



**SASKATCHEWAN
CONSTRUCTION SAFETY
ASSOCIATION**

Fall 2019

Safety

ADVOCATE

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COLLIN PULLAR ON TALL WALKING

Mention Saskatchewan outside the province and it is often the butt of jokes about its topography (you can watch your dog run away for days), despite the landscape being varied. Cold winters, farming and the Riders are also quick to come to mind in association with the province; however, when the conversation turns its people, words like "gritty", "resourceful", "passionate", "innovative", and "self-sacrificing" are common. Saskatchewanians don't just proudly walk tall, the people of Saskatchewan demonstrate that they can "tall walk" through character. Coincidentally, these characteristics are also what differentiates exceptional leaders from good leaders:

Grit – People with grit tend to work and play with a passion to persevere over the long haul. Their tenacity continually causes them to push themselves and others to be better, despite setbacks. Grit can be developed, but to do so requires difficulty and discomfort. The elite leaders in business and safety are always pushing themselves to be better, even at times when it is not really needed. The enemy of grit is ease, which typically leads to complacency. Complacency, in turn, leads to lack of competitiveness, lower productivity, and, from a safety perspective, is the most common predictor of injuries.



Resourcefulness – Effective leaders are extremely resourceful. They are quick learners and collaborators, particularly in situations that are difficult or confusing. On site, they are the ones that instinctually gather the team and figure out what they need to do to finish an unusual job, safely, and on time. Despite the odds, they find a way to solve problems and are not afraid to try new methods to take on new challenges.

Having a motivating “WHY” – Have you ever worked with, or for, someone that always seemed to inspire others with their passion? This type of individual has shifted their thinking from not just having success, but also significance, in what they do and achieve. Saskatchewan has been lucky to have so many leaders who have made the connection between their work and strengthening their communities. These are the men and women who motivate others through their passion and have dared to build dreams bigger than themselves.

Innovation – Innovation is often thought of as that incredible and unique “ah-ha” invention that no one has ever thought of and that will change the world as humankind knows it. In practice; however, this is not how innovation typically works. Even revolutionary ideas are not necessarily instances of lightning that suddenly appear in a bottle. Most innovations are small, and often unnoticed, changes to previously well-established ideas, practices, or products. More often, they are the result of combining and applying existing ideas for the simple goal of making things a little better.

Innovation is not just about being creative either. Being creative is important but creativity by itself, is not innovation. Innovation is a bit different. True innovation requires taking some risks . . . and taking risks means risking failure. Taking risks means showing some vulnerability and innovation can often mean getting comfortable with being uncomfortable.

Self-Sacrifice and Care for People – While one can develop a range of sharp technical and strategic skills, without a significant care for people, a leader and company can breed a dysfunction, arrogance, and coldness, that puts workers and customers at risk.

Exceptional leadership, in particular, has an aspect to it where one can no longer afford to just think selfishly of themselves, their success,

and their stuff. Leaders who begin to care more about seeing others grow are the leaders who gain as much enjoyment from the success of others as their own success. These leaders often realize the sacred burden that results in sleepless nights concerned about team members and others that are reliant on their leadership. Already tough decisions become tougher when the human factor is acknowledged and there is an awareness of the impact on their teams, their communities, etc. Making tough decisions doesn't always feel good and often requires a balance between sacrificing one's ego and caring for people.

There is a common Jamaican proverb that says “Wi lickle but wi Tallawah” (we're little, but we're Tallawah). The patois word Tallawah stems from the word stalwart, meaning strong, unwavering, committed, gritty, resolute and unfaltering. The statement literally means, “we may be small, but do not underestimate us, we refuse to be restrained by boundaries or preconceived notions . . . yes we, Tall Walk”. Saskatchewan people are so well known for this element of their character. As a population, they are smaller in number, but many Saskatchewan people have developed the exceptional character and ability to Tall Walk and this has influenced businesses and organizations across this country and around the world.

Leaders are expected to create vision, see over the horizon, listen closely to signals in the environment, make bold decisions, and focus the team on the major strategic goals all while keeping complacency and distraction from affecting the ability to execute the strategies necessary to succeed. It is a very tall order but Saskatchewan's Top 100 companies have proven, again that they can take on this challenge to walk tall.

Collin Pullar is the President of the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association, an industry-funded, membership-based, non-profit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training advice to nearly 10,000 employers and their employees in the residential, commercial and industrial construction industry throughout Saskatchewan to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. The SCSA's mission is constructing safety leadership.

SAVE THE DATE

Constructing
Safety Leadership

CONFERENCE

Tuesday, April 21, 2020
Queensbury Convention Centre
Regina, SK

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