

Leadership Through Courage



UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL STANDARDS

GOALS

1. State the common errors in organizational development and leadership.
2. Establish a firm understanding of the meaning and intent of organizational standards and supportive organizational standards.
3. State the outcomes of having no standards or supportive organizational standards.
4. Understanding and appreciating the need for selective intentional statements when writing policies.
5. State a good process for implementing policies.

KEYWORDS FOR APPLICATION

1. Organizational Standards
2. Supportive Organizational Standards
3. Intentional Behaviors
4. Prejudices, Biases, Discriminatory Behaviors
5. Exceptional Statements
6. Policies
7. Leadership

THE “DECIDE BY THE SEAT OF YOUR PANTS” RESPONSE

How many times have you heard the “I know it all” response?

I know what is expected!

I know what to do!

I know how to do that!

We/I have always done it this way!

I know it works better this way!

It is what I (we) want at this time!

I like to do it this way!

Once we hear the situation, I (we) will know what to do!

I know what I (we) should do!

(and on and on it goes to “skirt” the problem of WE NEED STANDARDS—WHICH INCLUDES (AT LEAST) POLICIES!”

Recently, I did consistent interviews of non-professionals as candidates for an organizational board position. The candidates were loving and kind in their approach of wanting to help others in the community and to problem-solve by just “talking with people.” “How do you make decisions?” I asked. The comment was the same: “We just talk to everybody on the board and then make up our minds as to what we want to do about the situation!” Whoa! What I heard was a process of “decide-as-you-go”

and “whatever feels good at the moment” decision-making process with no pre-established “guidelines” that help to determine decision-making! There was no attempt for an *objective* thinking process—and away we go! A disaster in the making!

THE NURSING PROCESS

As nurses—remember the “Nursing Process?” The process encourages objectivity. It is not a “what feels good” approach. The process is deliberate and accounts for intellectual and theoretical problem-solving. Not only does it apply to nursing—it is a universal five-step process. The process is:

Assessment of the problem
Problem Identification/Diagnosis
Plan to solve the problem
Implement the Plan
Evaluation of the Plan Outcome

Combine the Nursing Process with the Organizational Standards, and you have an outstanding problem-solving process combined with the specifics important to guide the organization’s success. As far as problem-solving, this combination is---a match made in heaven!

THE DECISION-MAKING DANCE

An Analogy: Having no standards or intended process to govern decision-making behavior and final decisions is like wearing a pair of goulashes to a formal dress dance. With these inappropriate shoes, the dancing (problem-solving process) becomes awkward, and the outcome of the dance (decision) is usually unprofessional and wrong.

The message is: When an organization requires and uses organizational standards, and a problem-solving process (like the Nursing Process), the problem-solving “dance” and correct problem-solving outcomes are more sustainable. The intellectual and theoretical problem-solving behaviors and results are all synchronized to the organization’s reason(s) for existence.

ENTROPY—YOUR ENEMY CAUSING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Entropy is the universal movement toward change and randomness. Discord occurs constantly. It is the administrator’s responsibility to regularly reinforce all standards and supportive standards to keep unwanted changes from happening. However, suppose changes do need to occur in the standards or supporting standards. In that case, a discussion by all individuals who are expected to comply with the changes should occur, be documented, signed, and dated by all who must comply.

UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF ORGANIZATIONAL STANDARDS

The definition of organizational standards: The basic categories that an organization uses to determine problem-solving decisions and measure the organization's success.

These standards form the foundation of organizational processes, thoughts, and behaviors. Periodic review by employees (especially employees that make decisions) of the written content of the standards is necessary.

The standards are consistent reminders that help to curtail the universal Entropy process.

Philosophy
Definitions
Goal(s)
Purpose
Objectives
Laws
Bylaws

A philosophy statement is a belief statement that gives a reason for the entire set of standards to be established, respected, and attained.

A definition is an exact statement regarding scope, description, meaning, nature, and unique distinctiveness.

A goal(s) is/are a *distant* aim to be established, respected, and attained.

A purpose statement is a reason for the goal(s) to be established, respected, and attained.

An objective(s) is/are incremental steps/behaviors that will lead to a goal(s).

A law is a general governing rule that regulates actions/behaviors of its members with potential consequences for non-compliance.

A bylaw is a *localized* law or rule intended to regulate the actions of members.

UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTING STANDARDS

In addition to the so-called standards of an organization, other clarifying language includes (but is not limited to):

A Guideline is a general rule, principle, or piece of advice.

A Rule is an explicit and expected behavior that is intended to promote the written standards.

A Policy is an intentional behavior(s) that supports and meets written standard(s).

A Job Description is a unique description of job expectations that can also measure job expectation compliance.

CLARITY IN ORGANIZATIONAL STANDARDS

It is evident in literature that many available titles/names are used to title individual standards and supportive standards. Many titles/names have similar definitions, which can be confusing.

Organizational standards and supporting standards form the basis of all expected organizational behaviors and are a required beginning point for all new organizations.

The administrative responsibility is to encourage input from employees and place in writing the agreed-upon “standards.” The standards should be written, direct in content, and an easy word or phrase that can be repeated verbally and in writing with absolute clarity.

A shared understanding of words and phrases related to all written standards and used in conversation increases a firm foundational knowledge that promotes progress and sustainability of all organizations.

PREJUDICES, BIASES, AND DISCRIMINATION

Having no standards or supportive standards is a feel-as-you-go approach to doing things or the way things are *wanted* at that fleeting moment. It is an insatiable need for group or individual convenience according to how we/they *momentarily* wish to meet an objective or solve a problem.

*The truth is: This Laissez Faire problem-solving without policies support **obvious and current prejudices, discrimination, and biases** in decision-making. These arbitrary decisions can change according to how a person feels for the day, what someone said that “pushed their button,” or any desire to get the “darn thing over.” There are so many personal factors in a person’s life that can change their perception and distort reality, it is impossible even to imagine them all. So, any feeling at that moment by the decision-maker(s) can be caused by any personal (physical or mental) or environmental situation. It invites unprofessional personal decisions that have no consideration or respect for the established standards related to the organization.*

It is a place where Entropy (universal movement toward randomness) is rampant and where anything goes. Decisions are adjusted to meet the everyday whims of anyone or anything that needs (they think) a “right- now” answer. It is a place where convenience and twisting of words and behaviors meet the uncontrollable personal needs of the involved. Even more, confusion is caused because who knows what future behaviors or future outcomes will result from such immediate lazy decisions. The responses are firmly related to, “IT ALL DEPENDS—AND IT JUST DEPENDS ON US AT THIS MOMENT!” You can bet that it does not depend on any intellectual or futuristic intellectual thought!

It is in this loose realm of subjectivity that credibility and fairness are thrown to the wind. No moral problem-solving standard consideration occurs. No consistent decisions related to similar circumstances arise, and decisions go wild.

It is true—We must relate, at times, to extreme unpredicted emergencies that require immediate thought and action. Emergencies cause an emotional and physiological response of flight and fight. However, in most emergencies, preparation through establishing initial intentions (policies) before an emergency will save lives and property. Why do we have smoke alarms, call lights on hospital beds, 911 capabilities, and on and on? Because—*forethought* allows (in almost all emergencies) for more consistent and accurate decisions to save lives and property.

THE USE OF POLICIES—OR SO-CALLED “INTENTIONS” RELATED TO FORETHOUGHT

The formal definition of “policies” is *intentional behaviors* that support the organization’s standards.

A written Policy Statement says: “It is the intention of this organization (stating the entity by name) to do the following to support the written standards and supportive standards on behalf of our customers/constituents/employees/board members in the circumstances/situations stated below. (Then, list the policies that support the standards.)

Suppose it is morally, ethically, legally, or just common sense for a process to intentionally occur in a certain way to meet the standards of a business. In that case, it requires unfettered consideration of *intentions* (policies) through our thoughts and feelings before an incident(s) occurs. Behaviors similar to policy statements are a part of our promises to each other—our marriage vows, verbal agreements, and a hundred other purposeful communications.

It is not uncommon for a business/corporation/organization to mimic or even make a “cookie-cutter” approach to setting policies. That means that policies are the same as other organizations, such as in a mimicking process. It also means that the policies are not well thought through regarding their general application to the unique organizational situation. Every situation is different and deserves scrutiny as to what you INTEND (POLICY-WISE) TO DO to meet the standards and supportive standards of the organization. Every case is unique, requiring a sensitive approach to maintain standards and keep litigious conflicts at bay.

Uniqueness as to your intentions is not related to last-minute off-the-cuff decisions—they require careful forethought. Policy development and its use are related to making decisions carefully (not under duress) and thoughtfully when your mind is calm. Calmness in thinking processes will produce more accurate and consistent responses.

ADDING “FREEDOM STATEMENTS” TO POLICIES

There are times when policies need to be developed yet have some freedom as to application. Therefore, a “freedom statement” is an addition at the end of a policy that states an exception.

Exceptions to any policy are reviewed by all board members and require a signature and date provided by all board members.

Many statements would lend to reasonable and necessary accommodations at the last minute or if the circumstances are not represented exactly in a manner that meets the current need. However, if such a need arises to circumvent the already determined policy, there needs to be an immediate review of the policy to help better accommodate more future policy considerations.

All policies require a periodic assessment, review, and updating as well as consideration of any reason to have an accompanying reasonable “freedom statement.” It requires a serious look and actual use of the existing policy BEFORE A FREEDOM STATEMENT IS EVER CONSIDERED!

ESTABLISHING A POLICY

Policies are to be established and approved by all members of the organization, business, or board. It should be a mutual process that incorporates the minds and approval of all concerned. Once a policy is in place, present the policy at the next meeting for reconsideration. The actual use of an approved policy is one of the most important determining factors as to the policy’s reasonableness and feasibility.

IN CLOSING

No one said that being accountable for leadership was easy.

Exceptional leadership capability and knowledge naturally promotes the most qualified to an administrative calling. Intellectual ability and willingness to establish and accommodate standards promote leadership success.

BE THE INFORMED AND COURAGEOUS LEADER YOU WERE ENTRUSTED TO BECOME!

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