

Larry Mullins

# EVERY ASSOCIATE A LEADER

**Management by MetaValues®**



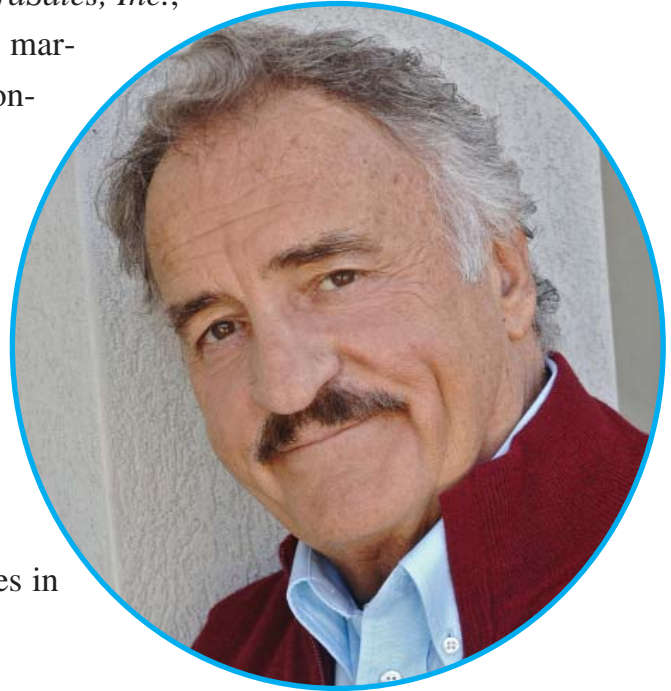
## PART THREE

**Start a MetaValues® University  
Where Every Student is a Teacher  
and Every Associate Becomes a Leader**

## ABOUT LARRY MULLINS

Larry E. Mullins is the President and CEO of *UltraSales, Inc.*, providing management consulting and syndicated marketing programs to retailers worldwide. He has conducted graduate school classes on creativity and personal development at the University of Tulsa and at Oklahoma University, and has taught new principles of self-actualizing as a guest lecturer at Flagler College in St. Augustine, Florida. He has lectured around the country.

Mullins most recent book is *The MetaValues Breakthrough, Limitless Power, Boundless Opportunities* presenting remarkable new advances in motivational training. See [www.MetaValues.net](http://www.MetaValues.net).



Another noted book of his is *Immature People with Power, How to Handle Them*. Joe Girard, recognized as the “world's greatest salesman” in the Guinness Book of World Records, said of this book: “If I had read your book before I started I would have reached the top much sooner.” Material from *Immature People* was included in an officers training manual by the U.S. Air Force. (See [www.LarryMullins.com](http://www.LarryMullins.com))

Larry is Marketing Feature Editor of Furniture World magazine (America's oldest trade magazine, with more than 100,000 readers including importers, manufacturers, vendors, and retailers). He has contributed articles on marketing and the application of MetaValues to business management for nearly 10 years. The magazine website, [www.furninfo.com](http://www.furninfo.com) and his corporate website, [www.ultrasales.com](http://www.ultrasales.com), contain an archive of more than 90 of his published articles on leadership, management and marketing.

# Every Associate A Leader - Part 3

**By Larry Mullins**

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## **Part 3: Start a MetaValues® University, where every student is a teacher and every associate becomes a leader.**

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“I am frankly concerned about the view that suggests that values are organizational furniture that we can re-arrange now and then, but that it really doesn’t matter what the nature of our values are. Or that our cultural values are something that ‘happens,’ and all we need to do is tune into them. In my judgment, for better or worse, our values are the soul of our organizations, and the responsibility for them rests with the CEO. The culture will rise no higher than the benchmark established by the keeper of the Mission, Vision, and Values of the corporation. And by established, I mean articulated, communicated, and most of all, lived up to.”

- Ken Larson, Founder and Chairman  
*Slumberland Furniture Company*

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The Value of an organizational MetaValues® University program is that it provides a powerful tool for a CEO to impact, develop, support and sustain the culture of his or her organization. It is from an organization’s culture that will

spring the desire to achieve and serve. An organization that embraces the key MetaValues of Integrity, Caring and Excellence is aligned with immensely powerful forces. Couple this with a common commitment to an inspiring Mission and Vision, and, all other things being equal, such an organization is virtually unstoppable. As explained in Part One of this series that ran in the December/January issue of *FURNITURE WORLD* (also posted to the article indexes on [www.furninfo.com](http://www.furninfo.com)), the U.S. military is a good example of this type of organization.



As Peter F. Drucker points out:

***“The Army trains and develops more leaders than do all other institutions put together-and with a lower casualty rate. BE-KNOW-DO shows how this is done-and how it can be adopted by the non-military: businesses, colleges and universities, nonprofits and churches.”***

I found the BE-KNOW-DO guidelines of great value. However, for the average furniture store the question is: how can our organization marshal the resources to teach MetaValues? The fact is, for good or ill, you are teaching values every day. To teach MetaValues, the primary leader must walk the MetaValues talk. Does he or she live and demonstrate Integrity, Caring and Excellence consistently? Having a set of Core Values helps a furniture store keep on track. Years ago I experienced a values “course correction” for myself. I was in the office of a furniture entrepreneur I know who is as honest as can be. He elected to state in his organizational Core Values that his company conducted its business with “uncompromising honesty and integrity.” A delivery team captain happened in, carrying an advertisement he took exception to. “This ad says you can buy a La-Z-Boy recliner and get one free. But, the merchandising department changed the prices. This isn’t true. What happened to ‘uncompromising honesty and integrity?’ I must admit I was a bit shocked that a truck driver would dare to challenge the CEO of the company in this way. But the CEO looked at the ad for a few minutes, and said. “You are right. We will never run this ad again. Thanks for bringing it to my attention.”

This task of modeling values cannot be delegated. The Army’s Leadership Manual, BE-KNOW-DO puts it this way:

***“Setting an example is a powerful leadership tool. If you counsel your associates, your subordinate leaders will counsel theirs as well. The way you counsel is the way they will counsel. Your people emulate your behavior. The significance of your position is a role model that cannot be overstated. It is a powerful teaching tool, for developmental counseling and other behaviors.”***

Most organizations, if its leaders address the deepest reasons for the organization’s being (many do not), give a lecture or show a video about the organization’s Mission, Core Values and Vision. The objective of a MetaValues

University is to go much further than this. The objective is to foster the understanding of MetaValues among associates. This is done by involving every associate, from the top down, in the Active Learning and training process. Active Learning goes against decades of misconceptions about teaching. The idea is to focus upon outcomes - on what knowledge, skills, and understanding is to be demonstrated by your associates, and how they are required to demonstrate their mastery. The U.S. Army uses the Active Learning method to train its leaders.



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This technique of involving every associate in active learning is a time-honored one in many disciplines. In the martial arts, for example, members of a

dojo become engaged in the teaching process early on. As a student progresses, he or she learns to patiently instruct lower belts. This teaching process includes not only techniques and disciplines, but also values. Melanie Murphy, one of the highest-ranking female karate black belts in the country, has developed a culture of respect, caring and integrity for all members at Way of the Crane martial arts school in Boulder, Colorado. One of her mantras is: ***“If any higher belt in this dojo ever mistreats any one of you, it is my fault, and my responsibility.”*** How many CEOs would dare to make that statement?

### **The Primary Goal Is To Make Your Associates Think**

The products of MetaValues learning must be knowledge, skills, and understanding. As stated, the goal is to strive to make associates think. Everything else must be subordinated to that paramount purpose. This is not the way people have been educated in school. Even colleges and universities fall short of teaching their students to think. The late Mortimer J. Adler was the son of an immigrant jewelry salesman. He rose to become Chairman of the Board of Educators of the Encyclopedia Britannica, Director of the Institute for Philosophical Research, and a Trustee of the Aspen Institute. He also wrote more than fifty books on philosophy and education. Here is what he wrote regarding education:

***“No one has ever been and no one can ever be educated in the early years of life. The reason is simply that youth itself, immaturity, is the insuperable obstacle to becoming educated. Education happens only with continued learning in adult life, after all formal schooling is over.”***

So set aside the common idea that having an MBA is adequate evidence of having an education or the ability to lead. To find your leaders, first look carefully at those in the ranks of your “ordinary” associates. No organization has ever surpassed the United States Military in teaching leadership to its rank and file. That is the model we will use. I have written about this idea before, but it cannot

be repeated too often: It is your rank and file associates who represent your company to your customers. The salespeople, the delivery crews, the clerks, the maintenance crews ... these “ordinary” people ARE your company to your customers, your community and your vendors. Ask yourself, do they model the ideals of Integrity, Excellence and Caring?

The question before us now is: How do we instill and continuously nurture high-minded character into all of our leaders? Which means, according to the latest trends of management theory, all of our employees. We must go beyond words and lists of desirable characteristics. If the premise is true that each employee is a potential leader, how do we bring those latent leadership characteristics to the surface? We are plowing new snow for most organizations, especially business organizations. Character-based leadership is the Army ideal. First a leader must BE. This means character is the first requisite. Then he or she must KNOW, or learn. Finally, the leader must DO. This is the successful formula the Army uses, BE-KNOW-DO. This is also MetaValues leadership.

### **Training the Whole Person**

While the Core Values do not change, the attributes of character are important areas of development. The Army expects its leaders to work to continually improve performance in these three key areas. Other organizations would certainly benefit from adopting such training, provided it was on-target and exciting. In the exhibit “READY FOR ANYTHING,” is a list of attributes I have teased out of the Army’s leadership manual. However, while leadership is more than a list of attributes, this does not preclude knowing what attributes must be developed. What takes place when these desirable attributes are cultivated is what is known as synergy, meaning the whole is much greater than the sum of the parts. For example, chrome-nickel steel has a tensile strength of 350,000 psi. Yet, if you add up the psi of each of its ingredients, the combined strength is only 260,000 psi.

Where does the extra strength come from? Science does not know. Likewise, no one can predict the synergetic strength of a leader who combines and integrates all of these desirable attributes of leadership.

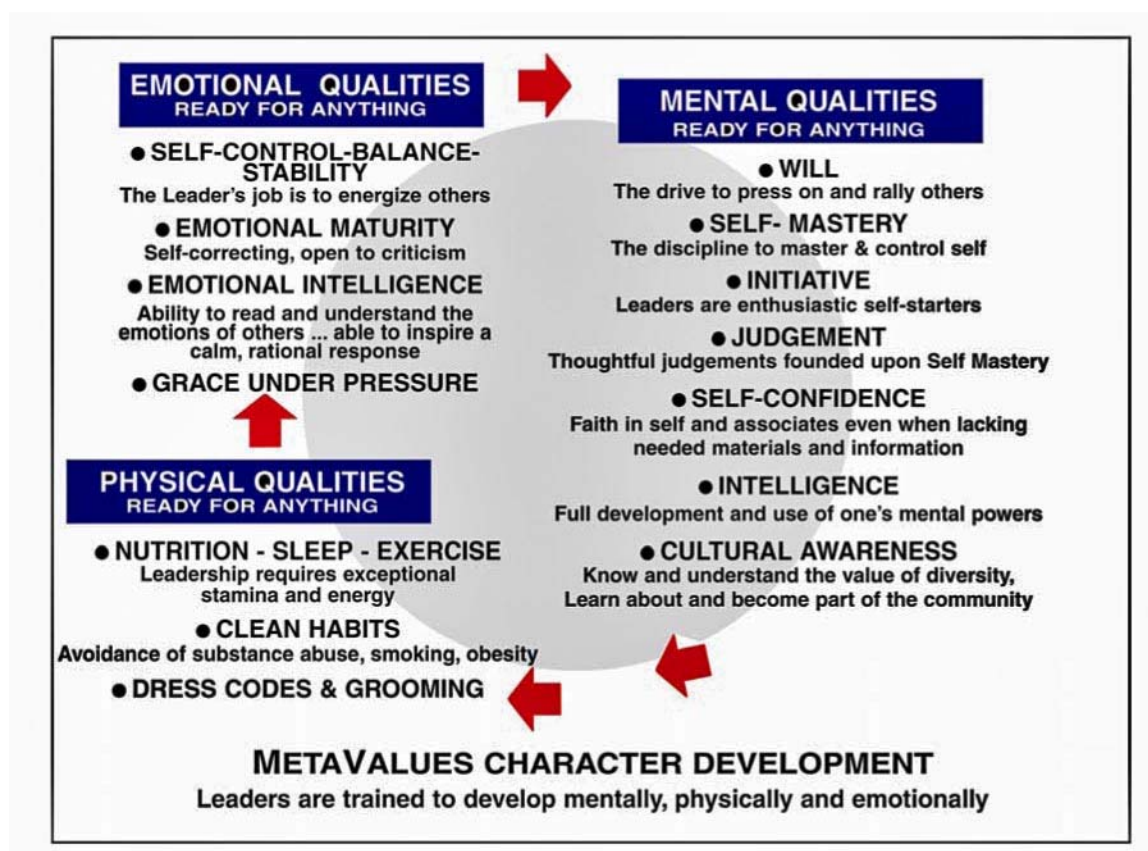


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Many trainers fail to utilize concepts and pictures in their training that involve the trainees. There is too much dialogue and not enough illustration and participation. Modern training processes include visual aids to enhance learning. In addition, experiential techniques are very effective, such as role playing, games and simulations, demonstration methods, and other highly specialized methods. There is quite a bit of teamwork training available these days. Here is what Frances Hesselbein and General Shinseki (who edited the recent book based upon

Army leadership training methods, BE-KNOW-DO) have to say about some of these contemporary techniques:

*“As anyone who has spent much time in the corporate world knows, there are hundreds of training firms offering team-building programs. They will take your group out to climb ropes and get lost in the woods. They will give everyone personality assessments and assign personality “types”-introverted, extroverted, and so on. There are team-building exercises and assessments galore. And don’t get us wrong; these can be useful in the right situation. But, to our way of thinking, many go right past what the Army has recognized so well: values underlie teamwork. Values come first, and behavior follows.”*



The operative words here are: *Values underlie teamwork*. My own message is the same, *MetaValues underlie enlightened teamwork*. Why? Because, if your

values are askew, your whole leadership training effort will be, at best, useless. At worst, it can be harmful. Stephen Covey, in his best-seller *The Eighth Habit*, gives the example of how a mistaken paradigm can lead to havoc. In the middle ages, “experts” attempted to heal sick people by bloodletting. It was generally believed that there must be bad things in the blood of an ill person, so if you get rid of large quantities of blood, the patient will recover. Many people died as a result. But paradigms, even wrong ones, are not easily dispelled. Few people dare to question them, especially when perceived experts support them. Covey gives us an amusing example of what would likely happen if we still bought-into this particular paradigm of bloodletting today. What would the experts be telling us to do? Yes, they would be telling us to support a practice that has questionable value with teamwork building exercises.

Stephen Covey’s Example: “Do it more. Do it faster. Do it more painlessly. Go into TQM or Six Sigma on bloodletting. Do statistical quality controls, variance analysis. Do strategic feasibility studies and organize around brilliant marketing plans so that you can advertise, “We have the highest-quality, world-class bloodletting unit in the world!” Or you might take people into the mountains and let them do free falls off cliffs into each other’s arms so when they return to the bloodletting unit of the hospital they’ll work with more love and trust. Or you might let members of the bloodletting unit sit around in hot tubs and explore their psyches with each other so that they develop authenticity in their communication. You might even teach positive thinking to your patients, as well as your employees, so the positive energy is optimized when bloodletting takes place.”

*(Editor’s note: bloodletting drops of blood along specific meridian points is considered to be an effective treatment method in patients with specific signs and symptoms in traditional Chinese medicine. Leaches are also occasionally used in modern western medical practice for post-surgical bloodletting).*

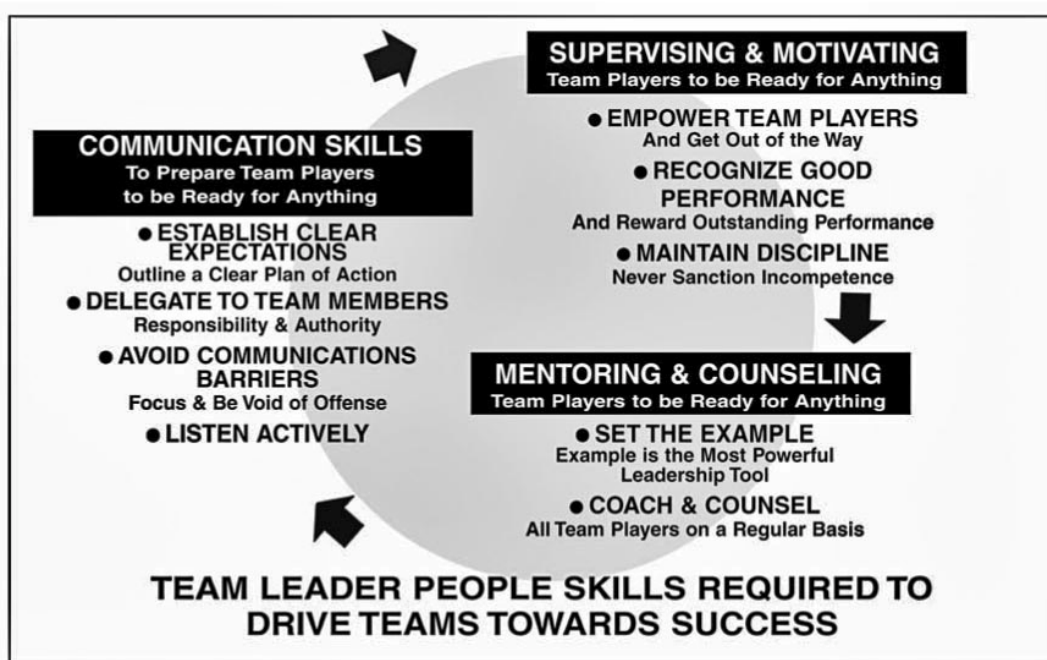
## **Jim Collins' Serious Error About Values**

“But,” you might protest, “no one would advocate such an inappropriate paradigm today.” Oh no? *Built To Last* and *Good To Great* are two of the most popular management books of all time. They are filled with good information, excellent research, and wise suggestions. Yet the author, Jim Collins drops the ball when it comes to values. In both *Built To Last* and *Good To Great*, Jim Collins states that values are relative and subjective. He writes that it really doesn't matter what values a company has, so long as its associates buy into them. He offers the example of Philip Morris, a successful “Built to Last” company that produces and advocates an addictive and dangerous product. This is the tell-tale passage on values from *Good to Great*:

***“Whatever one’s personal feelings about the tobacco industry (and there was a wide range of feelings on the research team and some very heated debates), having Philip Morris in both Good to Great and Built to Last has proved very instructive. It taught me that it is not the content of a company’s values that correlates with performance, but the strength of conviction with which it holds these values, whatever they might be.”***

While Jim Collins (and most other management experts) are correct in suggesting that the degree of commitment to an organization's Core Values will largely determine the performance of its associates, they are wrong when they see these values as purely subjective, and not open to sensible scrutiny and evaluation. This is not a casual mistake, it is a potentially fatal error. In fact, in my judgment this mistaken paradigm is at the heart of the crisis of integrity that exists in modern business today. Issues of integrity and ethics can no longer be ignored. Common sense begs the question: Are we to understand that an organization that adopts values which neglect the common good-or even cause harm-is to be considered a

“great” company as long as it meets a set of performance requisites? There was a time when sophistry could refute this rhetorical question by claiming that ethics are the domain of philosophy, but that answer is no longer acceptable. Abraham Maslow’s theory of MetaValues insists that common sense judgments about ethics and integrity are everyone’s responsibility, including scholars, scientists, philosophers, and business persons. As Maslow observed, a science without values will build gas chambers as readily as it might build hospitals.



### ***Teaching MetaValues Based Teamwork***

The fundamental values of a team emerge clearly when there is a failure by a team player. In a home furnishings store, the team may view such a failure as the problem of the individual who failed. In contrast, MetaValues teams are collaborative rather than competitive. They don’t allow team members to fail. It is the job of MetaValues instructors to show the way to create a MetaValues ambiance. This is very difficult, but once a MetaValues culture is in place and sustained, everything else is relatively easy.

There are stages to the team building process apart from MetaValues, according to *BE-KNOW-DO*. These are valuable and should be addressed. Also, we should keep in mind that teamwork may be something that private organizations strive for, but for the Army, teamwork is a fundamental requisite. The Army values we presented in the two previous parts of these Furniture World articles are: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. These are all important to building trust and trust is the foundation of teamwork. Keep in mind the team leader is a team player as well, and trust in the leader is based upon what he or she does. Trust begins with action. The leader must model discipline and competence, and lead “from the front” in Army terms. No hiding in an office.

The first stage in team-building is to establish the requisites, and the first requisite is trust. Next is communication. Leaders must understand the Mission, Values and Vision and must communicate these to the team. Early in this article, Ken Larson expressed his continuous efforts to communicate his organization’s Mission, Values and Vision to all his associates. Once more I emphasize that team leaders must work very hard to keep their team members informed. They should be open in their communication, share information, and also seek feedback and suggestions. This is an important process for team members; it demonstrates respect and inclusiveness. This lays the foundation for loyalty. Some might suggest the concept of loyalty is outmoded in today’s corporate climate. Perhaps it is more appropriate to say that loyalty needs to be redefined. We must assume that the organization is an honorable one with honorable leaders. In a team situation, it is virtually impossible for team members to clearly see the big picture. In a well-directed team, players perform because they do not want to let their buddies down.

Team players must be willing to give of themselves so that the team will succeed. The Army goes beyond a policy of not allowing discrimination or

harassment; the Army way is that soldiers at all levels from buck privates to generals treat everyone with dignity and respect.

The final requisite of the team is discipline. Without discipline there can be no Excellence. The most desirable levels of organizational discipline are achieved when associates trust in the Integrity of their leaders, understand and buy into the organization's Mission, and grasp how the collective competence of the team will help actualize the organizational Vision. (See the exhibit, "READY FOR ANYTHING" ... Stages of MetaValues Team Development). However, be aware that this is a very basic guideline. The on-going task of leading a team requires so much more. There is an incessant need to observe what is going on, to visit with team members on a regular basis, and to counsel with them as well as to listen to them. That is in addition to continuous training. The central idea is that just as you need team leaders who are ready for anything, likewise you need teams that are ready for anything.

In this brief series of articles it is not possible to present more than the basic ideas of educating your organization in MetaValues. I have appreciated the interest in this crucial subject. I don't need to tell you that the retail furniture industry is in a state of continuing change. Some of these changes are radical, and will greatly impact the way all of us, retailers and vendors, market our products and carry on our businesses. Through it all, however, those associates who share your Core Values will remain your most valuable assets. Integrity, Caring and Excellence are timeless MetaValues, and will not change. They are the impregnable pillars of great organizations.

# **“READY for ANYTHING”**

## **STAGES OF METAVALUES® TEAM DEVELOPMENT**

REQUISITES	FORMATION STAGE	ENRICHMENT STAGE	SUSTAINMENT STAGE
<p>[1]. <b>MUTUAL TRUST</b> based upon a Foundation of Shared MetaValues</p> <p>[2]. <b>COMMUNICATION</b> Team Leaders &amp; Team Members are Committed to the Mission, Honor the Values and Share the Vision</p> <p>[3]. <b>LOYALTY ...</b> a Commitment to the team collectively and team members individually</p> <p>[4]. A commitment to <b>SELFLESS SERVICE</b></p> <p>[5]. Unconditional <b>MUTUAL RESPECT</b></p> <p>[6]. <b>DISCIPLINE</b> based upon faith in the leader's individual competence &amp; the team's collective competence</p>	<p><b>Team Member Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve belonging and acceptance as a team member</li> <li>• Establish and address personal and family concerns</li> <li>• Get to know fellow team members, learn about the team leader</li> </ul> <p><b>Team Leader Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to and address the concerns of subordinates</li> <li>• Design effective reception and orientation</li> <li>• Communicate effectively</li> <li>• Reward positive contributions</li> <li>• Model values and set the example</li> </ul>	<p><b>Team Member Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop trust in team leader and fellow team members</li> <li>• Find and develop close friends on the team</li> <li>• Learn the key players</li> <li>• Learn to accept the customary way things are done by the team</li> <li>• Adjust to the personal feelings of other team members about how things ought to be done</li> <li>• Deal with and learn to overcome family versus job responsibility conflict</li> </ul> <p><b>Team Leader Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust and inspire others to trust</li> <li>• Nurture growth while maintaining control</li> <li>• Identify and guide the development of emerging leaders</li> <li>• Establish &amp; maintain clear lines of authority</li> <li>• Establish individual and team goals</li> <li>• Build team spirit through accomplishment</li> <li>• Acquire candid self-evaluation and self-assessment habits</li> <li>• Be fair &amp; even handed and delegate responsibility</li> </ul>	<p><b>Team Member Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build and sustain your trust of others</li> <li>• Freely share your ideas and feelings with others</li> <li>• Continually think of ways to assist other team members</li> <li>• Share the team's Mission and Core Values</li> </ul> <p><b>Team Leader Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuously model and demonstrate trust</li> <li>• Focus on teamwork, training, and maintaining top skill levels</li> <li>• Be sensitive and responsive to subordinate problems</li> <li>• Continuously think of new and more challenging training</li> <li>• Build pride and spirit through team social and spiritual activities</li> </ul>

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## **“READY for ANYTHING”**

### **Stages of METAVALUES® Team Development**

#### **1. REQUISITES FOR DEVELOPMENT**

1. **MUTUAL TRUST** based upon a Foundation of Shared MetaValues.

2. COMMUNICATION Team Leaders & Team Members Commit to the Mission, Honor the Values and Share the Vision.
3. LOYALTY A Commitment to the team collectively and team members individually.
4. SELFLESS SERVICE A commitment to providing it.
5. MUTUAL RESPECT that is unconditional.
6. DISCIPLINE based upon faith in the leader's individual competence & the team's collective competence.

## **2. FORMATION STAGE**

### *Team Member Challenges*

- Achieve belonging and acceptance as a team member.
- Establish and address personal and family concerns.
- Get to know fellow team members, learn about the team leader.

### *Team Leader Challenges.*

- Design effective reception and orientation.
- Communicate effectively.
- Reward positive contributions.
- Model values and set the example.
- Listen to and address the concerns of subordinates

### **3. ENRICHMENT STAGE**

#### *Team Member Challenges*

- Develop trust in team leader and fellow team members.
- Find and develop close friends on the team.
- Learn the key players.
- Learn to accept the customary way things are done by the team.

#### *Team Leader Challenges.*

- Adjust to the personal feelings of other team members about how things ought to be done.
- Deal with and learn to overcome family versus job responsibility conflict.
- Trust and inspire others to trust.
- Nurture growth while maintaining control.
  
- Identify and guide the development of emerging leaders.
- Establish & maintain clear lines of authority.
- Establish individual and team goals.
- Build team spirit through accomplishment
- Acquire candid self-evaluation and self-assessment habits.
- Be fair & even-handed and delegate responsibility.

### **4. SUSTAINMENT STAGE**

#### *Team Member Challenges*

- Continue to build and sustain your trust of others.
- Freely share your ideas and feelings with others.
- Continually think of ways to assist other team members.
- Share the team's Mission and Core Values.

### *Team Leader Challenges*

- Continuously model and demonstrate trust.
- Focus on teamwork, training, and maintaining top skill levels.
- Be sensitive and responsive to subordinate problems.
- Continuously think of new and more challenging training.
- Build pride and spirit through team, social and spiritual activities

*For Further Information, See [www. MetaValues.net](http://www.MetaValues.net) and [www.LarryMullins.com](http://www.LarryMullins.com)*