



# THE PLAN - LEAD - EXCEL NEWSLETTER

## Values

There are volumes written about values. Unfortunately, much of what I've read tends to indicate a basic misunderstanding of the subject; at least from a leader's or planner's point of view. It is not uncommon to hear that a person or company "has no values," or "lacks a value base." I disagree with that analysis because I've never run into another human being who didn't have some sort of value base. The problem usually is that a person's or organization's values don't agree with ours, or with those generally accepted by society. I've also observed that for many people, values tend to be situational. For instance, most people will tell you they value honesty, but will think nothing of keeping the extra money a busy cashier mistakenly gave them.

Whether creating a strategic plan for your organization's success, leading day-to-day activities, or just going about your everyday life, it's essential that you know your personal values. It's also critical to have a core, inviolate set of values that are the foundation for everything you do. I personally value integrity above all else. That means I will always deal honestly with other people and I expect the same from them. If I detect that someone is being less than honest with me, I will probably not continue to do business with

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Do you need a speaker for your next conference or meeting event? Bob Mason is an accomplished professional speaker who keeps audiences engaged while instilling them with a desire to excel. To schedule Bob, email [rlm@planleadexcel.com](mailto:rlm@planleadexcel.com)

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Bob's new book



*Planning to Excel*  
*Strategic Planning That Works*

them. I use this example to illustrate another point about values. We tend to hold others to our own standards. There's nothing wrong with that, as long as we keep two things in mind. First, since we are holding others to our values; values they may not feel are important, we create a potential conflict if two value sets are diametrically opposed. Second, expecting others to adhere to our values means we cannot stray ourselves. Credibility will instantly disappear when someone else feels there is a double standard.

As I mentioned earlier, everyone has a set of values. For instance, that guy who's trying to sell drugs to your kids has a value set. It isn't the same value set most of us subscribe to but it guides his actions. As a leader, you need to have a value set that is known to your subordinates, but you must also understand they may not share all of your values. I'm not suggesting your subordinates are drug dealers, that's an extreme example, but there will be differences in individual values that can lead to conflict. So, how do you deal with that? You as a leader, and the organization as a whole, need to define the organization's values and make those values clear to the organization. You must live by them every day, using them to guide your decisions. Employees must understand that, while they may not always agree with the values expressed by the organization, they are expected to live by them while doing the organization's business.

My favorite example of organizational values is Johnson & Johnson, whose corporate values were sorely tested in a case now studied in business ethics classes. The maker of Tylenol was rocked when an unknown person or persons laced Extra Strength Tylenol tablets with cyanide causing multiple deaths. Though Johnson & Johnson was not

is coming soon!

This short book provides everything an organization's leader needs to create a basic strategic plan. The book includes worksheets to record ideas as you progress through the planning process. You can preview the Introduction and first chapter entitled "Why You Need this Book" at [www.planleadexcel.com/strategicplanning](http://www.planleadexcel.com/strategicplanning)

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Ever wonder why some leaders appear to be more comfortable than others in their leadership roles? It could be because they know themselves and are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. You can't expect others to accept you if you don't know and accept yourself first. "Know yourself" is one of my "Inviolable Rules of Leadership." You can download that and all the rules for free at [www.planleadexcel.com/leadership](http://www.planleadexcel.com/leadership).

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responsible for the tainted tablets, they reacted immediately by recalling all Extra Strength Tylenol, a move that cost the company millions of dollars. They were not at fault, and didn't have to take such a drastic step, but the company's leaders felt it was the only appropriate course of action in keeping with the company's values. Those values are stated in the Johnson & Johnson Credo, available for anyone to view on their website, <http://www.jnj.com/connect/about-jnj/jnj-credo/>. Their response to the crisis cost millions, but probably saved the product line and possibly the company.

Values are critical to leadership and the planning process. The leader must understand their own values and, while everyone's individual values may not always agree, the organization must understand the values they are expected to adhere to.

Until next time, Plan - Lead - Excel.

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