



PM11

Proven Principles for Building, Managing, and Leading Happy, High-Performing Teams

Caroline Phares, VP Healthcare & Life Sciences, Altair
Oliver Robinson, SVP Analytics Strategy, Altair



Why does happiness matter?

Happy, talented teams are key productivity drivers



- Happiness boosts productivity by 12% (Warwick University Study)
- Happy workers are 13% more productive (Oxford University Study)
- McKinsey: Superior talent is 8X more productive

Case Studies

Interviews with leaders from



- Founded 2009
- ~450 employees
- Public Benefit Corporation
- supports open source
- CEO: Tareef Kawaf (since 2012)



- Founded 2012
- ~500 employees
- Certified B Corp
- 90% retention, 0 FDA critical findings
- Leadership focus on culture + quality
- CEO: Matt Jones (2012-2025)



- Founded 2013
- ~70 remote employees
- Pharma analytics and open source
- CEO: Olga Mierzwa-Sulima (since 2022)

Topics: growth, motivation, retention, leadership, workload management

Values and Higher Purpose



Company Mission,
e.g. open source,
community impact,
education



Purpose creates
belonging and
motivation



Mission is equally
important to profit



Commitment to values
reinforces integrity and
culture

Hiring the Right People



Values-based hiring:
cultural alignment
more important than
technical skill



Leader traits:
curiosity, honesty,
adaptability,
coachability



Outcome: reduced
turnover, cohesive
culture, scalable
growth

Retention Strategies

Regular feedback and surveys

Celebrating achievements

Company-wide gatherings (Posit::conf, Appsilon retreats)

Flexibility for family and purpose in work

Employees as people, not resources

Performance and Feedback



Design systems that enable productivity



Tailored feedback delivery



Regular check-ins, KPIs, and self-assessments



Conflict management using personality tools (e.g., Johari window)

Adapting Through Growth

- ~3 people = optimal team size for performance

- Growth milestones:



- Process are necessary but can stifle creativity
- Leadership evolution ensures continuity and innovation



Appsilon:

Founder-led → CEO
succession



Veramed:

CEO transition to focus on
AI strategy

Servant Leadership



- Leadership methodology coined first by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970
- Servant-leader shares power, puts needs of others first, helps
- Results in Trust, Loyalty, Motivation

Four Proven Principles

01

Lead with
values and
purpose

02

Hire and
nurture the
right people

03

Adapt
structure and
operations to
scale

04

Practice
servant
leadership

Conclusion



Questions & Discussion

Which leadership principle resonates most with your organization's culture?



Thank you!

Caroline Phares
caroline.phares@siemens.com

Oliver Robinson
oliver.robinson@siemens.com