

A VALUES COACH SPECIAL REPORT

The Business Case for Values Training

The Why and How of Formal Values Training

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Values Coach Inc.

**Transforming People through the Power of Values
Transforming Organizations through the Power of People™**

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I. Executive Summary

“Leaders are defined by their values and their character. The values of the authentic leader are shaped by personal beliefs, developed through study, introspection, and consultation with others – and a lifetime of experience.”

Bill George: Authentic Leadership

New tools will be required to help organizations face the challenges of the early 21st century. The left brain techniques of the past 20 years or so (reengineering, downsizing, restructuring, six sigma, customer service scripting, and so forth) have in many cases reached a point of diminishing returns, and in some cases have actually become counterproductive. More than ever, to sustain a thriving organization in the uncertain, rapidly-changing, and hyper-competitive environment of today will require an investment in people.

This Values Coach special report outlines the benefits of implementing a formalized program of training in *personal* values, and then describes some of the most important lessons we’ve learned from conducting such training over the past decade. The report concludes with comments about calculating the return on investment of such training. Based upon our experience working with hospitals and other industries across North America, we believe the most effective investment an organization can make is helping people achieve *their* personal and professional goals by living their values. This investment will be essential for the transition from the paradigm that has dominated the past half-century to the paradigm that is most likely to be successful in the years to come.

20th Century Paradigm

Accountability

Creating value

Hardwiring processes

Focus on symptoms

Obsession with numbers

Left brain dominant

21st Century Paradigm

Ownership

Promoting values

Softwiring passion and creativity

Focus on underlying causes

Obsession with people

Right brain – left brain balance

Attachment 1 of this special report includes an overview of the Values Coach course on *The Twelve Core Action Values*, which is a comprehensive and systematic curriculum on values-based life and leadership skills.

II. Transforming people, transforming organizations

In their book *Strategy Maps: Converting Intangible Assets into Tangible Outcomes*, Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton write that improvements in learning and growth are “leading indicators” for changes in the internal processes that bring about customer satisfaction and retention that in turn are responsible for future financial results. But learning and growth themselves are often predicated upon personal values, as reflected in such things as strength of character, attitudes and motivation, loyalty and commitment. In the end, leaders don’t really transform organizations, leaders transform people (or more precisely, help people transform themselves). One of the most effective ways of doing this is teaching those people practical skills and strategies for living their values, for becoming their best selves. Once a critical mass of people have begun that transformation, they cannot but help to have a transformative effect on the organization.

Why personal values matter to organizations

“We know from our research that the people who are clearest about their [own personal] vision and values are significantly more committed to their organizations than are those who are not clear about their [own personal] vision and values.”

James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner: A Leader's Legacy

Gallup's Employee Engagement Index puts the percentage of truly “engaged” employees at 29%, with 54% rated as “not engaged” and fully 17% being “actively disengaged.” Gallup has also found that a lack of engagement at work is positively correlated with an unhappy home life. This failure to engage is enormously costly to our organizations and our society (Gallup puts the national cost that more than \$300 billion annually), but it also represents a tragic waste of human potential. This epidemic of “Dilbert Disease” is reflected more broadly in the western culture of mindless self indulgence – where obesity is the fastest-growing disease entity, gambling is the fastest-growing industry, and debt is the fastest-growing item on our balance sheets. There is no quick fix for the problems of employee non-engagement (or the culture of mindless self indulgence). Pep rallies and customer service training programs (complete with happy face pins) won't do it. Ultimately, the only solution might be to teach people how to clarify and act upon their core values (no, we did not learn everything we need to know in kindergarten), and then to share the tools and the support they need to live those values. It's the right thing to do for our organizations; it's the right thing to do for our world.

The problem and the opportunity

No problem ever presents itself without also presenting a corresponding opportunity. The biggest problems facing corporations, hospitals, and other organizations today are multi-factorial. The causes are many and complex, and in many cases they will need to be attacked on multiple fronts. Some of the most significant problems are caused by a failure of values, or a failure to gain collective buy-in to shared values. That's why values training is not just “touchy-feely soft stuff,” but rather is central to the very heart of the organization.

The problem

- Many of the left brain management techniques of the past several decades – just-in-time processing, corporate restructuring, de-layerization, six sigma, customer service scripting, and so forth – are reaching a point of diminishing returns. These left brain techniques can help create a good organization, but it takes right brain qualities to build a great organization.
- The biggest challenge most organizations will face in the years to come is recruiting and retaining great people, and these people (especially in the younger generations) are increasingly demanding more from their jobs than a title and a paycheck: they want a worthy challenge and work that gives them personal meaning.
- When employees fail to make the connection between taking responsibility for living their personal values and the accomplishment of organizational objectives, those organizations run the risk of falling short on promises made to customers, or worse, failing to meet ethical or legal standards.
- In recent years, a number of books have been published on the subject of why people derail in their careers and why organizations crash shortly after reaching the pinnacle of apparent success; in virtually every case, at least one factor was a failure to have acted upon core values.

The opportunity

The path to greatness is paved with right brain qualities, including such virtues as passion, courage, loyalty, and commitment. You cannot buy these qualities with a paycheck, and people will not develop them to please the boss or increase the wealth of shareholders. They spring from deeply held personal values. Helping people connect with those personal values is one of the most important investments any organization can make any achievement of its goals.

III. The Benefits of Values Training

“We are struck by the explicit attention [excellent companies] pay to values.”

Tom Peters and Bob Waterman: In Search of Excellence

At Values Coach, we often hear some variation of this question: “Why should we teach values? We’re a (fill in the blank: business, hospital, government agency, etc.), not a kindergarten class. Shouldn’t we be able to expect that people come to us with good values already in place?” Actually, it’s true that most people *do* intuitively have good values. But it is the rare individual who has put much thought into exactly what those values are, much less what they can do on a daily basis to more effectively live those values. In this section of the special report, we’ll consider some of the reasons why an organization should make the investment in values training; in the subsequent section we’ll describe some of the most important lessons we’ve learned about how to conduct a successful values training initiative. First, though, let’s define what we mean by “value.” Here’s our definition:

Core Value (noun): A deeply-internalized philosophical code that serves as a personal guide for goal-setting, decision-making, conflict resolution, and more generally how one lives one’s life.

By this definition, core values are more than mere beliefs; it’s one thing to believe that poverty is a bad thing, and quite another to work toward alleviating the suffering caused by poverty.

Benefit #1: Moving beyond employee satisfaction

“Leaders of successful organizations make sure their followers are proud to be part of the company. For this to happen, the followers as individuals, and the organization as a whole, must have values in common.”

Larry R. Donnithorne: The West Point Way of Leadership

Most organizations conduct periodic employee satisfaction surveys. While this is certainly a good thing to do, most such surveys do not address the three most important variables necessary for having an enthusiastic and dedicated workforce: pride, connection, and trust (these are the key variables identified by the Great Place to Work Institute). And these three things all spring from believing in and acting upon core values.

Pride: Organizations that have made the proverbial leap “from good to great” are staffed with people who take pride in both the organization and in their profession. Encouraging this pride can be difficult, for at least two reasons. First, there is often negative peer pressure to not be an over-achiever, an apple-polisher, or a quota-buster. That’s one reason why we strongly encourage the graduates of our Spark Plug classes to stay together as a group after the training. Second, it’s difficult for people who have a poor self-image and low self-esteem to feel pride in themselves and their work. That’s why our training includes practical skills and strategies for dealing with negative self-talk, and for countering the negativity of others.

Connection: It’s important that people feel a sense of connection with each other, and with the work itself. This connectedness is most vital during times of stress and uncertainty; ironically, though, that is exactly when it is most difficult to cultivate and sustain. That’s why the best time to build bridges with values is always “now.” One of the sentinel benefits of formal values training is that it helps to forge a stronger sense of connection with the organization and its mission, and with fellow coworkers.

Trust: We’re sometimes asked why “trust” does not appear as one of the 60 modules in our advanced course on *The Twelve Core Action Values*. Our response is that trust is not a value, it’s an outcome; trust is earned by living values. Furthermore, mistrust and suspicion often spring from inner conditions rather than objective assessment of reality. People who don’t trust themselves (because of poor self-image and low self-esteem) find it difficult to trust others. In addition to building trust by promoting a shared set of personal values, our course curriculum includes many tools and techniques for building the self-trust that is essential to promoting trust between people.

The paradox of putting “personal” into values

When people share common values (such as those in *The Twelve Core Action Values*), and an understanding of how those values should be reflected in their attitudes and in their behaviors (as prescribed in the 48 Cornerstones that put the action into those twelve values), it can “depersonalize” the organization in very positive and important ways. Instead of being based on ego and personal ambition, goal-setting and budget development can be performed with the common interest in mind. Instead of seeking to blame others when problems arise, values-centered people look for failures of the system. And when it comes to dealing with conflict, values-centered people have the courage to confront underlying causes without confronting each other, and to respond with wisdom rather than reacting to emotion.

Benefit #2: Aligning personal values with organizational goals

“Identifying the core values that define your organization is one of the most important functions of leadership. The success or failure of this process can literally make or break an organization.”

Ken Blanchard: The Heart of a Leader

Motivational speaker Zig Ziglar says that everyone listens to the same radio station – WIIFM, or *What’s In It For Me?* One of the most important benefits of values training is creating a strong sense of alignment between organizational goals and personal values. Helping people connect with personal values (such as those included in *The Twelve Core Action Values* course) – *because it is in their own personal and professional interest to do so* – is one of the best ways to establish the behavioral expectations that lead to the organization’s desired outcomes. When people are clear about the *personal* benefits of living the behavioral expectations required of those core values, the organization is more likely to achieve its desired outcomes. Here are several additional examples drawn from our experiences:

Organization’s desired outcome: Higher productivity

Behavioral expectation: Prioritization of key tasks

Personal benefit: Better management of personal time and money

Core value: Focus (Cornerstones: target, concentration, speed, momentum)

Organization’s desired outcome: Superior customer service

Behavioral expectation: Cheerful and respectful communications

Personal benefit: A more positive outlook, better health, and a happier home life

Core value: Enthusiasm (Cornerstones: attitude, energy, curiosity, humor)

Organization’s desired outcome: Enhanced patient satisfaction scores

Behavioral expectation: Careful and attentive observation

Personal benefit: Heightened emotional equanimity and spiritual peace

Core value: Awareness (Cornerstones: mindfulness, objectivity, empathy, reflection)

The most effective way to achieve organizational goals is to begin with the desired outcome in mind, then to create a focus on the behaviors required to achieve that outcome, and the personal incentive for people to enact those behaviors. And the best way to motivate people to take action is to link the behaviors to deeply-held personal values. One of the exercises we conduct in the course of a Strategic Values Initiative is to create a matrix correlating the *personal* values that are taught in our course on *The Twelve Core Action Values* with the key goals of the client organization. This helps us to define appropriate behavioral expectations in such a way as to gain employee buy-in, because those expected attitudes and behaviors are linked to values important to them personally.

Benefit #3: Personal values reinforce corporate culture

“At the organizational level... values help define both the organization’s uniqueness and the direction in which it wants to move.”

Harold J. Leavitt: Corporate Pathfinders

Culture is the fabric of your values, philosophy, practices and customs that define how you do what you do, and that shape the emotional and spiritual environment in which you do what you do; it’s the observable manifestation of its values and identity – including the way you do business and what customers feel when they do business with you. Culture is also the only sustainable source of competitive advantage. Everything else can be copied (business models, pricing and promotion strategies, etc.) or stolen (people being recruited away, etc.). *Culture is to the organization what personality and character are to the individual.* And if, as the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, character is destiny for the individual, then for the organization culture is destiny.

Every organization, no matter what size, has a culture; the question is whether this culture has been consciously cultivated or has evolved spontaneously and haphazardly. It is a common misconception that culture is not amenable to leadership influence; there are many examples of massive and rapid changes being made, for better or worse. And this is perhaps the most important point: every organization is really a patchwork quilt of many cultures. In the best organizations, there are a few overarching themes that define the organization, which are then woven into the subculture of each different unit. This means that not only does the CEO have an influence on corporate culture, so does every other manager in the organization – again, for better or worse. One of the benefits of successful values training is that it can help an organization move from a culture of accountability to a culture of ownership. While accountability is vital, it also implies that someone else is looking over the worker’s shoulder, holding their feet to the fire (think about that metaphor!). Ownership, on the other hand, means that the worker is holding himself or herself accountable.

Benefit #4: Shared values help eradicate toxic emotional negativity

“When someone dumps their toxic feelings on us – explodes in anger or threats, shows disgust or contempt – they activate in us circuitry for those very same distressing emotions. Their act has potent neurological consequences: emotions are contagious... Like secondhand smoke, the leakage of emotions can make a bystander an innocent victim of someone else’s toxic state.”

Daniel Goleman: Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relations

The emotional environment of the workplace is typically defined by two things: what you say you expect (e.g. in values statements, job descriptions, performance appraisals, and the like), and what you tolerate. Over time, what you tolerate will dominate what you say you expect. That is why it’s so essential to establish *and enforce* behavioral expectations that reify the organization’s values. Based upon our anecdotal observational studies, we project that between ten and fifteen percent (10-15%) of all paid hours in the typical organization are lost in the swamp of toxic emotional negativity – complaining and commiserating, criticizing and finger-pointing, gossiping and rumor-mongering. As Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi points out in his book *The Evolving Self: A Psychology for the New Millennium*, unless it is being consciously structured, the human mind automatically gravitates toward negative, frightening, and depressing thoughts.

The emotional climate of a workplace is one of the most important determinants of whether people truly feel engaged in the work itself, or are simply going through the motions for a paycheck. Unfortunately, a small number of negative people can poison a workplace the way one or two smokers quickly fill a room with toxic cigarette smoke. It was once commonplace for people to be allowed to smoke almost everywhere – cafeteria, hospital patient care units, staff lounges, even airplanes. Today, the world has changed profoundly; someone caught smoking on an airplane would quickly meet the air marshal! Considering that toxic emotional negativity is as corrosive to the soul as cigarette smoke is to the body (indeed, recent research documents that it is also corrosive to physical health), it’s clearly a leadership duty to clear the emotional air. And especially in healthcare, there is a special obligation to not tolerate iatrogenic negativity – the transference of toxic emotional negativity from staff to patients.

One of the things we always cover in our Strategic Values Initiatives is *The Pickle Challenge* and *The Pickle Pledge* (named after the look on the face of the chronically-negative individual who look like they're sucking on a dill pickle). Many organizations have added their own special touch to *The Pickle Challenge*. At West Central, for example, The Grump Fund was established to benefit an employee with a serious family health issue. Everyone caught complaining (or who caught him or herself complaining) contributed a quarter to the fund (kept, appropriately enough, in a pickle jar). It was a lighthearted way to help people be more aware of their own inner negativity, and how it made them and the people around them feel.



Benefit #5: Values training helps recruit and retain people for whom values really matter

“People do not quit a mission; they only quit a job. People do not lead a community, they only leave an organization. People do not desert a leader, they only desert a boss.”

Joe Tye: Honey and Glue – 50 Great Ideas to Find and Keep Great People

Experts are using terms like “impending crisis” and “meltdown” to describe workforce shortages that will come about in the next 5-10 years as a consequence of mass retirement in the baby boom generation. While every industry will struggle with recruiting and retention issues, no industry will be effected as seriously as healthcare, where shortages of nurses and other professional and technical workers is projected to become even more severe than it has been in the past. Hospitals and other organizations are going to need to take every measure possible to attract, and then earn the loyalty of, good people. Gaining a reputation as an organization that takes values seriously can create a significant source of competitive advantage in the job markets, and promote loyalty once people have come on board. Research by the late Roger Herman and his colleagues (in their book *Impending Crisis: Too Many Jobs, Too Few People*) shows a straight-line relationship between how effectively an organization has framed and communicated its values and employee loyalty.

Benefit #6: Values promote respect and dignity in the workplace

In one of our Spark Plug training sessions at a hospital which serves a substantial Native American population, I mentioned the way that Mary Kay Ash used to tell her beauty consultants to visualize the letters MMFI tattooed across people’s foreheads, for *Make Me Feel Important*. One of our Spark Plugs, himself a Native American, went back to the emergency department, where he was a unit clerk, and called a staff meeting (for an explanation of how a unit clerk empowers himself to call a staff meeting, read *The Self-Empowerment Pledge* below). He asked his colleagues if, when “a drunk Indian” came in on a Friday night, they made him feel important. The answer, of course, was no. Then he asked why that Indian drank. The answer, of course, was that he drinks because he doesn’t feel important.

The young man pointed out that treating the symptoms in such a way as to contribute to the underlying disease was malpractice. So they placed a sign up on the inside of the ED door with the letters MMFI as a constant reminder that every person who came through that door was a human being with a (probably hurting) soul, not just a broken body, and needed to be treated with dignity and respect. Over time, this reminder to treat patients with respect and dignity regardless of their circumstances began to influence the staff to treat *each other* with greater respect and dignity. And because the emergency department touches so many other departments within the hospital, this began to have a positive influence on the entire organization. The primary reason that it was so effective is that the intervention was rooted in the value of Awareness (Core Action Value #3) and the associated Cornerstone of Empathy.

Benefit #7: Values bring down silo walls and foster a spirit of community

Shared values lie at the very heart of civilization, of what it means to be a community. The simple act of getting people to think about what their true values are, and to discuss these values and what they mean for our mutual expectations, is a powerful community-building exercise. When people discuss how their *personal* values relate to the goals of their organizations, it creates a stronger bond of ownership and participation. One of the things that we have discovered in our Values Coach training initiatives is that, as important as the curriculum is, the process can be just as important. When a critical mass of Spark Plugs take real ownership for *The Twelve Core Action Values*, they almost always help to bring down the “silo walls” that divide most organizations, and in the process foster a greater spirit of community.

Benefit #8: Values training promotes ethical behavior

Clarifying values helps you prepare for situations where there is no “right” answer, and whatever decision is made violates one value by honoring another. For example, many people at Enron honored “loyalty” by looking the other way at dishonesty, or by engaging in dishonest practices themselves, to the great detriment of the company and its customers and employees. Performance cornerstones transform your values from mere good intentions into behavioral expectations. Again citing Enron, that company included the word “integrity” in its statement of values, but it was clearly just a word, not a commitment. Had the company’s leadership actually specified the *observable behaviors* that constitute integrity, the company’s implosion would probably have been prevented. The reaction of Johnson & Johnson to the Tylenol poisoning crisis, on the other hand, offers a textbook case of ethical decision-making. What made this possible is that *long before* the crisis hit, the company had engaged people in training programs on The J&J Credo, the company’s statement of values; when the crisis came, the ethical response was almost pre-programmed.

Benefit #9: Values are inherently motivating

“It’s easy to forget what the measurements [that we make in our organizations] are measuring. Every number – from productivity rates to salaries – is just a device contrived by people to measure the results of the enterprise of other people. For managers, the most important job is not measurement but motivation. And you can’t motivate numbers.”

James A. Autry: Love and Profit: The Art of Caring Leadership

One of the main reasons so many “customer service” programs fail to have a sustained impact is that they don’t give people a personal stake in the outcome. Giving someone a happy face pin and a script to parrot (“May I help you? I love to help our customers.”) will not necessarily motivate them to be more enthusiastic in serving your customers. On the other hand, if you can convince them that being more enthusiastic will help them be more effective parents and happier human beings, they will almost assuredly bring that new enthusiasm to work with them, resulting in more enthusiastic customer service (even without the script and the happy face pin).

Benefit #10: Values are a source of toughness and resilience for adversity

“At some point each of us has to discover that our self-interest is better served by doing good work than getting good things. The more our job and our survival is on the line, the easier it is to make this discovery. In this way hard times are an ally.”

Peter Block: Stewardship: Choosing Service Over Self-Interest

Nobody enjoys adversity, but as Harold Kushner so cogently reminded us, bad things do happen to good people. Having a solid core of values is essential to transforming adversity into advantage. Someone with a solid connection to core values uses adversity as the catalyst for introspection and action rather than whining and playing the role of the victim. In our courses on values-based life and leadership skills, we promote the concept of contrarian toughness – taking pride in your ability to bounce back from every setback stronger and more determined than ever to prevail. And when an entire organization is staffed by people with an attitude of contrarian toughness, it is likely to survive and thrive, whatever the economy, the market, or the

competition throws at it. During those most difficult times, Courage (Core Action Value #4) and Perseverance (Core Action Value #5) are often the primary difference between winning and losing.

Benefit #11: Values are a catalyst for the learning organization

In his book *Worry: Controlling It and Using It Wisely*, Dr. Edward M. Hallowell, wrote that the most serious and damaging, and by far the most common, learning disability is simple fear. When people are afraid of being ridiculed or rejected, afraid of failing, afraid of looking stupid or ignorant, they end up trapped in their comfort zones, trapped in their cubicles. They are unwilling to ask the sorts of questions that lead to creative breakthroughs, afraid to stick their necks out by offering wild and crazy ideas or challenging stupid ideas being championed by people with greater perceived status and power in the organization. People who are acting from a core foundation of values, on the other hand, are more likely to take the risks that are required to explore, to learn, and to create. In our courses on *The Twelve Core Action Values*, as one example, we teach people to transform fears into problems, because solving problems promotes asking questions and seeking answers; and, as we say, it's easier to solve a problem than it is to conquer fear.

Benefit #12: Values promote productivity and stewardship

“By observing the behavior of a production floor employee or a senior executive, you can tell what the organization values and how it chooses to do its work.”

Margaret J. Wheatley: Leadership and the New Science

Values training might well be the last frontier for raising productivity. American organizations have squeezed about as much as they can out of restructuring, downsizing, TQM, and all the other left brain management programs that have been popularized in recent decades. In today's world, the greatest leverage will come from capitalizing upon right brain qualities, not left brain quantities. You often hear executives talking about moving their organizations “from good to great.” What is missing in many of these conversations is recognition that it requires right brain qualities such as passion, courage, loyalty, and enthusiasm to achieve and sustain greatness.

Formal values training can promote productivity (and subsequent profitability) in at least two ways. First, do you recall the figure quoted above that our observational studies suggest that 10-15% of all paid hours in the typical organization are wasted on toxic emotional negativity? What if those hours could be converted to productive activity? And not only that, imagine how much more productive the other 85-90% of time already (hopefully!) devoted to productive activity would be if people weren't being dragged into and down by the negativity of coworkers. Second, moving from a culture of accountability (left brain) to a culture of ownership (right brain) encourages people to treat the organization's resources as carefully as they would treat their own.

Benefit #13: Values training is essential to leadership development

“Adding value to a person is much more than personal promotion or organizational improvement... It is the enrichment of people's quality of life. It is the expansion of their life purpose and capabilities. People development is life-changing for everyone involved.”

John C. Maxwell: Developing the Leaders Around You

In today's complex and fast-changing world, organizations need leadership in every corner, not just in the corner office. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons (including a history of top-down command-and-control leadership in corporate America and the natural human tendency to remain within a perceived comfort zone), many leaders are frustrated with the difficulty they have encouraging people to take up the leadership challenge. One of the things we have discovered in our travels is that formal values training helps to uncover what we call “leaders in hiding.” The young unit clerk who reminded his coworkers to make their patients feel important (described above) one of many examples we've seen of people who, as a result of acting upon their values, begins to discover and uncover their own leadership abilities. As we say at Values Coach, *management is a job description; leadership is a life decision*. It is a way of looking at the world, of asking better questions, and of making the commitment to take the initiative when changes are needed.

Benefit #14: Values training fosters an empowering environment

The opposite of empowerment is helplessness. More than any of us care to admit, our sense of helplessness, of powerlessness, is often self-imposed. We are suffering from what psychologists call “learned helplessness.” Unfortunately, learned helplessness almost always transmogrifies into something more sinister: anxious paralysis, malignant apathy, or both. Notwithstanding the dozens of books that have been written on the subject of empowerment in recent years, the fact is that empowerment cannot be given, it can only be claimed. It is impossible to “empower” a person who is not empowerable, and in any event loaned empowerment is not the real thing. One of the resources we use is *The Self-Empowerment Pledge*, which includes seven simple promises that help people become more effective goal-setters and team players. When we share *The Pledge* (as we do at virtually every opportunity), we ask people to consider these two questions: 1) Would you be better off in five years – personally, professionally, financially and spiritually – if you were to make and keep these seven promises to yourself? The answer is universally a resounding “Yes!” 2) Would your organization be more positive and productive place to work if everyone were to make a good faith effort to make and keep these promises? Again, the answer is always “Absolutely!”



THE SELF EMPOWERMENT PLEDGE

Seven Simple Promises That Will Change Your Life

Monday's Promise: Responsibility
I will take complete responsibility for my health, my happiness, my success, and my life, and will not blame others for my problems or predicaments.

Tuesday's Promise: Accountability
I will not allow low self-esteem, self-limiting beliefs, or the negativity of others to prevent me from achieving my authentic goals and from becoming the person I am meant to be.

Wednesday's Promise: Determination
I will do the things I'm afraid to do, but which I know should be done. Sometimes this will mean asking for help to do that which I cannot do by myself.

Thursday's Promise: Contribution
I will earn the help I need in advance by helping other people now, and repay the help I receive by serving others later.

Friday's Promise: Resilience
I will face rejection and failure with courage, awareness, and perseverance, making these experiences the platform for future acceptance and success.

Saturday's Promise: Perspective
Though I might not understand why adversity happens, by my conscious choice I will find strength, compassion, and grace through my trials.

Sunday's Promise: Faith
My faith and my gratitude for all that I have been blessed with will shine through in my attitudes and in my actions.

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Benefit #15: People are seeking more from their work than a paycheck

“The search for morals and meaning at work, as well as the desire to experience the peace and purpose of the Sacred in the stressful world of business, are ‘inner’ truths, alive in the hearts of millions of people. These internal realities profoundly influence people’s behavior... These inner truths are our values – and they play a crucial role in change.”

Patricia Aburdene: Megatrends 2010: The Rise of Conscious Capitalism

As mentioned above, in the next five years or so, most organizations will face serious challenges with recruiting and retention. These challenges will be most severe when it comes to finding and keeping people with specialized skills and talents, and those with a solid track record of high performance. These people will have many options from which to choose, and for many one of the criteria will be the extent to which the employing organization shares and honors their values. Thus, making a serious investment in values training can help an organization become recognized as the employer of choice for people for whom values really matter.

IV. The “How” of Values Training

“The challenge of values is not to negotiate the importance of one over another, but to act on them. The quality of feeling alive comes when we act on our values, and find a way to bring our own model or strategy for better organizations and communities into the world.”

Peter Block: The Answer to How is Yes

In the years that Values Coach has been conducting training on values-based life and leadership skills, we’ve learned some important lessons in how to assure a real and lasting impact, both in the lives of individual participants and on the organization. Whether you are conducting a values initiative based upon your organization’s values (along the lines of the course that we worked with Auto-Owners Insurance to develop) or based upon personal values (such as those included in our course on *The Twelve Core Action Values*) many of the principles are the same.

Important: Do not go through the charade of parading out a values initiative if you do not intend to scrupulously adhere to those values, and hold people accountable for performing in accordance with those values. Telling the world, and your own employees, that you will honor values and then not doing it is worse than not talking about values at all. Remember, Enron had the words “integrity,” “respect,” and “dignity” in its written values statement, and today is most remembered for the vast gulf between what its leaders said and what they actually did.

Get the words right

Ultimately, a statement of values is a declaration about what you stand for and what you won’t stand for. This is true for both an organizational statement of values and a personal set of values. In developing *The Twelve Core Action Values* course, for example, we agonized over whether to use the word “mission” or “purpose” for Core Action Value #7, and in the end chose the latter.

Distinguish between values, behaviors, and outcomes

Many values statements include a blend of values, behaviors, and outcomes. For example, “integrity” is a core value; “honesty” is a behavior; and “trust” is an outcome. There is nothing wrong with this, but understanding the interrelationship between the three can help the organization more effectively achieve its goals. If the goal is enhanced customer service, the focus should be on the behavioral expectations created by having enthusiasm as a value (Enthusiasm is Core Action Value #10 in *The Twelve Core Action Values*).

Distinguish between personal values and organizational values

Your organization no doubt values excellent customer service, but it’s pretty unlikely that any of your people go home and talk about the importance of superior customer service over the dinner table. Fostering and promoting the values that parents *will* speak with their children about over the dinner table is one of the most effective means of encouraging them to engage in the behaviors that help the organization achieve its desired outcomes.

Put it in writing

And not just on the statement of values hanging on the wall. Be creative. Think of other approaches to keep values front-and-center. One of our clients incorporated *The Twelve Core Action Values* into every job description. For Auto-Owners Insurance, we created a multimedia training program including a 110-page workbook. For West Central (one of the nation’s most innovative agricultural cooperatives and world’s largest producers of biodiesel fuel), we incorporated both the company’s organizational cornerstones and *The Twelve Core Action Values* into a fictionalized history of the organization entitled *The Farmer*.

Take the indirect approach

Military historian B.H. Liddell-Hart demonstrated that in battle, the general who takes the indirect approach rather than assaulting the enemy head-on is almost always victorious. The indirect approach almost always

yields the greatest results in values training as well. In our experience, CEOs who introduce values training as “a gift” from the organization to its people as a way of helping them in their own personal and professional lives will achieve a much greater impact than the CEO who is asking them to live their values for the customer, the boss, or the shareholders.

Give your people something to crow about

Use values training as a means of fostering pride in the organization. Pride is more important than a paycheck when it comes to promoting loyalty. Pride is the difference between answering that icebreaker question with “I’m a nurse in the Peace Corps” or “I’m an executive at Enron.” We know that many of our Spark Plug graduates actually include that experience on their resumes.

Specify behavioral expectations

This is where the rubber hits the road. It’s the difference between values that are commitments and values that are just good intentions. For example, if “honesty” is included in a values statement (honesty is the first cornerstone of Integrity, which is Core Action Value #2 of *The Twelve Core Action Values*), people should know specifically what that means in their daily job performance. What does it mean to be honest in giving a performance appraisal? What would honesty dictate if one were involved in a conversation involving gossip and rumors?

Prepare in advance for the inevitable values conflicts

One of the reasons that corporations like Enron crashed was that many people got stuck in a double bind where they could honor one value – loyalty – but only at the expense of dishonoring another value – honesty. Every parent who has been told that his or her child needs “tough love” is placed in an analogous position. These tough choices are inevitable; thinking about how to make them ahead of time helps people not become their own worst enemies at crunch time.

Make values integral to your training process

Values – at both the personal and organizational level – should be an integral component of your recruiting process (e.g. having people sign a statement agreeing to honor those values as a condition of even being interviewed), should be included in the orientation process, and should be the subject of ongoing training.

Values should not be optional

Auto-Owners Insurance, a Fortune 500 company that has been a longstanding Values Coach client, has ten core values, and almost every one of their nearly 3,500 associates know all ten values by heart. The company *expects* people who work there to learn those values. By creating the expectation that people will know and live those values, by including it in the organization’s formal training programs, and by making it ubiquitous (it’s not at all unusual to see the ten core values posted in an associate’s work cubicle, even though each associate has discretion regarding what is posted on their walls), the company has created a rock-solid link between the values posted on the walls and the behaviors that are observed in the halls.

Focus values on key operating challenges

We were working with a large urban hospital that had serious staffing shortages and an excessively-high attrition rate. One of the things we did was create a custom audio CD entitled *BAU Leave*. This was a resource that the human resources department could give to any employee who submitted, or threatened to submit, a resignation. The CD asked that employee to think about their decision not in the context of money or other job-related issues, but rather in the context of their own core values, using *The Twelve Core Action Values* as the template for this introspection. Since values are a prime human motivator, bringing them to bear on the organization’s biggest challenges can bear substantial fruit.

Champion your champions

Our most successful values initiatives have been successful largely because of the enthusiasm and commitment of the Spark Plug groups. Building a critical mass of “values champions,” and supporting them with the time and resources they need, is essential to permeating the organization with values-based thinking, decision-making, and conflict resolution.

Stick with it

A values training initiative is not a quick fix for any of your organization’s problems or challenges; it is a long-term investment in the character strength and personal abilities of your people. Promoting values as the “program of the month” is substantially a waste of time and energy. This is a long-term and ongoing commitment.

Don’t buy into your own press clippings

Have you ever walked into a business establishment and read a statement to the effect that “we value our customers,” only to be greeted by a surly and preoccupied employee? It happens all the time, even in organizations that take values seriously. Every now and then, it’s helpful to have an objective outside observer help identify the gap between stated values and observed behaviors.

The Values Coach Paradox

In our work, we often find that organizations that are most acutely in need of training their people in values-based life and leadership skills are least likely to do it, while those that seem to have it all figured out are most likely to do so. The clients mentioned in this special report – Auto-Owners Insurance, Griffin Hospital, West Central – are all highly-regarded for their commitment to values and to people. And yet these are precisely the organizations that have made the most substantial commitment to values training. We believe that there is a direct cause-and-effect relationship.

V. Return on investment

“The value of... intangible assets derives from their ability to help the organization implement its strategy... Intangible assets such as knowledge and technology seldom have a direct impact on financial outcomes such as increased revenues, lowered costs, and higher profits. Improvements in intangible assets affect financial outcomes through chains of cause-and-effect relationships.”

Robert Kaplan and David Norton: Strategy Maps: Converting Intangible Assets into Tangible Outcomes

It is virtually impossible to project return on investment for something like values training. It’s not difficult to ascertain the cost of retaining an organization like Values Coach to conduct a program, and the cost of devoting people’s time to participate in that training. In our experience, that cost is a fraction of one percent of the organization’s total operating budget. What is difficult is to quantify the benefits. What is the cost-benefit of transforming one person with a contagious negative attitude into a positive and productive informal leader? What is the cost-benefit of replacing the toxic emotional negativity of complaining, finger-pointing, and rumor-mongering with the positive behaviors that reflect Enthusiasm, Faith and Service? What is the cost-benefit of one employee’s commitment to Integrity preventing a case of fraud? Furthermore, any organization that is sufficiently enlightened to conduct values training for its people is simultaneously involved in many other substantial undertakings (the way Griffin Hospital is committed to Planetree and Auto-Owners is committed to its S.O.S. – Super Outstanding Service – training). Allocating “credit” for improvements is virtually impossible.

Attachment 1: The Twelve Core Action Values

“History will judge leaders on – among other things – how well they understand the traditional framework of values, and on how they renew the tradition by adapting it to contemporary dilemmas.”

John Gardner: On Leadership

One of the first hospitals to adopt *The Twelve Core Action Values* was Griffin Hospital in Derby, Connecticut. Griffin is the flagship organization for the Planetree Alliance, an organization devoted to empowering and patient-centered healthcare. Since 1999, a number of other Planetree hospitals have followed suit, as have other organizations not affiliated with Planetree. The following quote was taken from Griffin Hospital’s statement to *Fortune* magazine in support of their application for inclusion on the roster of America’s *100 Best Companies to Work For* (Griffin has been included on that list for each of the past ten years – an unprecedented achievement for a hospital):

“There are amazing testimonials from Spark Plug participants as to how [training on The Twelve Core Action Values] has affected their personal lives. Graduates of the program have related stories of lifestyle changes that include weight loss, smoking cessation, career goal setting (including additional formal education), and personal-life priority setting.”

The application also included stories and testimonials from graduates of the training program. When graduates of one of the earlier programs were asked what they would tell people at another hospital who were considering becoming Spark Plugs at their organization, the responses were uniformly encouraging – the following is typical.

“The opportunity to become a Spark Plug at Griffin Hospital has enabled me to become a part of a group of dynamic coworkers that has a mission to capture all staff members in a philosophy of action [that will] assist everyone in their personal and professional life. It enhances life in every way.”

The Griffin Hospital program is now completely self-sustaining. They have given it the name *Dare to Care*, and adapted the course and teaching methods to their own particular culture and philosophy. This is perfectly in line with our ultimate definition of success: that long after our direct involvement has ended, *The Twelve Core Action Values*, as well as tools and techniques such as *The Self-Empowerment Pledge* and *The Pickle Challenge*, have become part of the cultural fabric. As CEO Patrick Charmel told *Healthcare Executive* magazine:

The first group of 45 people to go through this program felt so strongly about the benefits to them professionally and personally that they asked to be trained to facilitate the program and provide it to their coworkers themselves.

The Twelve Core Action Values course is a comprehensive and systematic curriculum on values-based life and leadership skills. These twelve values are universal and eternal; we all honor them, regardless of our religious beliefs, political views, cultural heritage, or any other factor. A Strategic Values Initiative based on *The Twelve Core Action Values* is not intended to change the values of any client organization, but rather to reinforce those *organizational* values by linking them with the *personal* values of the people whose attitudes and behaviors will determine whether or not the organization truly reflects its values and achieves its goals. For each of the twelve core values there are four Cornerstones, which provide a prescription for putting action into that value. Course participants are called Spark Plugs, because that is a powerful metaphor for what we expect them to do: take the ideas and inspiration they gain from the course and spark changes in their own lives, and then work together like the spark plugs in a car to spark the people around them.

The Twelve Core Action Values

And the Cornerstones that Put Action into those Values

Laying a Solid Foundation

The first six Core Action Values and associated cornerstones develop inner strength of character.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Authenticity
Self Awareness
Self Mastery
Self Belief
Self Truth | 4. Courage
Confrontation
Transformation
Action
Connection |
| 2. Integrity
Honesty
Reliability
Humility
Stewardship | 5. Perseverance
Preparation
Perspective
Toughness
Learning |
| 3. Awareness
Mindfulness
Objectivity
Empathy
Reflection | 6. Faith
Gratitude
Forgiveness
Love
Spirituality |

Taking Effective Action

The second six Core Action Values and associated cornerstones catalyze action and contribution.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 7. Purpose
Aspiration
Intentionality
Selflessness
Balance | 10. Enthusiasm
Attitude
Energy
Curiosity
Humor |
| 8. Vision
Attention
Imagination
Articulation
Belief | 11. Service
Helpfulness
Charity
Compassion
Renewal |
| 9. Focus
Target
Concentration
Speed
Momentum | 12. Leadership
Expectations
Example
Encouragement
Celebration |

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Representative Testimonials for *The Twelve Core Action Values*

“*The Twelve Core Action Values* has been an important complement to Griffin’s patient-centered philosophy of care. As the number of Spark Plug graduates has grown, their example has had a positive impact on our workplace environment, which I believe has been one of the factors earning Griffin a place on *Fortune* magazine’s roster of *America’s 100 Best Companies to Work For* each of the past [now ten] years. But more important in my view has been the influence that our commitment to *The Twelve Core Action Values* has had on individual employees. I’ve heard from many of our people who, as a result of this training, have made impressive personal changes.”

Patrick Charmel, President and CEO
Griffin Hospital and The Planetree Alliance

“Our initiative on *The Twelve Core Action Values* has definitely been worth the investment. The open staff sessions were extremely well attended, and had a rejuvenating effect on the entire organization. In particular, graduates of the two-day Spark Plug course are genuinely interested and engaged, and are now working together as a group helping us develop a roadmap for the cultural enhancements we wish to bring about in the years to come. This training in values-based life skills is an excellent complement to the more traditional technical subject matter that’s often the focus of hospital training.”

Jeff Hill, (then) President and CEO, Midwest Medical Center, Galena, Illinois

“*The Twelve Core Action Values* training has had an immediate positive impact at all levels at Central Peninsula General Hospital! This insightful and pragmatic message of personal and professional choices based on values has given our staff the tools they need to succeed at home and in the workplace.”

Dave Gilbreath, (then) Chief Executive Officer
Central Peninsula General Hospital, Soldotna, Alaska

“I wanted you to know how thrilled I am with the ideas that our Spark Plugs came up with at their first meeting following our training session... It is truly rewarding to see our staff so enthused about *The Twelve Core Action Values!*”

Genny Maroc, Chief Executive Officer, Marengo Memorial Hospital

“We adopted The Twelve Core Action Values as one of our educational offerings in the belief that helping our people be more successful in their personal lives would also help us cultivate a more positive workplace environment. In this regard, it has met our every expectation. I have heard nothing but positive comments from program participants, and believe that this initiative has reinforced the principles that we stand for.”

Todd C. Linden, President and CEO, Grinnell Regional Medical Center

“When we shared *The Twelve Core Action Values* with our employees and medical staff members, the response was unanimous: ‘We need more of this!’ That’s why we followed up with an intensive values initiative to train a core group of Spark Plugs to promote values-based leadership in our organization, and in our community. From Authenticity to Leadership, this is who we want to be.”

Sandy Haryasz, CEO, Page Hospital, Page Arizona