

VALUES CENTRED LEADERSHIP

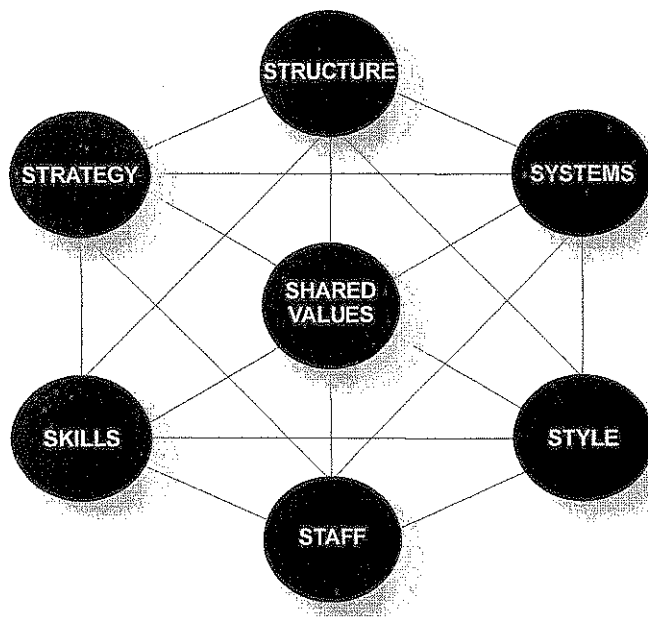
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. The National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services recognises the critical importance of an organisation having an explicit set of values to which all employees should aspire. Whilst a national set of values has been developed by the UK Fire and Rescue Service, the Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) Corporate Management Team believes that a more specific, personal set of core values developed and 'owned' by our own employees will be of more relevance to our organisation.

2. Following extensive investigation with various potential partner consultancies, a company known as 'the WOW Factor' were appointed to facilitate two pilot Values-Centred Leadership (VCL) programmes to meet the needs of Humberside Fire and Rescue Service staff. Research indicated that the WOW Factor Ltd had worked very effectively with several Fire and Rescue Services - most notably Avon Fire and Rescue Service and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (FEPA).

VALUES CENTRED LEADERSHIP

3. Values describe and provide a means of talking about what is important to us. They are ideals we hold that give significance and meaning to our lives and hence they underpin our beliefs, influencing the decisions we make, the actions we take and the life we lead. The following diagram shows how values form the centrepiece of organisational activity drawing together strategy, structure and systems with skills, style and staff.



4. Values provide a framework for the collective leadership of the organisation to encourage behaviour that supports the achievement of goals and mission. Furthermore, successful organisations are characterised by strong values and a strong guiding vision that communicates what behaviour is appropriate and what is not. If these values are widely shared across the organisation and are reflected in everyday actions of all then we will have a strong culture.

HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE VALUES

5. Values may vary from one part of the UK to another. We therefore took a representative sample of personnel in HFRS, that comprised two diverse groups. They became our 'champions'. They produced values they believed reflected the aspirations of people in Humberside Fire and Rescue Service. With minor changes to words they were merged to produce our core values:-

Commitment to Service
Openness
Respect
Enjoyment.

6. Each of these 'core' values is further expanded to explain exactly what is meant by the headline word or phrase.

Commitment to Service

We will be professional (through learning and development) in every way we serve our communities.

Openness

We will act with integrity and trust, be transparent and open to improvement through change.

Respect

We will respect one another and promote equality and diversity.

Enjoyment

We will help create a working environment that is stimulating, enjoyable and rewarding

7. The idea of explicitly promoting organisational values may seem daunting. However, it need not be so. Most people would ascribe to holding certain personal values which, more often than not, translate easily into their organisation's ethos. The trick is to persuade people to reflect the same values and act together to bring them alive in our service.

PILOT COURSE OUTCOMES

8. Two pilot courses were run in August and October 2006, each comprising 16 delegates. The three day courses were held at Cave Castle Hotel and principal officers of the Service were among the participants, along with the Learning and Development Manager and the Service Equality and Diversity Officer. The evaluation of these pilots, which included all delegates, was that the course is of great benefit and will assist the Service to embrace change in a positive, inclusive way. This benefit can only be achieved, however, if sufficient numbers of staff, at all levels in the Authority, are able to participate within a reasonable timescale.
9. Each of the course 'graduates' was asked to communicate with colleagues and ask for their opinions of the proposal to adopt a values-centred leadership approach to organisational development. The results of this face-to-face consultation process are highly supportive of the proposals:-

Out of 79 written responses to a simple question, accompanied by a memo of explanation and a 'face to face' description of the basis of VCL (see Appendix 1), 3 responses were non-committal, 4 were negative and quite cynical in their views of the way the Fire and Rescue Service is moving, nationally, but the overwhelming majority (72) were totally in favour of the concept. Some comments have been extracted and are included in Appendix 2 for information.

PROPOSALS

10. It is proposed to run 4 courses per year for two to three years in order to maximise the impact of VCL principles within the Humberside Fire and Rescue Service workforce. The intention is that each course will comprise of a cross-section of staff, including support staff, officers and members to ensure an even spread of these principles throughout the Service in a reasonable timescale. The member champion for Human Resources, Councillor Jefferies, is programmed to attend a future course.
11. It should not be necessary to put every member of the Service through the course, as it is expected that a 'critical mass' will be reached where sufficient people are espousing the organisation's values to influence the direction taken by the Service as a whole.

RISK IMPACT ASSESSMENT

12. This programme is designed to improve the performance of the organisation by injecting new motivation and energy into the workforce. The risk of discriminatory behaviour should reduce as improvements are made in equality, diversity and employee relations. Evidence in other organisations which have used a VCL approach has also shown a reduction in absenteeism and workplace induced stress.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. The cost of each programme is £6,000 for 16 delegates. This represents a cost of £375 per delegate (excluding accommodation and meals) which is extremely good value for a 3 day intensive programme led by three trainers. The total cost to run the optimum four courses each year will be as follows:-

4 x VCL programmes	£24,000
64 x 3 days accommodation	£16,000

Total cost for 2007/08	£40,000

This represents a total cost per delegate of £625 per programme, which compares well with residential programmes of similar duration at the Fire Service College which cost £975 per delegate.

14. The costs for 2007/08 have been incorporated into the Leadership and Development budget as part of the budgetary planning process, pending approval from Members to proceed with the programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. (a) That Members approve the purchase of four VCL courses for 2007/08, with a view to extending the programme until 2010; and
- (b) that Members receive an interim progress report in January 2008 to enable them to assess the impact of VCL after one year of operation.

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Background Papers: Nil

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