



Live Your Strengths

Welcome to the August edition of *Live Your Strengths*, the monthly e-newsletter from In Search of Excellence.

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Putting Values into Action (Part 4)

Over the last few months, I have been writing about how to put some action into your organization's values. We have covered how to clearly articulate your organization's values and define what those values mean in practice. We have also discussed how to create a 'Moment of Truth' action plan to ensure your values are honoured in times of stress or change. (If you missed these articles, you can revisit them at any time in the [Newsletter Archive](#) section of the website).

The final step in ensuring that your organization's values are more than a meaningless list of words is to **celebrate the values and make them a regular part of ongoing discussions**. We can't discuss something as important as values only once or twice and expect people to remember and/or consistently act upon them.

At each meeting in your organization, take a few minutes to talk about the values, making a point of recognizing others you have noticed upholding the values. Provide opportunities for members of your team to 'brag' about their colleagues and their successes at living the values, especially in difficult times.

This not only reinforces the importance of acting out your organization's values, but will also allow new members of the organization to be smoothly transitioned into the team by helping them realize what is expected of them.

We also must remember the organizational truth that 'what gets rewarded gets done'. Organizations often fall into the trap of rewarding *results*, without paying attention to *how* those results were achieved. So it is common to see bonuses given to the highest achievers, even if they did not necessarily uphold the organization's values in their work.

This clearly sends the message to others in the organization that, although we talk a lot about these values, in the end they are not as important as the achievements that are being *officially* rewarded. Think about this for a moment – what gets rewarded in your organization? Do those rewards have anything to do with the organization's stated values? If not, it may be time to revise the organization's incentive programs.

It is likely that an organization's values will never be perfectly upheld in every circumstance, but for values to truly become a part of the organization's culture, they must be a frequent focus and be celebrated along the way. These steps are fairly simple to implement – it is the consistency and priority given to values in the weeks and months to come that will make them powerful in any organization.

Live Your Strengths Update:

The newsletter will take a short hiatus for the month of September as we welcome a new baby into our family. However, it will return again in October filled with the usual array of articles, tips and tools to help you create the path to your potential!

Live Your Strengths Monthly Challenge: It's Feedback Time!

Thanks to everyone who has emailed or phoned to let me know how they are using the newsletter's articles and monthly challenges. It has been fascinating for me to hear about how you are applying these ideas in your workplaces, volunteer organizations, churches, and families.

If you have a success story to share, or have questions or suggestions for upcoming newsletters, please take a few minutes to email me at denise@insearchofexcellence.ca. Thanks and I look forward to hearing from you!

Cheers,
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"Creating the Path to Your Potential"

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