

# ADDRESSING WORKPLACE VALUES IN THE ORGANIZATION: LEARNING FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

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**Abstract** *For managing effective performance at workplace, it is desirable to introduce and implement the essential element of workplace values. Lack in application of these values at workplace may pose a challenge for maintaining positive organizational outcomes.*

*The purpose of this paper is to understand that how the application of human values at workplace can benefit the organization. The main focus is to underline the concept of workplace values from the perspective of leaders and employees. The authors researched literature studies in workplace values through online management journals and articles on human and workplace values. This study is split into two sections: first, exploring the concept of workplace values from different viewpoints and second, understanding the application of values in real workplace settings. This study provides useful insights to HR strategists for understanding workplace values from different perspectives and its significance in creating numerous organizational benefits. The briefing saves HR executives reading time by selecting essentially relevant information and presenting it in an easy-to-understand format.*

**Keywords** *Workplace values, Workplace, Leaders, Employees, Benefits*

**The culture of a workplace – an organization's value, norms and practices – has a huge impact on our happiness and satisfaction.**  
**Adam Grant**

Human values represent desirable traits of one's personality such as candor, veracity, patience, accountability, empathy, humanity, impartiality, and reverence. Human values are elemental to human existence and extend across classes, religion, cultures, and nationalities. These tend to foster an environment of conviction, clarity, accountability, compassion, esteem, collaboration, eminence, and brilliance. These act as internal motivators for people to perform their best with good moral character. Human values hold great importance in all cultures and unite people collectively in spite of their differences and trigger a concern for everyone's well-being.

Values are defined and explained by many scholars in different ways. Some have emphasized that they are internal states. Rokeach (1973) defined values as a stable belief that a definite mode of conduct is personally or socially accepted. According to Schwartz (1992) values are norms that people use to choose to defend their actions and to evaluate other individuals and events.

Basically, the core human values include:

- Love: unconditional care and concern;
- Peace: Control of mind and body;
- Truth: Vital moral obedience;
- Non-Violence: Respect and honor for other's right and

life; and

- Right Conduct: Congruence in action.

"Thinking with love is truth, feeling with love is peace, acting with love is right conduct, understanding with love is non-violence."

## WORKPLACE VALUES

Workplace values are guiding principles that help employees to understand the difference between right and wrong way of working. At workplace, a leader's goal should be to raising people awareness about the significance of human values and persuade them towards good behavior and habits. An effective leader is expected to play a role of a values-based leader who discuss with employees about importance of demonstrating right values in their everyday life and making them understand that how these values must affects their behavior and actions.

## Understanding Diverse Workplace Values

### From Leader's Perspective

A workplace leader plays an important role in creating core set of beliefs and values required for healthy workplace environment and healthy interactions among people

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(Reader, 2018). Following are some suggested instances of workplace values that should be practiced by employees from workplace leader's perspectives. These include:

**Understanding and following "Protestant work ethics":**

Sociologist Max Weber, who proposed the concept of "Protestant work ethics" in his book titled "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism," published in 1905, said that every employee should be obliged to put sincere, hard and genuine efforts to achieve individual, group and organizational goals.

**Keeping genuine performance:** Showing the commitment towards taking right actions and maintaining authentic performance is essential workplace value highlighted by organizational leaders.

**Be a good team member:** Employees should care for feeling of respect, cooperation and support to other members of the work group. Without cooperating others, it is really challenging to prove the worth as human being. A good employee should develop this human quality in order to be a worthwhile employee at workplace.

**Being accountable:** Showing accountability for given task and working honestly for its successful completion is required workplace value.

**Focus on details:** Employees should look for clear details related to the given job. They should be clear enough in understanding the basic details of assigned job. These details may include task list, priorities and responsibilities of the given job.

**Delivering quality:** Performing the quality work and delivering the quality results is an important workplace value should be admired by work force.

**Respect company policy, rules, and administration:** Employees should admire management policies, rules and other administrative issues in order to become loyal and most productive staff. This will help them in achieving organizational goals.

**Working with honesty and integrity:** Employees are expected to be truthful and honest in their efforts while working for their leaders and organization.

## FROM EMPLOYEE'S PERSPECTIVE

Employees are considered as an asset to an organization. From employee's perspective, there are certain workplace values should be admired by leaders for maintaining employees' happiness and satisfaction and to create healthy workplace relations. These include:

**Developing healthy work culture:** Developing appropriate

culture and socializing with everyone is a key responsibility of workplace leaders. Developing team spirit, informal get together and employee empowerment can help them to build the healthy work climate.

**Ethical and values-based leadership:** Encouraging employees and caring for their needs instead of their own is a leadership value of ethical leaders. Ethical leadership excites, energizes, encourages, and provides freedom to others, which is the spirit of people empowerment. As a values-based leader, boss must be good enough in guiding, motivating, and inspiring others to practice the greater good.

**Diversity management practices:** Today's workforce comprises of people belonging to different gender, age, race, culture, and educational and geographical background. Understanding and managing diversity related issue gives an organization an opportunity to develop new talent and ideas and to become most innovative in the competitive world. This can be done through cross cultural training.

**Empowerment of employees:** Feeling of empowerment is always essential at workplace in order to develop the good feeling, empathy, and respect for each other.

**Managing workplace conflicts through negotiation:** Workplace leaders can manage individual, group and organizational level conflicts by developing negotiation wisdom and creating a smooth platform for healthy discussions.

**Managing employee's stress:** For preventing employees from stress and poor performance, leaders should go for using the individual and organizational coping strategies including change in workloads, job redesign, improvements in physical work environment, behavioral counseling, meditation and time management training at workplace.

**Using motivational practices:** Workplace leaders can motivate employees by creating hygiene and motivational factors at workplace.

**Sound HR policies and practices:** This may include participative management style, grievance handling system, effective training sessions, competency mapping, regular potential appraisal, adequate performance appraisal system, and performance linked pay etc. This will lead to positive organizational outcomes.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF HUMAN VALUES AT WORKPLACE

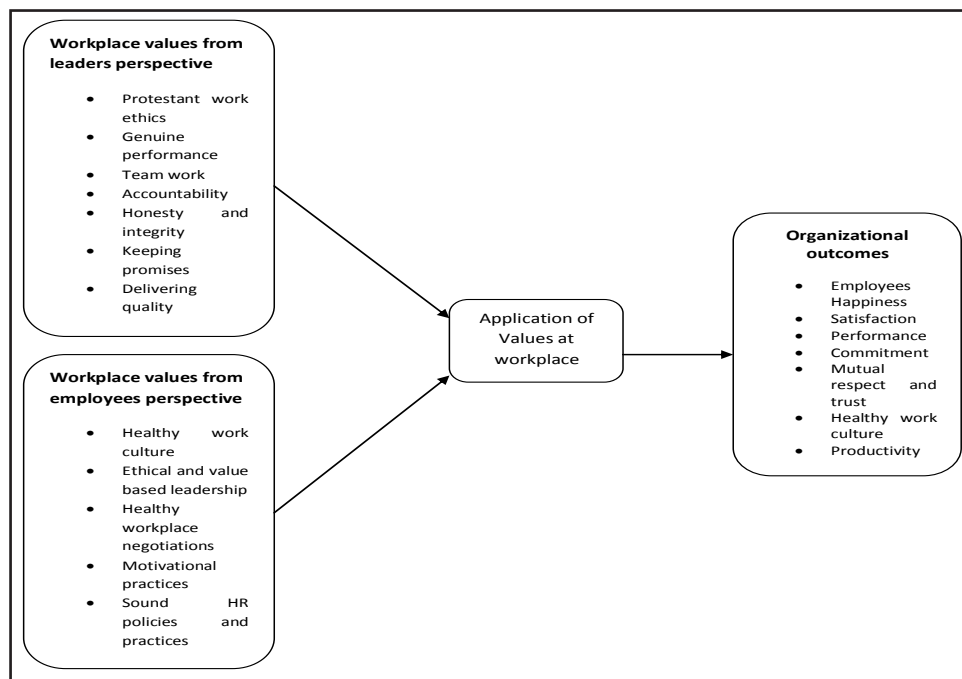
Right mixture of human values helps organizations to develop healthy work culture, employee's satisfaction, commitment and also improve overall organizational productivity as shown in Fig. 1. According to the researchers in area of

human and workplace values, various benefits organizations can achieve through practicing the right set of human values at workplace. These includes:

- Improves employee dedication and commitment;
- Develop cooperation and understanding among staff;
- Increase morale and work motivation;
- Develop trust and build confidence among staff;
- Produce quality results;

- Better relationships;
- Team work;
- Induce better learning environment;
- Build positive organizational image; and
- Improves competitiveness through strong labor-management relations etc.

The summary of workplace values from different perspectives and benefits through their application at workplace is represented in Fig. 1.



**Fig. 1: Shows the Workplace Values and Various Benefits Organizations Can Receive from Application of These Values at the Workplace**

## LESSONS FROM THE CORPORATE WORLD

### The Infosys Way of Creating Workplace Values

Infosys is a global leader in consulting, technology and outsourcing solutions. It believes in nurturing relationships that reflect its culture of unwavering ethics and mutual respect. At Infosys, people love and care their responsibilities beyond business. That is a reason that management established the Infosys foundation with the objective of providing assistance to socially and economically depressed sectors of the economy and performs ethically in all its public relations.

At Infosys, the management processes and decision making system are ‘powered by intellect and driven by values’. Few of value driven practices followed by Infosys include:

- Leadership by example;
- Integrity and transparency;
- Keeping fairness in all business transactions;
- Maintaining trust and respect with its stakeholders; and
- Continuous education and equal training opportunities.

### The HUL (Hindustan Unilever Limited) Way

Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) is India’s largest fast moving consumer goods company with a legacy of over 80

years in India and touches the lives of every two out of three Indians.

Unilever earned its corporate image by practicing integrity and respect for all.

Few of the examples of respecting values at workplace include:

- Development of standard of conduct includes honesty, integrity and respect for the human rights;
- Valuing diversity in workplace and having a culture of mutual trust, respect and transparency;
- Prohibition of using child labor;
- There is no conflict of interest because Unilever employees do not look for personal gain through misuse of their positions;
- HUL corporate purpose states that to succeed requires “the highest standards of corporate behavior towards everyone we work with, the communities we touch, and the environment on which we have an impact.” and;
- By 2020, HUL will drive fairness by further building human rights across its operations and advancing human rights in its extended supply chain.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Workplace leaders should realize the significance of human values at workplace. It is the leader’s duty to make everyone aware about importance of practicing values at workplace.

There is good number of examples of organizations working at national and international level, which focuses on religiously practicing values and ethics at their workplace as two of the top MNC’s examples mentioned above. Right blend of human and workplace values can help the organizations to create sound work culture, to perform better and to improve overall organizational productivity. This study provides useful insights to HR strategists for understanding workplace values from different perspectives and its significance for creating a numerous organizational benefits. It also provides opportunity for future researchers

to explore list of other useful workplace values and ethical practices, which may also be essential to build positive organizational image.

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