



DOING THE RIGHT THING

The mindset starts
at the top

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It's about 8 a.m. on a holiday. As I am drinking my coffee and getting ready to leave for a family getaway, I receive a call on my cell phone from Tim Foster. "Amir, I've reviewed the updated compliance training course, and I'm still not satisfied. I have a proposal for you. Let me write the course."

Tim Foster is the Chairman and CEO of three multi-campus institutions: Concorde Career College, Ogle School and YTI Career Institute. Tim previously served as the Chairman and CEO of Ross University (now part of DeVry University).

My team and I have had the pleasure of working very closely with Tim on a compliance training course – or shall I say, "doing the right thing" initiative. Tim has an impressive team of compliance officers and analysts serving at each institution, but he wanted to be personally involved in this project. For Tim, this was more about setting the right mindset – compliance simply being a by-product of doing the right thing.

I had already developed a strong admiration for Tim before receiving the call on that morning. I had felt his passion for genuinely wanting to do what is best for the students and was amazed by his hands-on leadership and detailed review of the course content to ensure that the training would be effective in creating a true compliance culture in the organizations he serves. But I was stunned that morning when Tim told me he wanted to rewrite the content of the course from scratch during the holiday season on his vacation and personal time.

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I must admit that I was very disappointed at not being able to satisfy Tim's vision for the course, but I was excited at the same time about the opportunity to secure course content from such an experienced and passionate leader in our sector. Tim completed the course content on time, exactly as he promised. And he reviewed and critiqued every single assessment item, scenario activity, learning game and multimedia resource in collaboration with our team to ensure the successful launch of the course.

During my family getaway, I had an "aha moment" that made everything very clear to me – a simple fact that we hear all the time but don't truly feel or experience. Organizational culture is all about the mindset, and that mindset starts at the top. Tim Foster is simply doing the right thing in his mind and at his executive leadership level, and he wants to have that mindset trickle down to all employees through an effective and empowering platform.

Jay Hollowell, Vice President of Training and Client Services at MaxKnowledge, has more than 30 years of successful experience in corporate training and career education and puts it very succinctly, "Mindset starts at the top and filters throughout the organization. That mindset turns into actions or behaviors and then into a culture which affects everybody in the organization. The mindset does not become alive until it is felt, and it is not felt until it has buy-in. That buy-in comes when employees feel as if their personal mission and values are in sync with the organization's mission and values."

In the final analysis, Tim's message to career college professionals is that we help to facilitate and support one of the most important decisions our customers – students – will make in their entire lives. They are unemployed, working in dissatisfying jobs or trying to realize a long-standing dream, and they have come to us for help. For them to be successful, they must thoroughly understand the information needed to make informed decisions and reach their goals. They must believe that the educational program is worthwhile and therefore demanding.

Plus, our local communities, and especially employers, must have confidence that our graduates are competent. The state and federal governments must know that we are behaving responsibly. Accreditors must believe that our educational programs meet or surpass their requirements. All of this, as stated by Tim, comes only through trust, a trust that is cultivated through transparency and the pursuit of high standards. If we consistently do the right thing, we will earn that trust.

Jay is so right. A mindset does not become alive until it is felt. Tim certainly made me feel his mindset, and he has created the platform to make his employees feel that mindset. I am very confident about the future of our sector knowing that we have strong and passionate leaders like Tim Foster who are doing the right thing and empowering their teams to do the right thing as well. 🙌



Dr. Amir Moghadam is the founder and CEO of MaxKnowledge, the leading employee training company for the career college sector of higher education. He has more than 20 years of experience in career education, serving in many capacities including Professor, Director of Education, Academic Dean, Director of Student Affairs, Campus Director and College President/School Owner. Moghadam earned his Ph.D. in Engineering from the University of Cambridge at the age of 22. He is a recognized leader in career education and has been selected as a Top Innovator by Career College Central. Moghadam can be reached at amirm@maxknowledge.com.