VALUES CREATION

Organization Values serve as guiding principles for you and your team members. They define acceptable and unacceptable actions and behaviors. Every organization has a set of Values – whether specifically defined or simply allowed to happen. Your team members know the current Values as, 'This is how we do things around here.' Or said another way, 'This behavior "positive or negative' is acceptable.'

Values...

- Serve as standards or criteria of what you hold as 'Valuable'
- Are motivational constructs - inspire you to be or do your best
- Transcend specific actions and situations (you hold on to your values no matter what)
- Serve as a way for you to prioritize those things that are important
- They are tied to emotion, not objective facts

Identifying and understanding your own values can help you as a leader in many ways. Start by asking yourself, "What's important to me – so important that I must have it present in my life – personally and professionally?" It's a great exercise to have your team members also define their personal Values to help them ensure alignment with the organization's Values.

Important Notes:

- Values should be EASY to achieve. These are not Goals to strive for.
- When you (or anyone) gets upset, it's often do to someone 'stepping' on one of your Values.
- You want one set of consistent Values for your organization or all of your diverse companies.

Values Defining Process. This process can include many elements. The options listed below encourage team member engagement through their involvement in creating the organization's Values.

Step #1

Brainstorm. Brainstorm a list of words that represent what you most value personally and professionally. Or, working with your senior team create a list of 10 – 15 Value words. If needed, Google will provide comprehensive lists. You want to make sure that you and your senior team are fine with any of the listed words. Note that many of the words can be nestled under other words as examples once the list is narrowed down.

Step #2

Selecting Top Values. There are options in how you go about select the top 5 or 6 company values. This number is recommended for ease of recall and execution.

A. Option 1: You and your senior team select the 5 or 6 words that best represent what's most important to the organization
B. Option 2: Distribute the list of 10 – 15 words to your team members and ask them to select the top 5 or 6 words that best represent what's valuable in the business (adding any additional words for possible consideration). You may want to get these lists back before proceeding to Step #3.
C. Option 3: Have this discussion at a team meeting. Be sure to distribute the words in advance. People often need thinking time rather than feeling put on the spot to contribute in a meeting.

Sometimes it's possible to turn your Values into an acronym. For example:

- C.A.R.E.S. = Respe**C**t, Loy**A**lty, Teamwo**R**k, **E**mpathy, Hone**S**ty
- S.P.I.R.I.T = Stewardship, People, Integrity, Resourcefulness, Innovation, Teamwork

Step #3

Toward Behaviors. If you have departments, have the department heads discuss this next step at a team meeting. Or, discuss this with the entire team at a team meeting. Request that under each of the 5 - 6 Values they create a list of 'toward behaviors.' These statements describe what actions need to happen in order to experience each Value in the workplace. Note – you/they/team members must be in control of these variables.

Example: **I experience _____ anytime a), or b), or c), or d) occurs.**
Let's say Teamwork is one of your selected Values. The sentence might go:
I experience Teamwork anytime…
a)there is no talking behind others' backs
b)someone covers for me when I'm going to be out and there's work that must get done
c)when phones are ringing off the hook and someone else starts answering
d)a big project needs to be completed and others happily stay late with me

Step #4

Consolidating. There are options for this process. Your choice may depend upon the size of your team, the amount of time you have or your organizational structure. Remember, the selected Value word is not as important as the agreed upon behaviors that demonstrate that Value in the workplace. You will most likely notice that many of the words and descriptions can be placed together or stacked in a variety of ways. *What's most important is that it makes sense to you and creates or reinforces your desired culture.*

A. **Option 1**: Collect the team's descriptions and consolidate them into an organized flow. Present for discussion at a team meeting.
B. **Option 2**: At a team meeting have the departments create Toward Behaviors from their department's perspective. Then have a spokesperson from each department present to the group.
C. **Option 3:** At a team meeting have each department work together to finalize their Toward Behaviors - based upon the finalized list of Values. Then have a spokesperson from each department present to the group.

Have a scribe at the meeting capturing the presented thoughts on a large pad of paper for all to see the consistency. Discuss the findings.

Step #5

Finalizing. Clean up the precise wording as necessary to ensure clarity and understanding. Distribute the finalized list to all team members. Create a poster to frame
and/or simply post it in visible locations.

Step #6

Reinforcement. You will want to ensure that the Values continue to live through ongoing reinforcement. Some options include:

- Tie each team member acknowledgement to one of the Values
- Discuss a specific Value during your morning huddles – rotating each one throughout the weeks
- Post positive quotes that reinforce different values
- Use the Values in your recruitment ad
- List the Values on each Position Agreement
- Breach of a Value can be an effective foundation for a Critical Conversation
- Select one Value to reinforce at each monthly team meeting
- Use your company white board to acknowledgment positive actions and results that tie in with the Values
- What else……