

Guiding principles redux

I asked the *QwikConnect* editorial team to indulge me, yet again, by reprinting the Glenair Guiding Principles here in my outlook column. They did me one better with that beautiful array of thematic posters inside the front cover. Thanks guys. I think it pays dividends to revisit these principles time and again as they are one of the big reasons we have managed to keep this enterprise running so smoothly for these past 60 years.

There is a quote I enjoy sharing with young people from Oliver Wendell Holmes (an old Bostonian like myself) about following rules. It goes, *the young man knows the rules, but the old man knows the exceptions*. Now the reason I appreciate this wisdom is that it is so obviously true. As young people, we all do our best to understand and follow the many rules of society. After all, we have only limited experience of our own from which to form sensible standards and practices. But as we grow older and wiser, we come to learn when and how rules may be modified according to circumstances (telling a white lie, for example, if the truth is bound to hurt someone's feelings). Some rules, to be clear, should never be violated, such as prohibitions against cheating or unethical behavior in business.

Which brings me back to the Glenair Guiding Principles—notice they are not called Guiding Rules—because if they were, folks would likely be breaking them left, right and 24/7. But they are principles and not rules. They steer our behavior in a positive direction rather than dictating every possible turn in every road.

- Protect the reputation of the organization
- Bow to the customer's convenience
- Pursue each task through to completion
- Be reality oriented
- Build win-win business relationships

These are some of my favorites. Again, you can see these are principles that direct general behavior, not rules that spell out every do and don't. But make no mistake: These principles have been more powerful in establishing our culture here at Glenair—and keeping us laser-focused on customer service and ease of doing business—than any book of rules could ever be. I just love hearing my colleagues encouraging each other to “find the win-win,” or to “bow to the customer's convenience.” That's the ticket, gang!

I believe our Guiding Principles are unique in our industry and that they have saved us from making many of the mistakes that can destroy even a great company. The inverse is also true: following these principles has positively made us a better company with a better culture. If there is any confusion regarding how important these principles are in sustaining our business, please feel free to give me a call or stop by my office for a chat. My door is always open.

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