

# creating collective trust

A CASE STUDY IN BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

“ If you trust each other, there isn’t a fear of conflict. If there isn’t a fear of conflict, then we can hold each other accountable. If we hold each other accountable, we get clear results. In order to get trust, you have to open up dialogue that requires someone to step out of their business mold and into a mold of who they genuinely are. ”

**neil brinker**

**Current:** President and CEO of Modine Manufacturing Co.  
**Former President and COO of Advanced Energy Industries**  
**Former President of IDEX Corporation**



## the client — Modine Manufacturing



### the opportunity

When Neil Brinker took over as President and CEO of Modine Manufacturing in December 2020, he was in for a big challenge. Historically a global leader in thermal management with its roots in the vehicular industry, the company was at an imperative crossroad. Competitive pressures of globalization, job outsourcing, and new technologies had eroded their core business. To chart a viable path forward, Modine’s identity and structure needed reimagining. Fundamentally, that started with the need to re-establish trust at the highest levels.

With trust, leaders can more capably collaborate and align on the organization’s greatest challenges, from defining the company’s purpose to driving its values. In order to build that trust, it is necessary to take time away from day-to-day concerns and make space to think about the bigger picture.



### the challenge

In previous executive roles at IDEX Corporation and Advanced Energy Industries, Neil worked with the Aspen Institute’s Executive Seminars team to create Custom Leadership Seminars that successfully helped manage change during key inflection points. Despite unique circumstances facing the companies, there was a single constant: to improve the business, they needed to build trust across their leadership teams.

At Modine, one core problem Neil identified was the centralized leadership model. Born out of efficiency in the midst of workforce reduction, there was concentration of power in the U.S. Midwest. However, the composition of the team lacked the global presence necessary to make the right decisions for a global company. Neil took steps to distribute power globally, and with this transition came an almost entirely new leadership team that needed to quickly create a collective sense of trust.

Neil turned to the Aspen team and commissioned a Custom Leadership Seminar to foster connection and break down barriers quickly. “This turnaround was going to be hard. There was a high level of interaction, conversation, and negotiation needed. I couldn’t wait a year to pull everyone together to learn about each other. I needed to do it immediately so that we could establish clear dialogue,” said Neil.



## the experience

Working closely with Neil, the Aspen Institute Executive Seminars team developed a two-and-a-half day seminar entitled **“Purpose, Alignment, and Values.”** The experience took place in Aspen, CO and featured curated readings, in-depth discussions, and guided small-group working sessions — all led by Aspen-trained moderators.

### The program aimed to:

- Develop a common vocabulary for and understanding of the company’s core values among the senior leadership in a time of transition.
- Forge stronger bonds of trust and communication among the senior leaders across cultural and generational differences.
- Calibrate a shared sense of purpose and operational priorities for developing an integrated top-down and bottom-up commitment to shared corporate values.
- Lay the groundwork for further alignment of meaningful shared corporate values throughout the organization.



## the path forward

The leadership team at Modine left the seminar with a clearer understanding of their purpose, mission, and values and built the strong bonds necessary to rebuild the company from the ground up. The combined experience of moderated dialogues, awe-inspiring surroundings, and moments for collaboration allowed the leadership team to think and be challenged in consequential ways. In the end, the leadership team created a foundation of trust that has helped them tackle big decisions.

With experiences and resources from the seminar as part of their tool kit, the Modine leadership team has been better equipped to drive significant growth. Modine’s share price has risen 96% since December 2020. The company is tapping its legacy of innovation and engineering and focusing business initiatives to position the company for a strong future for years to come.



**[Aspen Seminars are] different because they challenge your thought process and activate underutilized parts of your brain. The experience starts to build collaboration and trust in an environment that you just don’t have in the world that we live in.**



# interested

in learning how a Custom Leadership Seminar could help your organization?

Contact us for more information