

# ARE YOUR TEAM'S VALUES ALIGNED FOR OPTIMAL PRODUCTIVITY?

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**Overview** A team's productivity can be easily observed. Are the team members communicating effectively? Are the team members supporting each other? Is the team producing results? If the answer to these questions is no, a manager can spend an enormous amount of time coaching and correcting to improve the situation.

This assessment is designed to be conducted with all the team members present. The purpose is to allow the members to identify the desired values within the team structure and the specific behaviors needed to support these values. The team needs time to discuss the values, agree on the most important one, and share strategies for supportive behaviors.

When the team has agreed on appropriate values, individual team members invest the time and resources to support the values. Team members become "self-regulating" toward the values and individuals adjust their capabilities and behavior to adhere to group norms.

## LOGICAL LEVELS OF CHANGE AND LEARNING

The assessment is based on a model of learning and change initially formulated by Gregory Bateson and adapted by Robert Dilts in the mid-1980s. The model describes a hierarchy of levels of a group or individual. Each level affects the level below it and, by changing a higher level, you automatically produce changes in the lower levels. These levels include (in order of highest to lowest):

| <i>Level</i>       | <i>Questions</i> | <i>Corresponds to:</i>            |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| System             | For whom?        | Organization or workgroup purpose |
| Identity           | Who?             | Individuals role or mission       |
| Beliefs and values | Why?             | Motivation                        |
| Capabilities       | How?             | Goals and plans                   |
| Behavior           | What?            | Actions and results               |
| Environment        | Where? When?     | Constraints and opportunities     |

Because most organizational systems are established and individual roles are defined within these organizational systems, a group or individual can generally do little to initiate change at these levels.

However, beliefs and values can be identified and adjusted to meet a specific mission or vision. This assessment allows a team to select the most appropriate combination of values to create a positive impact on the team's motivation. When the team works at the level of beliefs and values, the team's selected values then automatically affect the levels below, that is, capabilities, behavior and environment.

# TEAM VALUES ASSESSMENT

**Directions:** *The first twelve rows identify values that most teams have identified as important and desirable. The three additional blank rows are for values that you might choose to include, such as thoroughness, accuracy, friendliness, and the like.*

**Step 1.** Write in additional values that you believe are important.

**Step 2.** Rank the values in order of importance, such as Respect is #1, Honesty is #2, etc.

**Step 3.** Rate how frequently team members demonstrate the value. Rating scale:  
1 = Never, 2 = Seldom, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often

| <i>Rank</i> | <i>Value</i>          | <i>Rating Scale</i> |
|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
|             | Responsibility        |                     |
|             | Accountability        |                     |
|             | Integrity             |                     |
|             | Respect               |                     |
|             | Communication         |                     |
|             | Support of each other |                     |
|             | Enthusiasm            |                     |
|             | Dedication            |                     |
|             | Honesty               |                     |
|             | Punctuality           |                     |
|             | Pride of workmanship  |                     |
|             | Reliability           |                     |
|             |                       |                     |
|             |                       |                     |
|             |                       |                     |

To customize this handout for your audience, download it to your hard drive from the accompanying CD-ROM. The document can then be opened, edited, and printed using Microsoft Word or another popular word processing application.

## POSTASSESSMENT DISCUSSION

1. Prior to the assessment, duplicate the values list on a chart board or white board where the participants can see them. If you cannot prepare the chart board ahead of time, ask the person who finishes the assessment first to duplicate the assessment values list.
2. The first objective of the postassessment discussion is to identify the top five values that the team agrees are the most important. With a small group of five or less, chart each individual's ranking and determine the top five values from the responses. With a larger group, ask for a show of hands to determine how many participants ranked a value in the top five. Use *M* for many (more than half), *S* for some (30 to 50 percent), *F* for few (less than 30 percent).
3. The second objective of the postassessment discussion is to have the team explore ways to integrate the values into team interactions. After the top values have been identified, initiate a discussion of the values rating by introducing this question:

*If the value is demonstrated less than often, how should we behave to demonstrate the value, and how often should we engage in the behaviors?*

With a smaller group, the discussion can be round-robin. A larger group can be broken into teams, with each team working on a different value.

4. Capture all suggestions. Either chart board each participant's contributions or distribute 3×5-inch cards, and ask each participant to write at least three suggestions for how team members should support the values. Review and discuss the contributions with the participants.

Examples:

### *Responsibility*

- Participate and say what you believe.
- Do what you say you are going to do when you say you are going to do it.
- Take initiative!

### *Respect*

- Actively listen to what I am saying.
- Say thank you and please; be polite.
- Speak to me in a respectful tone.

### *Communication*

- Let people know immediately if there is a problem; do not wait till tomorrow.
- If you have to write more than two paragraphs in an email, pick up the phone and call instead.
- Ask, who else needs to know about this?

## DISCUSSION POINTS

- If the team insists on having more than five values, include the additional values. Selecting a number of values is a way to stimulate a discussion about why specific values are important and the hierarchy of their importance. When team members have established the importance and hierarchy, they are more likely to support the values and take responsibility for their behavior.
- Avoid discussing the reasons for the current lack of specific values; this often leads to blame and focusing on what is not there. Concentrate the discussion on the benefits of having appropriate and resourceful values and what needs to be done to support them.

## REFERENCES AND RELATED READINGS

Bateson, G. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. New York: Ballentine Books, 1972.

Deering, A., Dilts, R., and Russell, J. *Alpha Leadership*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002.

Dilts, R. *Visionary Leadership Skills*. Capitola, CA: Meta Publications, 1996.

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