

What Entrepreneurs Can Learn From Gareth Southgate

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- 1 'Nice' is one of the most 21 words in the English language. It is perceived as gentle, weak, even submissive, but it is in fact insanely powerful. Nice engenders respect and followership. Nice puts you in first place, not last. The one lesson I want to impart to those starting a business is to commit to kindness and be a bit more like current Men's England Football Manager Gareth Southgate.



- 2 Entrepreneurial role models have all too often been cut from the same cloth. We have grown up in a world where bullish, bulldozing and 'bully boy' characters succeed. The recent high-profile unseating of this type of leader has put a spotlight on the new type of leader that the modern world is demanding.
- 3 Southgate's leadership of the England team is a great example of the resurgence of 'nice'. The reign of Gareth Southgate as England Manager has been one of positivity and cooperation, for both players and fans. In contrast with other England managers that banned players from interacting with their wives, he has embraced players' families. Southgate trusts his players and encourages them to take responsibility for their own actions.
- 4 Just as football teams rely on the people within them, around them and supporting them, businesses are built for people by people. If you build your company on toxic foundations then you will have a bad footing on which to engage your customers. In a fully connected world, company walls are see-through. Internal culture is now your brand culture. Your everyday actions and words are made visible to your prospective talent, suppliers, collaborators and, most importantly, customers. Authenticity, respect and courtesy are demanded. If you lead with kindness, every part of your business will be infiltrated and your brand will be enriched.
- 5 Following Gareth's lead, I've put together three tips we use at Superunion to encourage a kinder workplace:

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Southgate has propelled his team to success via encouragement and civility. As business leaders you need to check that your urgency and drive to get things done don't translate to rudeness and incivility. It will demotivate your team, create a culture of fear and paralysis and impact productivity and pro-activity.

7 **Reduce anonymity**

In particular, reduce the language of anonymity. Make people feel recognized as individuals. Don't call a mixed group 'guys' or a woman 'man', 'mate' or 'babe' — ask them how they'd like to be addressed. Greet them personally when you see them, say hello when you pass on the stairs. Remember their partner's and their kids' names. Show you care about them as people. Create a culture where people are allowed to be themselves at work, bringing their personality with them. The less people feel like a cog in a wheel, the more motivated they are to give all of themselves.

8 **Be present**

After taking the job, Southgate organized a secret trip to a Royal Marine training camp in Devon for the England team to prepare for World Cup qualifiers. The trip — albeit not football related — broke down barriers between players such as club loyalties that have plagued successive England managers over the past 20 years. As with this team trip, creating and protecting the time to talk at a personal level and carving out the space to simply enjoy each other's company, helps build rapport and trust. Plus this time together may help you find a solution to a work problem in an unexpected place.

9 Forget 'nice guys finish last' — be more Southgate and see for yourself.

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