

## **SJ Operating Rules**

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### **Or... "How My Brain Works"**

- 1) As the leader, I have the right to talk to anyone at any time about anything. Any discussion is not to be interpreted as direction.
- 2) Assume it can be done and then figure out what it takes to do it. Document assumptions and risks required for success.
- 3) Set a vision for an objective and challenge the team to achieve as much of that vision as possible.
- 4) I set very high expectations for your performance. Those expectations are based on the potential I see in you.
- 5) When I ask a question, it is for one of five reasons:
  - a. You weren't clear
  - b. You didn't answer the question I asked
  - c. This is new to me and I am educating myself
  - d. I am educating someone else that won't ask questions
  - e. I am testing convictions. If you don't believe in your answer, why should I?
- 6) Leadership – not management – from leaders, immersion by the team, and loyalty by all
- 7) Always show respect to others, whether or not you respect them or agree with them
- 8) I expect team members to be aggressive, vocal, creative, resourceful, and persistent. However, once a decision is made, I expect the team to execute the plan regardless of whether or not they personally agree with it.
- 9) Keep meetings focused
  - a. Have objectives and work to them. End the meeting when objectives are met.
- 10) I expect you to do your job. If I, or someone else, must do your job for you, then I don't need you.
- 11) Understand the problem before answering the question
- 12) Schedule and budget are not suggestions
- 13) Don't make things more complex than they already are –Just because you "can" doesn't mean that you "should."
  - a. Clearly separate "need" from "want" or "nice to have"
- 14) A complete answer to a question has four parts – anything less is incomplete
  - a. The absolute answer
  - b. Groundrules, assumptions, constraints, and boundaries
  - c. Sensitivities around the answer (is the point solution at a max, min, up slope, down slope, edge of a cliff, etc.)
  - d. Fallback approach if the current path fails
- 15) Everything must earn its way on because once it is on, it is nearly impossible to delete it
  - a. This applies to cost, schedule, and technical
  - b. Start lean, to the point of being uncomfortable. Then add when absolutely needed to meet a defined objective.
  - c. Try to have more than one justification for adding any element

- 16) Solve problems live, not via email – email is merely a fantastic conflict avoidance mechanism.
- 17) Make decisions. About right today is way better than perfect weeks from now.
- 18) Actively drive to problem closure and move on
  - a. If you can't solve the problem with a couple of attempts, inform me ASAP. Problems don't get better with age.
- 19) When solving a problem, don't wound it - kill it dead. No finger pointing. Let's solve the problem first. We will deal with root cause and preventative measures later.
- 20) The biggest waste of time is planning and executing a task that didn't need to be done in the first place

## **Expectations Of Leaders**

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### **What I Expect Of You – And What You Should Expect Of Me**

1. Have a plan
2. Define your vision and communicate it as the foundation for the program.
3. Delegate
4. Succeed, despite failures along the way.
5. Do what's right.
6. Never lie to me or deceive me. And don't lie to yourself.
7. Be the unambiguous leader of the effort. No one should have a question as to the person in charge.
8. Avoid reacting to surprises in real time – give yourself time to think before responding – and trust your judgment
9. I don't expect perfect execution – there will be too many variables you don't control. But I do expect perfect effort.
10. You are responsible for challenging your team to reach beyond their perceived limits – if you don't, no one else will.
11. Be willing to do any task that you would direct a member of your team to do.
12. Flow down all accolades and accept all responsibility
13. The buck stops with you. If situations occur within your jurisdiction, I will hold you accountable. That works for both the good and bad.
14. Hold your team accountable. They need to be willing to step up to responsibility for their actions and decisions within your domain
15. Handle all discipline in private.
16. Try to handle all conflict in private.
17. Make decisions. I don't like collective accountability. That does not mean "don't consult the team." It does mean that when a decision is yours or is elevated to you, listen to the necessary opinions, gather your facts, and make the decision. Now refer back to expectation #5.
18. Know what the members of your team are doing at a top level. If you know too much detail, then something else is slipping through the cracks.

19. Resolve team conflicts.
20. Break logjams.
21. Be concise, accurate, and timely with responses to action items, data requests, information flow.....and good jokes.
22. Take care of your customer.
23. Ask for help if you need it. As George Standridge so often says, there are no 5 words more powerful than, "Will you please help me?"
24. Not whine more than once on a subject. I'll get it. I don't need to hear it multiple times. That doesn't mean avoid bringing me problems. Just don't bring me problems that don't count, that you can handle but want me to, or that are beyond my ability to do anything about.
25. Vent to me, not the team.
26. Carefully select your "inner circle" or "circle of trust" (if you are a "Meet the In-Laws" fan) personnel.
27. Be 100% honest and direct with those people. They should be able to receive your frustrations, disappointments, accolades, anger, joy, etc. without filters....once. More than that and it turns into whining.
28. Inner circle stays inner circle. Do not share those things unfiltered with the remainder of the team. Be honest with them, but it is the role of the inner circle to handle those feelings/situations with those further down the food chain.
29. Not take anything personally, even if someone takes it to that level.
30. Not make personal attacks.
31. Know that you don't know it all.

### **Other Things I Learned The Hard Way**

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- Your Most Trusted People, Including Friends, Will Let You Down
- It's Not Personal
- Never Let It Become Personal
- Having A 100% "A Team" Does Not Work As Well As One Would Think – The Best Team Is A Talent And Experience Blend
- Forcing A Leader To Delegate Allows A Team To "Step Up"
- Young Employees Can Perform Far Beyond Expectations When Given The Chance
- Circumventing Chain-of-Command Seems Great Until You Are The One Being Circumvented
- There Is Always Someone Else Better At Your Job Than You