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a new place reinventing itself. "Ours" means that the company is the responsibility and under the control of the teammates who work for it, who have the opportunity to make the company what they would like it to be. This leads to the last question. Note that the executives do not ask what "is" the company, but rather, "What could it be?" The answer, "special," captures in a word the aspirations for building an organization that is truly unique in its culture and its results for its patients, while "could" reflects the fact that the development of the organization is a journey, and although it has achieved great things, its aspirations are for more, and that being special is something yet to be fully achieved.

We Said, We Did

Accountability is an important value at DaVita. So is measurement—the company measured not just clinical outcomes, costs, and labor utilization, but almost everything that was related to dimensions of performance. In addition, there is an emphasis on systematic, planned thinking and actions. All of this came together in the idea of follow-up, something that began at the very top of the organization. As Richard Fontaine, one of the directors on the company's board, explained, at virtually every board meeting Thiry would present a list of issues and questions from the preceding meeting, and then go through them one at a time and explain what the company and he had done about each. This included, for instance, progress on building a succession planning process and preparing back-up people ready for senior-level positions. Similarly, at DaVita Academies, if the company had made assurances or promises to the workforce—to get an answer to some question, to address some concern or problem—Thiry would explain what had been done and end with, "We said, we did."

The implication was that the company and each person in it was accountable for meeting its commitments—for addressing issues and explaining how another important value,

continuous improvement, was occurring. Several people noted, if someone was in a position of often having to say, "We didn't do it," that person would probably not last long at an organization that valued accountability and getting stuff done.

One for All, All for One

This idea, from the *Three Musketeers* movies, was a prominent theme in the company. Thiry's office at corporate headquarters in El Segundo, California, near the Los Angeles airport, had a movie poster from *The Iron Mask*, and has hanging in it the phrase that Thiry brandishes—in full Monty uniform—at DaVita Academies and in board meetings. The phrase represents an understanding of the idea of community: shared obligations and responsibilities for all" means that it is the obligation of each DaVita teammate to contribute what he or she can to the whole, to expend their best efforts on behalf of the collective, and to take responsibility for the company and each of its members. "All for one" means that just as each individual should devote himself or herself to the group, the group has a responsibility to help that individual develop and succeed, to surmount difficult setbacks and transitions.

An example of this care and community was a fund called the DaVita Village Neighborhood Fund, in which DaVita teammates contributed money to help others out with, for example, unexpected medical expenses or other financial needs. The fund's contributions to the DaVita Village Neighborhood Fund were matched by contributions made by the company out of its profits.

The Village—Not Just a Company, But a Community

Related to the idea of "one for all, all for one" was the idea of DaVita as a community, represented in the word "village." The company's headquarters in El Segundo was referred to as "Casa DaVita" (the house of DaVita).





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