

The Benefits Of A Value-Driven Business

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Values and culture are inextricably linked. While leaders play a central role in promoting values, just talking about them isn't enough. "Values are vehicles to propel a company's success. However, leadership's action is the fuel that moves the company forward, says Antonio Argibay, managing principal and co-founder, Meridian Design Associates Architects.



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But first, how is culture defined? "Culture is the deep, day-to-day existence of leadership, employees and customers. It's not something you can fake," says Argibay. Once culture is outlined and understood, the values system comes next. "Employees come to understand and share values through actions and examples much more than through words and motivational posters," Argibay continues. "They look at whether leaders are acting in line with values. At Meridian, we talk about our core values – for example, Opportunity and Quality – in everyday conversations. That reinforces our culture."

The result? According to Argibay, a culture that parallels company values can offer many benefits, because of high morale and ability to draw talented employees. These include:

- Resilience and sustainable growth
- Innovativeness, thanks to a strong team that appreciates management's commitment to values
- Ability to deliver high quality products and services.

To receive the benefits, a strong foundation must first be built.

How to Create a Culture That Mirrors Values

Culture, according to Argibay, is the single most important driver of organizational success. To develop an effective corporate culture, values should be integrated into everything the leader does and be communicated in a straightforward and concise manner. For example, when giving updates, consider discussing how values affect company decisions. You should model the behavior you want to see in your employees and set an example of what you want your corporate culture to be. Incorporate the values into daily activities and reinforce them continuously.

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How to ensure that your company culture mirrors its values? It's very simple, although sometimes easier said than done. "It's important to never act in a way that negates the values. That leads to a lack of respect, as well as resentment. You have to live by what you say," observes Argibay.

When employees get the idea that a leader's decisions are inconsistent with company values – even when that's not the case – they may decide that the leader isn't personally committed to those values. Then, s/he will be viewed as a hypocrite. "And that negativity can impede the company's success," says Argibay.

Values also influence key company decisions. "They're the measuring stick for your decision-making," says Argibay. "For example, in an interview, besides looking to simply fill a position, we also consider how much development we can offer them. That's a reflection of our Personal Development and Opportunity values."

To ensure that your corporate culture is in sync with values, the most important step is living the values and weaving them into everything you do and say. Words are a great start, but actions take center stage