

Skip Prichard Interview for *Performance Driven Giving*

Skip is the *Wall Street Journal* best-selling author of *The Book of Mistakes: 9 Secrets to Creating a Successful Future*. He is also the CEO of [OCLC](#), a global nonprofit computer library service and research organization. Skip has run global businesses ranging from the startup phase to mature businesses with over \$1.5 billion in revenue. He is a giver in every aspect of his life, including business. In fact, *Harvard Business Review* labeled Prichard as a rare social CEO and a “relentless giver.”

Instead of an audio interview, we conducted a written interview with Skip. Here are his responses.

1. How can leaders practice gratitude intentionally?

Leaders who practice gratitude intentionally make it part of their routine. They express it in meetings, write notes, give public praise, and are genuinely thrilled to put the spotlight on those who make a difference.

Leaders who express gratitude do it best when it is specific, authentic, timely, unexpected, sincere, duplicatable, and personalized. These are the elements of leadership gratitude that make an enormous difference.

Imagine hearing this in a meeting: “Susan, you completed this project on time, under budget, in a way that was innovative and not only delivered for the organization but taught us an entirely new way to operate. Now that you have trailblazed a new way for us to operate, we want to reward you with a new opportunity.”

Contrast that with generalized statements like “thank you for your work” and little information as to why something was noticed.

Best of all, when delivered with specificity, gratitude teaches the entire organization what matters. It highlights the value of the organization in a tangible way.

2. Lesson #2 from The Book of Mistakes is, “Recognize your inherent value.” How does it impact our giving and generosity when we realize we have great value to give to others?

Understanding your unique giftedness is part of the success journey. Without knowing your value, you are careening from activity to activity without purpose and meaning. When we truly understand what makes us special, we have an immediate way to add value to others.

When we allow others to define our value, we are often listening to the critics and naysayers. We are allowing others to put their definition of success on us, which limits our future. Enormous power is evident when we allow ourselves to be true to our purpose.

3. Lesson #9 from The Book of Mistakes is, “Pursue your goals with urgency.” How can giving to others help motivate us to achieve our goals?

There’s plenty of hard research to back up the claim that gratitude improves performance, but in the end, I still find it a bit mysterious. When the right person serves it up at the right time and in the right way, it fuels success.

Giving and receiving are linked. When you give, you will find it easier to receive. That allows new opportunities to be planted. When you practice gratitude, you will find that others are magnetized to your own cause. They will naturally come along side you to guide, assist, and help you achieve what you could never have done on your own.

4. In your leadership roles at OCLC and Ingram, how did you encourage your team to developing “giving” qualities such as generosity, teamwork, volunteering, or personal growth?

The first step is to hire people who have the giving qualities already, a nice shortcut. I am fortunate to find people who want to make an impact.

Beyond that, model the way. If the leader is passionate about personal growth, many in the organization will take up the cause. Once they do, they rarely give it up because the benefits are extraordinary. Jim Rohn shared advice with me once

long ago to “Work harder on yourself than you do on your job.” It was the best advice I ever received, and I share it with all the organizations I have the privilege to lead. If you work hard on you, everyone benefits. It’s counterintuitive to the advice that you should work hard on your projects, or what your boss says is the most important. Instead, work on personal growth. Give naturally and joyfully. Let leaders on the team lead from their strengths.

5. Your website describes you as a “growth-oriented business insider.” What role has giving played in your personal and professional growth?

Growth is important to me in every way. Growth encompasses personal and team growth, the expansion of potential. When that happens, business metrics like revenue growth will happen.

Giving stems from the unique way I grew up. My parents took in the abandoned, the addicted, and the abused. Some would stay a night and many for years. I learned the art of pouring into others by watching them. My mom was an amazing counselor and motivator who touched every person she encountered. I was the beneficiary of this amazing childhood, and I am motivated to be a fraction of that for others. There is nothing more gratifying than watching someone reach their goals and exceed what they thought was possible.

6. Anything you’d like to share about OCLC?

OCLC is a consistent winner of regional and national Best Place to Work awards. The organization’s innovative technology platforms, high employee engagement, and superior benefits are often cited as attraction and retention drivers for its staff. A commitment to advancing racial equity and fostering sustainable development goals among its members are important values for customers, members, and associates. Among OCLC’s inventive programs are opportunities for peer-to-peer recognition called You Rock, invitations for customers to recognize staff members and its award-winning wellness initiatives.

A commitment to furthering access to information for global libraries speaks to the heart of academia, learning and open information. OCLC provides free research, training and advocacy services for libraries and archives. The organization also partners with local community organizations through its

volunteer We Care program, Diversity Council memberships and employee-led charitable campaigns. Corporately, OCLC sponsors a number of industry events, conferences and awards focused on leading libraries and librarians.

As the President & CEO, I can say with confidence that the spirit of giving at OCLC is not a corporate initiative but comes from a truly generous spirit of employees who are always thinking of others first.