



“ ‘Tool’ is clearly a metaphor... to indicate tangible things you can do to get desired results. Every tool is a product of some good intention to do something. With repeated use, a tool will evolve and become refined. A good tool will have a central use but will also be usable for things other than that which it was intended. For instance, a good hammer could be used to prop open a door. The metaphor of ‘tool’ indicates any distinct, learnable process or practice that can be described and repeated to get an effect.”

David Sibbet: *Visual Leaders: New Tools for Visioning, Management, & Organization Change*

The Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit is a comprehensive and systematic guide to help you create a plan and a blueprint for what we at Values Coach call the Invisible Architecture™ of your organization. Using a construction metaphor, this toolkit will help you design a blueprint for the foundation of core values, superstructure of corporate culture, and interior finish of emotional attitude in the workplace. The Toolkit will not only help you think more clearly about your values, culture, and attitude, it will also give you tools, strategies and ideas for developing that ideal Invisible Architecture and the inspiration to use those tools.

The Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit is not a paint-by-numbers cookie cutter; it is, rather, a toolkit in the best sense of the word that it contains resources that can be used for a wide range of culture-building projects. The tools in this Toolkit are meant to be used repeatedly, not used once and put back in the box. And, as with any tool, the more you use them the more skilled you will become and the more effective the tools will be.

The Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit can be used for an entire organization or for part of the organization. These tools apply to a division or a department within an organization as much as they do to the overall organization itself. For that matter, many of the tools in this toolkit can apply at home in the organizational life of your family. Many



of the tools included in this toolkit can also apply in your own personal life to help you achieve your career, family, financial, service, and spiritual goals.

At any given time, you can use or adapt some or all of the tools in this Toolkit. For example, if you are a department or a division within a larger organization that works under established organizational values not subject to change, you can use the module on core values to develop guiding principles under the umbrella of those values, and then use other modules to define the culture and the emotional attitude that you want to cultivate where you work.

As with all planning, the process is as important, and usually more important, than the outcome itself. There is no one right or wrong way to use the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit, and in many cases the process will evolve in a positive way as you progress. Because people take ownership for what they helped to create, it is important to have as broad-based participation in the process as possible. And unlike the visible architecture, plans for your Invisible Architecture are never cast in stone, and the work is never done.

Each section within the Toolkit workbook complements one of the six webinars that are an integral element of this system. Each section contains links to worksheets, posters, and other resources; and links to additional resources, including the eBooks, workbooks, and other resources from Values Coach.

Our purpose at Values Coach is transforming people through the power of values and transforming organizations through the power of people. The Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit will help you do both. Our goal is to help you build a stronger and more resilient culture of ownership on a foundation of values (both personal and organizational).



Homework

The Values Coach website resources page includes a wealth of additional materials that will help you build a more positive and productive organizational culture. This includes eBooks (such as *Never Fear, Never Quit*, *The Florence Prescription* and *The Healing Tree*), the workbook on *The Twelve Core Action Values*, webinars, special reports, and other resources.

Throughout this Toolkit Workbook you will see references, quotes, and excerpts from other books and resources, like the one below. In each case I've excerpted a passage that is most relevant to the point I am making, but I encourage you to select and read a number of these books yourself (or assign them to a member of your team to read and report back to the group). Especially in recent years there has been a burgeoning interest in corporate culture and workplace engagement, and no one single source has a monopoly on the best of the wisdom and practical advice.

“An organization that develops a strong and adaptive culture will enjoy greater loyalty from customers and employees alike. Cultures that foster ownership create labor and cost advantages because they often become better places to work, so they become well known among prospective employees. Compared with less effective cultures, they generate higher referral rates and more improvement ideas from employees.”

James Heskett, W. Earl Sasser, and Joe Wheeler: *The Ownership Quotient*



Suggested process for using the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit

Begin by having your leadership team watch the introductory video, discuss the questions at the end of this section, define your specific goals and—most important—make sure that you have enthusiastic commitment from this group. This is also the time for you to consider your specific process, and in particular who should be involved and the proper balance between top-down and all-inclusive participation.

Disallow Opting Out: The ultimate success of cultural blueprinting will substantially depend upon enthusiastic engagement by your middle management team. We've worked with organizations that have a “culture of optionality” that tolerates managers sitting on the sidelines or, worse yet, cheering for the opposing team by not participating or by actively resisting cultural transformation. Have the CEO or other senior organizational leader, either in person or by way of a video presentation, emphasize the organization's commitment to this process, show the introductory video, and lead a discussion about how the process will work in the organization. Make sure that any objections and concerns are addressed upfront, and ask managers to think about informal leaders from their areas who might be engaged.

The Cultural Blueprinting Team: We recommend that you select a Cultural Blueprinting Team to serve as a steering committee for the process. While the team might include representatives from the senior leadership group, ideally it should be comprised of formal and informal leaders from throughout the organization, or your part of the organization. It is imperative that there be close coordination and cooperation between the Cultural Blueprinting Team and the leadership group to avoid any misunderstandings, or to have members of the Cultural Blueprinting team feel as though they have not been supported or (worse yet) that the rug has been pulled out from under them by a lack of support from their leaders.

One of the most frequent questions we get asked refers to the specific process by which members of the Cultural Blueprinting Team are selected. Again, there is not a single cookie cutter approach. You can open it up to applications—the upside is you'll have a highly committed group and might well find leaders in the most surprising corners (later in the Toolkit I quote from a book by my friend Brian Jones which says that ordinary greatness is found where you least expect it—everywhere!). The downside of using the application process is that you will undoubtedly have to tell some would-be volunteers that the panel is full, and you'll have to turn them away. Then your challenge is to find other constructive ways to engage these people in the dialog and the process.



Or you can hand-select participants. The upside to this approach is that you will get people you know will be positive and committed to the project. The downside is that most of these people are already over-committed and you might gain less ownership from the rest of the organization. Most organizations do some blending of approaches: encouraging key people to take part and selectively opening it up to other applicants; enhancing participation with sub-groups; using town hall meetings or other methods to engage people who are not internally involved in the process. Many of the tools in the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit can be used to enhance organization-wide engagement.

Assuming a six month process, with one Toolkit module per month, begin by having the leadership team, including middle management, and the Cultural Blueprinting Team view and discuss the first webinar. After a kick-off session, where you watch and discuss the introductory video, schedule 6 additional sessions with the management team and/or cultural blueprinting team. This will typically be a two-hour commitment with the first 30 minutes including a review and discussion of previous modules and homework assignments, 60 minutes for watching the webinar, and the final 30 minutes for discussing next steps and making homework assignments.

Early in the process you should establish a cultural baseline using some of the tools provided, including the Cultural Assessment Survey, the Passion-Performance Matrix, and the Attitude Bell Curve. You should also establish a baseline for internally maintained data including employee engagement, customer or patient satisfaction, turnover statistics, productivity, and other appropriate data. The Toolkit includes downloadable PowerPoint slides for each of the six webinars. At the option of the organization, the webinars can be shown to employees in their original format and/or managers and Cultural Blueprinting Team members can tailor the slides to make a personal presentation.

“ If you subscribe exclusively to the belief that everything has to have an immediate return or investment, you will never fully comprehend higher math. It requires an equal commitment to such things as safety, training, loss prevention, wellness, and benefits, the so-called soft matters that are essential to sustainability but rarely create a short-term return on investment.”

Dan J. Sanders: Built to Serve: How to Drive the Bottom Line with People-First Practices



Great Organizations are More than Just Organizations

The most successful organizations pursue innovative and aggressive business strategies, but they also appreciate the aphorism that culture eats strategy for lunch (a saying coined by the late, great management guru Peter Drucker); they have attractive and functional physical plants but they also understand that their greatness derives from things that cannot be seen, not from beautiful buildings. Without using the words Invisible Architecture™ or Blueprint Behind the Blueprint™, they are as diligent in working on these as they are their structures and strategies. A few examples:

- ✓ Southwest Airlines flies the same types of airplanes and recruits the same pilots, flight attendants, and mechanics that are employed by every other airline, but has by far the highest employee loyalty and productivity in the industry.
- ✓ Zappos sells the same shoes you can buy in any department store, but getting a job at their call center is more competitive than trying to get into Harvard. The company went from start-up to a billion dollar enterprise in eight years, selling the same shoes you can buy in any department store, and has created a tremendous competitive advantage from its values and culture.
- ✓ Les Schwab sells the same tires you can buy at any other tire store; Schwab came to dominate the tire business in the Pacific Northwest by creating an empire of people on fire to sell you a tire (they actually *run* out to your car to welcome you when you pull into the parking lot).
- ✓ Starbucks built a global powerhouse in less than two decades selling the ultimate commodity product—coffee—at a substantial premium over what people could get it for out of a Folgers can. When the company got into serious trouble in 2008, it was a resilient culture more than brilliant strategies that set the stage for one of the most impressive business turnarounds ever.

Each of these organizations, and every other that makes “Best Companies” and “Great Place to Work” rosters, intuitively understands that the Invisible Architecture of core values, corporate culture, and emotional attitude creates the only sustainable source of competitive advantage. Strategy can be copied, technology can be leapfrogged, and your best people can be recruited away by competitors. But no one can steal your values, copy your culture, or compete with your attitude. Designing and building a



great Invisible Architecture is both one of the most rewarding things a leader can do, and one of the greatest legacies he or she can leave for those who come after.

The Great Place to Work Institute, which selects the 100 Best Places to Work for the annual *Fortune* magazine roster, says that the three most important determinants of being a great place to work are pride, connection, and trust. Note carefully: these are not qualities that can be developed with business strategy, technology, or physical construction. They are outcomes of your Invisible Architecture—values, culture, and attitude. You should be just as deliberate in designing this “blueprint behind the blueprint” as you are for the other things.

“ People will not desert a leader, they will only desert a boss.
People will not quit a mission, they will only quit a job.
People will not leave a team, they will only leave an organization.”

Joe Tye: All Hands on Deck: 8 Essential Lessons for Building a Culture of Ownership

When you are planning new construction or remodeling is always a great time to also be working on changes in your Invisible Architecture. You wouldn't move old furniture into a new building. Why would you move in negative elements of culture, and inappropriate attitudes and behaviors?

Overview of the Six Modules

The Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit features this workbook plus six one-hour webinars that are designed to inform, challenge, and inspire you to think about the ideal Invisible Architecture of your organization and to create a plan and a blueprint to foster that ideal. You can download the slides from each webinar and customize them for your internal communication purposes at the Client page on the Cultural Blueprinting Toolkit website.

Here is a recap of the six modules:

Module #1: From Accountability to Ownership—Rewiring your Organization for a Culture of Ownership

In today's turbulent and competitive world, a highly engaged workforce and a culture of ownership are the only sustainable sources of competitive advantage. Mere accountability is no longer enough; accountability is externally imposed motivation (having



your feet held to the fire, being held accountable with rewards and punishments); a spirit of ownership is intrinsic motivation that does not require having someone else hold you accountable. This module covers general strategies to foster a culture of ownership, provides a simple cultural assessment tool, and challenges your team with questions to spark thinking for the next five modules.

Module #2: The Invisible Architecture of Your Organization

In this module, we begin the process of creating “the blueprint behind the blueprint” for your organization, and crafting a culture plan to reinforce and complement your strategic plan. Using examples of best and worst practices from multiple industries, we challenge your team to think in new ways about your Invisible Architecture, and to create a source of competitive distinction based on your core values, corporate culture, and workplace attitude.

Module #3: The Foundation of Core Values

Your core values should define who you are, what you stand for, and what you won't stand for. In this module, we use tools like The Values → Behaviors → Outcomes Continuum and The Values Clarification Drill to help your team appreciate the power (and in many cases the missed opportunities for building culture) of your statement of values. We explore how and when to revisit, revise, and revitalize your organization's values, and strategies to inspire your people to relate their own personal values to the values, vision, and mission of the organization. We look at innovative ways to package, present, and promote your values so they don't look like generic boilerplate (we call it boringplate) that could just as well grace the walls of a competing organization without anyone noticing. Finally, there is a brief overview of the Values Coach course on *The Twelve Core Action Values*, which is the core course for the Values Collaborative.

Module #4: The Superstructure of Corporate Culture

It's often said that culture eats strategy for lunch, but most organizations do not have a culture plan to reinforce their strategic plan. This module begins by describing *why* culture trumps strategy, explores the culture-strategy interface, describes essential qualities for building a culture of ownership, explains why we need cultural toughness and resilience today more than ever before, and shares practical tools and strategies for fostering a more positive, productive, and resilient culture.



Module #5: Interior of Emotional Attitude

The aphorism “attitude is everything” applies to organizations as well as individuals. In this module, we explore how the collective self-talk, self-image, and emotional baggage of your people creates an invisible ceiling on the performance potential of your organization. We then share strategies for creating cultural intolerance to toxic emotional negativity, including The Pickle Challenge for a more positive and productive workplace. The goal is to help you eradicate toxic emotional negativity from the workplace, the way we not so long ago eradicated toxic cigarette smoke from public places (including the workplace).

Module #6: From Transactional to Transforming Leadership

In this module, we describe the relationship between transactional and transforming leadership and cover The Four Dimension of Values-Based Leadership: Character, Expectation, Fellowship, and Quest. Using real-world examples as well as those from fiction (including some of the greatest leaders who *never* lived) we consider various leadership archetypes. The module includes twelve strategies for being more effective as a transformational coach and leader and for building a culture of ownership on a foundation of values. In today’s world, we need leadership in every corner, not just in the corner office, so we conclude with a focus on fostering a self-empowering organizational culture.

“ Investing in people and building their skills and abilities raises their sense of their own competency and capability. To the extent people believe they are better prepared and more skilled, they will perform at a higher level simply because they have more confidence in themselves, including a belief in their ability to learn and develop that encourages further learning and growth.”

Jeffrey Pfeffer: What Were They Thinking? Unconventional Wisdom about Management