# How do we hire good people, and then keep them?

_____

John Franklin | June 1, 2020

**EXPERIENCE & TRUST**

The world of senior living, senior care, and healthcare are in a constant state of change. That's why – over the past 30 years – organizations have turned to John Franklin for guidance and advice they can trust. As a writer and speaker, John continues to research and write about subjects he considers important to the senior living industry.

**www.pearlcreekadvisors.com**

**An often overlooked fact is that recognition from one's peers means more to people than recognition from one's manager.**

In addition to making sure that residents in our communities are well-cared for during this time of crisis, we also need to make sure that our staff are being well-cared for. We also need strategies to enhance teamwork during this time of working remote for many. Before COVID-19, staffing shortages and retaining staff was the number one challenge facing many senior living providers. Two years ago, when visiting a Senior Housing website, three of the eight articles discussed the staffing crisis.

In a 2014 Gallup poll, over 65 percent of workers said they are not engaged at work, and even more striking is that a large percentage of those are actively disengaged. In addition, conservative estimates of employee turnover across the long-term care sector range from 45 percent to 66 percent with some studies showing ranges of 40 to 166 percent. Therefore, it is important to find ways to engage and keep employees.

Some organizations have and are developing successful cultures of employee engagement by recognizing that taking care of employees is the key to providing exceptional service and care for residents. One such organization has managed to create an 86% retention rate. So, in this especially volatile and vulnerable time, what can we do to find good employees? And what can we do to keep them? Let's revisit what we look for in candidates, what type of work environment we provide, and how we train our leaders to provide a safe, collaborative, yet challenging work environment.

Let's start the conversation.

# How do we hire good people, and then keep them?

Recently, one of my clients asked for a copy of the white paper I had written several years ago that included the "Three I" Model. He was referring to my white paper on staffing. He wanted to ensure, during this time of crisis, that his community's staff are well-cared for. What follows is an update of that white paper, with added thoughts on what we can do to enhance teamwork during a time when many staff members are working remotely.

Before business school, and before working in the senior living industry, I held a job as a systems engineer at NASA working on the high profile Space Shuttle Program. But, I was not happy. How can a person not be engaged and happy working on the Space Shuttle Program? Although the job was surely aspirational, it did not provide me with a sense of achievement or autonomy – two essential ingredients to an engaged employee.

Almost every person at some point in their life has held a job that was not engaging, and every business school tries to address this subject in organizational behavior classes. In fact, in a 2014 Gallup poll, *over 65 percent of workers said they are not engaged at work, and even more striking is that a large percentage of those are actively disengaged.* I attended a session on "Overcoming the Staffing Shortage" at a senior living conference last year that asserted 25% of nursing assistants are actively looking for another job and that 97% of CNAs are open to new job opportunities at any time.

Conservative estimates for employee turnover across the long-term care sector range from 45 percent to 66 percent, with some studies showing ranges of 40 to 166 percent. It is very expensive to hire and train people. Therefore, it is important to find ways to engage and keep employees. There is no shortage of ideas, suggestions and strategies to address the issue. In fact, the Senior Housing Forum website has featured articles on the staff crisis for several years.

So why write this paper? My hope is that this paper will provide a simple construct to help some organizations reduce employee turnover rate, and thereby save money, and in so doing, create a more enjoyable and fulfilling work environment.

Because I care as much for caregivers working in senior living communities as I do the residents who are being cared for, I developed a model called the "Aggregate Intelligence Culture." To show you how the model works, let's take a deep dive into several senior living organizations that have developed, and are developing, successful cultures of employee engagement by recognizing that taking care of employees is the key to providing exceptional service and care for their residents. By putting "3I Employees" into a "3A Environment," these communities are creating an *Aggregate Intelligence Culture* ("AI Culture").

# AI Culture



Aggregate
Intelligence
Culture

**Turnover decreased by 12% in the first year alone.**
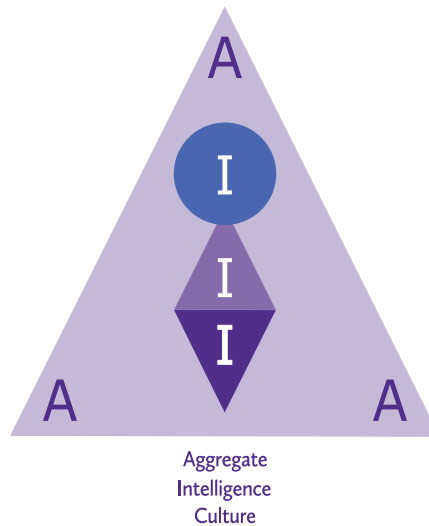


Four years ago the CEO and other senior leaders at Williamsburg Landing in Virginia began to think of different strategies to reduce employee turnover. They developed an AI Culture. Words are important, so the first thing they did was to rename ***the process of hiring, developing and keeping talent as "Talent Management Strategy."*** The Talent Management Strategy they created is called ***"Proud to Care."*** It was fully rolled out at the beginning of 2018. The "Proud to Care" strategy is based on the tenants of servant leadership and has five components: Recruitment, Onboarding, Retention, Education and Training. Turnover decreased by 12% in the first year alone.

## The Three "I"s of Hiring Good People – the 3I Employee

Warren Buffet is considered by many to be the greatest investor in the late 20th century. Part of his investment success was hiring the right people. When asked to identify his secret to hiring, his response was simple. He looks for three traits – intelligence, energy and integrity. In my AI Culture model, I have replaced the word *"energy"* with the word *"initiative"* – creating the three "I"s.

# 3I Employee
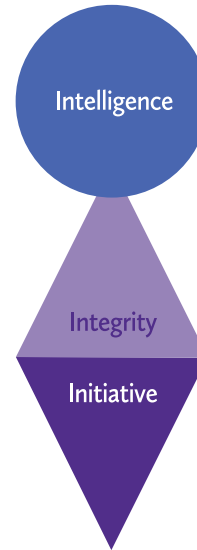
## Integrity

When discussing the three attributes to a good hire, Buffet mentioned that integrity is the most important.  Hiring people who will always do the right thing cannot be overemphasized. As the old saying goes, it only takes one bad apple to ruin the barrel – just one dishonest person to sabotage the culture of an entire group. Like a virus, sabotage can spread throughout an entire department, or even an entire organization.

Edwin Friedman, an ordained Rabbi and family therapist, who became known internationally as an expert on organizational leadership, discusses this in his insightful book, *A Failure of Nerve* (Seabury, 2007). He states,

> **Sabotage is not merely something to be avoided or wished away; instead it comes with the territory of leading, whether the territory is a family or an organization."**

Good leaders are change agents. And many people do not embrace change. As a result, he explains that leaders need to beware of and recognize sabotage. As he says, the easiest way to derail a good leader is to undermine. ***Hire people with integrity and you possibly mitigate one of the major causes of leadership derailment and dysfunctional groups.***

In preparing for this paper I had an intense conversation with a former hospital executive who asserted that social intelligence may be more important than integrity. He offers a good point. I agree that people with high social intelligence can be

effective leaders and managers. However, those same people, if they lack integrity, can use the skill of social intelligence for social manipulation by influencing others to believe things and do things that hurt the organization.

I assert that people who have integrity have a certain amount of social intelligence – and the right kind of social intelligence, which includes self-awareness, a key trait for good leaders. One of my friends is a partner at **Battlefield Leadership**, a firm that teaches leadership lessons by bringing corporate teams to famous battlefields around the world. I participated in one of those programs with one of my sons. The experience is a powerful way to learn important leadership concepts. When asked to identify the number one cause of failed leadership, my friend replied without hesitation, "a lack of self-awareness." In fact, **if you ask most leadership experts the number one cause of failed leadership, a "lack of self-awareness" is almost always at the top of the list.** I was delighted to see that *Leading Age Virginia* emphasizes development of self-awareness as an integral component in its middle-manager leadership training programs.

A senior living executive I have much respect for asked me a question on this subject. "How do you determine if someone has integrity?" Wow, what a great question! The answer goes beyond the scope of this paper, but I suggest the following. Check references and ask these probing questions:

- Do they speak truth with compassion?
- Do they communicate well and assume positive intent in people?
- Do they like themselves?
- And finally, do they always do their best without being too hard on themselves when they do fail?

I would also add – **are they willing to listen and learn from others, or do they see the world as black and white.**

## Initiative

Initiative is the second most important trait you look for in a 3I Employee. Either you have it or you don't. I know this is a provocative statement, but after much reading on the subject and many years of managing people, I believe it to be true. This was made clear to me in a recent conversation with a close friend. We were traveling together on a long trip, and we landed on the subject of talents and gifts. Why do some people have more athletic prowess, others more creativity, and others more intelligence? It comes down to the fact that we are not all born of equal abilities and gifts.

During the conversation, I voiced frustration with people who appear to lack a solid work ethic or who do not have the ability to persevere through challenges or obstacles. My friend softly suggested that I should think of "high energy" as a gift. Until that moment, I had never thought of high energy – **initiative** – as a gift, but I now believe that statement to be powerfully insightful.

> If you ask leadership experts the number one cause of failed leadership, a "lack of self-awareness" is almost always at the top of the list.

That gift may explain why some people have more initiative, a stronger work ethic, more grit and greater perseverance than others. Similar to dexterity, which is needed to be a good surgeon, or hand-eye coordination, which is critical to a great tennis player, passion fueled by high energy is necessary to perform some jobs at a high level. You simply cannot force someone to have high energy if he does not have it. Let's face it, tremendous energy is required to get through certain events and challenges.

I am reminded of an investment banker from a top Wall Street firm who came to business school many years ago to recruit talent. She said the most important trait her firm seeks in a candidate is physical and intellectual stamina. At the time, I did not realize the significance of that statement.

Angela Duckworth, the author of *GRIT - The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, has devoted a lot of time studying the subject of perseverance (Scribner, 2016). A Harvard graduate, she left her consulting job at McKinsey to spend several years teaching in the Philadelphia school system before pursuing her PhD in psychology. During her time as a teacher, she came to the eye-opening realization that the most successful students were not the smartest students. The most successful students exhibited what she calls *"grit."* In her book, she states,

> **... what we accomplish in the marathon of life depends tremendously on our grit - our passion and perseverance for long-term goals. An obsession with talent distracts us from that simple truth.**

In her TED talk on this subject Ms. Duckworth admits that she is not able to determine why some people have grit and others do not. *My friend was correct – it is simply a gift. Some people have it and some do not.*

I use "*initiative*" instead of *"energy"* as an important trait in hiring good employees because I propose that one needs more than energy. This is where passion comes in. The combination of passion with high energy, what I call *"directed energy,"* leads to effective outcomes. A person should be passionate about the particular job or the skill that is required for that job or at least be passionate about the company's vision and/or mission. **Passion fueled by high energy is initiative.** Further, I believe that initiative combined with aspiration creates self-actualization, the highest level in the Hierarchy of Needs theory by American psychologist Abraham Maslow.

> **Passion fueled by high energy is *initiative.***

Many times earlier in my career I failed as a leader/manager because I expected something that some people were not capable of delivering. Although my fellow employees may have exhibited traits like intelligence and integrity, they lacked initiative. Angela Duckworth's use of *"grit"* and Warren Buffet's use of the word *"energy,"* both identified something akin to *"initiative"* as more important than intelligence to be successful. I now look for initiative in the people I hire.

## Intelligence

The third key for success in hiring good people is somewhat obvious. I do believe that most people have the intelligence to perform most jobs. Yes, there are exceptions. However, most people who are interviewed will have the intelligence to perform the job for which a company is interviewing.

Unfortunately, our society, most companies, and most leaders and managers seem transfixed by intelligence and talent, thinking that the most talented candidates and prospects will become the most successful. In his book *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game,* best selling author Michael Lewis explains why talent alone does not predict success by looking to major league baseball and the Oakland A's (W.W. Norton & Company, 2004). In the book, he describes how most major league baseball scouts were obsessed with talent and evaluated and drafted players accordingly.

Because of the Oakland A's small budget, the team could not draft and then keep the most talented players. As a result, general manager Billy Beane was forced to use an analytical, evidence-based approach to draft players, players that did not appear to possess much talent. However, Beane's strategy worked. The Oakland A's became very successful, with a payroll budget that was 40% of other clubs in the Major Leagues. The Oakland A's success changed forever how baseball players are evaluated and drafted.

Going back to her book, *GRIT*, Angela Duckworth states that an obsession with talent distracts us from the truth that intelligence or talent alone is not a predictor of

**People are more motivated and persistent and will give you that special "*discretionary effort"* when they believe in the *"why"* of what they are doing.**

success. There is a reason why many professors like to tell their "A" students that they will be working for the "B" and "C" students some day. While intelligence is a third and important component to the 3I Employee, I believe integrity and initiative trump intelligence as key traits to seek in potential hires, especially at leadership level positions.

### The Three "A"s of Retaining Good People – The 3A Environment

After hiring 3I employees that exhibit "Integrity, Initiative and Intelligence," the really hard work begins. Let's be truthful here. Anyone who has managed people knows that it can be difficult to manage 3I people. They expect integrity, not just from themselves, but from those to whom they report. This is where creating a "3A Environment" is needed. Once a 3I Employee is on board, they must be offered a 3A Environment, or risk losing them. That 3A Environment consists of *Aspiration, Achievement* and *Autonomy* – for each and every employee.

Williamsburg Landing realized this. As a result, the community developed a new vision as a part of its three-year strategic plan, "Living Beyond Ageism." Their vision includes a new set of core values: Passion, Respect, Integrity, Diversity and Excellence, known as "PRIDE," which leverages their *"Proud to Care"* Talent Management Strategy. This vision is intended to provide their 3I employees with an environment that cultivates aspiration, achievement and autonomy.

## 3A Environment
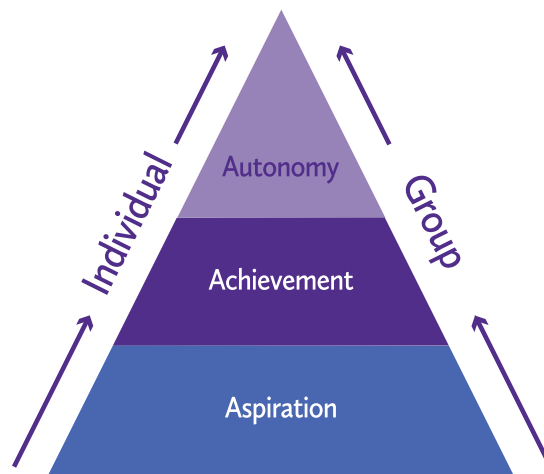
**Between 40 to 70 percent of employees are not enthusiastic or committed to their work, mostly because employees do not understand their company's core values and beliefs.**

### Aspiration

First, let's discuss aspiration. Every person needs a reason "to be." The former CEO of BB&T called it "Your Why." This helps explain why the popular book by Rick Warren, *A Purpose Driven Life,* became an international best seller (Zondervan, 2002). ***People are more motivated and persistent and will give you that special "discretionary effort" when they believe in the "why" of what they are doing.*** In his book, *Start with Why,* Simon Sinek does a great job of explaining this simple but powerful concept (Portfolio, 2009). In addition, when people understand and believe in the reasons behind their effort, they display greater resilience and stamina.

Organizations that have a very powerful and poignant mission or vision have a competitive advantage in recruiting and retaining employees because those companies offer employees a purpose. This is where non-profit organizations can and should have an advantage. Although most companies know that they need to help employees understand the company's higher purpose, they fail to effectively do so. As one article in *Senior Housing News* points out, various studies estimate that ***between 40 to 70 percent of employees are not enthusiastic or committed to their work, mostly because employees do not understand their company's core values and beliefs.***

Helping people understand the impact of their work does not have to be complicated or expensive. However, creating aspiration needs to be personal, which means that you have to tap into a person's passion. As discussed earlier, hiring a person with initiative means you are hiring a high energy person with passion. ***Make sure you match a person's passion with the job or the greater mission of the organization.*** Giving workers data about their customers does not work. But giving employees a clear sense of how their work directly affects specific customers is personal and profound, and it does work.

LifeSpire of Virginia, a not-for-profit organization that owns and operates four senior living communities in Virginia, creates a shared sense of mission through one component of its onboarding process. To ensure that new employees know how important their jobs are in making a difference in the lives of residents, each new employee meets a panel of existing residents. That panel of residents shares stories and explains how those day-to-day jobs, whether those jobs are in housekeeping, food service or maintenance, impact and improve their lives. This makes it personal, thereby creating aspiration, passion and purpose.

## Achievement

> **Skill is created when talent meets effort. However, acquiring a skill in and of itself is not achievement.**

A need we all have is the desire to achieve and to be recognized. Going back to her book, *GRIT*, Angela Duckworth presents the "Effort Counts Twice" theory. The first component of her theory is *talent x effort = skill*, meaning the combination of effort with talent will build skill. However, that is not enough. More "effort" also must be added in order to create the desired outcome: *skill x effort = achievement*. Talent alone is not skill. Skill is created when talent meets effort. However, acquiring a skill in and of itself is not achievement. It takes more effort, combined with the acquired skill, to create actual achievement. Malcolm Gladwell drives this theory home in his book, *Outliers: The Story of Success*, which recounts many fascinating stories, including how the Beatles became one of the most successful acts in human history partly by sheer practice and effort (Little, Brown & Company, 2008). Achievement is something we all want, but it takes lots of effort.

*We feel good about ourselves when we perform a job well done and when it is recognized as such.* So, how do we measure the progress of acquiring the skills needed to perform a job well done? In other words, if a job does not provide a tangible sense of achievement, both in measuring the skills being acquired and the actual results those skills are being used for, the great hire with all her initiative will use that initiative to find a new job, especially if the acquisition of those skills and tangible results created are not recognized and rewarded.
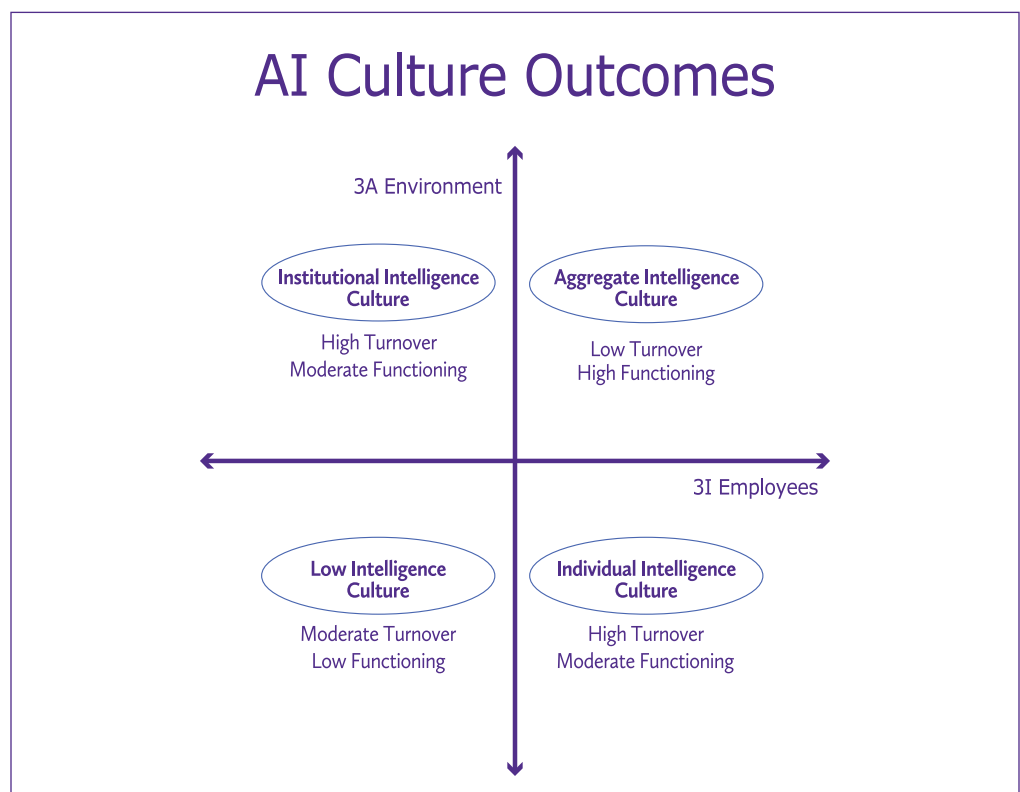
Therefore, it is critical to have some basis by which to measure skill acquisition and outcomes. *It makes good business sense to create accountability, but more importantly, our psyches need it.* Therefore, creating some form of outcome measurement creates engaged employees. The "art" of this exercise is making goals that are neither too easy nor too difficult and creating "buy in" from employees.

How can organizations do this? Garden Spot Village, located in Pennsylvania has realized an employee turnover rate of 23%, compared to industry averages that are at least two times greater by using a unique approach in fostering and measuring achievement among its employees. First, the organization eliminated employee annual evaluations and adopted a coaching model. This cultivates frequent feedback which creates more opportunities to experience achievement. In addition, much of the coaching is future-focused instead of past-attentive to generate a sense of potential.

Another benefit of the coaching model is that it has resulted in a very high leadership retention rate. One theory is that it gives leaders within the organization a sense of purpose. Anyone who has coached athletes has experienced the reward and pleasure of seeing players do well. By adopting the coaching model, managers feel increased ownership and do a better job of leading. However, it is not enough to institute systemic changes and hope that employees will rise to the task. You must equip employees to rise to the task. Of their 500 employees, Garden Spot now has 100 employees who are certified as coaches. *This culture change required enormous organizational intent and effort to properly communicate and implement, especially at the middle management level.*

> **Most managers and leaders do not realize that recognition from one's peers means more to people than recognition from one's manager.**

## AI Culture Outcomes

3A Environment

**Institutional Intelligence Culture**
High Turnover
Moderate Functioning

**Aggregate Intelligence Culture**
Low Turnover
High Functioning

3I Employees

**Low Intelligence Culture**
Moderate Turnover
Low Functioning

**Individual Intelligence Culture**
High Turnover
Moderate Functioning

I want to take a moment to touch on a facet of achievement and recognition that may not be obvious. There are three psychological avenues by which we process achievement and recognition. The first is feedback from our manager. The second is feedback from our peers. The third is feedback from one's self. Most managers and leaders do not realize *that recognition from one's peers means more to people than recognition from one's manager.* This does not mean that feedback and recognition from one's manager is not important, it just means that as managers, we need to understand the importance of the former, and as managers, we need to create opportunities where recognition from one's peers can occur. Ask any actor what award means more to them, and if they are being truthful, they will say the Screen Actors Guild award because it is about peers honoring peers.

## Autonomy

The final component of a 3A Environment is autonomy.  Once we create aspiration and a platform for employees to achieve and be recognized, especially by their peers, we need to get out of the way. Many business gurus will agree that a company's greatest asset is the personal creativity of its employees. So how do you tap into this tremendous resource? One way to do so is to create *autonomy*.

Presbyterian Homes of Georgia does this by crafting a vehicle for its directors, managers and supervisors to feel free to make decisions. *(Please see the case study, page 15.)* To empower its middle managers, Williamsburg Landing created the "I Care Leadership Academy," a four-week training module required for all directors, managers and supervisors.  Training is critical because many middle managers have never been coached on how to lead, including how to help the employees they manage take advantage of the autonomy they are given.

Sometimes as leaders and managers we become so enamored with the processes we have developed or the high-priced systems we have purchased that we forget to listen to our front-line employees. To avoid this trap we can create a system where innovation is driven by employees instead of management, thereby creating personal growth opportunities. Presbyterian Homes of Georgia, Garden Spot Village, LifeSpire and Williamsburg Landing are excellent examples of creating systems that promote innovation from the bottom up, offering employees much needed autonomy.

By hiring 3I Employees and giving them a 3A Environment in which to thrive, life plan communities can create the Aggregate Intelligence Culture ("AI Culture").  We know that putting smart, motivated people together in an environment that cultivates new ideas and thinking results in better outcomes and greater success.  It creates an environment where "aggregate intelligence" fosters solutions and creates outcomes that are impossible to achieve when those same individuals are acting alone or in silos. In addition to creating a high functioning team, the AI Culture promotes low turnover.

## The Special Challenge During COVID-19

One very important take-away or lesson learned from the COVID-19 crisis is the need for social connection.  This is also important for our staff.  Even before COVID-19, increased automation and digital communication in most jobs *diminished opportunities for social connection in the work place, making it more important than ever that employees find some type of meaning in their work.* In response to COVID-19, many companies are requiring remote work, amplifying challenges we already had when we were working face to face.  A legacy of this pandemic may be that more companies embrace remote work, making challenges associated with working remotely permanent.

So how do we do remote work better?  How do we stay truly connected when communicating remotely?  Adam Grant addressed this issue in one of his most recent podcasts.  When working remotely, he identifies *"shared understanding"* and *"shared identity"* as key ingredients to maintaining an effective team.

Maintaining a "shared identity" is especially critical when working remotely and can be lost when two key ingredients of a 3A environment are removed – *Aspiration and Autonomy*.  To maintain aspiration, leaders must remind everyone of the team's goals and ensure each person understands how his or her responsibilities matter. To reinforce this, leaders can share stories of residents who have communicated why the organization's work is important in their lives. Because people are physically separated, the tendency will be to separate emotionally. Therefore, it is important to minimize language that speaks of departments as separate groups and try to use language that makes everyone feel like they are on one team.

It may seem silly to talk about how autonomy needs to be reinforced when working remotely.  Here is the paradox.  When using audio or video conferencing, there is a tendency for one or two persons to dominate the conversation. And it usually defaults to the leader because the leader, feeling isolated, may feel inclined to do so in order to be heard.  This causes others to feel left out.  In doing so, we have just taken away subordinates' autonomy and we no longer have a shared identity.

Maintaining "shared understanding" means gaining an appreciation for each other's remote work environment. Personally, I cannot imagine working from home with young children.  However, many people are currently doing just that.  By definition, some people will have more challenging remote work environments than others.  Therefore, leaders should make it easy for team members to understand the context behind peoples' work spaces or their lives.  ***Doing so makes it easier to generate an assumption of positive intent.***  We know integrity and initiative are important characteristics of a good employee.  It would be unfortunate for team members to question a co-worker's integrity or initiative because of a lack of appreciation for challenges a co-worker might encounter working remotely.

**PEARL CREEK**
ADVISORS, LLC

Comprehensive Capital
Formation Advice

John Franklin

804.539.3943

john.franklin@
pearlcreekadvisors.com

62 Olive Branch, Lake Anna,
Virginia 23024

A final comment on working remotely as teams.  Use caution in the amount of video conferencing used.  Video burnout can occur.  According to Adam Grant, several studies indicate that people actually pay more attention and can read people easier on an audio conference call versus an audio/video call.  This seems especially true for introverts.  Video calls have their place, especially if team members have not seen each other in awhile.  However, it is good to mix it up.

## In Summary

Once you identify "3I" candidates who demonstrate integrity, initiative and intelligence, recruit them by effectively communicating your organization's mission and values. This inspires "Aspiration," the first component of the "3A" environment." When you communicate "why" a candidate should join your organization, you also encourage organizational alignment from day one, a key ingredient to high functioning and successful groups.  You then need to train your mid-level managers in how to create an environment that empowers the employees they manage to have a sense of "Achievement," the second component of the "3A environment." That training should also include how to create "Autonomy," but autonomy with guardrails.

By placing "3I Employees" in a "3A Environment," you create an "Aggregate Intelligence Culture."  This "AI Culture" empowers mid-level managers to take practical steps that help employees in their search for meaning at work. When successful, these efforts provide a road map for aligning the personal aspirations of employees with the most important goals of the organization—a combination that benefits everyone.  In summary, the AI Culture takes care of good employees.  And as Richard Branson, the CEO of Virgin Airlines states,

**If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the client.**

## A Case Study

PRESBYTERIAN HOMES
OF GEORGIA

Presbyterian Homes of Georgia (PHGA), which has been in business for almost 70 years, operates five senior living communities in Georgia and plans to open its sixth community in Athens, Georgia, in 2020.

With a strategy to create an employment environment that is caring and nurturing for its staff, PHGA currently has an 86% retention rate, unheard of in the senior living industry. PHGA believes it is able to maintain such a high retention ratio by treating employees like family and by embracing and rewarding loyalty and trust from the staff. For example, assisting employees by continuing paychecks after a cancer diagnoses is rewarded by those same employees returning to work and giving the extra effort – what I call "discretionary effort" – to repay the kindness of the organization.

By valuing and investing in staff, staff in turn invest and care deeply for residents. This process of caring begins with the recruitment process and is indoctrinated during onboarding. PHGA prepares skill set interviews and conducts situational analysis and behavioral interviewing for each candidate, regardless of the position. This ensures that each perspective employee shares in the values and mission of the organization and will always put the resident first. During the onboarding process, employees are taught that traits such as generosity, love, dedication and care are valued and rewarded and are necessary to be successful. In other words, PHGA embraces the concept that "heart skills" are equally or even more important than "job skills."

PHGA's motto, "Where Caring Employees Make a Difference," is put into practice every day. Staff will take personal days and sit with families who have loved ones at the end of life. Staff members truly become part of the family. It is not unusual for PHGA staff to take turns preparing meals at home and bringing those meals to a resident's family when a resident is placed in Hospice care. A specific example of this extraordinary culture occurred with a couple residing in skilled nursing. Before her Alzheimer's diagnosis and his stroke, the couple spent every Wednesday afternoon at the movies. A CNA learned of this, and every Wednesday for five years, she either rented a movie or purchased a movie out of her own resources to help the tradition continue. She would prepare popcorn for them and dim the lights so that their movie day continued until both passed away.

One staff member visits the hospital each time a resident is admitted and delivers a "get well" bear. Some residents have kept those bears for many years and still talk about how meaningful it was for that staff member to care enough to visit and bring a gift. A resident from outside the United States had trouble communicating. The staff learned that she loved Valencia oranges. To make her feel more included, staff had sweet Valencia oranges ordered and delivered to her. Staff members will even take residents' clothing home to mend when residents are unable to do so themselves.

The standards of quality care start at the top.  All members of senior management are expected to model and communicate the culture that is expected from all staff.  All business decisions and daily behaviors are aligned with the culture.  Staff members feel valued because every position is treated as equally important to the caring of residents.  A component of that culture is to ensure that resources are made available to staff.  This can be a challenge for not-for-profit, faith-based communities.  However, by valuing staff through consistent practices, everything else falls into place.  Loyalty grows when management actually treats staff the way we all want to be treated – as a valued member of a high functioning team.