

# Case Study

What could Netflix teach golf?

August 2018



# Introduction

Netflix have turned the entertainment industry on its head and have altered the way many millions of people now consume entertainment. Are there potential lessons in what they have done that are pertinent to the golf industry? There most certainly are but one simple area Netflix can help the Golf Industry is in organisational culture.

Netflix state that their core philosophy is people over process. Their culture is instrumental to their success helping them to attract and retain stunning colleagues, making work there more satisfying. Let's look at how they work towards this.

## Netflix and Culture

"Netflix is better entertainment at lower cost and greater scale than the world has ever seen. We want to entertain everyone, and make the world smile." A simple statement that sets the direction of Netflix as a global giant, a key part of the Netflix success is their unusual culture document the start of the recruitment process and any ongoing working relationship.

Like all great companies, they strive to hire the best and they value integrity, excellence, respect, and collaboration. What is special about Netflix, though, is how much they:

1. Encourage independent decision-making by employees
2. Share information openly, broadly and deliberately
3. Are extraordinarily candid with each other
4. Keep only their highly effective people
5. Avoid rules

Their core philosophy is people over process. More specifically, they have great people working together as a dream team. With this approach, they are a more flexible, fun, stimulating, creative, and successful organisation.

## Real Values

Below are their real values, the specific behaviours and skills they care about most.

### Judgement

- You make wise decisions despite ambiguity
- You identify root causes and get beyond treating symptoms
- You think strategically and can articulate what you are, and are not trying to do
- You are good at using data to inform your intuition
- You make decisions based on the long term, not near term

### Communication

- You are concise and articulate in speech and writing
- You listen well and seek to understand before reacting
- You maintain calm poise in stressful situations to draw out the clearest thinking
- You adapt your communication style to work well with people from around the world who may not share your native language
- You provide candid, timely feedback to colleagues

### Curiosity

- You learn rapidly and eagerly
- You contribute effectively outside of your specialty
- You make connections that others miss
- You seek to understand our members around the world, and how we entertain them
- You seek alternate perspectives

## Courage

- You say what you think, when it's in the best interest of Netflix, even if it is uncomfortable
- You are willing to be critical of the status quo
- You make tough decisions without agonising
- You take smart risks and are open to possible failure
- You question actions inconsistent with our values
- You are able to be vulnerable, in search of truth

## Passion

- You inspire others with your thirst for excellence
- You care intensely about our members and Netflix's success
- You are tenacious and optimistic
- You are quietly confident and openly humble

## Selflessness

- You seek what is best for Netflix, rather than what is best for yourself or your group
- You are open-minded in search of the best ideas
- You make time to help colleagues
- You share information openly and proactively

## Innovation

- You create new ideas that prove useful
- You re-conceptualise issues to discover solutions to hard problems
- You challenge prevailing assumptions and suggest better approaches
- You keep us nimble by minimising complexity and finding the time to simplify
- You thrive on change

## Inclusion

- You collaborate effectively with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures
- You nurture and embrace differing perspectives to make better decisions
- You focus on talent and our values, rather than a person's similarity to yourself
- You are curious about how our different backgrounds affect us at work, rather than pretending they don't affect us
- You recognise we all have biases and work to grow past them
- You intervene if someone else is being marginalised

## Integrity

- You are known for candour, authenticity, transparency and being non-political
- You only say things about fellow employees that you say to their face
- You admit mistakes freely and openly
- You treat people with respect independent of their status or disagreement with you

## Impact

- You accomplish amazing amounts of important work
- You demonstrate consistently strong performance so colleagues can rely upon you
- You make your colleagues better
- You focus on results over process

## Conclusion

Yes a Global multinational company with massive assets and resource can create the culture they require and get the buy in from those involved, the question is do you as a Golf Club create and support an environment to allow this to happen? Could a document like this adapted to your club environment motivate, educate and empower your employees? And also allow the governing body a set of instructions to identify and remove confusion about what is great work?

Finally a quote from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author of *The Little Prince*, that shows Netflix the way:

***If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the people to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders.***

***Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea.***

What is your vast and endless sea?