

Values Alignment in the Workplace

THE PROBLEM

A number of teams within a state government department had difficulties embracing a company-wide initiative to introduce a Values Program. The teams were comprised primarily of managers from a fairly technical background. They felt the Values Program represented little benefit and they could not see the point of all this 'airy-fairy soft stuff'. The Organisational Development unit responsible for designing the Values Program needed to find an approach that would demonstrate the 'realities' of Values in the workplace.

ACTION TAKEN

In consultation with TMS and their clients, the Organisational Development team facilitated a 1-day workshop which featured the **Window on Work Values Profile**. The objectives were to:

- Illustrate the practical benefit of recognising values in the workplace
- Identify how the values of the organisation were currently perceived
- Discuss the implications of personal values on leadership style
- Address issues of values alignment within the team and the branch
- Begin exploring the implications of values across the whole department

The Window on Work Values Model was introduced through a card sort activity. Each group was asked to illustrate how they currently perceived the values of the organisation. The next component involved debriefing their individual Window on Work Values Profiles. Participants then plenarised their results and discussed the issues of alignment within the groups. This exercise highlighted some very interesting results. The composition of the group in terms of the Window on Work Values Model, started to reveal the origin of disagreements or barriers with many of the teams. There were a number of cases where historically poor relationships could be explained and understood because one manager had values in the northern (Organisational Constraint) part of the Window, while their colleagues had values in the southern (Organisational Freedom) section. This clash of values revealed why they had such different attitudes to management, leadership and change and why problems had occurred.

The realisation about how their values were misaligned enabled the managers to understand how their values impacted on the way they all worked together. The final component of the workshop was for the team to review all of the issues that had arisen and identify the implications these had for the way they operated as a branch. They could then start to develop action plans for addressing any issues. The biggest benefit as far as the Organisational Development unit was concerned, was the opportunity for each management team to realise the impact misalignment of values can have on the functioning of their teams and to appreciate the need for a company-wide values program.

OUTCOMES

The Window on Work Values framework offered a simple and practical starting point for discussions around values at work. The Management Teams were quickly and easily able to translate the theory into their operational realities. Additionally, the Profiles the participants received were very accurate and insightful, leading to good robust discussion about individual differences and team and branch alignment.

Due to the success of the initial program, the Window on Work Values workshop was used more broadly than just at the management level. The Organisational Development unit also used the program when they encountered reluctance at any level in the organisation. Additionally, they also found it was successful when they worked with groups that went through the department's Corporate Values program and wanted to do more work on values.

Industry: Public Service/Government

TMS Product: Window on Work Values Profile

Total Staff Number: 3200

Organisational Challenge: Values and Culture



Window on Work Values Model

WINDOW ON WORK VALUES PROFILE



THE QUESTIONNAIRE

- 64 Items
- Available electronically or paper based
- Takes approximately 15 - 20 minutes to complete
- Extensively researched and validated
- Written in straightforward, positive language

APPLICATIONS

- Team Coaching and Development
- Cross-Organisational Mergers
- Multi-Team Integration
- Executive Coaching

“Very useful in clarifying purpose etc. of team and increased understanding of where team members come from. Dialogue created was excellent”.

Kamini Davenport,
Department of Defence

Values have a major influence on how individuals approach their work. They drive our decisions, cause us to defend what we believe in and determine our behaviour at work.

The Window on Work Values will help teams understand their values and whether they are aligned with those of the organisation. Once their core values are identified, the team can begin developing its own Team Values Statement and Team Charter.

The report provides feedback to the individual on eight core value types:

- Individualism
- Collectivism
- Compliance
- Empowerment
- Authority
- Independence
- Conformity
- Equality

This feedback allows individuals to compare the degree of alignment of their own work values with the way the team perceives the values of the organisation.



“In my view it is useful as an extension of the Team Management Profile to go deeper in to the decision making process afterwards or separately for vision oriented workshops or decision-oriented workshops”.

Edgard Meuleman, Sirkant nv.

BENEFITS

- Can be used with all types and levels of teams
- Highlights the significance of shared values in teamwork
- Shows individuals what really motivates them about how they work
- Helps individuals appreciate and accommodate other people’s views
- Highlights the core values that drive their behaviour
- Demonstrates how to apply individual values to real work issues
- Provides feedback on the organisational culture that fits their values
- Provides a language to communicate the individual’s values to others
- Enables teams to develop their own values-based ground rules and team charter