

When there is an issue in an organization, it is either a values issue or a system issue.

Values Issue

- Break in integrity
- *Intentional* mistake
- Disrespect
- Intentional break in policy
- Blaming others
- Excuses
- Not taking responsibility

Systems Issue

- Mistakes
- Errors or oversights
- Poor quality
- Poor attitude
- Poor performance
- Lack of motivation
- Not understanding responsibility
- Inadequate Training
- Poor policies

The theory is:

- When an issue occurs in an organization, managers can ask:
- Is it a values issue or a system issue?
- The key is to train employees to always follow the values. If they do, then the solution to the issue is to improve the system.
- We have done training for nearly all employees on how to keep to the values.
- Now they are working on the system for improvement and not criticizing each other.
- They are identifying their frustrations in the system (or transformation). The theory is, if you improve the system (or transformation) to reduce frustrations for the employees, you also reduce frustrations for the customers.

Optimum Leadership, Inc. Operational Values



Integrity:

- Communicate openly, honestly and responsibly: Say what you mean and mean what you say. ...and don't say it mean (tone of voice).
- Make only agreements¹ you intend to keep.
- Act upon your agreements to the best of your ability.
- Communicate when you can't keep agreements to those who need to know.
- Admit when a mistake is made and look at the system² as a team for a solution (no blame, make no excuses, no complaining).

Respect:

- Treat others as we would like to be treated
- Communicate directly, calmly and professionally (the absence of profanity, sarcasm and condescension)
- Listen attentively and congruently³ without interruption and paraphrase to confirm understanding (stop, look, listen and confirm)
- Acknowledge the value of different perspectives and demonstrate it by our actions

Customer⁴ Focus:

- Ask clarifying questions to be sure you understand what customers need.
- Make suggestions and recommendations that may better suit their needs
- Always keep your customer informed (as defined by the customer)
- Acknowledge requests promptly (as defined by the customer)
- Anticipate customer "wants"
- Treat all customers with respect and integrity
- Continuously explore ways to make more and more "higher quality" agreements with customers (continuous improvement)

¹ Agreement: An activity that is specific, measurable and time sensitive.

² System: A series of *interdependent* processes that achieve an aim.

³ Congruent: Words, tone of voice and visual body language match to form a consistent message.

⁴ Customer: Anyone with whom we interact, provide information or services.