

## V-V I - A tool to measure the extent of Vision-Value alignment

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*Aligning vision and values to build ethical leadership and build healthy business culture has become important like never before. The paper outlines the development of an Instrument that can measure the extent of vision value alignment, identify their existing leadership style among the four styles described and a module to move towards High Vision and High Values Individual and Organization. The usages of the tool are in Leadership coaching, recruitment, training & development, organizational diagnosis.*

**KEY WORDS:** Leadership development; Vision and Values; Business ethics

Organizations tend to have cultures of their own, normally evolved over a period of time depending on what the purpose of the organization is and what values it would stand for, which can be either an asset or a liability. Organizational culture can also be an important source of commitment and continuity. On the contrary culture can also be a source of inflexibility and resistance to change. It is therefore imperative to create, nurture and sustain a healthy culture that reflects on organizational performance. Designing and understanding corporate cultures has been an uphill task for leadership and workers alike. Efforts to recognize and study the organizational culture began almost 40 years ago. Culture has been viewed as a construct describing the total body of belief, behaviour, knowledge, sanctions, values and goals that make up the way of life of a people. (Herskowitz,1948; Sathe,1985; Schein,1985; Schall,1983; Schwatz & Davis,1981; Broms & Gahmberg, 1983). Despite the efforts of companies to build ethical cultures, the actions of a few who have traded integrity for profits have cast a shadow on all. Never has it been more important for businesses to 'talk and walk the talk' of what they stand for. Research has indicated that organization's culture can be managed (O' Reilly,1989; Saffold,1988). But Weick (1983) states "Organizations don't have cultures, they are cultures, and this is why culture is so difficult to change" (p.125).

In the face of continuing corporate breakdowns, it is crucial to address the critical importance of creating ethically viable corporate cultures. It is also imperative for corporate leadership to make an assessment of their organizations' growth and eliminate the risk of corporate scandals. Corporate leadership has to be convinced about creating, nurturing and sustaining ethical cultures because it not only minimizes the risk of breakdowns but also actually adds value and creates a competitive advantage for their companies. Increasingly, several global companies are realizing that they cannot operate on a long-term basis in the global market without focusing on vision and value-based leadership. In the formation of organizational culture, both the purpose and process play a key role. While vision defines the purpose, values define the process. This reiterates the point that any work on developing an organizational culture should include vision and values as an important dimension.

This paper elaborates on a module to enable Leaders gain clarity on their vision and values using a Instrument developed on Vision-Value alignment, which shows the leader and the group the progress they would make in understanding their vision and values.

### **Theoretical framework**

Management theories have continuously focused on either being task-centered or people-centered. Beginning with the scientific management methods of Frederick Taylor in the 1900, Bureaucracy models of 1920's, the Hawthorne experiments in the 1930's, Human relations approaches in 1940's, the Motivational theories from Maslow, Herzberg, McGregor, in the 1950's and Schien's complex man theories of 1960's have been a movement towards understanding the job as well as the people dimensions, but independently. The Management by Objectives of Peter Drucker and One minute manager of Kenneth Blanchard brought in the task focus again. Focus on Quality and systems brought in by Deming complimented the efforts. But Ouchi's Theory Z, concepts of Empowerment and Emotional quotient brought back the focus to people issues (Wren, 1994). With the perspective of knowledge workers introduced by Drucker, the human capital again plays the key role (Barrett,2001).

The focus cannot be that of either-or, but a balance of both, with alignment as the key. In today's context, Leadership should be able to link their critical decisions to organizational vision and values. It is the absence of alignment that gives birth to issues. When the alignment breaks there is a downfall of the organization.

In developing the culture of the organization, leaders are believed to play a vital and important role. They are considered the influencers and the values they hold goes a long way in influencing the values the group holds. Leadership also plays a critical role in managing boundaries between organization and its environment (Lundberg,1985). In every organization the leadership must be able to enable right things to happen at the right place, at the right time and in the right context, in order to ensure continuous sustainable growth. However, the road to continuous business growth may not be as smooth as seems, what with several critical factors acting as impediments in allowing the leadership to perform its role.

The scandals faced by Enron, Tyco Electronics, WorldCom have troubled several management minds and strategic thinkers. Institutes and Corporate have realized the failures, which has resulted in new courses in Business Ethics (Weisman, 2003). Some of these Leaders got carried away by their success and were more intent on satisfying the stakeholders in terms of the dollars and cents that the business brought. Value addition was to them measured in monetary terms. As a consequence the process of conducting the business was ignored. Gradually, greed took over and numbers kept multiplying till the bubble burst. The same investors who praised the CEOs of these organizations for excellent performance did not lose any time in blaming them for the debacle. Outstanding professionals who possessed excellent skill sets and competencies were managing these organizations. But what they lacked in was an alignment between the purpose (vision) and the process (values). Every individual or organization starts with a clear set of vision and values. As they move forward, especially with a great deal of success, they tend to lose sight of the values that brought them to where they were, or the vision that kept them focused.

More than just the statement of vision and values, it is the clarity on the vision and values that should govern the organization and fuel its journey towards its ultimate stated purpose. The vision and values of an organization need to be defined well and, more importantly, aligned. For, an imbalance in them will have serious implications. While,

- Vision without Values is risky
- Values without Vision goes nowhere
- Values with Vision is evolution.

### **The Research Problem**

The organizational values have to be understood from the individual's value system. The employee value system are seen as being central to his motivational system; his expectation of organization rewards and his job satisfaction (Davis,1971; Fitzgerald,1971; Uris,1973). Human values were further found to affect not only perception of appropriate ends, but also perception of the appropriate means to those ends (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly,1976; Guth & Tagiuri,1965).

Higher the clarity, stronger is the integration of vision and values into every action. Gaining clarity is a continuous journey and not a one-time activity. This requires a powerful development process along with appropriate evaluations to help them move towards excellence. Though enough thought has gone into the topics Vision and Values independently, the tools available to measure the extent of alignment between them is very sparse. Therefore the progress of the individual or the organization is not measured. Further, there are few ways to understand the vision-value orientation of the individuals in the selection process. This research answers that by developing an instrument and also a module to enable Leaders to move towards high-vision and high-value orientation in their style of leadership.

### **The conceptual framework of the V-V Instrument**

Leadership will have to respond to the following basic questions at any point of time in the life cycle of the organization.

- Where to go?
- How to go?
- Why one wants to go to where one wants to go?
- What one wants to do?

Each question gives rise to an important component of organizational existence and direction. Responding to each of these questions gives clarity into those critical components.

### ***Vision***

The response to the first question **‘Where to go?’** would give clarity on the goal or vision which is the end point of an organization’s or individual’s objective. Vision is not just an objective or a goal but something more than that. It is the power of attempting to see the future...the ability to think about or plan the future with great imagination and wisdom. It is different from goals and objectives. For instance, an objective is a part of a goal, every goal comprises of many objectives. A few goals together form a vision. Goals can differ from person to person. But when one talks of a vision, there is a ‘ultimateness’ to it. It is what one wants to achieve in a long, long time... at least not immediately. Having a vision is not limited to individuals alone, even organizations need to have a vision, as is evident in grandiose organizational mission statements.

#### *Characteristics of a vision*

- Vision gives meaning to every action of the individual and the organization, like a lighthouse that guides.
- Vision must be attainable. It is also like the horizon that keeps stretching beyond the limits and boundaries.
- Vision also gives a lot of scope for defining realms. It is not restricted to specific aspects of development or any one facet of the organization. It operates at multiple levels. And, within an organization every employee must define and align his vision to the organizational vision and continue his quest for perfection.
- Vision is something that is etched in stone. It often does not change with time easily.
- Vision is not only inspiring but it is also inspired.
- Vision has to have a competitive edge. But it must also be able to transcend competition and look at evolution.

### ***Values***

The response to the second question **‘How to go?’** will provide insight on the kind of values that would guide the actions of individuals and organizations to move in the set direction. This would determine the means to achieve an end. Values are subtle beliefs and life principles that get indoctrinated into the human psyche over time. They give meaning to every purpose through feeling. Values are like the compass that guides one to one’s ultimate destiny. Any time one has difficulty making an important decision, one can be sure that it is the result of being unclear about one’s values. For this paper values mean ‘those beliefs that are within myself which govern my behaviour in any given context’ (Sampath,1999).

### ***Clarity***

The response to the third question **‘Why one wants to go?’** will give a deeper understanding of the goal and the appropriate means to be adopted to achieve the goal. The lack of clarity at this level will definitely lead to a lot of value conflicts as one is unclear on why the organization or the individual wants to achieve what they have set out to achieve. Clarity is a response associated with any question. One undertakes any activity based on the likely expectations and outcomes and the value or benefit they hold. Complete awareness and full knowledge of the dynamics of an action – consequences included – defines clarity.

For instance, let us take the case of two individuals who have set a materialistic goal of wanting to earn a million dollars in a period of one year, who set out working on accomplishing the objective. They are also clear on their values; that is how they will earn this amount. But both have not spent enough time figuring out why they want to earn the million dollars. What is bound to happen in such a situation is, when they accomplish their goal of earning a million dollars, they will be confused about how to use the money. In all possibility, they will be indecisive or take wrong decisions. Lack of clarity on purpose, therefore, will lead to distractions and result in decision-making that is not in line with the long-term vision of the organization or the individual.

### ***Context***

The fourth question **‘What one wants to do?’** will give an insight into the context. But one can be sensitive to a given context only when one has the clarity of the responses to the first three questions. Context is the framework within which one carries out an activity. A context-less activity is like a lost action, rudderless and meaningless. Context is a support to understanding, a situation that facilitates closeness to comprehension and appreciation.

Therefore, the four key words that emerge in the process of responding to these questions are: Vision, Values, Clarity and Context. Each of these words is powerfully interconnected and any imbalance will lead to undesirable consequences, be it in the organizational or personal sphere.

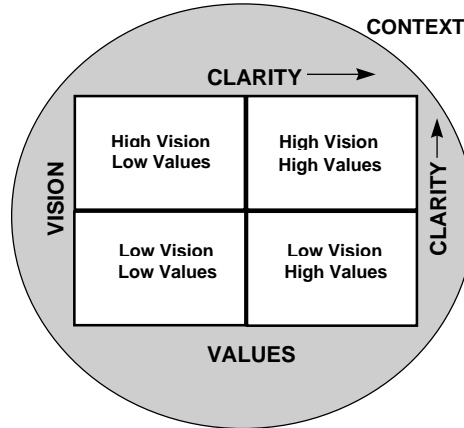
The clarity of purpose and context are fundamental in nature and only clarity about them will infuse the required impetus to propel the organization in its charted path. Clarity on purpose and process are the main factors that influence organizational well-being and differentiates a successful organization from a mediocre one. While the

former indicates the destination one wants to reach, the latter provides the path and clears the route that the organization needs to take.

### Relating concept to reality: Leadership styles

The figure below gives the idea of the various combinations possible. Mapped against clarity of vision and values in a given context, the leadership can be in low vision and low values, low vision and high values, high vision and low values, and high vision and high values.

Figure 1: Leadership styles



Each of these four leadership styles has distinctive characteristics. A brief view on each of these styles is given below while a detailed analysis is presented in the appendix.

<p>High Vision Low Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Survival of the fittest</li> <li>- Ends justify means</li> <li>- Self-centered</li> <li>- Master game player</li> </ul>	<p>High Vision High Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change is way of life</li> <li>- Principle centered</li> <li>- Trendsetters</li> <li>- Leaders</li> </ul>
<p>Low Vision Low Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- While in Rome be a Roman</li> <li>- Shortsighted</li> <li>- Comfortable following established paths</li> </ul>	<p>Low Vision High Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Believes his way of life is 'the' way of life</li> <li>- Form-centered</li> <li>- Externally-driven</li> </ul>

These leadership styles are not absolute. But they are commonsensical and true. The nearest parallel that can be drawn is the four-leadership styles concept of Jack Welch, the legendary CEO of General Electric (Slater, 1999).

**Type 1** managers (**relates to High vision Low values**) are those who deliver on commitments and also share the values of the company. Their futures are an easy call: "Onward and upward." These are high vision-high value leaders who, apart from ensuring their growth, also ensure the organization's growth.

**Type 2** managers (**relates to Low vision Low values**) neither deliver on commitments nor do they share the company's values. Their future is an easy call too: "Out of the door they go." These are low vision-low value leaders who neither add value to themselves nor to the organization and eventually court failure.

**Type 3** managers (**relates to Low vision High values**) do not fulfill commitments but share the company's values. Welch believed in giving them a second chance, in a different setting. These are low vision-high value leaders who demonstrate character more than competence, but hardly realize that they are not able to move the organization in the required direction. They lose their ability to influence and eventually the organization stagnates.

**Type 4** managers (**relates to High vision Low values**) deliver on commitments, but do not share the values of the company. They are high vision-low values individuals who improve the bottom line of the organization without realizing that they have ruined the foundation [of the organization] in the process. Their success is widely appreciated until they are caught for flouting the rules. Jack Welch, and General Electric, believed that while Type 1 managers have to be retained, Type 2 managers have to be shown the door, and Type 3 and Type 4 managers have

to be given a chance to move into the Type 1 space. While Jack Welch believed this, the eastern culture believes in developing them to move towards High vision – High values.

### **The reality and its challenge**

The challenge in today’s corporate world is in identifying these styles in leadership and enabling the leaders from every other quadrant to move into the high vision-high values space. It is easier said than done, but this is what separates ordinary leadership from extraordinary leadership.

These apparently conflicting leadership styles, or managerial types, are present in every organization in good measure. While some of them focus on the vision others focus on the value, without ever realizing that neither of them can exist without the other. To understand this further let us consider the hypothetical case of two leaders working in different departments of an organization. Leader-A is strictly quality conscious and lacks the foresight of time and related factors. He is typically a high values-low vision leader. Leader-B is more bottomline driven who does not mind bending the rules a bit. He is a low values-high vision leader. Both are likely to get into conflict when there is an issue of quality, because of which delivery is rendered not possible. The high vision-low values leader somehow wants to ensure delivery, to achieve his targets, seemingly insensitive to quality considerations, while the low vision-high leader turns insensitive to the need to achieve targets, focusing instead on quality.

The figure underscores the point that each group needs to be given a better idea of the philosophy of the other group(s). It can lead to a process of integration thereby enabling both groups to move towards the high vision-high values space. That would mark the beginning of a lasting organizational revolution. Every such conflict is an opportunity for navigating the organization towards its objective, with the leadership learning valuable lessons along the way.

The movement from any other category to the high vision-high values space will be lasting if the change arises out of realization, and not merely out of knowledge. The change has to happen at the ‘causal level’ than at the ‘effect level’.

Ultimately, the question that every leader should ask himself/herself is not just, whether there is alignment between vision and values, but what is the extent of that alignment. When this question is addressed to the total satisfaction of the leadership the growth of the organization is assured.

#### ***About Vision-Value Instrument***

Though the concept is much spoken, there is a dearth for well-established tools and modules to provide clarity. This paper proposes the development of a tool that can measure the extent of misalignment of vision and values in an individual. This is achieved by establishing the current location of the individual on a grid.

This is a forty-item instrument<sup>1</sup>. In developing the instrument the author has used the method of summated rating scales developed by Rensis Likert (1932).

#### ***Development of the V-V I***

An exhaustive survey of relevant literature was carried out and a list of statements reflecting on the basic premise and the four key concepts were prepared. The list of statements was scrutinized and consolidated. The list of statements revised by the author in consultation with five research experts, three consultants and a fifteen senior corporate executives working in USA, Malaysia, Srilanka and India constituted the first draft of instrument. The draft instrument was pre-tested with a sample of three hundred executives from organizations in Asia. The scores on items were subjected to inter-item correlation analysis. The items with significant coefficients of correlation were deleted. Thus final draft of instrument was prepared which was again pre-tested to determine its reliability.

#### ***Reliability of Instrument***

To test the reliability of the instruments Alpha and Split-half (Spearman-Brown and Guttman) coefficients were calculated. The results are presented in the following table.

Tests	Reliability
Alpha	0.7978
Guttman split half	0.8038
Correlation between forms	0.6732
Equal length Spearman-Brown	0.8047
Unequal length Spearman-Brown	0.8047

**Validity of Instruments**

The face validity of the instruments appears to be fairly high, as only those items have been selected for which there was a high degree of agreement between the author, research experts, consultants and executives. Further, the content and face validity was established by the author using the method of known groups, validated against ratings by self and others. The field data based on behavioral manifestations was also collected and correlated with the scores on the grid. This has given a high consensual validity to the instrument.

The uniqueness of this Instrument is its ability to assess the extent of clarity on vision and values covering various dimensions. The Instruments was administered and subjects were asked to respond to each of the statements on a seven-point scale. The responses to various items are scored and the total scores of each subject are computed. The total scores depict the extent of clarity on vision and values. The Instrument presents the location of the individual in the vision-value grid and describes the predominant characteristics of the individual in the current state of being. It also provides the focus area for immediate action. The grid provides clarity to the individual leader or group where they stand. Given below is a sample grid.

Figure 2: Sample vision-values grid

**VISION VALUE GRID**

<i>HIGH</i>			
<i>HIGH VISION LOW VALUES</i>		<i>HIGH VISION HIGH VALUES</i>	
	*	*	*
V I S I O N	*	*	*
*	*	*	*
*			
<i>LOW VISION LOW VALUES</i>		<i>LOW VISION HIGH VALUES</i>	
<i>LOW</i>	<i>VALUES</i>	<i>HIGH</i>	

**Module to enable alignment of Vision and Values**

Using the tool with its evaluation of the Leadership needs to be followed by a well-articulated, customized module to enable them to develop action plans. The author has over the years used the Instrument along with a two-day workshop module. The objectives of the module are:

- To understand the importance of vision, its relevance to leaders and organization.
- To understand the meaning of values and learning how to work with causes than effects to bring about deep change.
- To formulate and gain clarity on one’s own vision and values.
- To identify areas of comfort and discomfort within oneself in the path of alignment.
- To learn to navigate oneself towards High-vision High-value position on a continuous basis.

**Implications for HRD**

Using this Instrument, the progress of the leader can be monitored regularly. This Instrument can be used

- In Selection process, for various Leadership positions.

- In Leadership coaching.
- In Organizational diagnosis and based on the results appropriate training needs can be formulated.
- In processes aimed towards Team alignment and synergy.

The author intends to develop norms for each specific profession, geographic region and area of business. The norms would enable positioning of the Leaders and the organizations in the global context.

Continuous alignment of vision and values through ethical leadership would result in evolving a business culture, which would nurture excellence and larger well-being, which would further become the foundation for building a lasting organization.

Ethical and effective leaders are driven by a singular vision, not of what is, but of what is to become and they make sure that everyone around them understands and buys into that vision, and navigate through the maze of chaos to achieve an alignment between their vision and values. Like Mohandas Gandhi, Winston Churchill and Martin Luther King, who were not merely leaders but navigators; men who negotiated the nuances of life; pilots who pursued their goals to perfection. It is therefore imperative for leaders to turn navigators and to create an environment, and a process, which enables people to identify misalignments and eliminate the causes.

The Vision Value Instrument that this paper enumerates sets the context for alignment in specific terms. The module enables the leaders to work the action plans and integrate the learnings to journey on the path of excellence. Ethical leadership and vision driven business cultures are catalyst processes that guarantee lasting organizational success, especially in an era of fragile corporate existence. Ultimately effective organizational leadership is an alignment of vision and values, and an effective leader has to have high vision and high values, clarity on purpose and context sensitivity.

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**Note**

1. Vision Value Instrument developed in 2003 is available with Arpitha Associates Pvt Ltd ., 302, IInd Floor, Santoj Cottage, # 107, Surveyor Street, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560 004. E-mail:info@arpitha.com

**Appendix**

Profile of Leadership qualities

<b>Profile</b>	<b>Low vision – Low values</b>	<b>Low vision - High values</b>	<b>High vision - Low values</b>	<b>High vision - High values</b>
Vision	No vision	No clarity on vision	Focus on vision only	Clear focus on vision along with values
Values	No convictions or values	Strong values	No conviction or values	Principles centered and values driven
Initiative	Low initiative	Externally driven	Externally driven	Internally driven
Leadership	Followers	Value keepers	Game players	Leaders
Influence	Can be easily influenced	No exploration	No exploration	Introspective and influential
Context orientation	Context insensitive	Out of context	Out of context	Context sensitive
Convention	No convention	Conventional	Unconventional	Highly progressive
Commitment	Can't say	Is committed when in line with values	Is committed when in line with vision	Is committed only when in line with vision and values
Driven by	Others	Values	Vision	Vision and values
Ego	No ego	Egoistic	Egoistic	Humble
Flexibility	Flexible out of ignorance	Rigid	Rigid	Flexible out of awareness
Learning	No introspection, no learning	Arrogant out of being right	Power driven hence arrogant	Process driven hence humble
Response	Reactive	Reactive	Reactive	Proactive
Conviction	No convictions or values	Strong conviction	No conviction	Principles centered
Certainty	Wants absolute certainty	Deals ambiguity with resistance	Does not bother about ambiguity	Finds solutions out of ambiguity
Options	Zero self options	Few options	Few options	'n' Number of options
Tradition	Mixed up tradition	Traditional	-	-
Orientation	Comes from the past	Lives in past	Lives under constant threat	Lives in present.
System	Just follow	Stagnates	Degenerates	Creates