



Legacy Leadership Development Group

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*From the desk of
Ed Hager:*



VALUES, CULTURE AND CORPORATE SUCCESS

Just like the old Wendy's commercial that questioned "Where is the Beef", today's highly successful companies are questioning "Where's the Values". In today's environment where many corporations are facing uncertain times and a tough economic environment, there is no better time to redefine and re-communicate your company's values both internally and externally. Helping your teams understand what your company holds as their core guiding values will build understanding and buy-in around decision making and overall direction that guides your daily business process.

There is no mistaking that values, or the lack of, set your company's culture. It is obvious that companies with high levels of success are grounded in values and live out these values in every aspect of their daily business and culture.

An example is Chick-fil-A. The system of their core values and beliefs which govern Chick-fil-A's actions: its policy of putting customers first; the importance of working together; the drive to continuously improve; personal excellence; and the duty of stewardship for resources Chick-fil-A possess.

So the question is...Do you know "Where are the Values" within your organization?

"Executives will have to invest more and more on issues such as culture, values, ethos, and intangibles. Instead of managers, they need to be cultivators and storytellers to capture minds."

~Leif Edvinsson

Build an Organization Based on Values

Why Values, What Values?

By [Susan M. Heathfield](#)

Values are traits or qualities that are considered worthwhile; they represent an individual's highest priorities and deeply held driving forces. (Values are also known as core values and as governing values; they all refer to the same sentiment.)



Value statements are grounded in values and define how people want to behave with each other in the organization. They are statements about how the organization will value customers, suppliers, and the internal community. Value statements describe actions which are the living enactment of the fundamental values held by most individuals within the organization.

The values of each of the individuals in your workplace, along with their experience, upbringing, and so on, meld together to form your corporate culture. The values of your senior leaders are especially important in the development of your culture. These leaders have a lot of power in your organization to set the course and environment and they have selected the staff for your workplace.

If you think about your own life, your values form the cornerstones for all you do and accomplish. They define where you spend your time, if you are truly living your values. Each of you makes choices in life according to your most important four – ten values. Why not take the time to identify what is most important to you and to your organization.

Why Identify and Establish Values?

Effective organizations identify and develop a clear, concise and shared meaning of values/beliefs, priorities, and direction so that everyone understands and can contribute. Once defined, values impact every aspect of your organization. You must support and nurture this impact or identifying values will have been a wasted exercise. People will feel fooled and misled unless they see the impact of the exercise within your organization. If you want the values you identify to have an impact, the following must occur.

- People demonstrate and model their values in action in their personal work behaviors, decision making, contribution, and interpersonal interaction.
- Organizational values help each person establish priorities in their daily work life.
- Values guide every decision that is made once the organization has cooperatively created the values and the value statements.
- Rewards and recognition within the organization are structured to recognize those people whose work embodies the values the organization embraced.
- Organizational goals are grounded in the identified values. Adoption of the values and the behaviors that result is recognized in regular performance feedback.
- People hire and promote individuals whose outlook and actions are congruent with the values.
- Only the active participation of all members of the organization will ensure a truly organization-wide, value-based, shared culture.

The following are examples of values: ambition, competency, individuality, equality, integrity, service, responsibility, accuracy, respect, dedication, diversity, improvement, enjoyment/fun, loyalty, credibility, honesty, innovativeness, teamwork, excellence, accountability, empowerment, quality, efficiency, dignity, collaboration, stewardship, empathy, accomplishment, courage, wisdom, independence, security, challenge, influence, learning, compassion, friendliness, discipline/order, generosity, persistence, optimism, dependability, flexibility.

Although important aspects of your life and attention, these are not values: family, church, professionalism. If you define what you value about each of these, you are identifying the core value. As an example, the core value in family might be close relationships; in church, spirituality.

“Personal leadership is the process of keeping your vision and values before you and aligning your life to be congruent with them.”

~ Stephen Covey

