



# Eagle Express

## Creating A Culture of Excellence

Culture is the most important indicator for success or failure in any organization. It's no accident Apple's innovative culture of excellence is as distinctive as their products are revolutionary. Apple's culture is evident in every aspect of the company - it drives their success.

You've seen the impact of positive culture firsthand. Think of your last flight on Southwest Airlines, or your last visit to one of the Disney Parks. You also know the few, the proud, the U.S. Marines. Their culture is so strong it glues them together and provokes a sense of pride, which makes them unparalleled in adapting and overcoming any adversity.

Consider also Zappos, one of the fastest companies to reach \$1 billion in sales. They are an organization fueled by a diverse culture, which is inclusive, encouraging, and empowering. Their CEO clearly values culture over strategy, personally indoctrinates new hires on company culture, and incentivizes employees to quit anytime they feel the Zappos culture is not a fit for them.

Our Air Force culture is *just* as important to our success, and in turn, the defense of our nation. Contemplate the culture in your unit. Do the attitudes, beliefs & actions result in sustained excellence, high team morale marked by dignity and respect for teammates, strong internal communication, and an acceptance of a risk to achieve fresh innovation?

If not, then ask the person in the mirror, "Why not?" Our Air Force, including both civilians & blue-suit Airmen, is accountable to strengthen a vibrant culture and increase our legacy of excellence for the greatest Air Force in the world. Getting culture right takes hard work and true commitment. The following are a few basics to reflect on:

**Be an engaged leader:** Positive culture is fueled by leaders at every level who are passionately engaged and living it by example. They are enthusiastic communicators and motivators who set a clear vision, mission, values and goals while they create the environment for all to flourish. Engaged leaders also empower every Airman to be a leader by innovating and guiding positive change in any processes, program or person they touch.

**Live our core values:** To firmly embed Air Force core values into our culture, we must empower our people and ensure everyone understands exactly what is expected of them. "Integrity First" forms the basis for trust and confi-

dence in our Air Force. Without it, we will fail. "Service Before Self" and "Excellence in All We Do" must be firmly embedded in our culture. Strong cultures empower people by identifying their talents and deliberately mentoring them to reach their full potential. These cultures also convey a clear role of personal and professional responsibilities their people are accountable for.



**Establish a culture of discipline and respect for human dignity:** Good order and discipline are prerequisites for creating an environment where everyone is recognized for the value they bring to the team, and should be treated with the dignity, respect, and kindness all wingmen deserve. Practically speaking, this begins with eliminating any coarse or offensive talk, which has the potential to quickly turn toxic. Foul language and sexually or racially explicit innuendos have no place in any professional organization. Unprofessional behavior, even the perception of unprofessional behavior, cannot be tolerated. We must never forget the honor and privilege it is to wear the uniform of our nation.

As Airmen, we have a duty to get our culture right. If we fail in this regard, we will no longer attract America's finest sons and daughters to join our ranks.

- Watch your thoughts, they become words...
- Watch your words, they become actions...
- Watch your actions, they become habits...
- Watch your habits, they become character...
- Watch your character; it drives the culture in your unit, our wing, and your home.

If each of us does our part, we will instill a winning culture; one which makes Airmen love their work, and reflects their inspiration through mission excellence. Our long-term success is dependent on sustaining a vibrant culture, alive and well-equipped for an ever-changing world.

What legacy of excellence will you inspire?

*MWG*  
"Deliver Excellence!"

