

HOW TO CREATE STRATEGIC GROWTH-ORIENTED VALUES

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Many companies have an old set of value statements, written by a founder or previous management team. These values might hang on the wall or be pasted into collateral. Whether these speak of the priority of the customer and providing service or of treating others with respect, there are a few steps any management team can take to make this essential element of strategy more impactful and to fuel accelerated growth.

Do you have conflict in your workplace and/or is growth not as fast as it could be? What is the cost of conflict on productivity and effectiveness?

Most conflict in the workplace can be traced back to a lack of understanding or enforcement around company values. To have values work as a tool for improving teamwork and reducing conflict, have your team answer two questions each year. An all “hands on deck” exercise can help to reinforce the desired attitudes and actions.

The two key questions are: How do employees and customers want to be treated in the workplace? And how will we deal with it when someone doesn’t live up to these values?

Since people tend to support what they help to create, everyone should have input into these answers.

To supercharge the values in an organization, and transform them into strategic growth-oriented values, we also need to ask teams two other questions: How should we conduct our work, work with each other and customers? What kind of environment do we need to foster in our company, in our work and in our relationships in order to absolutely maximize your joy in the workplace as well as the growth rate, profitability and stability of this company?

Have every employee openly discuss the top traits, qualities, ways, habits, environments,

attitudes...i.e., values, that are needed to live and work by, and list this out. The list will usually have several dozen potential values.

Then ask each individual to privately list out the top six of those values that they feel are the highest priority values that will most accelerate growth and improve satisfaction, happiness and profitability in the workplace. Next, have employees team up in twos and agree on a top six values together, then repeat the same process in teams of four, then eight etc. until the entire team has come up with what they have prioritized and agreed on as a list of the top six to 10 or so values that will create the optimum environment.

As facilitators, we conduct a similar process around the question, “How will we deal with it when one of us doesn’t live up to our value statements?” This is a much tougher but more important question, and yet key to ensuring that the values become the reality.

Depending on time, the group or a committee could work on also building working definitions of each value, and perhaps examples. The final document can be printed on a poster and ceremoniously signed by the entire team.

Leadership should regularly and publically recognize employees being good examples of walking the values.

Most teambuilding exercises like rope courses and falling backwards into your co-workers’ arms are a waste of time compared to having the team create growth-oriented values and strategic growth objectives that will work to accelerate growth. These exercises help to Create Emotional Ownership, the “C.E.O.” of your growth-oriented culture. We’ve seen this process double the size of companies while making for a much happier workplace. Are you ready to grow? **AG**

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