



Leaving industry no choice but to become people-focused

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In my time at Knight Industrial Services (KIS), I've often heard, "You guys truly take care of your people." For the longest time, I asked myself, "What do we actually do? Why wouldn't we treat our people right?" I remember how my dad, our founder, gave our teammates frozen turkeys every Thanksgiving. I know we invest in developing our craftsmen and treat them with respect, but there must be more to it.

I started asking our teammates, "What does KIS do that others don't?" Their answers ranged from our quarterly companywide parties to paying our teammates holiday pay. I wasn't buying it. I have been with multiple companies with similar perks, but the culture was terrible. So, what is it we do differently?

After giving this a lot of thought, I've come to a conclusion. There isn't one thing we do that different; there are many.

- Give everyone a voice. First, we give everyone at KIS a voice, and we listen. We have a system in place where the field solves issues and improves the company on a daily basis. They are encouraged to bring up issues, and we have a system in place that supports that.

- Find the right people. Second, we spend time vetting people and finding the best of the best. We search not only for those who are good at what they do, but also who truly hold the same values as KIS. We treat our people like family, not like products. We don't see them as disposable or replaceable; we see them as an investment, as our teammates and family.

- Hold them to our values. There is not a written process for how to treat your people. It comes from within — the values you hold and having people who live up to those values as leaders of your company. At KIS, our values are how we write our processes; how we hire, fire and promote; how we communicate with our customers and vendors; and what sets us apart from the others. Our values include:

1. Teamwork: We are dependable and accountable. We collaborate and support each other.

2. Integrity: We are professional, we execute our processes consistently, we do the right thing always — even when no one is looking, and we uphold a high level of respect.

3. Transparency: We always communicate the truth openly and honestly, we embrace our vulnerability, and we ask for help when needed.

4. Adaptability: We constantly improve and buy in to the system and changes that best serve KIS' passion.

- Focus on relationships. My career started in the food and beverage industry, an industry with low margins, high turnover, excessive marketing budgets, and hardly any

focus on relationships or people. Restaurants and bars spend so much effort promoting a "good time with good friends" that they hardly focus on creating that good time. For an industry focused on experiences, why is it lacking a focus on human relationships? The risk is much lower; customers are spending

\$10 on a burger versus millions on pipeline maintenance. With higher risk comes the need for trust. How do you form trust? You form trust by focusing on relationships.

Relationships are core to KIS' success. We must build trust with everyone we work with: our teammates, customers, vendors and

community. Our relationships set us apart.

We are leaving industry no choice but to become people-focused. Our people make us who we are. We are Knight Industrial, and we are proud to be Knights.

For more information, visit www.knightis.com or call (281) 421-5049. •

