

Leadership assumes awareness of one's personal values

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When you take a decision within the company for which you work, have you ever asked yourself if you are most influenced by the company's values or by your own?

The fact is that YOUR values (recognized or unrecognized) exercise an enormous influence, often greater than those of the company. And yet, in almost every company, the emphasis is on the company's values. These are important, of course, but often, as Maxime Morand says, the reflexes that would bring them to life are lacking. I am talking of the translation of the company's values into observable, measurable **behaviour**. We shall come back to the question of corporate values another time. But, for the time being, let's concentrate on YOUR personal values.

It is important to have a grasp of what your values are.

Which is why the next stage in our journey ("Leadership: Why don't we have the impact we would like?") is very personal and touches our very core: our VALUES.

Values, a definition:

As understood individually and in wider society, a "value" is what is considered desirable, good, enriching, useful and stimulating.

Values influence our actions and decision-making. They give direction and drive.

Employees expect their managers to have a clear, stable attitude based on values. An attitude of this kind promotes confidence and transparency, and validates a framework in which employees feel at ease. Values are a source of **security**.

Self-reflection

What are your personal values? (What do you ascribe importance to?)

What stimulates you?

I am quite sure that you all have strong personal values. They are the fruit of your upbringing, the people who have influenced you (parents, friends, role models), your beliefs, your thoughts, your lived experience. But have you formulated them, reflected on them?

What do you understand by value A or value B? What does it mean to you?

It is important that we do this exercise so that others can take their lead from us. If my employees know my values, know what is important in my eyes, they can relate to me and, above all, anticipate my reactions. This gives **guidance** and strengthens relationships.

Take this simple example. For many of you, RESPECT is an important value. But what does respect mean for you?

Suppose that, for me, the word respect has something to do with punctuality. If I have arranged to meet my wife and she arrives 45 minutes late, without warning me, I will be upset and conclude that she does not respect me. But suppose my wife is African and comes from a culture where they have a different attitude to

LP3 SA

Head office: rue Général Dufour 18, 2502 Biel/Bienne

+41 78 818 40 18

www.lp3leadership.com

time. Even arriving two hours late is still regarded as being “on time” and does not imply a lack of respect. So the person you are dealing with also acts out of his or her own values. It is therefore necessary to define and spell out these values, communicate to facilitate relationships and cooperation.

As in all matters, going to extremes can have consequences. So a thrifty person, if he or she is not self-aware, is in danger of becoming mean.

On the other hand, a thrifty person can in certain circumstances be very generous. It all depends on the situation. When it comes to spending money, this person may be thrifty, but in love or affection he or she may be very generous. Every value has a positive counterpart, which it is important to recognize if we are to know ourselves better.

Which is why I advise every person I deal with to perform this exercise with their three main values: what are the positive counterparts (the factors counterbalancing these values) and which way do I tend if I go to extremes?

I have done this, and I have always communicated my three key values to my employees, explaining why they are important in my eyes. My values are also posted on my office door and are available to all employees in a document available on the company intranet.

My three values and their positive counterparts are:

1. **FAMILY**

(Belonging, the importance of teamwork) and the positive counterpart in my case is:

INDIVIDUALITY

(I also need to take care of myself, bear in mind my own needs and not always think of others first)

2. **PLEASURE**

(As the motor which releases energy and stimulates) and the positive counterpart in my case is:

SERIOUSNESS

(I am relaxed but what I say has meaning, is grounded in reality)

3. **SUSTAINABILITY**

(I hope to have an impact in the medium and long term) and the positive counterpart in my case is:

MINDFULNESS

(I also need to pay attention to the present moment, i.e. to live here and now and not always be thinking about the future)

Do this exercise to clarify and express your values.

Author: David Fiorucci

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