



## Are Your Managers Capable of Managing a Diverse Workforce?

Are you sometimes surprised by the lack of understanding that some managers have about people who are different from them? In many cases managers have been managing people for years, and yet they still don't have a clue as to what makes people tick.

One of founders of the Integro Leadership Institute, Dr Ralph Colby, developed a profound yet simple model that takes a lot of the mystery out of *why* people do *what* they do. He called it the **Whole Person Concept**.

This model compares people to an iceberg, with the behavior clearly visible above the water line for everyone to see, and so much more below the waterline that others can't see. The key to understanding people is learning more about what is going on *below the waterline*, because we do know that all behavior is caused by what is going on within the person.

The reason we get along well with, or at least understand people who are like ourselves is because we understand them... that is, their behavior makes sense to us. When people are a mystery to you it is because you don't understand why they do what they do... what is going on inside of them (below the waterline) is so different to what goes on inside you. Their behavior does not make sense to you.

There are three primary aspects of a person below the waterline that have an impact on how they behave:

- Thinking and Feeling
- Values or Beliefs
- Needs

The *Thinking/Feeling* aspect is closest to the surface and has the most direct impact on behavior. At any point in time, you are doing either what you *think* you should do, or what you *feel* like doing. When the alarm clock goes off on a workday, do you *feel* like getting out of bed, or do you get up because you *think* you should? Most people think their way out of bed in the morning rather than leap out of bed with enthusiasm and energy. *Thinking* and *feeling* are often in conflict... so people have to make choices. Do I do what I *feel* like doing, or do I do what I *think* I should do... or have to do?

How do your employees come to work? Do they feel like coming to work or are they there because they believe they have to... there is no better alternative to earning the money they need at this time? Do your employees feel proud to work for your organization and passionate about what they do, or do they think it's just a job?

How well your managers understand what motivates each of your employees will have a huge impact on the answer to that question. Managers who do not understand people often kill their employees' enthusiasm and passion for their work... not intentionally, but simply through their ignorance of what motivates them.

So where does *thinking* and *feeling* come from? The next layer down in our iceberg is **Values or Beliefs**. If you believe in something strongly then you will feel strongly about it and think about it a lot. For example, what are your own beliefs or values? If you have very strongly held values in this part of your life it will have a significant impact on how you think and feel, and therefore how you behave. Your values have been shaped by your experiences throughout your life... where and when you grew up, your family, your religion, your education and your own reflection about what is important for you personally.

Many of the people you work with may have had very different life experiences than you. They grew up somewhere different, were taught a different set of values by their family, belonged to a different religion or no religion at all. As a result, many of their values and beliefs are very different from yours... so whose values are right?

Most people believe that their own values and beliefs are right... but does that mean that someone who believes something different is wrong? Or that my values are better than the other persons?

This is where many managers come unstuck in getting the best out of their people... they judge people based on their own set of values and have no understanding of what the other person's values are.

Yes, of course there must be an agreed set of shared values that everyone in an organization should operate by... honesty, doing quality work, being customer focused, teamwork and personal responsibility are just some examples. But that doesn't mean that everyone has to have the same personal values... unless those personal values clash with the business values.

The whole point in understanding what makes people tick, especially people who are very different from you because of culture, gender, age or even personality, is that different personal values are just different. This doesn't mean that different values are wrong!

You don't have to agree with the other person, but if you want people to be engaged and perform at their best, you do need to understand what is important to them. Get curious about people and ask questions to determine what their values and beliefs are that may effect the way they operate in the workplace.

At the bottom of the iceberg we have **Needs**... the more instinctive motivator. Our needs are things that we would like to do, not necessarily what we believe we should do.

The needs around the self-esteem area are what people strive for in order to feel good about themselves. These are the underlying psychological needs that are the *invisible motivators* such as the needs for *achievement, recognition, security, acceptance*, etc. They have a significant impact on how committed and productive an employee will be.

The value in understanding the **Whole Person Concept** as a manager is the clarity it provides around motivation. There are two primary sources of motivation... **needs** and **values**. People are either doing what will meet their needs, what makes them happy or satisfied, or they are doing what they believe they should do.

Managers who are focused primarily on meeting their own needs often do so at their employees expense. By contrast, the *emotionally intelligent* manager understands that they create the environment or climate that employees work in... so they work hard at creating an environment where all their employees feel valued, look forward to coming to work and go to extreme lengths to do their best every day.

What is the potential for growth in your organization if all your managers and supervisors were more knowledgeable about their people? If all employees felt a strong commitment to your organization and its purpose and vision, what difference would it make to *productivity, customer satisfaction, staff retention* and *profitability*?

It is the area of values that provides you with the greatest opportunity to align your employees and get that commitment. People need to know that what they do is meaningful... that they are making a difference. Are your managers able to help them see that?

[More Information](#)

Sincerely,

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