



WORKBOOK

## EMERGING OPTICAL LEADERS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

### MENTOR WORKBOOK

Welcome to the Emerging Optical Leaders Mentorship Program. You will spend this year with your mentee focusing on 5 Core Competencies to help them grow personally and professionally. Take time to read through the list of Core Competencies, located at the end of this document, and select one for your mentee. They will select the other four. Work with your mentee to set up your reoccurring monthly mentorship session and decide the order in which you will focus on the Core Competencies and record it in this workbook.

Month	Action Item
January	Introduction and Selection of 5 Core Competency Skills
February	Skill #1, Call 1
March	Skill #1, Call 2
April	Skill #2, Call 1
May	Skill #2, Call 2
June	Skill #3, Call 1
July	Skill #3, Call 2
August	Skill #4, Call 1
September	Skill #4, Call 2
October	Skill #5, Call 1
November	Skill #5, Call 2
December	Program Wrap-Up

Skill #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Call 1 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Your mentee will share information during your conversation that relates to the questions below. Use this section to make notes.**

On a scale from 1-10 with 1 being "Not At All" and 10 being "Proficient", how comfortable is your mentee with this skill? What challenges have they had in the past that they would like to improve moving forward?

What have they done to sharpen this skill?

How is this skill relevant to their current job function? To future career aspirations?

What do they hope to improve with this skill over the next 2 months?

**Answer these questions during or after your call with your mentee.**

What are the top take-aways from the call with your mentee?

What activity will your mentee exercise to improve in this skill?

Skill #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Call 2 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Your mentee will share information during your conversation that relates to the questions below. Use this section to make notes.**

On a scale from 1-10 with 1 being "Not At All" and 10 being "Proficient", how comfortable is your mentee with this skill?

What was the outcome of your mentee's activity? Positive, Negative, Unexpected?

What specific areas of the activity did you discuss with your mentee?

**Answer these questions during or after your call with your mentee.**

How has your mentee's comfort level with this skill changed from the first conversation with them?

Has your mentee found additional ways this skill applies to their current or future job aspirations?

What advice did you provide?

Moving forward, what will your mentee do differently to use this skill more often or more effectively?

Skill #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Call 1 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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On a scale from 1-10 with 1 being "Not At All" and 10 being "Proficient", how comfortable is your mentee with this skill? What challenges have they had in the past that they would like to improve moving forward?

What have they done to sharpen this skill?

How is this skill relevant to their current job function? To future career aspirations?

What do they hope to improve with this skill over the next 2 months?

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What advice did you provide?

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Skill #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Call 1 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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What have they done to sharpen this skill?

How is this skill relevant to their current job function? To future career aspirations?

What do they hope to improve with this skill over the next 2 months?

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Skill #3: \_\_\_\_\_

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Skill #4: \_\_\_\_\_

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What have they done to sharpen this skill?

How is this skill relevant to their current job function? To future career aspirations?

What do they hope to improve with this skill over the next 2 months?

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What are the top take-aways from the call with your mentee?

What activity will your mentee exercise to improve in this skill?

Skill #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Call 2 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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What advice did you provide?

Moving forward, what will your mentee do differently to use this skill more often or more effectively?

Skill #5: \_\_\_\_\_

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What have they done to sharpen this skill?

How is this skill relevant to their current job function? To future career aspirations?

What do they hope to improve with this skill over the next 2 months?

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What activity will your mentee exercise to improve in this skill?

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## CORE COMPETENCY SKILLS

Action Oriented	In our fast-moving world, opportunities can pass by in a flash. Blink and a chance is missed. Organizations depend on great ideas to keep them ahead of the pack, but without implementation, they're just good ideas. Thoughts, initiatives, plans, designs, strategies – all critically important, but none of them will make a difference without execution. And that's where action-oriented people come in. They make things happen. Ideas become plans. Plans become reality. They get things moving. When things get tough, they rise to the occasion and switch to solution focus. They quickly move from "Why did this happen?" to "How can this work?" And they inspire others to do the same. So don't just think it, do it. Take some risks. Seize opportunities. Drive things forward.
Balances Stakeholders	A stakeholder has a legitimate claim, or a "stake." Stakeholders affect or are affected by the actions of an individual or the organization. They may be internal to the organization or external. Decision makers or decision approvers. Information providers or information seekers. They may be actively involved or on the sidelines. They may have different priorities – sometimes complementary, sometimes conflicting. That's what makes balancing stakeholder needs so important. Getting anything of value done today isn't a go it alone proposition. Stakeholders are critical to the success of any strategy, initiative, or project. They may be the team in charge of executing your vision. Or the person who pulls the approval strings. They could be the customer. Investors. The board. Stakeholders can be advocates for you or just as easily be blockers. Creating the right balance in working with stakeholders can mean the difference between a project flying or crashing. And it's a juggling act. Knowing who to engage with and when. Who to inform and to what degree. Who has something you need to be successful and what they expect in return. And recognizing that balancing often means you won't please every stakeholder every time.
Being Resilient	Setbacks are often unavoidable. Potential pitfalls are everywhere, especially in today's demanding, adverse, and often volatile working environment. Even the most resilient people experience setbacks. The difference is they anticipate them. Meet them head-on. Have the ability to withstand them. They use their resilience to stay in control. To keep positive and believe there is a way forward, even when it can't be seen. They recover quickly, learn, and move forward. But resilience doesn't come easy. It required courage and commitment. But without it, stress can rise to unmanageable levels. Performance can fall away. You can burn out. The more resilient you become, the more you'll stay calm under pressure and positively adapt to difficult situations. You'll keep going on when you feel like giving up. You'll bounce back to baseline levels of performance, confidence, and satisfaction sooner. Not only that, you'll be better equipped to confront the next challenge that arise. You'll be stronger.
Builds Networks	Most organizations have experienced tremendous change since the dawn of the 21st century. Flatter and more matrixed. Virtual teams and offices. Cross-functional ad hoc teams. Global operations. 24/7 connection. Shared services. Centralized and decentralized functions. This is how work gets done now. Decisions are made in teams, with input from multiple functions. Meetings are held on the web, crossing time zones and involving multiple geographies. It's no longer enough to go to work, meet with local colleagues, make a few phone calls, close your door and go home. Connections need to be made with support staff, idea generators, resource managers, and decision makers across the country or around the world. It's not only how work gets done – it's how ideas are spread and careers advanced. This is an exciting world for those who are both open to connecting and focused on forging relationships. But if you are dismayed by ambiguity or shy about reaching out, navigating the network may be a challenge for you. To be successful, you need to know who people are and what they do. How to collaborate, share resources, and maintain productive relationships. You need to be focused yet fluid. Willing to participate and ask for help.

<b>Business Insights</b>	<p>You gotta know the territory! Nothing beats knowing what's going on, and it can be essential to developing credibility. This means people developing insight through two routes. First, they pay attention to their own industry. Build expertise in their functional discipline. Understand how the departments and drivers of their organizations relate to and work with each other. Understand the agenda, issues, and concerns of the people they work with inside their organization. See things as others do. Walk a mile in their shoes. Second, they look outside. Learn about their competition and customers. Identify trends. Spot potential opportunities and threats that could come their way. When you know what's going on, you can maximize your contribution. Be better able to put forward ideas and suggestions that pass the business practicality test. Make it your business to learn about the business.</p>
<b>Collaborates</b>	<p>Inside and outside of work today, it's hard to find examples where anything of value gets done without collaboration. Collaboration is the art of bringing people together to leverage their skills, talents, and knowledge to achieve a common purpose. Collaborating creates synergy – resulting in a combined effort with greater results than those achieved by individuals. It breaks down barriers. Increases mutual respect and recognition. Helps overcome issues of poor communication, lack of cooperation, suspicion, and a myriad of dysfunctional behaviors. Collaborative relationships must be managed so the friction is removed and the power of those relationships can be realized. Good collaboration is all about reciprocity. Mutual openness and idea sharing. Mutual accountability and commitment. The most effective collaborators know when it's the right time to bring people together. What has to be achieved and why? Who has what's needed to reach the goal? How should people be brought together? Collaboration leads to more efficient use of time and resources and the easy exchange of ideas and talent. Things get done quicker. Ideas are built upon. There is less duplication of effort. People are more likely to be committed rather than just compliant.</p>
<b>Communicates Effectively</b>	<p>Organizations thrive when the flow of information and ideas is timely and accurate. When quality of communication is a consistent high priority. Good communication results in mutual understanding, harmony, and action. Poor communication wastes time and resources, hinders goal accomplishment, and sours relationships. Leaders communicate to inform, persuade, coach, and inspire. People at all levels share ideas, learn from each other, and keep each other informed about problems, opportunities, progress, and solutions. Effective communicators provide a clear message that is understood by everyone in the audience. They are attentive listeners who are open to others' ideas. They deliver a message that is consistent but fine-tuned for a particular audience. It has just the right tone. The perfect pacing. The best possible wording. The audience finds the message to be crisp. Relevant. Impactful. Effective communication, whether written or verbal, enables you to convey your vision, to point the way forward, and to energize others to work together and pull in the same direction.</p>

<b>Cultivates Innovation</b>	<p>Organizations need to innovate to survive and thrive in the constantly changing competitive landscape. How can they stay ahead of the curve? A first step is to make innovation a priority. To enlist contributors and leaders at all levels to spearhead innovations, large and small. It requires paying close attention to what customers want and need – new and improved products, services, solutions, and experiences. It means generating lots of ideas and nurturing the best ones while they're being transformed into something tangible. It means constantly improving operational processes – even replacing them altogether – harnessing the latest research and technology. Innovation also involves rethinking your organization's business model – the value proposition, markets, revenue streams. To be an effective innovator, you need to take initiative and collaborate with people who have diverse points of view. You need to get comfortable taking risks. To experiment and apply what you learned from mistakes and failures. Even if you don't consider yourself to be naturally creative, it can be awakened at any time. Learn about the process of innovation and the tools that support it. Embrace the mindset that you and your organization are never done, never satisfied, never standing still.</p>
<b>Customer Focused</b>	<p>The most important people in any organization are customers. Whether for profit or non-profit, community-based, social serving, or governmental agency, there is always a customer of some kind at the heart of most every action. Without customers, it's likely your organization would not exist. In some roles, there is a direct link to external customers and in others the connection is more indirect. Or the customer you primarily serve is inside the organization. Bottom line – those who please customers the most will win. Winning organizations are always customer oriented and responsive. Winning strategies always include a customer-facing lens. Being successful means continuously paying attention to customer needs and adapting as these evolve. You need to evaluate and flex, understand and respond. A focus on customers opens up thinking, drives innovation, and creates a responsive and agile organization. Internal or external – they're equally important. It's hard to develop a high level of customer satisfaction externally if those within the organization are disengaged.</p>
<b>Decision Quality</b>	<p>Making good decisions can be challenging: Short time frames. Limited information. Impatient people waiting for answers in the face of difficult trade-offs. Good decisions are based upon a mixture of analysis, wisdom, experience, and judgment. Trouble is, people are not all that good at making decisions. They tend to overestimate their ability to make good judgments and are overconfident in forecasting outcomes. Making quality decisions in organizations today means working in an environment where ambiguity and uncertainty are the norm. Where considering whom to engage, what information to gather, and when to apply helpful tools are all considerations to take into account. Sound decisions come from the balance between speed and quality. Being totally correct all the time isn't a realistic goal. Instead, it's about being correct enough on decisions to move ahead and allow adequate time for effective execution.</p>

<b>Drives Engagement</b>	Greater things can happen when people are engaged. Think of three accomplishments you're proud of, then ask yourself what was driving your engagement when you achieved them. If you can figure out what increase the engagement level of others and focus on building that, their accomplishments will be greater. Engaged employees are more productive because their work behavior is energized, focused, and more aligned to the needs of the organization. Retention rates are higher among engaged employees because they are challenged by their work in the context of a supportive environment with a caring, encouraging, and empowering boss. They feel appreciated, listened to, and supported. Multiple studies in a variety of industries have shown that increases in employee engagement result in improvements in profitability, quality, productivity, revenue, customer satisfaction, innovation, and retention. Engaged employees care about the right things – the things that best serve the organization. They view the organization's problems as their own. They take personal responsibility for the success of the organization and go the extra mile. But people are different. What triggers their engagement and keeps it high differs considerably. Engaging everyone takes a varied approach, so adapt to individuals. Find out what makes them tick so you can engage them and keep the engaged.
<b>Financial Acumen</b>	Finance is about how organizations generate, preserve, account for, spend, manage, and move money. Every organization needs to be concerned with its financial health. Failure to keep a laser focus on financial matters will ultimately doom most any enterprise. Every part of an organization, whether for profit or not, is impacted directly or indirectly by financial results. Finance is at the core of business activities. It affects how an organization raises capital, analyzes and values investments, develops and executes plans, pays for improvements, and pays its taxes. As central and important as finance is, studies show it is not well understood outside of specific domains of finance, accounting, and audit functions. You don't need to be a finance expert, but you do need acumen on the fundamentals, at minimum. People at all levels need to understand the financial information that is relevant to them so that they can act on it. To be successful as a leader, you need to not only understand finance, but also know how to incorporate a financial thinking lens into every major decision you make.
<b>Instills Trust</b>	Trust lies at the heart of effective relationships. Whether in or out of the workplace, trust generates feelings of goodwill. It enables successful collaboration and more productive outcomes. When there's trust, things go more smoothly. People pull together, relying on each other to do their part. They're better able to work through conflicts and tough times. Without trust, there are unnecessary speed bumps, heightened doubt, dips in performance. Being trustworthy is about being honest and authentic. It's about acting with integrity. Showing consistency. Being credible. If you're trusted, it means others can count on you to deliver and to look after their highest interests. Trust is based on reciprocity – you need to give it to get it.
<b>Interpersonal Savvy</b>	Interpersonal savvy is an essential part of getting things done within organizations. The key to getting along with all kinds of people is to hold back or neutralize personal reactions and focus on others first. Being savvy is working from the outside in. It involves having a range of interpersonal skills and approaches and knowing when to use what with whom. Customers. Senior leaders. Peers. External stakeholders. Direct reports. All of these relationships deserve respect, authenticity, and care. A welcoming demeanor puts other people at ease and sets the stage for smooth, productive interactions. Being warm. Pleasant. Gracious. Considerate and diplomatic. Approachable and friendly. Attentive to others' perspectives. All are qualities of relating effectively to fellow human being. When relationships are approached in a flexible and "others-oriented" way, you accomplish results while establishing goodwill and leave others interested in working with you again.

<b>Manages Ambiguity</b>	Whether at work or off work, people constantly face situations that are ambiguous or uncertain – where it's not clear what the problem is or what the solutions is. Where the unknown outweighs the known by a wide margin. Some studies estimate that 90% of what managers deal with is at least somewhat ambiguous. New demands, new technology, new marching orders, new processes. Nothing lasts very long. In an era when clarity is scarce and certainty fleeting, relying on solutions that have worked in the past may seem safe, but it's actually risky. New times requires new solutions. Solving problems and getting things done in this volatile context means being willing to forge ahead when the path is foggy, at best. It means adjusting your approach – to both problems and people –to match changing conditions. To surrender the need to be sure. The world is getting less and less predictable. By having a mindset geared to viewing uncertainty as the new normal, you'll be better prepared when the next unknown appears. And better prepared to view that unknown as an opportunity to capitalize on.
<b>Manages Complexity</b>	Problems are getting more complex all the time. Success today depends on figuring out the best solution to difficult, high-stakes issues. Issues that have so many moving parts that it's hard to make sense of it all. Most people are smart enough to solve problems effectively, but they don't always go about it the right way. They don't define the problem carefully or rush to conclusions. Or they go to the other extreme and analyze it to death without trying anything out. They may also rely too much on themselves, when multiple people usually have a better chance of arriving at the best solution. It's tempting to skim the surface of a thorny issue. But skim-the-surface solutions will yield superficial results at best and be flat out wrong at worst. You need to drill down, gather data from diverse sources, sort through it, and then distill it into simpler, understandable themes. Evaluate the pros and cons of potential solutions. Test out the best options. Learn and share lessons along the way. And stay alert for future problems that may arise.
<b>Manages Conflict</b>	Conflict is a natural part of organization life. Organizations are made up of diverse people with differing opinion and competing interests, making conflict inevitable. There is conflict over information, resources, opinions, territory, position. If it's important to someone, it has the potential to cause conflict. Handled badly, conflict can entrench. Disrupt productivity. Damage relationships. But conflict isn't always a bad thing. Conflict surfaces previous undiscussables. Highlights not just the disconnects but also the intersection of ideas. Managed well, conflict provides a forum for finding better alternatives, even breakthroughs, in building relationships and solving problems. But only when the people involved treat each other constructively and respectfully. When you manage conflict effectively, you begin to see conflicts less as headaches and more as opportunities. Issues get resolved. Collaboration improves. Solution focus replaces negativity and recrimination. Things progress in a positive direction.
<b>Nimble Learning</b>	Most of us are good at applying what we have seen and done in the past and utilizing solutions that have worked for us before. A rarer skill is doing things for the first time. Solving problems we've never come across. Trying solutions we have never tried before. Analyzing problems in new contexts and in new ways. With the increasing pace of change, being quick to learn and apply first-time solutions is becoming a crucial skill. It involves taking risks, being less than perfect, discarding the past, going against the grain, and cutting new paths. It requires patience, persistence, and a positive attitude. Organizations need people who can quickly adapt their thinking to the current situation. People who can draw on their past experiences and apply the learning to a new and different setting. To become a nimble learner is to be engaged in the present while drawing on past learnings and thinking about future needs. Ask good questions. Learn from experience. Be willing to try new things. And be flexible in the face of new or changing information.

<b>Optimizes Work Processes</b>	<p>Great processes simplify work. They align jobs and systems to better serve customers. Streamline communications. Cut cost and increase efficiency. Process touches everything from simple job task planning to complex supply chain management. From workstation layout to supercomputer data management. Streamlined processes drive improvements in quality, customer satisfaction, sales and profitability. With a well-designed process, performance is measured in results – not activity. The best processes are dynamic. Nimble. Able to flex with changing conditions. These processes are designed so that problems can be quickly and easily spotted and corrected. They're optimized for efficiency. Understanding and designing processes like these means knowing that there is no real finish line. It means continuously asking, "How can we make this better?" It's building in measurement and control methods and feedback loops. Knowing how all the pieces interrelate. How a change in one part of the process will affect upstream and downstream elements. With every incremental process improvement, you impact one or more important aspects of the work. Quality. Productivity. Timeliness. Cost. Safety. Keep a laser focus on continuously upgrading and optimizing your work processes. Chances are they are an untapped source of competitive advantage for your organization.</p>
<b>Organizational Savvy</b>	<p>Organizations are made up of formal structure, policies, buildings, inventory, intellectual property, and so forth. They may be logically planned and brilliantly orchestrated, but while human beings are still at the core, things can get messy. It's the human element that injects politics, emotion, uncertainty, intrigue, and conflict. Often, we end up dealing with a confusing blend of the rational and irrational, the controlled and the random, the spoken and the unsaid. It's easy to get lost in the fog. Organizational savvy is the compass that guides you swiftly and without mishap to your destination. People who do this well understand the difference between what the organization intends to be versus the reality. They read the unwritten signs to navigate the organizational maze. They know who has power and influence. They appreciate who has respect. And they are aware of who only has a title. They know which messages work and which ones don't. They use their understanding to move things forward for the greater good. In short, they're masters at getting work done in an organizational setting. So accept the complexity of your organization. Don't fight it. Learn how to work with it to your advantage.</p>
<b>Plans and Aligns</b>	<p>Nothing helps move things along better than a good plan. And a clear marker of a good plan is one that is aligned with strategic priorities. Plans lay a foundation. Aligned plans enable you, your team, and the entire organization to move in the right direction. Plans help people get organized and remain focused. They lead to better use of resources. Reduce scrambling. Help people anticipate problems. And prompt them to proceed with more confidence. This is particularly important given the rapid change and uncertainty prevalent in organizational life. Bob Johansen of the Institute for the Future describes the importance of providing clarity as a smart way to address chaos and confusion. Plans do just that. Instead of jumping into action, use the planning process to deliberate on what you're trying to accomplish. Line up your plans and projects so they are in sync with strategic organizational priorities. Collaborate with others to develop robust, flexible plans that guide you where you want to go.</p>

<b>Resourcefulness</b>	<p>So much to do; so little time to do it. Finite resources; infinite needs. Everyone having more to do than they can get to. Sound familiar? That's life in organizations today. There are often more opportunities than there are people, time, and money available. Most anyone can produce results, given unlimited resources. The real trick is to produce results by making the best use of the limited resources available. Resourcefulness means finding a way to get things done, even when the odds are against you. Not getting stalled at the first roadblock but, instead, looking beyond the obvious for other viable approaches to accomplish the goal. Knowing how to find and secure scant resources. Orchestrating efforts so that assignments are executed efficiently and effectively. Challenging yourself to do more with less. And redefining what's possible.</p>
<b>Self-Awareness</b>	<p>Self-awareness, the ability to clearly assess your own capabilities, gives a foundation upon which to grow, develop, and take on new challenges. Deploying yourself against life and work is greatly helped by really knowing what you're good at, average at, and bad at, what you're untested in, and what you overdo or overuse. It is not a new concept – it was Socrates who said, "Know thyself." The fact that over 2,000 years later we're still figuring out how to be more self-aware is an indication of how challenging it is for us to see ourselves as we are. Self-aware people are able to connect the external perspective – how they are perceived by others – with the internal – how they see themselves. And that can be uncomfortable. But with great risk comes the potential for great reward – both for yourself personally and for your organization. This is, if you take action. Just increasing your self-awareness is not enough. You must do something with that knowledge, if it is to have an impact. Accepting that you have changes to make is your choice – it's up to no one but you. That means aligning your strengths and development areas with what's important for your career growth and deciding how to apply your increased self-awareness. Knowing how it can make you more effective and doing something about it.</p>
<b>Situational Adaptability</b>	<p>Those skilled at situational adaptability recognize the needs to be flexible and act differently because no two situations are exactly alike. They know that using the same approach, tone, and style in different settings may be consistent but not necessarily effective. You wouldn't behave the same way in a team brainstorming discussion as you would when managing a customer complaint or navigating a politically charged strategy session. Quickly adjusting and fine-tuning your behavior in real time allows you to be versatile in different situations and interactions with others. Situational adaptability means paying attention to circumstances and adjusting accordingly. Bringing empathy in times of stress and change, firm direction in times of uncertainty, or diplomacy in times of conflict. Continuously gauge the impact you're having and stay alert to make adjustments to your demeanor and approach. Be flexible to meet the needs of the moment. The outcome will be ease of transaction and effectiveness of interaction.</p>

**Values Differences**

Valuing differences creates a work environment where people can and want to do their best. As the economy becomes increasingly global, our workforce has become more diverse. The typical definition of diversity – race, ethnicity, culture – now includes perspectives, styles, and thought. Savvy organizations recognize the success is increasingly dependent on those who can interact effectively and respectfully with all types. Research shows that employee engagement, innovation, teamwork, and the bottom line can be improved by truly valuing each other. Working effectively in this diverse world starts with self-awareness. Knowing how you react to others. Recognizing the biases you have. Knowing how your behavior is perceived. Understanding your attitude toward others with a diverse point of view. After awareness comes action. Considering how you handle bias, poor treatment, and conflict. Demonstrating that you value others. To be effective, you won't ignore the differences. You'll understand and embrace them. You'll accommodate and encourage them. Valuing differences will help you learn and benefit from the wealth of knowledge and experience that diversity brings. It opens doors to new ways of thinking and new opportunities for building the success of the organization.