

OUR VALUES BASED LEADERSHIP APPROACH

A BRIEF OUTLINE

The basis of 'Values Based Leadership' is most neatly expressed by this X diagram - which was first devised by Buck Blessing and Tod White of BlessingWhite.

It shows the 'Job' or role as a space in which individuals engage with work both to contribute success for the organisation and to create personal success and satisfaction.

There will be a natural dynamic that works to keep these in balance – if an individual is contributing a lot, but not getting much back (the red pin) they will over time lose motivation or burn out unless the balance can be restored. And if they are getting what they need from their role, but not contributing to the organisation as needed (green pin) the organisation will, over time, act either to develop their contribution or to remove them from role. The only sustainable points of balance which maximise contribution also maximise satisfaction, and vice versa.

In Values Based Leadership we have built on this simple truth to explore the leader's role in creating an environment which enables and fosters sustainable maximum contribution over time, in a world which demands agility and creatively collaborative teams.



VALUES BASED LEADERSHIP DEMANDS THAT LEADERS:

- Create clarity
- Communicate with authenticity
- Coach for collaboration.

CREATING CLARITY

In a world where complexity, ambiguity and rapid change are the 'norm' we cannot expect to give our teams clarity through devising 'process' which individuals follow without critical thought and without considering the consequences of their activity elsewhere in the system. Leaders equip their teams by creating clarity about the WHY and HOW of the contribution expected from roles as well as the WHAT.

WHY requires that we know the way in which our team's contribution adds to the success of the organisation, and to its overall purpose.

HOW we go about our work and delivering our contribution must be consistent with the ethics, principles and values of our team and of our organisation – so we need to be clear what those are and what demands that makes of us. We also need to understand how what we do interacts with and impacts on the rest of the 'system' – other teams in our organisation, customers, suppliers and stakeholders.

WHAT we contribute is the goals and targets that will tell us we are contributing consistently with the purpose, strategy and goals of the organisation. Understanding these is vital, not least to allow resources and energy to be properly allocated and prioritised, but they cannot become a substitute for understanding purpose – otherwise teams will continue to pursue goals that are no longer optimal as the environment shifts.

COMMUNICATING WITH AUTHENTICITY

Creating clarity is fundamental but insufficient for Values Based Leadership. If we are seeking for our people to engage with organisational purpose, to take responsibility for collaborating across the organisation to overcome barriers and to adjust targets and ways of working to maximise true success then leaders have to inspire as well as clarify. And leaders cannot inspire sustainably if they are not themselves inspired; they cannot create the trust that forms the foundation of engagement if they are not themselves authentically engaged. Leaders must understand their own Purpose, Beliefs and Values and be able to communicate to others 'from the heart', sharing authentically the ways in which the why, what and how of the organisation inspire them personally and inviting others to find that same personal engagement. Leaders need to communicate with vulnerability as well as authenticity, to share their own struggles to find a sustainable high performance, high satisfaction way of working in order to set the foundation for a coaching culture in which the right conversations happen in the right way, at the right time to support sustainable high performance and creative collaboration.

COACHING FOR COLLABORATION

The basis of a truly agile culture is that ideas, perspectives and information are shared effectively, and that collaborative decision making works with that information to keep the organisation working on its purpose, consistently with its values in complex, ambiguous situations. In an agile culture everyone is taking responsibility for managing their own and the collective performance, development and satisfaction, with full and true collaboration from their peers, their team and their leaders. This can only happen where a coaching culture is established, and the 'way we do things around here' is to enquire for understanding and support others to make good choices in pursuit of shared purpose, rather than to compete for power and resources, or to maximise individual 'successes' at the expense of others and of the whole. Values Based Leaders must have the full range of leadership styles at their disposal – and be able to use them in the right way at the right time. But above all they must be comfortable and confident in using coaching.

THE COMPONENTS OF A VBL IMPLEMENTATION

Where you start and how you focus will be contextual and the order of activities might need to be different depending on starting points and practicalities. However the basic components will be the same:

1. Establish clarity of purpose and show how the goals and targets of the organisation contribute to purpose, consistently with the organisation's principles. This will often involve coaching the most senior leadership team, and possibly across key leadership teams.
2. Enable leaders to engage authentically with purpose, goals and principles and to communicate in ways which inspire through values clarification, both individually and as teams. Again this may benefit from some one to one and team coaching.
3. Build the coaching capacity and confidence of leaders at all levels. The right solution will depend on the level of coaching maturity of the organisation – ELECTRIC Coaching and/or Coaching Fundamentals are options to consider here.

At OCM Discovery we use our expertise and experience to partner with organisations looking to adapt with agility, and to deliver with purpose. We work with leaders to authentically engage in collaboration to build productive, purposeful and satisfying teams. Contact Diane Newell diane.newell@theoem.co.uk to start a conversation and find out more.