

# LeadershipFAQs

a newsletter from [www.leadershiptraq.com](http://www.leadershiptraq.com)

Missive 7

the  
issue

## How do I trust the inmates to perform well?

by Ken Blanchard

Let me remind you of an important reality in organizations today – *the inmates really are running the asylum*. This is a reality. A leader can't be everywhere in the organization, and be there at every moment. You have to accept that your organization, *at the implementation level*, is really in the hands of your people. So...how do you get the inmates to run the asylum *well*?

### **Know where you are going?**

It starts with vision – and it's your job to provide it for your people. They need this from you. In Missive #1 of LeadershipFAQs I reviewed what vision is about – **mission** (*what we're trying to do*) and **image** (*what we should look like if we are succeeding*).

### **Clarify your values...**

You can't just set goals for your people and tell them to win – you have to give them guidelines – you have to give them the *rules* for the game they are playing. I'm talking about **values**. Do you know that less than ten percent of the organizations in the United States have agreed upon operating values that are published – that are really communicated to people? *Less than ten percent!* If you don't give them *yours*, they will use *theirs*. Here's the problem – if you don't give your people a set of values to guide their behavior and decision-making, *they will use their own, whether those values "fit" yours or not!* It puts way too much responsibility on your people, and creates confusion on the front lines of your organization. So...what do you do?

### **Keep it Simple...**

The number one mistake that organizations make when they start listing their values is that they try and list too many! Our research shows that people can't handle more than three or four values on an organizational list.

Look at the example of Jesus and His leadership.

### **...like Jesus**

He was confronted by one of His critics who asked Him to choose the most important of the Ten Commandments. Can you imagine having to come up with an answer for that question? But His response was masterful, because He summarized all Ten Commandments into two essential values. He said, "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it – love your neighbor as yourself. Everything hangs on these two commandments*" (Matthew 22:37,38). Masterful!

### **Make a List...**

You have to list your values in rank order. If you don't, your people will pick and choose any of them they want. I talk to a lot of organizations. Most businesses with a set of values list one value around integrity or ethics; one value about taking care of their customers; and a value of profitability or success. If they're not ranked in order, you may find your people doing unethical things *in order to turn a profit*. That

definitely results in a conflict. Therefore we need to prioritize our values.

### **...like Disney**

Disney (a well-run, profitable organization) is a good example here. They have four main values: safety, courtesy, entertainment, and efficiency. *But their values are in just that order*. They are committed to turning a profit (value #4), *but never at the expense of the safety of their guests* (value #1). They also are not going to do anything to save money that will diminish their ability to provide courteous service. They're not going to downsize to the point that their guests can no longer find anyone who will be courteous to them!

### **Now, Coach Your Team**

Give the list of values to your people and start coaching them. Let them know when they get off base, and cheer them on when they do it right! This turns your organizational hierarchy upside-down *at the point of implementation*, which keeps you doing what a good leader is supposed to do - free your people to fly like eagles – focusing their energy and creativity to make the vision a reality!

Yours for bringing sanity to the asylum,

Ken Blanchard

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