

The Simple Management Secrets Behind Mulally's Ford Turnaround

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If there were a Hall of Fame for business leaders, Alan Mulally would surely earn a spot. [Ford Motor's](#) [F-1.01%](#) retiring president and chief executive led one of the most successful corporate turnarounds in history, and he did so amidst the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.

Virtually every time Mulally opened his mouth during the past eight years, he found a way to work in his four strategic objectives, otherwise known as the One Ford Plan:

- Aggressively restructure to operate profitably at the current demand and changing model mix

- Accelerate development of new products our customers want and value
- Finance our plan and improve our balance sheet
- Work together effectively as one team

Insiders, of course, know the plan by heart, because Mulally issued everyone a laminated, wallet-sized copy when he joined Ford in 2006, lest anyone forget what was at stake.

Now, as he hands over the CEO's role to Mark Fields, Mulally says he has no worries that Ford's turnaround will continue. "It's bigger than me," he says. It's the processes, and the expected behaviors."

The "expected behaviors," it turns out, are printed on the back of that wallet-sized copy of the One Ford Plan, and are just as important, he said, as the four frequently cited strategic goals.

"Wherever we are, there's always a teaching moment," he explained. "Someone might have an issue, and everyone slides their card onto the table."

Making employees carry around a list of "expected behaviors" sounds like Ford is treating them like kindergarteners, but you can't really argue with success.

Here, then, is Mulally's basic recipe for managementsuccess:

Foster Functional and Technical Excellence:

- Know and have a passion for our business and our customers
- Demonstrate and build functional

and technical excellence

- Ensure process discipline
- Have a continuous improvement philosophy and practice

Own Working Together:

- Believe in skilled and motivated people working together
- Include everyone; respect, listen to, help and appreciate others
- Build strong relationships; be a team player; develop ourselves and others
- Communicate clearly, concisely and candidly

Role Model Ford Values:

- Show initiative, courage, integrity and good corporate citizenship
- Improve quality, safety and sustainability
- Have a can do, find a way attitude and emotional resilience
- Enjoy the journey and each other; have fun – never at others' expense

Deliver Results:

- Deal positively with our business realities; develop compelling and comprehensive plans, while keeping an enterprise view
- Set high expectations and inspire others
- Make sound decisions using facts and data
- Hold ourselves and others responsible and accountable for delivering results and satisfying our customers