

**TIP #35 – MARCH 2009**  
**ALIGNING VALUES TO ACTIONS**  
**CONTRIBUTED BY MARK WARNER, AUTHOR OF *INSPIRING LEADERSHIP***

Objective: Promote the practice of Model the Way with this exercise that helps leadership teams define their guiding principles and, based on the progress they believe they are making, establish next steps.

Audience: Intact Leadership Teams

Time Required: One hour

Materials Needed/Setup:

- Values Card Exercise from *The Leadership Challenge® Workshop Facilitator's Guide*
- Values Cards for each participant

Process:

1. Introduce the importance role values play in guiding our behaviors as leaders
2. Complete the Values Cards exercise as described in *The Leadership Challenge® Workshop Facilitator's Guide*.
3. Each leadership team member selects one value that he/she would like to propose as a value/guiding principle for the team
4. As a team, distill all of the recommended values down to a maximum of 6 guiding principles
5. 2 or 3 persons each describe what this guiding principle means for this team (on flip charts)
6. Provide instruction to participants about testing the team's guiding principles against Calendar, Critical Incidents, Stories, Language, Measurements and Rewards (as in the Facilitator's Guide)
7. Ask each team member to score (from 0 to 10) how well he/she feels the team is doing on each guiding principle
8. Ask each team member to score (from 0 to 10) how he/she thinks the organization would score the team on each guiding principle
9. In small groups, ask team members to describe why they think the overall score is the way it is and what the team can do to improve.
10. Bring the smaller groups back together to create a consolidated action plan
11. Follow-up in six months to review progress, discuss if the team has improved, and why or why not.

Variations:

Participants write a letter to themselves (to be read six months later) outlining the actions they are going to take personally to improve the team score. The facilitator collects the letters at the workshop and returns them to the participants six months later.

Facilitator Tips:

The principle behind this approach is that most companies have an established set of values. But it is not the existence of corporate values that matters. What makes a difference in how leadership is practiced in organizations is whether each member of the leadership team is willing to engage in defining what values mean to them, as individuals, and how they are going to apply those values in their day-to-day work.

Instead of values becoming a communication exercise with blogs, posters, and leaflets, this exercise reinforces the notion that values are about reflection and alignment with individual leaders.

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