



## **A Strong Leadership Message From Metallica Frontman James Hetfield**

**For building a thriving team, camaraderie is more important than functional fit**

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For building a thriving team, camaraderie is more important than functional fit. This message is exemplified in the story of Metallica, one of the most successful and influential heavy metal bands in history.

Metallica's early days were not without controversy. One of the founding members of the band, Dave Mustaine, was let go shortly before the release of their debut album. While Mustaine was one of the most talented guitar players, the band recognized that his behavior and values did not align with those of the other band members. While all band members called themselves "Alcoholica," Mustaine -- different from the rest of the band -- was uninhibited and violent, with a tendency to physically push his bandmates around. The other three eventually grew weary of him, and on April 11, 1983, they fired Mustaine. The decision to fire one of the best guitar players must not have been an easy one, but the band obviously recognized already back then that camaraderie was more important than functional fit.

In a recent statement, frontman James Hetfield reinforced his message and again stressed the importance of camaraderie for team success. He stated that he believed he and his current team members were actually average players, at least individually. However, when they worked together, something special happened. If team members embrace teamwork as a shared value, they can achieve the extraordinary. In healthy cultures, even "mediocre" team members can be lifted to new heights.

For leaders of teams and organizations of all sizes, this message is crucial. If you want to build successful teams and organizations, you must hire considering two dimensions, functional fit and camaraderie.

To hire for camaraderie, you can take the following steps:

### **1. Define purpose and vision**

Clearly define and communicate your organization's compelling purpose (Why do you do what you do?) and your inspiring vision (What do you want to achieve?). Only if your new hires are intrinsically motivated to turn your organization's purpose and vision into reality can they thrive in and reinforce your culture.

### **2. Define your values**

Take your time to also clearly define the values that you embrace and that you want to see your team members embrace too. Values are a key pillar of the Leadership House framework and tell you how you want to work as a team. Clearly defining your core values will help you identify the traits and characteristics you're looking for in your new hires.

### **3. Reflect on your culture in your job description**

If you have a strong company culture, your employees and team members will communicate this in their words and actions. This will already attract like-minded people who may be a good cultural fit. But you can do more. In your job description, you can convey what you stand for and what you look for in candidates when it comes to culture, values, attitudes, and behaviors. Make use of this. It will save you a lot of time, as this kind of job description will not only attract the right people but also prevent the wrong people from applying.

### **4. Ask relevant interview questions**

If you value camaraderie, you must not only ask interview questions dealing with functional fit. You must also, and especially, ask questions about cultural fit. Some questions you may consider:

- Why do you want to work for us?
- What excites you about our organization or our team?
- Why do you find our purpose worth pursuing and our vision inspiring?
- What cultures do you thrive in?
- How would you describe our culture so far?
- What values are important to you?
- How do you want to contribute to our success?
- In terms of culture, what have you learned at other organizations or in other teams and what bad experiences have you had?

For example, if teamwork is a core value, you want to ask questions about teamwork and ensure that a candidate's answers reflect empathy and an attitude that prioritizes

team success over individual success. If accountability is a core value, you want to understand whether your potential hire embraces a "soft on the people, tough on the issue" attitude, appreciates candid feedback, and thrives in a culture where results achieved matter (not tasks completed).

By taking these steps, leaders can ensure they're hiring to build a health company culture. This will lead to greater job satisfaction, greater employee retention, and ultimately better team performance.

The story of Metallica and their decision to let go of a talented but incompatible band member highlights the importance of camaraderie for team success. Purpose, vision, and values matter! This is why they are also part of the [Leadership House framework](#) that you can follow systematically to become a highly effective leader.

### **Want to know more?**

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