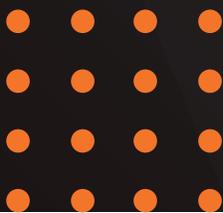

Time to adopt a buffalo culture in office

One of the great leadership groups I have been

fortunate to intersect with, C12, recently introduced the concept of adopting a Buffalo Culture as a leader and organization. There are many layers to this analogy, but the essence of this idea is contrasting the behavior of cattle and buffalo in the wild when faced with an unavoidable big storm. Cattle tend to scatter and try to outrun the storm and this behavior ensures they are in the worst part of the storm for longer and more likely to suffer injuries and loss of life. Buffaloes, on the other hand, regroup and head into the storm, and the power of the group and frontal attack reduces risk and pushes them through the storm quicker. As soon as I saw this, I thought of commercial office and the need for owners and operators to quickly adopt the Buffalo Culture. Here are a few convictions that will be required:valued resource: essential for long-term individual, collective and corporate health. Here are a few convictions that will be required:





Know the “why”. I remember after we executed the first WeWork deal in Texas in 2014, I started getting calls from asset managers across the country who were contemplating doing a similar coworking deal. What I quickly realized is that in the quest to not be either first or last to adopt something newer like coworking, more often than not, the questions were almost solely focused around the deal (cost, rents, size, etc.). I would ask my own questions that centered around, “tell me about your investment strategy”, “talk to me more about the asset – what is it today, what do you want it to be, and does this deal support that”, or “why do you think this offering would be additive”. Without answering these questions, you are simply running with and from the storm. The results, while good initially, can be disappointing and short-lived, and I see this play out with technology, talent management, amenities and other areas.



No time for “we’ve always done it this way”. Some time-tested practices do not need to be reimagined, and prioritizing initiatives based on needs is critical. But having merged several operations teams, I learned to love hearing that phrase, because pushing through that initial resistance helped drive our teams to some of the best changes we made. They were seldom easy changes, but by having defined the “why”, it provided the confidence to lean into the decision, the conviction to diligently work through inevitable challenges, and the ability to never lose sight of that initial “why”. And in my experience, once you find success as a team intelligently pushing through to new levels of success, you find new energy in actually becoming excited to embrace change.





Rally the troops. It is a very predictable cliché from someone who spent several years in the Army, but this analogy and my experience leading office teams suggests it is, and will be, truer now than ever. No matter where anyone sits inside of an organization, they want the courtesy and respect of being communicated to, especially in the face of an obvious, bigger-than-we've-ever-seen storm. That effort as a leader is continuous, never over, and requires time as well as intentionality. For the younger buffalo, I have a feeling that the first time a big storm approaches, it is more than a little unnerving, so you need to have a lot of confidence in both your leaders and the rest of the herd.



“We’ll get through this” is something we have all heard and said this past year. Hope is our best friend in the face of uncertainty and ominous storm clouds, but with 2021 here and not nearly all the unknowns solved for, I cannot think of a more critical time than now for owners of office to quickly rally around this Buffalo Culture and identify a plan and team to help lead this effort. It will not eliminate the storm or its intensity, but it will instill the necessary confidence to know that it is the safest and shortest way to fight through to the other side, where the sun awaits.



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