



LEADER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Creating a Value Based Culture



I don't know when we stopped, but if you went to public school before the 80's you probably remember reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Up until that time there was a lot of overt patriotism, a sense of oneness, united, even with our differences. As a nation I'm sad to say we've lost a lot of that.

I spent my youth and much of my adult life as a Scout leader in the Boy Scouts of America; I grew up in a Christian home and spent a career in the military. In each of them, as a nation, we were united by a shared set of values that were part of our traditions and as a result our shared culture. Perhaps you have, or had, an association with an organization similar in nature.

Values like allegiance, one nation, under God, indivisible, liberty and justice for all. Being trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent; "I shalt not . . ." We recited them regularly, we discussed them often, they were incorporated into our daily lives and activities. They were, in short, our guiding principles. As such we saw ourselves, and the world saw us, as a great nation. Some of our nation's great leaders in government, industry, business, science and entertainment were, or are, Eagle Scouts.

The common thread is they each were built on a foundation of core values and those values formed the culture of the organization. From it a vision formed, a mission stated and goals set. So what can you do to make your organization great? How do you create a culture of success and unite your entire team/organization in pursuit of the organization's vision, mission and goals?

Discuss Them On A Regular Basis

If you hold a regular scheduled staff meeting, open it up with no more than a two minute presentation on just one of your organizations core values. Now don't get preachy on me, keep it casual but from the heart and without discussion - you have a meeting to run.

- 1.) State the core value, (i.e. Pursue Excellence)
- 2.) Share with everyone why this core value is important to you and to the success of your team. Pull from other values to help clarify or explain. (i.e. To have excellence we must . . . have tenacity, be proactive, be open-minded, etc.),
- 3.) Share an anecdotal story in support of. It can be your own, someone else's, recent or in the past, perhaps a parable. "Just last week I was reading about . . . The writer spoke of a famous football player's pursuit of excellence and what separated him from other players. He wasn't extraordinary just by showing up. He practiced his game all year not just during the season, he studied the game, he continued to look for small improvements - and he worked to help other players be great."



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After YOU, and only YOU, have presented each core value, your organizations vision and mission, then turn to one of the attendees to your meeting (preferably start with one who will support your new tradition with enthusiasm) and say, "Debbie, would you do me a favor; you know how I've been presenting our core values each week? Would you please pick one and next staff meeting, do the same thing I've been doing? Thank you." For the meeting after next ask someone else. Continue until everyone has participated - then start all over again with yourself.

NOTE: If you are not already doing this, you're probably going to get push-back, either directly or behind your back. That's OK, you're extraordinary. You're not afraid. You're confident and tenacious. Make it happen.

Why Is This Important?

Just like in the organizations I mentioned above, when core values are discussed regularly and openly, they tend to be, at least initially, at the conscious level. Long term they become our character.

Throughout life we are often faced with moral dilemmas, choices, decisions. An employee might be thinking "Eh, it's good enough" or "Hmm, I could probably just take a short cut and get out of here". But at yesterday's staff meeting, someone just spoke about excellence. Thus prompting a second thought that says..."No, let me do it right".

Of course over time, your two minute presentations become something of a tradition, an expectation, dare I say a culture and soon a way of life. For new hires, it sets the stage. Extraordinary leaders have extraordinary character; with extraordinary character they are not afraid.

Be Extraordinary!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anthony Tannej".

Comments welcomed and encouraged via email or on Facebook
Next time: Who's the boss?