



Return On Integrity

[Establishing Current Condition Analysis]

When it comes to core values, every organization has a current condition. Every organization has a set of core values, whether they are intentionally stated or established by an inevitable, unhealthy reverse flow. The first step on the organizational side of the equation is assessing, with brutal honesty, the current condition.

Let's start our assessment by answering the following twenty-one questions. Note the "if so" nature of these questions. I would suggest there is a sequential nature to this assessment. At whatever point you reach your first "no" answer, you can pause to note that you have established your current condition. You might find answering the remaining questions interesting and informative, but it will not really be relevant to your analysis of the current condition. Those remaining questions will prove critically helpful in establishing a specific threshold to head toward. It won't be reached as a goal; it will be reached because you intentionally chose to lead the reversal of the flow. Take a few minutes to thoughtfully answer each question.

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1. Do we currently have a stated set of core values?
2. If so, could I, as the leader, list each value on a blank sheet of paper?
3. If so, are these values fully known and understood by me?
4. If so, do I consciously and intentionally live each of the stated, known, and understood organizational core values, and am I painfully aware of it when I don't?
5. If so, could each member of my leadership team list each value on a blank sheet of paper?
6. If so, are these values fully known and understood by each member of my leadership team?
7. If so, does each member of my leadership team consciously and intentionally live each of the stated, known, and understood organizational core values, and are they painfully aware of it when they don't?
8. If so, could 98 percent of our employees list each value on a blank sheet of paper?
9. If so, are these values fully known and understood by 98 percent of our employees?
10. If so, do 98 percent of our employees consciously and intentionally live each of the stated, known, and understood organizational core values, and are they painfully aware of it when they don't?
11. If so, could my leadership team strongly agree that I live our set of stated, known, and understood organizational core values?
12. If so, could 98 percent of our employees strongly agree that I live our set of stated, known, and understood core values?
13. If so, could 98 percent of our employees strongly agree that each member of my leadership team lives our set of stated, known, and understood core values?
14. If so, do I, as the leader, believe our organizational core values build value?
15. If so, does each member of my leadership team believe that our organizational core values build value?
16. If so, would 98 percent of our employees believe that our organizational core values build value?
17. If so, do I, as the leader, consciously think about our organizational core values when I make everyday choices, strategic decisions, and show up in internal and external relationships?

18. If so, does each member of my leadership team consciously think about our organizational core values when they make everyday choices, strategic decisions, and show up in internal and external relationships?
19. If so, do 98 percent of our employees consciously think about our organizational core values when they make everyday choices, strategic decisions, and show up in internal and external relationships?
20. If so, is the specific language of our organizational core values verbally used on a regular basis and as a reference point and guiding light?
21. If so, are the language, spirit, and essence of each of our stated organizational core values relevant, engaging, inspiring, and reflective of a robust core?

Think long and hard on this last question. The first twenty questions are a quantitative assessment of the commitment to the values—however they are stated. This last question (question twenty-one) is a qualitative assessment of the effectiveness in how the core values are stated.

Without the commitment, the qualitative nature of the values is not much use. However, without a rich qualitative component, a strong commitment may not be achieving anywhere close to its full potential.

Regardless of your answer to question twenty-one, it would serve you well to completely reevaluate an existing list of stated organizational core values. You might think of it as each currently stated value having to earn its way back onto a clean slate. If there are no stated organizational core values, it's the perfect time to build one from scratch.

There are three final questions critical to assessing the current condition of the intersection of personal and organizational core values. Affirmative answers to these questions aren't possible if there isn't a stated set of organizational core values to begin with. A negative answer to question twenty-one, of course, would have a qualitative impact on any affirmative responses to the first twenty questions, but also on any affirmative responses to these three questions.

You will find embedded within that twenty-first question the very recipe for helping each of the final three questions meet their full potential.

22. Do I have, know, fully understand, and live a set of personal core values intentionally intersected into our organizational core values?
23. Does each member of my leadership team see themselves as knowing, fully understanding, and living a set of personal core values intentionally intersected into our organizational core values?
24. Do 98 percent of our employees see themselves as knowing, fully understanding, and living a set of personal core values intentionally intersected into our organizational core values?

We previously said that holding up your values and looking at them is like holding up a prism while turning it to see a variety of perspectives. Having an affirmative answer to all twenty-four questions is like turning your prism into a diamond—a 24-carat diamond!