

- **Attitude**  
Remember both positive and negative attitudes are contagious—keep a positive attitude.
- **Keep a Sense of Humor and Have Fun**  
We are serious about our business but have fun working, training, and growing together.

## LEADERSHIP THROUGH A MULTI-LEVEL TEAM STRUCTURE

Structure is the process of aligning work through tasks, responsibilities, departments, and divisions. Cardinal IG has a hybrid-type structure that includes a traditional hierarchy—using basic centralized administrative functions that include accounting, sales, and marketing. Yet the heart of the company is an integrated team network embedded in this organizational framework. Teams operate both at the top level and within the many manufacturing divisions within the plant, assuring everyone is working toward the same purpose.

The six manufacturing divisions of the company are responsible for specialized components of production, such as glass cutting/tempering, spacer fabrication, insulating glass production, shipping, and receiving. Each division has a supervisor with broad management responsibility. Division supervisors are salaried workers that previously served as team leaders and are selected for their past performance and leadership potential within the organization. These supervisors meet as a team, and are responsible for upper-level decisions and the recognition program.

Within each of the six divisions, there are three teams, each with its own team leader. Team leaders serve at the front of production, managing the day-to-day operations and maintenance of the plant, and also take on a major part of the human resource functions of the employees. Cardinal IG does not have a human resource department, although it does maintain a centralized function for the technical administration of payroll and benefits to assure compliance with laws and regulations and internal consistency. Duties such as hiring, firing, personnel problems, scheduling, and training are done by the team leaders and department supervisors. “We do not send our problems to the HR department for them to solve. Our team leaders are empowered and taught to solve the problems. They are close to the situation,” Pinder says.

This cuts down on bureaucracy, keeps decisions close to those that do the work, and creates ownership of results. The plant runs seven days a week with three weekday shifts and a maintenance team that works on weekends when the plant is not in production. Pinder comments that the team leaders are considered the most crucial part of the organization.

Pinder’s philosophy of leadership extends beyond management. All Cardinal IG employees are considered leaders, accountable for their individual behavior and performance as team members. Developing the strong work culture at Cardinal IG Fargo starts when a team member is hired. Pinder meets with all new employees and makes sure it is understood that if they choose to work at Cardinal, they must meet four criteria: *First, be willing to work hard. Second, have a good attitude. Third, be a team player. Fourth, be willing to support the mission.*

The leadership training program established at Cardinal IG is extensive, continual, formal, and informal. It includes quarterly leadership training sessions reinforced by the

*Cardinal IG Leadership Handbook.* Leadership development is a key part to building confident and competent leaders, and ensures a ready bench of people prepared to lead.

Managers at all levels are trained and expected to serve as mentors and coaches for their employees. Division supervisors, team leaders, and Pinder himself are available to employees at all times. That accessibility is a critical component of teamwork, especially for a company that operates around the clock. Pinder and his entire management team continually reinforce and model teamwork, communication, and accessibility. The Employee Handbook states the following:

*My intention is to run this organization as a team. My role on the team will be like that of a coach. I will provide the vision and direction, while you will run the plant. Together, we will make Fargo IG the flagship plant in the corporation—a world-class performer. To do this, we also must communicate with each other. If you have an idea to make things work better, please let me know about it. Know that I am always available for you—anytime day or night. You are my top priority and you are the organization's most valuable resource.*

A leader should always train his or her subordinates to be ready to take over their position at anytime, a philosophy Pinder continually stresses in his leadership training. Recently, Pinder was promoted to president of Cardinal Glass Industries to manage nine IG plants (one of which is Cardinal IG Fargo). Mike Arntson, the production manager who has been with the company since it was started in Fargo, was promoted to plant manager. In a recent interview, Arntson was asked if it was difficult to transition into the new position. "It was not difficult at all. I have been trained for this position, and I have been part of developing the philosophy of the company since I started. It was a natural transition." Leadership is intentionally evolving at Cardinal IG.

## A CULTURE OF DISCIPLINE AND RESPECT

In the book *Good to Great* (2001), Jim Collins describes companies that outperformed others as having a "culture of discipline." They have not settled on being just "good" but have characteristics that make them "great." They have a freedom (and responsibility) within a defined framework. They have a fanatical adherence to doing what they do best. These organizations as described by Collins are not autocratic, but caring.

Discipline in this sense is about having a consistent, orderly system of rules that govern conduct and activity. It is about making roles, responsibilities, and expectations clear, and fostering self-regulation. This view of a culture of discipline describes Cardinal IG well, and is influenced by the military background of Pinder. However, discipline is only half of the story. Love is the rest. Pinder describes the balance of love and discipline in an article:

*We hold subordinate leaders accountable and responsible—and the big thing is that you must love—truly love—your subordinates. People might think that sounds strange. "Love? What are you saying Love?" But every employee needs to know that their leaders and I love them and truly care about them, their families, and their futures. If you truly believe that I love you, you're not going to call in, show up late, because you don't want to let me down.*

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