

Shared Values

The purpose of conducting a shared values activity is to help team members reach a consensus on the most important values they all share. This can be beneficial when starting a major project or work endeavor, when individuals feel that others are not being receptive to new ideas, or when team members need to strengthen their bond.

MATERIALS

- Paper and pens
- One piece of flipchart paper for each sub-team
- Colored markers

INSTRUCTIONS – PART 1

1. Each participant should take two minutes to write down what they believe are the three most important values to our organization, department, or team.
2. Explain that values encompass a range of characteristics, including commitment to customers, integrity, teamwork, leadership, quality focus, innovation, efficiency, respect, creativity, learning, and more.
3. The group should be divided into sub-teams consisting of four to six participants.
4. Each participant should share their three values within the sub-team.
5. Each sub-team should agree on their top three most important values from the ones shared.

INSTRUCTIONS – PART 2

1. Each sub-team should be given a piece of flipchart paper and some colored markers.
2. The sub-teams will have 10-15 minutes to create a poster using words, symbols, and/or pictures that represent their three values.

INSTRUCTIONS – PART 3

1. Each sub-team should present their poster to the entire team.
2. As a team, analyze patterns and themes that arise and reach a consensus on a unified set of values for the team.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

1. If a newcomer to the organization/department/team were to see this list of values, what behavior do you think they would anticipate from people?
2. Do we act in this way?
3. What factors can lead to a loss of our values? What actions can be taken in that situation?
4. How would incorporating these values contribute to achieving our objectives?
5. What impact does this have for us in our work?

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- The sub-teams should be encouraged to be creative in their representation of the values.
- If a sub-team does not finish, inquire about the factors that hindered their progress. People can gain knowledge from their challenges. Then, explore strategies for avoiding or effectively addressing these barriers.
- In the upcoming days, it periodically ask about the values being displayed in the workplace.
- If your team or department does not have a vision statement, create a shared vision statement in a future team building session.
- If your team or department does not have a mission statement, develop a mission statement in a future team building session.

Adapted from Miller, Brian Cole. *Quick Team-building Activities for Busy Managers: 50 Exercises That Get Results in Just 15 Minutes*. New York: AMACOM, 2004. Print (page 42).