

FOREWORD BY **PETER CANCRO**, JERSEY MIKE'S SUBS, FOUNDER AND CEO

WALTER BOND AND ANTOINETTE BOND

cultivate

A stylized illustration of a white golf ball on a yellow tee, positioned between the letters 't' and 'i' in the word 'cultivate'.

THE SIX

NON-NEGOTIABLE TRAITS

OF A

WINNING TEAM

A BUSINESS FABLE

WILEY

PRAISE FOR *CULTIVATE*



“*Cultivate* provides an honest look at the importance of teamwork and how it drives the success of your business.”

Jeff Penz

Choctaw Casino & Resort Senior Director of Gaming

“My dad would often say ‘You are dependent on others, so others must be dependent on you.’ A winning team depends on both the team and you; *Cultivate* has made this easy to digest, understand, and win!”

John Miller

CEO

Denny’s Inc.

“This book is a quick and highly entertaining read, full of pragmatic and insightful lessons on everyday leadership. A great reminder to always put people and purpose first!”

Kelly Baker

Executive Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer
Thrivent Financial

“Anyone can win once; only teams that are built with intention and tenacity become champions. *Cultivate* has captured the DNA of championship teams.”

Anton Vincent
President,
Mars Wrigley, North America

“Teamwork is how I see the world. *Cultivate* nailed the very essence of how winning teams should operate. Congrats, Walter and team. You nailed it!”

Kevin McHale
NBA Hall of Fame
Boston Celtics

“*Cultivate* is a must-read book for any leader who wants a straightforward formula to learn how to build a better team to get better results. *Cultivate* introduces the reader to three college friends, Alex, Bobbie, and Collin, who reunite on the golf course and are joined by Alex’s daughter Austin, a rising college freshman. Over a competitive game of golf, they discuss their business and personal successes and challenges, while Alex manages to weave his wisdom as to the six key attributes of a successful team into the conversation in a fun, quirky, and easily readable format.”

“Alex’s ability to artfully impart his knowledge and advice, combined with his enthusiasm and skill for teaching and mentoring, are good reminders that the best leaders are able to *cultivate* other leaders!”

Diana Garvis Purcel
Independent Board Member and
Former Chief Financial Officer

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PREFACE



**DISCOVER THE 6 SECRETS TO
BUILD A CHAMPIONSHIP-CALIBER TEAM THAT
CAN OUTPERFORM YOUR COMPETITION, PLUS
ACHIEVE GOALS YOU MAY THINK ARE
IMPOSSIBLE TODAY**

If your company or organization wants to get to the next level of success, you'll need to cultivate a team mindset among each of your employees.

Using the proven ideas and concepts in their new book *Cultivate*, Walter Bond and Antoinette Bond provide the insight into how you and your teammates can improve your team performance and to become a champion in your industry and sustain a competitive advantage.

Walter and Antoinette highlight the six non-negotiable traits of a winning team through a business fable. The fable contains characters that resemble real-life people you can identify with as they encounter challenging situations and make breakthrough achievements, especially when they work as a team to accomplish a common goal.

By improving on the team skills illustrated throughout the book, you can learn to become a peak team performer who is able to achieve bigger goals than you might otherwise attain by yourself.

Many companies and organizations today are struggling to hire, develop, and retain top talent. Moreover, many managerial leaders fail to recognize they have a teamwork problem, and even fewer know how to improve teamwork.

That's why Walter and Antoinette have written this book. It fulfills an unmet need among entrepreneurs, executives, and managers in a variety of industries.

Good teamwork leads to greater success. By applying the ideas, concepts, and skills communicated throughout the book, you can turn your company or organization into a champion-caliber, peak-performing team that can dominate your industry.

Ready to get started?

FOREWORD



FIRST IMPRESSION THAT HAS LASTED TO THIS DAY. . .

I first met Walter Bond in early 2013 when Jersey Mike's agreed to be part of an episode of a Food Network series called *Giving You the Business*. Walter was the host of the show.

After sharing our respective backgrounds and filming the show, I knew Walter would help our company going forward. Soon after, I asked Walter to join our Jersey Mike's National Conference as a guest keynote speaker.

WALTER ELECTRIFIED OUR AUDIENCE WHEREVER HE SPOKE. . .

Walter came on the stage and had an unbelievable presence. He captured the crowd immediately and received a thundering standing ovation.

After that, Walter spoke at two other national meetings and several leadership meetings that were held with owners, area directors, and their managers. He continued

to teach us how to recruit, develop, and retain top people so that we could stand apart from our competitors.

Walter got our employees to understand our goals, adopt our company culture, work as a team, and express excellence.

**SIX YEARS LATER. . .OUR BOLDEST DECISION
IN COMPANY HISTORY**

Six years later I called Walter and his wife and business partner Antoinette to invite them to join me in our company's biggest initiative ever—to do something never done before in the history of franchising. Walter immediately said yes!

I asked Walter how we should communicate the message he was teaching throughout our national organization of franchisees. Like a true coach, Walter said to me, "Peter, that's easy. Just be you, and tell them what is in your heart and what you want to do and why."

Walter, Antoinette, Tatiana, and I traveled to more than 25 cities together across the United States. He made a big impact among our team in each location. In the end, the owners of each franchise saw us as true partners with them.

It was a pivotal moment in the history of our company that we will never forget. Spending so many days and nights together on the road with Walter to deliver the message of unity to our teams and crews across the nation was truly inspiring.

As we look back on these initiatives, our investment was a key building block to launch forward like never before. Today we stand as one of the top franchise systems in the country.

**OUR POST-COVID GOALS ARE COMING TO FRUITION,
THANKS TO WALTER BOND AND HIS NEW BOOK**

Now, after COVID, we're ready again to have meetings and gatherings with everyone throughout our system across the country. Walter, Antoinette, my wife Tatiana, and I will be traveling across the country. They will meet with our owners, managers, and our teams to motivate us to stay on track with our mission. Then we'll finish our journey with our long-awaited national meeting.

I'm especially excited that on this road trip we will bring the development principles from Walter and Antionette's new book *Cultivate*.

The book has many active examples that show how best to manage our day-to-day lives and what path we should choose to take. Walter will motivate, teach, and coach our team. He'll help us communicate our plan and help us understand the goal and the path ahead.

Cultivate reminds us to step back and check on how we are doing. For me, it was to take another look at our mission statement as a company. To give and make a difference in someone's life. To help raise people up together with the mindset to provide service to others.

While those may sound like words, this book shows how we can turn those words into action that produces results.

After reading *Cultivate*, I can honestly say, “Yes, we are staying true to ourselves, and we are re-inspired!”

IT IS TIME TO “CULTIVATE.” I hope you enjoy reading the book and execute what you’ll learn.

Peter Cancro, Founder and CEO,
Jersey Mike’s Subs

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Kelly Baker, we'd like to thank you for your invaluable insight as we began the journey to advance our vision of teamwork and how it relates to maximizing human capital and building stronger teams. Our conversations have really cemented what great teams look like on a C-suite level.

Daniel Grissom, thank you for your partnership as we honed in and defined the traits that make successful teams click.

Peter Cancro, a big thank-you to you and the entire Jersey Mike's Subs team. Our partnership has helped us see what great teamwork and culture look like up close. You have set a high standard of what is possible through cooperation.

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The Bond Group team: Thank you to our team members who continually help us push our company and projects forward. Kendall Bond, Justin Greiman, Diana McCarthy, Jeff Traister, Steven Van Tassell, Amy Wirth, Kirsten Womack, and Abir Zayed are invaluable to our current and future success. You already know this, but we'll tell you anyway: we cannot do anything without you.

INTRODUCTION



CULTIVATE^{VERB}

cul-ti-vate | \ 'kəl-tə-, vāt

TO IMPROVE BY LABOR, CARE, OR STUDY :

We believe that all great teams have similar characteristics and traits. Six traits are non-negotiable for a winning organization to operate at a high level (see Figure I.1). *Cultivate* is designed to be the go-to guide for employees and employers who want to build a high-performing corporate team or be part of one. Impact players who work together harmoniously make up the core of successful, elite teams.

It sounds simple, yet many organizations struggle with it. This book offers readers a practical, applicable guide to recruiting, developing, and retaining qualified employees to build powerhouse organizations through the eyes of relatable characters in our story.

When you meet Alex and shake his hand, you may do a double-take. You may see a reflection of yourself.

6 NON-NEGOTIABLE TRAITS



Figure I.1 The six non-negotiable traits

Alex started with one store, probably like you, and grew it into a much larger company. Early on Alex spent his weekends working and nurturing his company, but now his weekends are spent on his family. Alex loves people. They're the most critical thing in the world to him. He made the company office feel like a home-away-from-home for the enjoyment of his teammates—his work family. Alex loves face-to-face meetings, believing it helps his team stay connected. Alex is in the people business.

Maybe you'll identify more with Bobbi, aka the Energizer Bunny. Bobbi is a micromanager, with an emphasis on the micro. There are no details too small for her

attention. She is happiest when she has multiple projects running, making her employees into extensions of herself to accomplish much more than one person alone can.

You might see yourself in Collin, although we hope not. Collin is unable to admit his shortcomings. It's always someone else's fault. He had all the platitudes to accompany his business personality: "It's not our job to hold their hands. We are not their friends. It's not personal." Collin's problem is that he always hires guys just like him.

Alex learned how to run a successful business as a teenager working for Mr. Hank, a neighbor with a landscaping business. From Mr. Hank, Alex learned how to cultivate a successful enterprise and the traits it needs to grow. At first, he didn't know it, but he was learning about establishing common goals, communicating effectively, and finding the chemistry necessary to bring together a diverse yet successful team. Most important, he learned about the lifeblood of a business: commitment, accountability, and trust.

As you read this book, we'll prompt you with reflections about what you've read and the actions you need to take for your business's success. We hope you'll let these lessons sink deep into your soil and take root, helping you grow and improve.

1



“A” GAME

Alex checked his reflection in the full-size mirror by the front door one more time. He couldn't remember exactly when the navy blue sports coat and white dress shirt became his uniform, but it has become his signature look, and it suited him well. The look always reminded Alex of how far he had come. He headed outside, and his Tesla reacted as he got closer to the car. He settled into the driver's seat and reversed down the long stone driveway, wove through the perfectly manicured streets of his gated community, and waved at Gertie at the guard gate before turning onto the main road. He always says hi to everyone, whether a resident or a worker, rich or poor. Alex believed that you shouldn't just communicate with people; you should *connect* with everyone. The most important thing in the world to Alex is people.

Years ago, when he was looking for office space, two things were important to him. One was being close to home, which benefited him and his family, and two was that it had a lot of windows that benefited his teammates at work. He wanted his culture to feel open and free so everyone could enjoy working together and enjoy life. Alex devoted his day to taking care of all his *people*. The office on Gardner Street was the perfect fit. The open-concept space featured exposed brick walls, trendy lounge furniture in the center, and private offices and conference rooms settled behind floor-to-ceiling glass walls. The laptop-friendly workstations built into the wall and designed to look like classic workbenches were Alex's favorite feature.

He wanted his office to feel like a really cool home-away-from-home for all his teammates to enjoy.

It was Saturday morning, so the office was quieter and slower than usual, but there were still a few people buzzing around the space. He didn't ever have to ask anyone to work extra, come in early, or work weekends. Everyone sort of did this on their own. It was part of the culture from day one. Everyone, for the most part, was completely dialed in and connected to the business. Alex built an amazing business from humble beginnings using some simple but non-negotiable strategies.

Alex walked into the first conference room and checked his watch—8:30 a.m. All his regional managers would arrive in the next hour. Alex was a simple man and found security being where he needed to be long before anyone else. He wanted that to bleed through his culture. He was a stickler for time. *On time is late, and early is on time* was his favorite mantra. He paced the room, carefully pushing in the chairs, adjusting the table slightly, and checking his reflection again in the large window overlooking the parking lot.

Alex believed in meetings. He didn't believe in long meetings, but he believed in getting the team together as much as he could face-to-face. He loved Zoom too if it meant his team could talk and stay connected. But his face-to-face meetings were his favorite, and he didn't mind the extra expense; he thought it was well worth it.

All of his meetings were run the same way on purpose and didn't involve a lot of preparation. Everyone knew the basic template. Alex didn't like surprises, so his meetings were run very efficiently, and the rhythm of them was predictable. His regional managers grew to love the predictability of his meetings and knew the flow very well. Everything was mapped out, and every regional manager knew the expectation of how to run their region. These meetings could practically run themselves.

Alex started with one store but now owned 150 stores with 2,000 employees that brought in more than \$300 million in revenue. He believed each store needed its own dedicated crew of about 12–15 people. The goal was to build a perfectly constructed team that operated at a championship level. The *crew* was what made each store tick. This meeting with his 16 regional managers was everything to Alex. Each regional manager had the task of recruiting, developing, and retaining top talent and building each crew at each store they managed. It was the only meeting he ran himself. This one was his pride and joy, and he felt it was his most critical meeting to keep his team and culture strong and positioned for growth.

He looked up when he heard a knock at the conference room door. Two tiny, uniformed women with large rolling carts stood smiling in the doorway. He ushered them in and helped them set up the goodies in the middle of the table. Two boxes of bagels, two dozen donuts, three trays of muffins, three portable cardboard containers filled