



Prompting a Dialogue About Values

Within your organization, values and ethics should be likewise reinforced and “institutionalized.” For example, Johnson & Johnson has Credo workshops for executives; Sun Microsystems has a business conduct office and places all top executives and financial managers through its “Fiduciary Boot Camp”; business schools are expanding their curriculums to include courses on values-based ethics and responsibility; most larger organizations have confidential whistleblower hotlines; and all companies are responding to Sarbanes-Oxley about corporate/personal responsibility.

If workshops and class attendance aren’t viable options, you should, at a minimum, hold staff meetings that focus on and periodically reinforce the organization’s values. Possible questions for your team that might spark dialogue include these.

- Is everyone aware of our values?
- What is presently working? (Always start with the positive.)
- What isn’t working?
- What are the barriers preventing us from living these values?
- Have you seen any recent changes in people’s behaviors in your department?
- What departmental changes can be made?
- Are individual development needs around our values being incorporated into employee’s performance goals?
- How do we ensure that values become more of our cultural fabric/daily routine?
- What other suggestions or ideas do you have?

Always be sure to provide feedback if people are willing to share their thoughts.

(Reference: Ligos, M. (January 5, 2003). Executive life: boot camps on ethics ask the ‘what ifs.’ *The New York Times*, 3, p. 12.)



