



## EXECUTIVE VITALITY: VALUES AND VACATION

Are you literally afraid to take your vacation because your organization may frown upon you leaving during a crucial time? Do you decide to take less vacation than you accumulate to ensure your place in the corporate ladder? Did someone threaten you into changing your vacation dates so that they might have you in the office while they go on vacation? All of these scenarios are familiar to us in our corporate coaching experiences – when misalignment between values and vacation occur.

What we have learned:

- Creating and taking vacation time has a positive impact on productivity.
- Vacation time is a private affair.
- Your employer should respect your vacation time.
- The more your vacation matches your personal values the better.
- The more your organization is perceived to align its values with vacation policy the better.

Since the first week of August is a popular time for people to take vacation, we thought we would ask you: Do your vacations match your values? Or, do your values match your vacation?

Is there something in your values about delivering quality, performance, focus, quality of life, excellent customer treatment, teamwork, fun, respect, passion, health, engagement, integrity, happiness, putting people first, innovation? That is not a random list; it is taken from various actual sets of core values.

Take any combination of two, three, or four of the values above and ask yourself the following types of questions:

- Can my team be innovative, perform at peak, and deliver quality with passion if they have not had appropriate time off in more than a year (or more than 6 months)?
- Can I put people first, be healthy, have fun, and be engaged if I am “operating on fumes?”
- Can people across the organization collaborate as teams, unfailingly treat all people with respect, focus on the customer, and even act at all times with unimpeachable integrity if they cannot focus at all because they are a bit strung out from over-work and under-vacation.

Here are some questions to consider:

1. Do you take an adequate amount of vacation and do you provide an adequate amount to your organization?
2. Are you structured in such a way that people can take vacations without minor or major work disasters occurring, e.g., do you ensure adequate planning, adequate coverage?
3. How much vacation is enough? For different job types or levels—does it vary?

4. How frequently should people take vacation, e.g., three weeks once a year or one week every four months?
5. Back to the original question—do your policy and practice match your values?

There are no right or wrong answers to questions 3 and 4; it will vary from industry to industry and company to company, job to job. The important thing is that you ask the question.

*What do you need to do so that your vacation practice and policy reflect your values? What do you need to do to ensure that you and your employees get the appropriate R&R (either Rest and Relaxation or Recharging and Refreshing)? See related Wall Street Journal article about employees who refuse to take vacations.*

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