



Crew Room Wall . . .

This section provides US Airways pilots an opportunity to write articles on subjects of their own choosing. These articles express the opinions of the authors and should not be understood or interpreted as expressions of ALPA or US Airways MEC positions. Articles in this section are subject to the same editorial standards as the rest of the US AIRWAVES. Authors should be prepared to spend time discussing them with the US AIRWAVES staff.

Values and Corporate Culture

Phil Gibson (CLT)

Lou Nemeth (CLT)

Marshall Rogers (CLT)

Gorden Kerr, Jr. (CLT)

“What in the world do values have to do with US Airways? In a word—everything! Our values are expressed in our corporate culture.”

Value, defined simply, is something of importance. Often we think of value in terms of art, jewelry, cars, etc.—in other words, something with monetary value. However, there are things of a much higher value that we cannot put a price tag on that we hold very dear to us, such as our ideals and closely held beliefs. All of us come from very diverse backgrounds and, thus, a very diverse set of personal values. How important are these values? They guide our actions and our interpretations of each experience in our day. Difficulty in making a certain decision probably stems from lack of values surrounding that situation.

To explain this in a basic example, consider a visit to a restaurant. You arrive and are seated at a comfortable and quiet table. While looking at the menu the gymnastics surrounding your values begins. There are many factors to consider before choosing what to eat. There is the price and healthiness of the meal. How hungry am I? What if my partner is a vegetarian, do I want to steer away from meat dishes? How will I feel after I eat this (bloated, unsatisfied - may need Roloids, or satisfied)? With a clear set of values to deal with each of these issues, we will have very little problem choosing. In other words, values express themselves in our behavior. Without clearly defined values in our life, simple decisions can become difficult.

What in the world do values have to do with US Airways? In a word—everything! Our values are expressed in our corporate culture. Why is this important? Every decision we make while performing our duties at US Airways is based on our value system and those values are the heart and soul of this airline. We all have our own set of personal values and when we are at work we have a set of values to deal with work situations. Sometimes, if the values we use at work are not clearly spelled out, it can create conflict and confusion. (For further reading on the subject of differences between personal and organizational values and how to align them we recommend *The Power of Alignment*, Labovitz and Rosansky, 1997.)

Where do these values originate? There is much debate about this. Sometimes, the leaders of a company design a set of values based on their experiences in a particular industry that sets the tone for everybody. Other times, values emerge through years of experience based on complex interactions between the business and its customers. All groups (and by this we mean either business groups, social groups, and even family groups) have a set of values. Again, some are clearly identified (like the Four Way Test in the Rotary Club) and some are not so clearly identified (like regional accents). In some cases, the values are part of the rules



and in other cases, the values express themselves as a result of association. Probably the most effective values come from leadership because the orientation within business is to follow authority. New leaders can begin changing the culture of a company by operating within a new set of values.

How do individuals contribute to this endeavor? A much-used example is Dr. W. Edward Deming, the father of the post-war economic boom in Japan. He developed the notion of having a constant, never-ending commitment to consistently increase the quality of a business every single day. Even though this sounds self-evident, it was a revolutionary idea. The basic idea is that in the West, we tend to think of progress happening in large doses. A 10 percent increase in performance or a 10 percent decrease in cost. The Japanese place a value on very small increments of improvement like one hundredth of one percent. The small improvements add up over time, and they are interested in the direction of change rather than some large measurable instant change. Dr.

Deming told the Japanese in the 1950s that this would give them the power to dominate the markets of the world. Keep in mind that Deming's ideas worked well within the Japanese society where control and predictability are highly valued.

So, values can be very large ideas spelled out very clearly or they can be very small ideas that add up to a larger picture.

One can begin to understand the place of values in your own experience by just asking the question: What are the values that are expressed in my group? Asking the question is a good place to start when trying to understand values at home or at work. You can make that group any size you wish. It can be your family, your union, your company and even your country. Asking the question begs the answer and starts a process of understanding that is certainly very interesting and potentially very rewarding.



“ Probably the most effective values come from leadership because the orientation within business is to follow authority. New leaders can begin changing the culture of a company by operating within a new set of values. ”



Robert C. Monin, CFP
President

AMHERST FINANCIAL SERVICES INC.

Registered Investment Adviser

531 FARBER LAKES DRIVE
WILLIAMSVILLE, NEW YORK 14221