

Onward – Why it’s more than just a word at Cast & Crew

By Eric Belcher

For years, I’ve closed written communications with my Cast & Crew colleagues with Onward!. Some members of our team might wonder why I use it.

Here’s why.

It’s very self-descriptive ... continuously moving forward, irrespective of what obstacles might stand in your path at any given time. It’s also definitive. You don’t have to keep answering the “what-do-you-want-to-do?” question.

I’m not alone in liking the word. Onward also has gained a modern-day boost from the book (*Onward: How Starbucks Fought for Its Life without Losing Its Soul*) written by Howard Schultz of Starbucks. And that nicely complements some of its better-known earlier usage, including famous quotes from people like Henry Ford, Winston Churchill ... and, yes, even Dan Quayle (“*We will move forward, we will move upward, and yes, we will move onward.*”)

Fact is, Onward is a great word! And while it’s simple to like the easily understood sentiments of constantly going forward with a dogged determination, I’ve also been intrigued by the word because each of its letters suggest a word or words that capture what we are trying to do at Cast & Crew.

O is a good place to start, and not just because it begins the word. It’s a good place to start because it easily brings to mind the concepts of “one company” – which is an important go-forward theme for us as a company.

“One company” really captures where we are going in 2017, following the two strategic acquisitions we made in 2016. We acquired screenwriting software leader Final Draft in February and, then, in the second half of the year, we purchased CAPS Payroll, whose payroll activities span multiple entertainment market segments including commercial production, venues, music tours, live events and unscripted television/independent film.

So, we’ve spent several months now putting the three companies together into “one company” and reinforcing the concepts of a “one-company culture.” Our goal: to optimize our operations so we can offer clients the industry’s best service and best suite of technology-enabled solutions while expanding support, training and career opportunities for all of our employees.

Paul Argenti, a management professor at the Tuck School at Dartmouth University, has done a great amount of research on the concept of a one-company culture. He believes companies with a one-company culture are characterized by several attributes – one of which is management’s commitment to the process.

“In the last century, large corporations have expanded in size, reach, and complexity,” Argenti says. “To keep employees aligned strategically, management must dedicate resources to creating a one-company culture, one in which employee self-interest and corporate self-interest intersect. The most successful companies execute strategy through clear communication and consistently articulated values.”

Clearly, one of the critical elements necessary for success is for everyone in the company to understand and share the company’s strategic goal.

To illustrate this particular attribute, he cites as an example a story dating back to 1962 when President Kennedy was visiting the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA) space center in Florida. As the president was touring the center, he stopped to chat with a janitor.

President Kennedy walked over to the janitor and asked: “What are you doing?”

“Well, Mr. President,” the janitor responded, “I’m helping put a man on the moon.”

A shared – and clear – vision. Teamwork. Execution with the same goal in mind.

One company.

At the same time, we’re mindful that “one,” by itself, also is relevant because each of our three companies is a leader in its individual markets and each company’s staff has important one-on-one relationships with our customers. We’ve worked very hard to protect and enhance those relationships during our own internal integration activities.

Finally, it’s also significant that both “one company” and “one” – though not stated directly – are significant core themes in our mission statement.

Cast & Crew Entertainment Services is the premier provider of technology-enabled payroll and production-management solutions to multiple important entertainment end markets, including film and television, new media, commercial production, venues, music tours and live events.

Cast & Crew and CAPS Payroll provide best-in-class entertainment payroll and residuals processing; production accounting software; workers’ compensation programs and financial services, including production incentive consulting and administration. Final Draft is the screenwriting software standard.

Our leadership position reflects the industry's best customer service, targeted product development and technological innovation.

Our core values of Quality, Integrity and Security are the foundation of everything we do.

Onward!

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