

## Leadership Tips March 2006

# This Month's Topic: Value Based Leadership Creating a Vision • Part 2

**Dr. Marilyn Manning and The Consulting Team, LLC**

*(Feel free to forward this e-mail or use it for a team discussion.)*

Values are the standards and principles upon which behaviors and decisions are made. A true value is not something we are willing to compromise. Values affect our actions and choices. They establish how we expect to be treated and how we treat our customers and employees.

Values affect actions and decisions and establish how we expect to be treated. They provide a sense of continuity by creating common interests. Because values are tied to your belief system, they form the bedrock of your moral system. As such, they create meaning in your business and life and provide guidance on how to treat others.

"If employees know what their organization stands for, what standards they are to uphold, then they are much more likely to make decisions that support those standards. They are also more likely to feel as if they are an important part of the organization. They are motivated because life in the organization has meaning for them." Deal & Kennedy – *Corporate Cultures*

I highly recommend that a thoughtful value process be conducted before writing a strategic plan. Every employee in your company already has a set of values that they live by. Values are very intrinsic and personal. If you can hold some meaningful dialog about values, you begin to see where employee priorities lie. By aligning employee and company values, you build an environment that is congruent. You build loyalty. We all want to work in places that reflect our personal values. For example, a perfectionist engineer who values high quality and thoroughness will soon feel discouraged, demotivated, and become unproductive working for someone who values quantity above all else.

Peters and Waterman say "Figure out your value system. Decide what your company stands for. Every excellent company we studied takes the process of value shaping seriously."

Holding company-wide value discussions, as highlighted in Step 1, will help to form your value system.

### **STEP 1: Hold Company Wide Values Discussions**

- Design an appropriate list of values (at least 30)
- Distribute to all personnel to prioritize
- Identify top priority values
- Train leaders in facilitation skills or use an outside facilitator
- Hold facilitated team discussions to define importance of top values

### **STEP 2: Develop a Code of Behavior**

- Discuss behavioral expectations based on the values of the organization
- Gain consensus on a company code of behavior
- Be very specific and make behaviors measurable
- Discuss consequences for broken agreements

### STEP 3: Values and Ethics

- Publish your vision, values, and mission statement
- Act according to your published values
- Conduct ethical awareness training for employees
- Clearly define policies and lines of responsibility
- Encourage open discussion of all subjects, especially controversial ones
- Weigh all decisions against your published vision, values, and mission to ensure consistency

Here is an example of a value-based vision statement:

*"We will strive to insure that the City of \_\_\_\_\_ is a safe, clean, prosperous, well governed city, in which the citizens are involved in the decision making process."*

Each leader and each team can define their own expectations. How will they put their values into play? What procedures can they agree to? How will they distribute responsibilities? How will meetings be conducted? What will be the lines of communication? How do problems get resolved?

The results of a recent survey of American managers show that clearly articulated organizational values do make a significant difference in the lives of employees, as well as in performance. Values are the bedrock of all company cultures. Working globally, values become even more important to understand and respect. Paying attention to values, discussing them, and honoring them can build teams and prevent unnecessary conflict.

Vision, values, and mission form a firm a basis on which you can build your business. It is important to communicate your vision, values, and mission to everyone involved in your business. Employees can better see how their actions contribute to the overall organization. Suppliers can suggest products and services that better meet your needs. Your board of advisors and mentors can make more meaningful recommendations. Your customers can appreciate what you stand for and can support you.

Remember, to reinforce a value-based culture for your business or team, try the steps outlined in this article. Conduct your internal and external environmental scan, assess your stakeholders, and gain consensus on the organizational values through a meaningful process.

### Getting Help

Whether you are a seasoned executive, or if you are just starting out there is no greater skill than being able to recognize that you may need help. Visioning and Strategic Planning take committment and dedication. Let us help you out.

Check out our **Strategic Planning** and **Leadership Coaching** services to see how we can assist you in your work.

Take a moment to take our FREE **Strategic Planning Checkup**.

### Related Assessments

In addition to our services we offer some products that will help you to understand how you are as

a leader.

### **DiSC® Classic Profile**

*DiSC Classic* has 30 years of proven reliability and over 40 million users, and remains the most trusted learning instrument in the industry. It is used worldwide in dozens of training and coaching applications, including organizational development and performance improvement. *DiSC Classic* can help improve communication, ease frustration and conflict, and develop effective managers and teams. **Get it Now**

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### **Complimentary Articles**

Want more tips from Dr. Manning?

We have many of her articles available on our **website**.

Below are just a few of the articles that are available for free:

*Are Visions Useful?*

*Coaching for Change: A Blueprint for Leadership Success*

*Dealing with Stress in the Face of Change*

*Seven Difficult Personality Types and How to Deal with Them*

*Meetings. Bloody Meetings!*

*How to Build Customer service from the Inside Out*

### **About Dr. Marilyn Manning**

Dr. Marilyn Manning, CSP, CMC, the founder and CEO of The Consulting Team, LLC, and international author of seven business books, resolves difficult people problems. She specializes in interactive speeches, workshops, and consulting in the areas of Leadership, Teamwork, Conflict Mediation, Executive Coaching, Meeting Facilitation, Strategic Planning, and Communication. 82% of Dr. Manning's work is repeat business. For more information about Dr. Manning and The Consulting Team, LLC go to **www.theconsultingteam.com**.

### **Drawing**

Send us an e-mail to [admin@theconsultingteam.com](mailto:admin@theconsultingteam.com), describing your favorite "Leadership Tip" by April 1st, 2006 and your name will be entered in a drawing to win a copy of Dr. Manning's latest book, *Developing as a Professional*.

**Next Month**

Our next issue will focus on 360° Coaching.

**About Leadership Tips**

Leadership Tips is a monthly newsletter aimed to help individuals deal with the difficult issues they face in today's busy and often hectic work environment. We deal with topics such as conflict, anger and stress management, team building, change management, how to become a better communicator, and how to developing leadership skills. To view past and present Leadership Tips newsletters go to **Newsletters**.

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