hundred years, so that we can live out that impact.

Again, I'll just say it. When you've got continuity, people who aren't just trying to see this as a job and to make the next paycheck, but who are thinking, hey, 10, 20, 30 years from now, how can I build a career of impact and provide for my family at an organization? Again, you just see doing the right thing, thinking with a hundred-year mindset, those two just go to what gathers so well.

Tracey Diamond:

What does that mean in terms of a hundred-year mindset? Do you have any examples of what the companies put in place to meet that value?

Jordan Hayes:

Yeah. Let me start by sharing a story. Our Now Chief Financial Officer of eight or nine years, he came from a well-known Fortune 50 organization. As any good MBA student knows, what is the purpose of a publicly held organization? It's to maximize shareholder value, right? It was an early executive meeting here and our founder said, "Okay, team. What is the purpose of our organization?" He confidently raised his hand and said, "Some maximize shareholder value." Her counter goes, "Wrong. We exist to be a blessing." Now our shareholders are part of that, right? So, if we don't exist as an organization, we're not going to be a blessing to much of anybody. It's not that we're running a nonprofit here, but we think through our suppliers, we think through our customers, our communities, our employees, these are all stakeholders in the organization. That's an area where, again, I think the public mindset would say, "Every quarter, we've got to meet our earnings per share number. If we're not meeting it, then we're willing to sacrifice the long term in order to make Wall Street happy. This is an organization where time and time again, I've seen us do the thing that either was counterintuitive, or was a little bit painful organizationally, or maybe from a leader's pocketbook in the short term in order to build an organization that could stand the test of time."

Tracey Diamond:

Jordan, you mentioned two of the core values; doing the right thing and the hundred-year mindset. I think you said there were five of them. What are the other ones?

Jordan Hayes:

Yeah, absolutely. The first one actually is authentic ownership. It's this idea that we don't just tell you to act like an owner. I've been at organizations where we say, act like an owner, right? Because we all know an organization when people like act an owner, they're rowing in the same direction, they can accomplish incredible things. It's a little bit different when you actually are an owner, when you have a stake in the outcome.

As I shared earlier, we became an employee-owned organization in 2011. What that did, there was a culture of ownership well before that, but it reinforced it financially. You have a stake in the outcome. As the organization grows, thrives and succeeds, not just quarter to quarter, but year over year and decade over decade. You have the opportunity to build generational wealth in line with that.

It's not because we set out 15 years ago and said, how can we maximize our share price growth over the next years? We sat out saying, how do we do right by our customers, our suppliers, our team members and the business results have proven themselves? That's authentic ownership. We've got two more. One is in the arena. I love this one. Are you guys familiar with the speech? I want to say, it's by Theodore Roosevelt, about in the arena?

Tracey Diamond:

I have it hanging in my office.

Emily Schifter:

Yeah, a mentor gave it to me once when I made a mistake and she said, "This is a good thing to keep in mind, because you're at least trying."

Tracey Diamond:

I know nothing about this and it makes me think of the movie Gladiator, or the TV show Gladiator. What is in the arena?

Jordan Hayes:

I wish I had the speech off the top of my head and I could just recite it for us. It might be worth doing at some point. Lead to your point, we've got it in our boardroom to remind us, as we gather around the table, this is not about sitting in the stands Monday morning quarterbacking, making calls. This is about each of us rolling up our sleeves, getting dirty, being entrepreneurial, scrappy, acting like an owner, not just an observer. I just love that's a big part of our organization.

Then the last one, you'll see it aligns so well with the others is who before what? Go back to, it's not who, instead of what, right? Who, instead of what? Ultimately, if you aren't delivering the what, the business results, the efficiency that KPIs, again, you lose the platform to exist in a business world that's ever evolving. It says, who before what? When I'm hiring somebody, hey, before I ask you about your skills, those are critical. I want to get to know you, help me understand your story, help me understand your aspirations, how a role and opportunity here could fit with your desires and your growth when we're meeting one-on-one with team members. Yeah, we need status updates, and we need to know project priorities and roadblocks. Before that, I'm going to say, how was your weekend?

No, not like the 10-second version. Really, how was your weekend? How are you doing? How are you showing up today? What do you need for me as a leader in order to serve and to set you up for effective – It might be different between the team members. It might be different today versus yesterday versus next week. Again, there's just that core practice going to. You've heard me share employee examples. What we really try to do is, I'd say, be a beacon for that in the marketplace. When we engage with suppliers, when we engage with customers, something we hear all the time as we do market surveys is you're a relationship first company. Even though I know you're walking into sell me something, doesn't feel like I use car sales dealership.

It feels like I'm sitting down with somebody who wants to partner with me, not just for the short-term sell, but for the long-term partnership, to help me build and grow my business. Again, I would say, it's internally and externally, the values are just embedded in how we try to operate day in and day out.

Tracey Diamond:

Jordan, what advice do you have for other companies when they're trying to come up with their own core values and ethical principles?

Jordan Hayes:

It's a great question. The first, I'd say, this might be a little bit controversial is values should not happen by consensus. I think I heard the phrase "A camel is a horse built by committee." Everybody wanted something, everybody got the thing that they wanted, but it didn't actually end up doing anything all that way.

Tracey Diamond:

Oh, that's really being mean to camels. I don't know.

Jordan Hayes:

At times, their camels are great, right? Let me give another example. Enron. Are you guys familiar with their four core values? Okay. Respect, integrity, communication, and excellence. They sound great. I bet 60% of organizations have something like that out there. But when you build either, because it looks good on marketing material, or you just try and combine and get almost the average of what everybody has said, you don't get something that drips with conviction, that's compelling, that is a call to action. Part of why we follow a vision is because it inspires us, not just to be average, right? But to be better than that. What I love about our process is, don't get me wrong, we invited input from every single person in our organization.

I want to say, over 50% of our team members actually participated in our long focus groups to answer the question, what makes us unique? Why do you work, and what makes this place special? What do we aspire to? How do we need to show up every day in order for that to be true? We consolidated that, we were met, but at the end of the day, it took the fingerprints of the senior leadership team saying, "This is good. Ultimately, what do we stand for?" When we're at the boardroom and we have an opportunity, and we're deciding between A and B, what's ultimately going to drive us? Who do we hire? What values get rewarded here, and what values get you moved out of the organization to one that's better aligned for you? I just think that's really important. That's what I love about ours. They're authentic to us. They really are what we will make decisions by, and they don't just sound like what you might find in any other organization. I think that's a big part of it.

Emily Schifter:

Yeah, I think that's interesting. A good balance of consulting everyone in the company. But then you're right, somebody has to be the leader and make the decision of these are the ones that we're going to focus on. Once you've identified whatever your ethical guideposts are, whatever you've decided, what do you think is the best way to make sure that they are persistent? Not just, like you said, on marketing materials, but how do you make sure that employees and your customers and your vendors, partners, like you mentioned, no, you mean it. It sounds like a cathedral, some of that you try to live by your values, you've mentioned the Living Wage program, the employee ownership. Maybe all companies can't do that, or at least not right away, but what are other ways to really make sure that those values permeate the organization?

Jordan Hayes:

There's a phrase recently I've heard about communication that you need to say something seven times in seven ways. I would say, our strategy, not just with the values, but this culture of ethics, integrity, and alignment from top to bottom, the strategy was this needs to be embedded in every aspect of our organization, right? We could go from the employee handbook, not just say the values, but what does that look like in practice? What's our code of ethics? We've partnered, this is an unsolicited advertisement. Our Troutman team has just been incredible partners in helping us capture that in an illegal, thorough way that, right? Every new team member comes onboard an annual, we're reviewing and writing, this is what it means for us.

I shared, gosh, on a weekly, or a monthly basis, we just celebrate team members who are living out our core values. They get shout outs at our all-hands meeting. We do an annual core values award winner, and this is where it's needed. These are peer-nominated awards. It's just when we get together, all 100-plus employees on an annual basis and celebrate and share stories of what it's looked like to live out these examples on a day-to-day basis. As we work with supplier partners and customers, whether it's built into the contracts, or just built into the language of how we partner with them, we emphasize we're here to be a partner, not a short term. Here's what that looks like for us. Here's our expectations for you, but here's what you can expect from us.

So often, it's a breath of fresh air in a world that, again, is just dominated by a transactional approach to relationships. I think that's the key. There's probably three or four other ways that I'm missing right now. I think it is just saying, hey, what are the seven areas of your organization that you can build this in? It's not a one hit launch. It's something where there's an excuse to come back to it, daily, weekly, monthly, annually.

Tracey Diamond:

I love the repetition. I also love that it's not just something that you're putting out into a policy that nobody reads, but you're living the values on a day-to-day basis. How do you ensure accountability to these ethical guideposts? I mean, it sounds like you're doing a lot to motivate your team, but how do you keep them accountable?

Jordan Hayes:

Yeah. I mentioned there were probably three or four other areas. One of those ways is performance conversations. As we set goals, most organizations, here are goals to achieve for your role, right? It's a lot of focus on the what, which is understandable. It's the KPI, it's the operational, it's the sales number. One of our goals aligns with core values and really to ask the questions, how are you going to grow in embodying and living these out this year? What's your growth goal? There's an invitation, you don't have to hit all five and five ways every year, but it just makes it part of, hey, how you operate in our organization is just as important. It's right on there with what you deliver.

Managers go through those conversations with their team. Let's say, on a quarterly basis, they're reviewing that. Again, it's not like a quarterly conversation in itself. It's going to ensure that we live out our values, but it's another one of those touch points, where it helps make sure all of us stay on track. You and me, as much as anybody else, we can get distracted by the hustle and bustle of the day-to-day. Those are just ways to make sure it surfaces on a regular basis and is considered part of what it means to be an effective team member.

Emily Schifter:

How do you handle it if somebody's not living up to the values? Certainly in HR, you've definitely dealt with the question of if someone's not meeting a clear expectation, you're supposed to make X in sales and you're not, that's a really easy in some ways, performance conversation, but it's a little harder when it's a little bit less objective and more of a, are you a fit? How do you deal with that? How do you minimize risk in that situation?

Jordan Hayes:

That's a great question. My first answer is we reached out to our Troutman partners. It's saying, I call them partners, right? It's almost like I say, as part of your organization, Troutman Pepper partners, we really do see you as a partner. I think we have a partner who's thinking legal and risk, but who has also spent the time to get to know our business, our values, our context, our culture around performance and behavior and who can guide us, again, not from a place of – I can go to ChatGPT and say, what does ChatGPT think? That's a good starting point. But to walk, even if it's for 20 minutes, Emily, Seth, here's how I'm thinking through this. What am I not asking? What am I not thinking about that I should be considering?

Let me go back to who before what. We're not quick to make short-sided decisions. We really try and think holistically and ensure that it's almost, I look inward first. Have we set the right expectations? Have we resourced? Have we trained? Have we provided clarity of expectation? It's the first that onus is on me before I look outward. The second is, again, we spend time. Kindness is not avoiding hard truths. I reread Patrick Lencioni's *Five Dysfunctions of a Team* recently. I don't know if you're familiar with it, but he makes the point that basically, trust is the foundation of a high-performing team.

I would say, yeah, that makes sense. What I think the insight in that book is that's because when you have trust, you can have direct, candid, hard conversations that you recognize aren't about – they're not a personal attack. They really are to address an issue, or an underlying

behavior that's causing distraction. We have kind, direct, candid, documented performance conversations where we speak to the gap, we give opportunity to understand maybe context that we're not aware of. We give clarity, resourcing, and support of what that looks like going forward.

Ultimately, we are apt of doing the right thing is thinking about the individual. At the same time, it's not forgetting the 99 other team members, where if there is a performance or a behavior gap over time that's not being addressed, it's not doing the right thing to let that person continue to negatively impact the rest of the organization. I would say, we are intentional, judicious, candid, caring in those conversations. Ultimately, if we're not finding resolution and the paths are getting further apart then closer together, we ultimately say, "Hey, this might not be the right place for you to add and contribute going forward. There may be another organization whose values and behaviors you align better with."

Tracey Diamond:

I have to say, you clearly aren't taking a chapter from the Mr. Milchik Performance Review in the TV show, *Severance*, which we talked about in a couple of episodes ago.

Jordan Hayes:

The irony is amongst our people team, that is a favorite show. We thought for an April Fool's joke, how funny would it be to say, hey, we've revamped our performance conversations. Here's your new guide of what was it? Intentions?

Tracey Diamond:

Appropriations, I think it was.

Jordan Hayes:

There you go.

Emily Schifter:

Yeah. Switching gears a little bit. In our next clip, we hear Robin and his Merry Men singing gleefully about their plan to invade and rob the castle of the evil King Richard. This presents another ethical dilemma of a sort, the tension inherent in the question of whether it's justifiable to rebel against a ruler in the name of righteousness, even if that rebellion involves breaking laws, or creating a situation where there's violence, or theft.

[CLIP 3]

Little John:

While he taxes us to pieces and he robs us of our bread, King Richard's crown keeps slipping down around that pointed head. Ah, but while there is a Merry Man in Robin's wily pack, we'll

find a way to make him pay and steal our money back. A minute before he knows we're there, Ol' Rob'll snatch his underwear. The breezy and uneasy king of England.

[END OF CLIP]

Tracey Diamond:

That one's a good reminder of the importance of creating an environment, where employees can ask questions about things that fall in the gray area, because we don't really want them to resort to violence and death. Jordan, beyond employees, should a company try to make sure that their partners, their suppliers, their customers, etc., are abiding by their ethical values? How far should the net be cast?

Jordan Hayes:

It's a great question. When I think about our industry in particular, what we've found is that as an example, our supply chain is being not only heavily regulated, but there's a strong cultural movement towards saying, "Okay, I bought something in the grocery store, or at a retail store. What's the upstream chain? What were the implications? Whose hands had to go to making? Am I comfortable? Do I think it was an ethical supply chain?"

I'd say, we're intimately involved in that from a regulatory standpoint with both our upstream suppliers and our downstream customers, understanding that there's visibility. I think that's just a keyword, right? There's visibility and alignment in terms of understanding the steps at each of those stages. Are there the right policies and procedures in place to show we're comfortable with that?

Tracey Diamond:

I think it creates an interesting tension between respecting the fact that these are individual companies of their own and their own cultures, but also, wanting to make sure that the companies that you're doing business with are doing the right thing to take from core value number one for Cathedral Holdings.

Jordan Hayes:

Wow. I love the word you use for it, tension. There's a phrase, "There are problems to be solved and there are tensions to be managed." This is, I think, a tension to be managed. To my earlier point, there are some black and white components to ethics, lines that cannot be crossed. I think that's where we just have a zero-tolerance policy, right? There's a right and a wrong way to approach a supply chain to both financial transactions, business, those are easy. I think that's where we draw a hard line in terms of the part.

Tracey Diamond:

Oh, and there's laws, right? We want to make sure that the people we're doing business with are implying with the law.

Jordan Hayes:

Absolutely. Then where this tension is, okay, I would love if everybody shared the same purpose, but I would hope they look across the aisle at us and say, "You know what? They might see business a little bit differently than us. Yeah, but are our true core values, is there some baseline alignment there?"

One thing that I've loved is, when I think about our suppliers, our customers, our team members, they're drawn to how we operate. I think you said, hey, how far do we cast the net? Maybe go with that analogy. I see us drawing them to the net. As an example, we've got some key long-time supplier, other partners, we invite them to our annual shareholder meetings, where we cast vision about why we do what we do. We celebrate our core values. We talk about our share price, but not just in the context of, again, growing wallets, but growing the potential for impact. I hear story after story of the influence that we're having on the market by not being tight-fisted and only operating with everybody who thinks exactly like we do, but being open-handed, but intentional.

I'll go back to our purpose statement. If we're going to inspire others to be a blessing, we've got to interact with them, and we've got to be able to shine a light on what it looks like to do business differently. Again, I think that's a tension we manage on a day-to-day basis. But if we're successful 10, 20 years from now, there's going to be more purpose-driven business out there in the chemical distribution space than there is today.

Emily Schifter:

Lead by example, which is also a habit of good managers. Interesting to see how it can play out with suppliers and vendors and other partners as well.

Tracey Diamond:

Always important, right? The role model, for sure. All right, I think it's time for our last question. How do you ensure your ethical guide posts are continuing to serve your company? Do you guys look at that periodically and maybe make changes as times go by and situations evolve?

Jordan Hayes:

Yeah, I'll go back to the Enron example earlier. I don't know when the last time they thought about their core values was, but I can't imagine it was on a regular basis. These, amongst other things, they have a tendency to go stale. I do think there is a healthy cadence of not only reinforcing and celebrating alignment with core values, but stepping back. Maybe it's every year, two years, three years, saying, is this still us? Is this still what we aspire to, how we operate? Is this still honest to how we make decisions? Either there's a frank conversation saying, no, maybe we need to let our core values reflect it, or, hey, we've gotten off track and we need to course correct.

One practical way we do this, I know many organizations do an annual engagement survey, but we're really intentional in ours to ask around the question of, what's the gap between what we

say we do and what we actually do? We mine for those uncomfortable truths and really pair those up. Again, a lot of times, it's just a miscommunication, right? It's nothing nefarious. But sometimes we come across things where there's a pattern here, where those two may be getting misaligned.

Fortunately, I've just seen the intentionality in the commitment of this team to go back to, okay, doing the right thing is a daily commitment. Look in the mirror to compare those two and make sure there's integrity and alignment. I've seen this, just be intentional to make moves in that direction. Once again, I think without intentionally creating cadences where we have to look in the honest mirror, it's very easy for core values to end up the same way they do at other organizations, which is just placards on a wall.

Tracey Diamond:

Makes sense. That makes a lot of sense. Well, Jordan, thank you so much for joining us today. This has been a really interesting conversation and frankly, a really good reminder to our listeners about pulling it together in terms of what are your core values, taking a step back and really assessing what does it mean for us to be doing business in today's world and making sure that we are doing the right thing. Thank you so much for joining us today. Thank you to our listeners for listening in. Please shoot us an email. Let us know what you think. We'd love to hear your suggestions for future episodes. Thanks so much.

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