

## Activity 4-2: Values in Business

### *Objectives:*

- a. To increase awareness of the importance of values as determinants of organizational behavior.
- b. To increase awareness of the differences in team members' perception of values.
- c. To experience some of the issues associated with group decision making.

### *Introduction:*

The future-shock era has caused continuous questioning and change of values. The Watergate crisis, the 1976 bicentennial celebration and strong ideological orientation of the Reagan administration, and the Newt Gingrich congressional revolution of 1995 have been times for intensive reexamination of the values of American democracy. Particularly prominent were the negotiations involving the trade of arms for hostages between members of the National Security Council and Iranian officials; the subsequent denial by the White House set off a credibility crisis on honesty. *U.S. News & World Report* did a national survey at that time on lying in America. The responsibilities and roles of business in our society, in the European democracies, and in the communist countries are also constantly debated. Further, the individual American is torn as never before between the values of our past, more stable culture and those of the present world. Marriage, sex, personal commitments, trust in interpersonal relationships, religion, and material wealth are among the primary areas of value conflict.

The need for governments, organizations, and individuals to identify and live by commitment to values is currently recognized as an essential element of effectiveness in living.

The exercise that follows is to help your team evaluate the relative importance of certain values with which business organizations must be concerned. Values can be thought of as existing in a hierarchy in our thought processes, some being given higher importance or priority than others. The whole pattern of values in an organization represents the core of its operating philosophy and its organizational culture. Thus they are major determinants of behavior of management and employees.

Values defined: Things, ideas, beliefs, and acts that are regarded as good or bad, right or wrong, desirable or undesirable, beautiful or ugly, contributing to or detrimental to human welfare, and so on. Societies, organizations, and individuals all have values with priorities of importance. For example, individuals may differ greatly in the values associated with religious beliefs, but a higher-order value that they all presumably would accept is freedom of religious beliefs.

### *General Exercise:*

Assume you are a member of a top-management team of a large corporation. During a team-development retreat, the facilitator-consultant informs the group that she has observed from individual interviews with team members that differences in perception exist as to the values by which they operate. Yet each person seems to be assuming that her or his values are shared by the other team members. As a basis for developing awareness and better consensus in values, the following tasks are undertaken.

### *Task 1 (Individual Rankings):*

Listed in alphabetical order on the accompanying worksheet are 10 values that are among those often discussed in regard to business functioning. Your job is to rank these according to the priority you would assign each in terms of importance for conducting business. Do this by writing in the first column next to the value a 1 for the

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value of highest importance, a 2 for the next, on down to a 10 for the value of lowest importance. In the second column, briefly note the reason for your ranking. Be sure to do this without consulting others; also, be sure your rankings are not observable to team members while completing this task. (Note: There is no right or wrong answer and no definite solution to this exercise. The rankings should be based on your own beliefs.)

*Task 2 (Team Rankings):*

Teams meet outside of class. Members compare their rankings of the values and come to a consensus as to how the team would rank the items from 1 to 10. This ranking should reflect what the team believes, not your estimate of how businesspeople would rank the values. (Note: Consensus does not necessarily mean that all agree with the final ranking of the team; it does mean that everyone's views were expressed and understood and that agreement was reached on how the values were to be ranked. In a real situation your personal values may differ from your colleagues', but you may decide to support the team's viewpoint for reasons such as hoping eventually to persuade your co-workers to adopt your views or wanting to be open-minded to see whether you could be wrong. If your values are too different, you may find, after a reasonable period, that you do not fit into the team. The main point of the exercise at this time is to increase your awareness of value issues.)

*Task 3 (Classroom):*

Teams list on the board the rank ordering of their values. Discuss similarities and differences.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet for Activity 4-2

Values	Your Ranking	Reason	Your Team's Ranking	Reason
Career growth and development of personnel				
Concern for personnel as people				
Efficiency				
Ethics (morality)				
Managerial and organizational effectiveness				
Servicing clients' needs (for example, equipment, orders)				
Profits				
Providing products or services for society				
Quality of goods or services				
Social responsibility				