"Perhaps more than at any previous time, an organization today must know what it stands for and on what principles it will operate.

No longer is value-based organizational behavior an interesting philosophical choice.

It is a requisite for survival."

Ken Blanchard & Michael O'Connor
"Seven Steps to Becoming a Fortune 500 Company"

Many people have given little more than a passing thought to identifying the values that govern their personal behavior, and even fewer organizations have done so. Instead, they accept the values of others or let situations determine their values.

In almost all cases in which values are not clearly defined, good decisions are more difficult to make.

Without values, people are easily influenced and decisions are subject to frequent change or compromise. Situational values confuse people, and create problems and complexity.

Successful leaders make important decisions based on a set of core values – doing the right things for the right reasons.

In an organization, personal values may differ, but a leader will help everyone focus on a 'common good' value system that engenders a desire for cooperation and team work without invalidating those personal differences.

What are your personal and organizational values?

Can you easily and specifically identify them?

What about the people in your organization – are you communicating your organizational values to them effectively, so they are aware of, and committed to, those values?

Take time to clarify or review the values you hold as a leader. Focus on what is really important to you, and ask yourself, "What are those few beliefs that I value so strongly that I will not compromise?

"My firm belief is that values are the buoys in the channel of commerce.

During the course of your career, you've got to make thousands of decisions. You've got to react to what happens every day.

But if you can't tie your decisions back to your core values, you get lost.

Totally lost."

James R. Houghton
Former Chairman & CEO
Corning Corporation

As an executive and a leader, if you engage in behavior which conflicts with your values, you will sacrifice your credibility. The end does not justify the means.

At one time in the history of the United States of America, it is said that there were Iroquois Indians who made decisions only after they examined the effect of those decisions on seven generations.

Values are driven throughout the organization by your behavior and your example.

Think about your personal and professional values – and your contribution to a value-based society that will thrive for generations to come. Then articulate, exemplify and operationalize those values throughout your organization.

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