



## Management Credo

“We the People...” “I pledge allegiance...” One of the hallmarks of effective leadership is the ability to provide needed direction by putting into a few words the core values required by the mission. Nowhere is that more important than in American healthcare.

As I’ve listened to successful leaders over the years, I’ve been struck by how frequently they express direction over how their teams should manage, a kind of management credo as to how their team should proceed on today’s field of action. The following piece attempts to capture what I’ve seen these winners express. Whatever your beliefs about the leadership job, getting everyone in management on the same page becomes a powerful way to multiply that vision.

- We believe the customer is king; it is a privilege to serve their cause. They trust us with their lives and loved ones. They give to us a supreme gift, the opportunity to do something meaningful with our lives. Our power is manifest by making it happen for them.
- Management is about winning. Simply trying hard, being sincere, and trudging off to another useless meeting is not success. We will write down our goals, get others excited about them, make change, and measure how we are doing. “A” Team members are passionate about this; “B” Team members don’t work here.
- We are Family. The Golden Rule applies,

all the time, everywhere. If we expect people to stand by us, we must stand by them. We back each other, are kind to each other, and always approach each other with a mind to solve daily issues. We will be judged by the quality of our relationships.

- We are intolerant of mediocrity and bureaucratic thinking. We reject all limited and “it won’t work here” thinking. To do otherwise would negate our powers as men and women. There is nothing inherent in our situation that destines us to fail except our inability to think differently. We will be positive minded, always. Leadership is all about edge, execution, and energy.
- We believe happiness in life is in direct proportion to our commitment to excellence. Sloppy work, shoddy thinking, and half efforts have no part in what we do. The quality of our creative work matters and defines who we are. We will debate less. We will act!
- We understand that leaders are not bosses, critics, or memo issuers. They are teachers, servants, and appreciators. Leadership is not about us; it’s about the

team. We will work alongside, listen, and change the organization to fit their needs. We will lead in only one way, by example.

- Our task is to find answers for many difficult problems. Answers are abundant in the creative thinking of our team, patients, visitors, physicians, and us. Each day we will ask the Golden Question, “How can we do this better?”
- We will not wait for perfect answers. We insist on partial, even small improvements in the now. We expect to make mistakes in the process of making progress, but we will never make the mistake of defending the status quo.
- We embrace contrarianism. We will not follow the herd. What others have no courage to attempt, we will try. What others say cannot be done, we will do.
- Failure in our task is not an option. We will persist. We will work with passion. We will never give up. Success is a marathon—we will go the distance. We will stand on top of the mountain. We will live our dream, not dream our life. ■

*Clay Sherman, drclay@GoldStandardManagement.org, is the author of Gold Standard Management and Creating the New American Hospital. A member of the Healthcare Management Hall of Fame, Clay provides extensive free resources of organization high performance materials at [www.GoldStandardManagement.org](http://www.GoldStandardManagement.org).*