

Newsletter Vol. 2.2005

Inside this Issue:

Corporate Values

An excerpt from Rushworth Kidder's insightful article on the "value of values"

Carousel of Values

An effective way of helping people to describe actions, behaviors, policies, and procedures that demonstrate their Code of Ethics...

"Creating a Culture of Ethics" programs!

Coming to Manchester Sept 14th and Oct 6th

Words from the Wise?

We all know that culture is not just what we say, but what we do. However, there are times...

Carousel of Values

VALUES TO ACTIONS TO ACTION PLANNING

While it is common for organizations to have a Code of Ethics, many find it challenging to describe the actions, behaviors, policies, and procedures that demonstrate each of the values listed therein.

A "Carousel of Values" exercise is an effective way of helping people to accomplish this, and of helping them to better identify and define their shared values.

The process is straightforward. Begin the activity by explaining the goal, which is to describe each value in practice in the *ideal* work setting.

In other words, what does honesty (if selected) look like when it is being expressed?

In essence, you will be defining the values and translating them into actions, behaviors, policies and procedures.

A few guidelines for implementing the exercise are as follows:

1. If a Code of Ethics does not exist, gather input from staff members and compile a list of shared ethical values such as honesty, responsibility, etc.
2. Assemble small groups of three or more people, one group per value listed by the staff or from your Code of Ethics.
3. Write each value as a heading on a separate piece of flip chart paper. It's best to use bold lettering, as the chart paper will ultimately be posted
4. Provide fine point markers to list examples under each heading on the flip chart.

Then you can begin the process as follows:

- Distribute the previously prepared flip chart papers, one per group.
- Explain that each group is to use a prescribed amount of time to list as many examples of their value as possible – ask them, "How do [honest, responsible, etc] people behave? What sets them apart from people who are not [honest, responsible, etc]?"
- Explain that once time is up, each list of examples will be passed to another group to be reviewed, analyzed, and expanded upon.
- Give clear signals for when to start, and time the activity, allowing more time to complete the first few lists and less time for the last few rounds.
- Once all groups have worked on all sheets, post the sheets.
- Invite participants to vote on the most important/significant examples for each value, and gather their input.

To maximize the effectiveness of the "carousel" you might consider posing the following questions as well:

- 1) Is there any significance to how you voted? What is behind the clustering of votes?
- 2) Do you see gaps between the descriptions of these values that represent the *ideal* future state, and how these values are being expressed currently?
- 3) What steps might you take to close these gaps?

"Creating a Culture of Ethics" public programs

A healthy culture requires common language and values-based decision-making tools for acting in difficult situations.



Peter Cooke

To help business leaders identify these characteristics and promote ethical, high-performance cultures in their organizations, Cooke Associates will be offering two public

Creating a Culture of Ethics programs in NH this fall.

The first is a 9AM - 3PM workshop scheduled for **September 14th** at *America's Credit Union Museum* in Manchester, NH.

The second is a 4 – 7:30 PM program including reception, tour of new facilities, and seminar at historic **Canterbury Shaker Village** on **October 6**. The Village's mission is preserving the legacy of Canterbury Shakers and providing a place for learning, reflection and renewal of the human spirit. This event will be sponsored by **New Hampshire Business for Social Responsibility**. Please visit cookeassociates.net or contact us for more information.

How Valuable are Corporate Values?

By Rushworth M. Kidder

According to a new global survey, most companies think they benefit from focusing on values, though they're hard pressed to say why.

And while they believe that the tone of the CEO is crucial to reinforcing values, the survey says companies are "surprisingly lax in quantifying" what the study calls their ROV, or "return on values."

The survey was conducted by the Aspen Institute, a nonprofit organization known for its leadership seminars, and Booz Allen Hamilton, a global management consulting firm.

Though only 365 of the 9,500 senior executives contacted returned their surveys, the response was sufficient for drawing some broad conclusions. It also reflects a perennial problem with values surveys: Those who respond may be especially interested in the topic, while those who think values aren't important don't answer.

Nevertheless, this survey produced some important findings:

- Companies that identify themselves as leaders in their sector approach values more comprehensively
- Different regions apply values differently. For example, Asian/Pacific firms are much more apt to include social responsibility on their list of values (74%) than are North American firms (58%)
- Topping the list of values is "ethical behavior/integrity."

Friends of the Institute of Global Ethics are familiar with the Institute's finding that five ethical values — honesty, responsibility, respect, fairness, and compassion — are universally held around the world.

The Aspen/Booz Allen Hamilton study, however, reveals a curious linguistic muddle in many corporate codes: They are often a jumble of values. Some of the 14 values identified in the study are clearly

ethical, such as "integrity," "honesty/openness," and "accountability." Some are conditions that result from the application of these values, such as trust, environmental responsibility, social responsibility/corporate citizenship, and commitment to diversity.

But the list also includes other commitments to shareholders, staff and customers that appear more transactional than ethical and are often demonstrated by companies having little interest in ethics.

Finally, there's a group of values — including "drive to succeed," "innovativeness/entrepreneurship," "initiative," and "adaptability" — that regularly run counter to ethics. Take each of these to its logical extreme, and you've described the culture of Enron just before its fall.

And that's where the muddle comes. The authors of this survey begin by noting that "corporate scandals have provoked profound skepticism about business ethics and conduct." They also quote Xerox CEO Anne Mulcahy saying that corporate values "helped save Xerox during the worst crisis in our history."

But which values? "Honesty" and "accountability" may well help avert crises. "Drive to succeed" and "innovativeness," though they're wonderful things, may generate those very crises in the first place.

Little wonder, then, that corporate executives find values confusing. Fortunately, there's a solution, tucked into the report's phrase "business ethics and conduct." Those two terms, often taken together, are profoundly different. Each needs its own code for expression. The truly ethical values — the ones that, if violated, would cause anyone around the world to exclaim, "That's just plain wrong!" — are the five universals. Philosophers call them "terminal values" — virtues that are in and of themselves good. Beyond that, corporations need codes of conduct. That's where such words as "drive," "excellence," "innovation," "success," "commitment," and "perseverance" can show up. Philosophers call them "instrumental values" -- only useful as

instruments to getting somewhere else, and only good if the ends they serve are good.

Without such distinctions, pity the poor executives. They've been told that if they live by their values, they'll create good companies. Then they're presented with this potpourri that, according to this survey, actually inhibits corporate codes. No wonder they turn skeptical. The simple step of separating codes of ethics from codes of conduct, and insisting that the latter never be implemented without the former, would save us from some damaging ambiguities -- and some budding Enrons.

Words from the Wise?

We all know that culture is not what we say, but what we do. But at times the *spoken word* is worth repeating:



"In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock." — Thomas Jefferson

"...the ethics of a leader largely depends on how he or she gets, distributes, and exercises power and influence." — Joanne B. Ciulla, *The Ethics of Leadership*

"Good people don't need laws to tell them to act responsibly, while bad people will find a way around the laws." — Plato

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Increasing organizational effectiveness by helping organizations discover their shared values and linking those values to critical business competencies