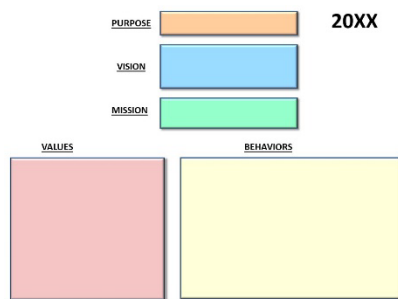


Building Higher Trust 111 Your Values and Vision

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



It is vital to keep your values and vision current and visible. I often witness organizations that do not do this. When I ask if they have values, they start talking about honesty, integrity, customer focus, or employee satisfaction. I get some vague statements about ethics thrown in for good measure.

Then I ask where I can find the written values. Sometimes the leader can pull something out of a drawer where the items resemble what I just heard.

More often. I hear, “the values are posted in the conference room and the break room.” I go and look, and there is indeed a slightly-torn or smudged paper on the bulletin board. If I ask the employees about them, they tell me “Oh yes, we have the values posted, but “they” don’t follow them.” If the posted values are not followed, they do more harm than good. They serve as a reminder of the hypocrisy.

Vision and values must be in play every day

There are several organizations where the words are in the minds of the executives but not even written on paper, let alone implanted in the hearts of the employees where they can do some good.

Three rules with values are 1) write them down, 2) talk about them at every chance, and 3) follow them. If you miss any of these steps, then you are forfeiting most of the power of having values. Actually, values do you the most good when they are difficult or expensive to follow. People see and appreciate the effort to live by the values.

Vision is the same

The exact same discussion applies to the vision of an organization. If the vision is not committed to writing and included in discussions with employees, it loses its power. It

does not direct the daily activities of the population to move toward the future with confidence.

Expand the publication to the entire strategy

These two things are most important to write down. I believe the entire strategy should be committed to written form. That would include the following things at a minimum: vision, mission, values, purpose, behaviors, strategies, tactics, and measures.

Many organizations make a production out of generating the strategy. The resulting tome is way too heavy for the employees to lift, let alone read and understand.

Compress the result to a single sheet

I usually reduce the entire strategic framework to a single sheet of paper. On the front side, we have the purpose, vision, mission, values, and behaviors. On the reverse side, there is a neat array of the top 4-6 strategies. Too many strategies defeats the purpose of focusing effort. Then you have a few major tactics for each strategy. Finally, what measure do we intend to use to track our progress for each tactic. I like to laminate the document as a way to indicate legitimacy.

Can do in a couple days

Usually, the entire process of developing the single sheet framework takes from 8-16 hours of interface time with a management team. That is enough time to engage everyone in the process. It is far less than the burdensome six-to-18-month process that creates hatred for the process among the staff.

Summary

Drive an efficient and high-energy process to create the strategy for your organization. Commit the resulting framework to paper and refer to it every day. You will have a much higher chance of being a successful organization.

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of *The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals*, *Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online*, and *Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind*. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations