

# How to make values live in your organization

Values exist in every workplace. Your organization's culture is partially the outward demonstration of the values currently existing in your workplace. The question you need to ask is whether these existing values are creating the workplace you desire.

Do these values promote a culture of extraordinary customer care by happy, motivated, productive people? If not, you will want to:

identify the values that currently exist in your workplace;

determine if these are the right values for your workplace; and change the actions and behaviors by which the values are demonstrated, if necessary.

"Within the organizations I have had the opportunity to serve, the core values were communicated by actions mostly - in the ways in which business is conducted on a day-to-day basis, and not so much in words directly spoken or written.

"I am a strong advocate of demonstrated values more than written or spoken - actions speak louder, but also believe that written values that reinforce and support specific actions, and specific actions that

reinforce and support written values, make a powerful combination that far exceeds one or the other by itself. If it is written down and demonstrated in action, we can really hold our feet to the fire when we need to."

In a prior article, I discussed what values are, why you want to identify values, and where values fit within your workplaces. This article moves the process of identifying workplace values to the next step.

Values Development Process

My focus, in this article, is on how to develop and articulate shared workplace values. While the focus is on values identification and alignment, you can use this process to develop any product or course of action that needs widespread support, enrollment in, and ownership from your staff.

I have used it successfully to help organizations develop mission statements, visions for their future, relationship guidelines and norms, prioritized action plans, and departmental goals.

Steps in a Values Identification Process

To identify organization values, bring together your executive group to:

learn about and discuss the power of shared values;

obtain consensus that these leaders are committed to creating a value-based workplace;

define the role of the executives in leading this process; and provide written material the executives can share with their reporting staff.

In one of my client organizations, that recently completed this process, the Team Culture and Training Team, a cross-functional group of employees from every level of the organization, asked the executive group to initiate and lead this process.

Where possible, acting on a desire for change that is percolating from all corners of an organization, is a powerful assurance of success.

Design and schedule a series of values alignment sessions in which all members of the organization will participate. Schedule each member of the organization to attend a three-four hour session. (If your group is small, it is most effective for all members to meet in one session together.)

These sessions are most effective when led by a trained facilitator. This allows each



member of your organization to fully participate in the process. Alternatively, train internal facilitators who lead one session, and participate in another.

On the next page, read about the role of leaders in a successful values identification and alignment process.

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## The darker side...

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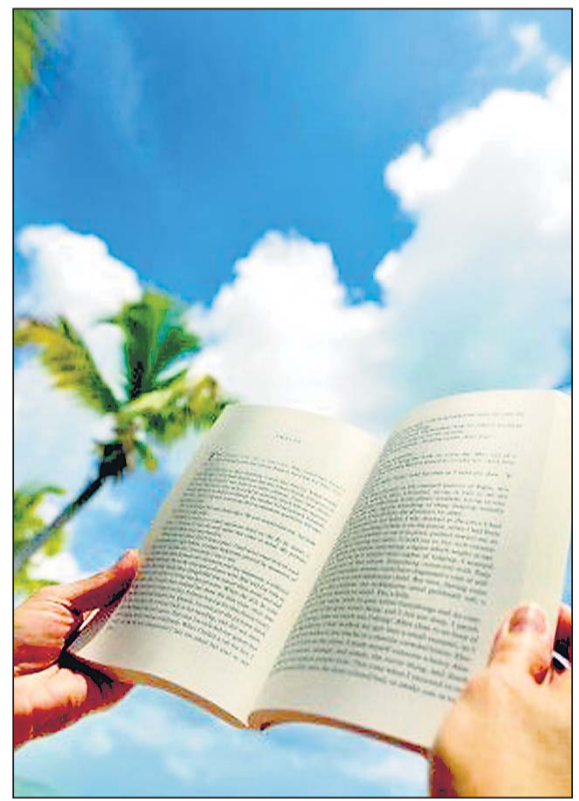
When questioned later, they affirmed that the charting was taking too much of the time they needed to accomplish the goals. But, they had awesome charts while they were keeping them up.

Another example of this is when an organization spends time and energy to develop a comprehensive business plan, and then the plan sits in a drawer. While the act of making the plan was important, the follow-up is the critical piece. Regular review and follow-up make a plan live - and serve.

Too Many Goals Make Nothing a Priority

In my work with small and mid-sized manufacturing companies, I often find that people wear so many hats, they are overwhelmed with the sheer number of goals they are expected to meet. I once facilitated a strategic planning session during which people analyzed and established priorities. They moved non-priority items to a "B" list and believed they had successfully created an "A" list of the most important, achievable goals.

You can imagine my consternation when, at the end of the session, the senior manager looked at the



list of goals on the "B" list and said, "These are all givens. We have to accomplish these anyway."

People with too many goals experience these issues.

They never feel as if they accom-

plish a complete task.

It is difficult to tie their goal accomplishment to a reward and recognition system that recognizes their accomplishments.

They don't know what is most important to accomplish next.

They fall prey to the "check it off the list" syndrome in which they check tasks off their list before the actions have been integrated by the organization.

Goal setting is a positive, powerful, business practice when it tells your staff where you are going. Effective goal setting also demonstrates what success will look like during the journey and upon arrival. When practiced poorly, however, goal setting can negatively impact your organization in all the ways described, and more.

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