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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 behaviours 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 was 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 were, why you wanted 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.

Two recent reports offer guidance on motivating and developing talented employees in the current global economic downturn.

Motivating And Retaining Top Talent

A report from OnPoint Consulting identifies strategies for motivating and retaining top talent in the current economic climate when the emphasis on bonus payments is no longer possible or appropriate. Previous research has found that earnings and benefits have a 2 per cent impact on job satisfaction and engagement compared to 70 per cent provided by job quality and workplace support.



Motivating top talent

The report suggests the following survival strategies:

- ▶ Create a sense of purpose - Engagement and retention improve when people understand how they connect to the "Big Picture" and how they make a difference.
- ▶ Provide meaningful work - Allowing people to do what they do best and make a significant contribution is key to engagement and retention.
- ▶ Solicit ideas - Involvement in decisions gives people a sense of control in uncertain times, shows

them their opinions matter, and improves decision acceptance.

- ▶ Let people know where they stand - Setting tough but realistic goals is motivating even in a tough environment.
- ▶ Enhance trust and communication - Trust is built when leaders improve credibility by being candid, demonstrate reliability by ensuring their actions are consistent with business objectives and values, and are accessible.

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