



Transforming Workplace Culture through Values Based Leadership

Tamaran Cook and Kristin Plante – Nevada County

Why did we decide to make a change?

- Silos
- Backlogs
- Reduce vacancy rate
- Increase job satisfaction



Our Goals



Leadership

- Improve communication between First Team
- Increase flexibility and break down silos

Staff

- Decrease vacancy rates
- Develop leadership at all levels
- Improve job satisfaction and productivity

Customers

- Reduce backlogs
- Speed up processing times
- Improve customer service

How did we do it?



Intensive Leadership
Training



Institutionalizing
H.E.A.R.T.S! Values

In February 2020, program managers, supervisors, and analysts (10 people total) started an intensive leadership training.

This training was led by the Assistant CEO and an outside consultant.



Intensive Leadership Training

Weekly meetings for 3 months

- No shop talk, meetings were 100% focused on leadership and teambuilding
- Focus on trust, communication, and healthy conflict

Weekly or biweekly one-on-ones with consultant

- Time to discuss specific personal challenges

Coffee Buddies

- Opportunity to build connection and trust



Intensive Leadership Training

Key Concepts:

- “Start/Stop/Continue”
- Brené Brown “The Anatomy of Trust”
- Captain Marquet “No They On Santa Fe”
- Simon Sinek “Start With Why”
- 3 Vital Questions
- High Performing Organizations



Intensive Leadership Training

Operational expectations set:

- No meeting without an agenda, facilitator, and scribe
- Talk to people, not about them

Team Contract developed:

- Started process by creating a values word cloud that reflected how we want to show up at work
- Translated that vision into a set of guidelines we all agreed to work towards



Intensive Leadership Training

What do you need from each other?

A word cloud of interpersonal skills and values. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern around the center. The largest words are 'trust' (blue) and 'respect' (green). Other prominent words include 'grace' (pink), 'support' (yellow), and 'stand up for each other' (red). Smaller words include 'listening', 'engagement', 'communication', 'understanding', 'cooperative spirit', 'clear communication', 'generous assumptions', 'assume positive intent', 'thoughtfulness', 'vault', 'patience', 'feedback', 'sharing ideas', 'friendship', and 'presume positive intent'.

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DSS Supervisor/Analyst/Program Manager Team Contract

April 22, 2020

The mission of the Department of Social Services is opening doors, building community, and providing County residents with needed social, eligibility, or employment and training services.

Team Slogan:

First team, united we thrive!

Team Values:

Respect: We value and respect everyone's opinions, roles, strengths, weaknesses and are committed to exercising respect in all we do. We are open to all suggestions, practice active listening, and cooperation in decision making. We don't shut people down. We don't talk negatively about each other behind their backs.

Clarity of Intent: Slow is smooth, smooth is fast. We focus on outcomes not problems. We know that clarity and alignment of production, management and leadership to the organization's goals is key to working as a team to achieve those goals. Communication, catch-ball, and first team are our tools to ensure clarity and alignment across our organization.

Once our leadership team was on the same page and consistently modeling these concepts, we brought this philosophy to the whole division.



Goals:

- Break down silos
 - Switched from “intake” and “continuing” to a “one team” model
 - Caseloads were combined into two big program-based caseloads
- Improve capacity
 - Created a training team to get new hires trained faster
 - Time to train has been greatly reduced, and new staff are much happier
- Improve flexibility
 - Supervisors meet weekly to set priorities
 - Staff are assigned based on program knowledge
 - Task-based model



Strategic Reorg



- Department Head and Program Managers met to discuss vision, goals, and values



Institutionalizing Our Values

H.E.A.R.T.S! Values



- Interview questions focused on culture and values as well as experience
- Onboarding week includes discussion of values with leadership
- Each new hire meets with department director
- Staff created a recruitment video showcasing our values and culture



Institutionalizing Our Values

Hiring and Onboarding

- Performance evaluations
- Progressive discipline
- Recognition



Institutionalizing Our Values

Supervision

- Using the lens of our values when developing policies and procedures
- We highlight values when notifying staff of a new policy or change
- When we're stuck on a decision, "running it through our values"



Institutionalizing Our Values

Decision Making

- “Wednesday Wonders”
- Division Newsletter Values Spotlight
- Department Meeting Values Spotlight
- Division Meeting Values Spotlight
- Annual department meetings
- Gratitude Board



Institutionalizing Our Values

Celebrating Successes

Example of a Wednesday Wonders email:

Service: We are here to serve others, and we do so with kindness, equity, dignity, and respect.

A gentleman came to the ERAC today and was wet and cold from the snow. He didn't have a change of clothes, as he was wearing them all because he didn't have a backpack to hold them in. As luck would have it, a team member had brought in a pair of lined pants to work today to donate. Another team member recognized that the customer was in need and offered him the pants. The pants fit him perfectly, as if they were meant to be his. We are now on the hunt for a backpack to give him so that he can keep the clothes he isn't wearing safe and dry.

Great job Team!



Institutionalizing Our Values

Celebrating Successes

- New hires aligned with our values from day of application
- Our vacancy rate between 2016 and 2019 was 7% - in 2021 it was less than 2%
- Based on better data and more strategic management of the staff we already had, we were able to get 7 new positions approved



Results

Hiring



- Meeting weekly to strategize, looking at the collective work
- Processing more applications
- CalFresh 30-day processing above 90% last quarter for the first time in years



Results

Processing

- Leadership Team
 - Effective First Team
 - All opinions and ideas are heard
 - Increased challenging for better outcomes
 - Increased comradery
- Eligibility and Employment Team
 - Meetings and Teams chats are now full of gratitude and support
 - Increased grace and forgiveness
 - Reduced the “THEY”
 - Talking to people, not about people



Results

Morale



6/29 8:40 AM

I enjoy seeing the long term effects and growth I may have had on a team member. To be able to assist them in their knowledge growth and see them take it and run. Seeing my coworkers succeed in this job and observing their confidence grow day to day means a lot to me.



15



4/13 3:42 PM

I am throwing all kinds of love and gratitude for our Clerical staff, they are amazing at helping to support walk-in customers at all three locations - Karina killed it with a super challenging customer yesterday



8

Results

Morale

KL

2/23 8:44 AM

WOW!! I love these stats as it shows the huge amount of work we are accomplishing!!



6



3/30 9:17 AM

That was such a happy, happy, joy, joy meeting...



3



1

KL

4/27 9:28 AM

It takes a village



3



1



4/27 9:28 AM

Love our leads!!!



3



4/27 9:28 AM

You guys did great! Teamwork!!



2

Results

Morale



Questions?



Contact:
tamaran.cook@nevadacountyca.gov
kristin.plante@nevadacountyca.gov