

Operation CONCRETE VALUES

– LARRY’S SHORT STORIES #116 –

It all began in the fall of 2006, as we started aligning the operations at MidwayUSA with the leadership and management principles from the Baldrige National Quality Award – in preparation for our 2009 Baldrige application. One of the Baldrige questions was: “What are your stated Vision, Purpose, Mission and Values?”

We had a Mission Statement, but it needed updating to be Baldrige-aligned. The Vision (our desired future state), Purpose (why we exist) and Mission (what we do) only required moderate changes; but we struggled long and hard over the concept of Company Values. You see, Values aren’t strategies, they aren’t goals; they’re about ethics – doing the right thing. After lots of frustration and false starts, we finally came to the understanding that Values don’t

originate in companies, they come from the Employees; only people have Values. Great companies simply adopt the most relevant of those Values, then hire Employees who share them. Company Values are pretty easy to understand when you think of them that way.

MidwayUSA identified and adopted nine personal Values: Honesty, Integrity, Humility, Respect for Others, Teamwork, Positive Attitude, Accountability, Stewardship and Loyalty. This is a nice collection of words that have been important to society for centuries; they haven’t changed over time and could practically be engraved in stone.

Now, Values must be deployed; that is, every Employee must know and share the same Values, to create a culture of trust. Our Mission Statement was posted in multiple locations

throughout each building and our interviewing and reviewing processes were updated; we did a pretty good job of systematically putting our Values in front of every Employee.

But then came a revolutionary idea; why don’t we engrave our Values into our sidewalks, as a further reminder to each Employee,

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our guests and prospective Employees just what our Values are. Unfortunately, when

the quotes came in, they were well above what we expected; interestingly though, the equipment was inexpensive and easy to use – it was something our maintenance folks could do, so we made the investment in tools and training.

Then, someone came up with a really wild and crazy idea; let’s let every Employee participate in this project and engrave a few of the letters. And so they did – 308 Employees, in total. If you get a chance to visit the MidwayUSA campus, you’ll find our Values engraved in the sidewalks at every entrance to every building – from Operation Concrete Values.



Larry Potterfield
MidwayUSA Campus
5875 W Van Horn Tavern Rd
Columbia, Missouri
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Finished product – the first of 20 sets of MidwayUSA Values, carved in stone.



Four MidwayUSA Employees take their turn. Note the air compressor in the background.



This "Wasp", by Engrave-a-Crete, is a hand-held air-driven jackhammer. It is only 6" long and weighs a few ounces.