

***The core of what you do and the behavior you need.***

Our ability to deliver consistent value to our customers is dependent on one or two core elements of the way in which we do 'our work' and the real culture and resulting observable behaviors the support that work.

So how do we begin to have real value-added conversations around the culture and behaviors needed at an individual organizational team level? How do we align them to wider corporate structures? To begin to answer these questions we need to ask a very basic and frustrating question:

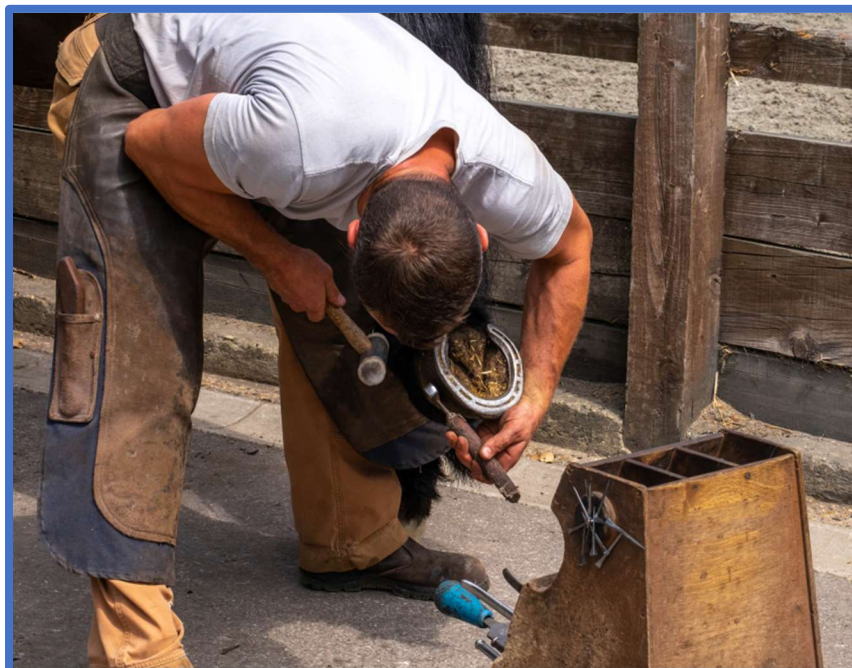
**What is at the core of our ability to deliver value?**

Or putting it another way.

**What is the essence of what you do as an organization?**

Our ability to deliver consistent value to our customers is dependent on one or two core elements of the way in which we do 'our work'.

At one stage in my life, I spent a lot of time caring for and riding horses. If you ever get the chance to see a farrier at work, take the time to observe the details of this ancient work system.



The ancient craft of a farrier.

The core of a farrier's ability to deliver value is to secure the right size and shape shoe to a horse's hoof. Once the skills associated with a farrier's work are grasped some of the most crucial behaviors behind the ability to do the work are calmness and safety.

A good farrier carefully picks the location where the horse will be shod. No risks of being trapped. No risk to the animal or the farrier. The farrier spends time stroking and sometimes nuzzling the animal soothing and calming it. The arrangement and sequence of tools in what is often a uniquely made toolbox are laid out to ensure the flow of work is smooth with no sudden changes and minimal noises. Can you see how the horseshoe nails are presented to the farrier in the picture above? All tools are in the exact place needed to ensure a smooth calm process while all the time the farrier calms and 'speaks' to the horse. When the work is finished, he again rubs and strokes the animal – building trust. They will see each other again soon.

But other behaviors are also important from a customer's perspective. Has the farrier arrived at the agreed time? I may have brought the horse in from a far field to have the animal ready and prepared for the farrier. As a customer it can be a pain if I am waiting around for the farrier to turn up! Is the work carried out in a reasonable length of time? 'A little less talk and a bit more action' can often apply!

On occasion a farrier has pointed out a health concern with the animal. Maybe an infection in the frog of the hoof. Or a swelling on the hock. The farrier may spot the issue and advise that a vet should look at the issue before it gets any worse.

These behaviors are very real; they link directly to the work that the farrier carries out every day. The expression of these behaviors make the difference between a '*must be tolerated*', '*good*' and '*excellent*' farrier!

***The behaviors we look for must be aligned to the work that we do.***

## ***Describing your essence.***

*'You need to figure out the behaviors that drive success in your organization...and recognize the heck out of them'*

David Novak. Former Chairman & CEO Yum Foods. Author of Taking People with You.

So, what is at the essence of what you need to do in your organization? The following are some thoughts on observable behaviors within certain industry sectors. Please note that these are not defined lists. They are the accumulation of our own observations with the team at S A Partners during our consulting practice. They are in no way a definitive or complete list. The purpose is some examples of very real positive and negative behaviors that we have observed. In some cases, the positive has a direct and obvious opposite not ideal behavior, but in other cases we have added examples of opposites.

As mentioned earlier, it is always a good place to start if you can create a safe space where teams can openly speak to and list the not ideal behaviors they experience that make their work harder to do. It is very important that the discussions do not become personal, they should be kept at process level.

Q 'What makes it difficult to produce the important financial status reports on time?'

A 'We don't get all the information we need at the right time'

Q 'Is this a problem in all areas?'

A 'No, some departments are better than others.'

The conversation can then move to the impact on the business from not having the relevant information available at the right time. We do not focus on what person in what department. There may be issues in that department that we need to review, but the base behavior once agreed is the prompt delivery of the necessary information which is accurate and presented in the agreed format.

So consider your own work environments, what is the essence of the work of your teams?

Is the essence related to the need for detailed operational monitoring of large pieces of capital equipment as in energy generation or bulk chemical manufacture?



Figure 7: In a capital equipment intensive business. What behaviors are important?

POSITIVE BEHAVIORS	NOT IDEAL BEHAVIORS
Respect for Equipment – taking responsibility for workplace and equipment	Demarcation or silo mentality between support functions
Safety – active risk identification, control and communication	Poor or intermittent review and enforcement of work standards
Sharing observations on equipment performance to help improvement activity	Reluctance to share ideas
Problem resolution driven by curiosity and learning	Finger pointing and blame
Leaders present in work areas regularly supporting process performance improvement activity	Leaders focused on output figures
Co-development and ownership of work methods and performance standards	Little input from frontline on process design development
Leaders promoting and living safety and improvement activity	Work standards developed and reviewed by functional groups
Active and visible cooperation between functional and operational department	No ownership or accountability for workplace housekeeping or basic machine maintenance/cleaning
Equipment operators’ opinions sought and valued in relation to equipment, performance improvement and new equipment purchase	Leaders seldom seen in work areas. No time given for improvement activity
Energy and waste consciousness.	Little effort at recognizing positive contributions

Is the essence of work based on care and compassion for those in care?



Figure 8: In a healthcare environment. What behaviors are important in this setting?

POSITIVE BEHAVIORS	NOT IDEAL BEHAVIORS
Respect for work environment – hygiene cleanliness, infection control	Demarcation or silo mentality between functions
Safety – active risk identification, control and communication between patients and colleagues	Gossiping/undermining colleagues
Active participation in hand over briefings being prepared and ‘Present’	Criticizing process rather than support for improvement.
Supporting colleagues checking in regularly	Failure to follow-up, patient requests, information requests
Respect for dignity of patient and their family	Reluctance to engage with skill development and process improvement
Respect for patient confidentiality	Talking over patient
Listening to and seeking input from colleagues	Token or inconsistent approach to process standards
Awareness and respect for all colleagues involved in the patient care journey	Disrespect for colleagues and their contribution to patient care
Continual learning and self-development	Talking to rather than listening to patient

Is it the assembly of the intricate parts of a medical device or pacemaker?



Figure 9: Medical Device Assembly Line. What behaviors are important in this workplace?

POSITIVE BEHAVIORS	NOT IDEAL BEHAVIORS
Respect for Equipment – taking responsibility for workplace layout and equipment	Poor ownership or accountability for workplace housekeeping or basic machine maintenance/cleaning
Safety – active risk identification, control and communication	Poor or intermittent review and enforcement of work standards
Awareness and interest in upstream and downstream processes	Problem investigation improvement activity carried out by ‘elite’ groups with limited engagement with frontline teams
Understanding product use and patient impact ready to highlight any potential risks to product quality or compliance	Compliance culture resulting in over complexity and change paralysis
Flexible and willing to learn new skills	Reluctance to share ideas, fear of change
Strict adherence to current process standard while looking for opportunities to improve standards	Finger pointing and blame
Leaders present in work areas regularly supporting process performance improvement activity	Leaders focused on output figures
Co-development and ownership of work methods and performance standards	Little input from frontline on process design development
Leaders promoting and living safety and improvement activity	Work standards developed and reviewed by functional groups
All leaders reinforce positive behaviour and culture through effective recognition	Leaders seldom seen in work areas. No time given for improvement activity

### ***Behaviors often extend beyond***

Is your essential behaviors based on the need for close relationships with external third-party suppliers? There are many businesses today who rely totally on external suppliers for their product and service delivery. In some cases, there may be some internally controlled manufacturing or service activity, but the external value-adding element can be far larger. In these instances, it can be surprising to see the focus of management control and improvement activity is skewed towards the remaining internal processes. This is obviously a big miss for these organisations.

In one situation I spoke to an employee of a large pharmaceutical company whose role it was to review the quality of manufacturing and supply of a key raw material at an external manufacturer's site. The raw material in question represented a very small volume to the third-party suppliers' production volume and was not a key focus for them.

In speaking to the employee of their experiences of visiting the site they described the lack of interest and effort on the part of the supplier; in some cases the supplier was evasive and obstructive. Unfortunately, this was the case with several similar suppliers. However, the biggest and most disheartening issue affecting the employee was the feeling that they were alone in these difficult situations. They did not feel the support of their managers. For them, the lack of support and engagement in their feedback reports describing the behavior and attitude of the supplier was crushing. For the employee it meant that all this effort was for nothing. It was a tick the box exercise. Once the visit was completed it ticked the box. Solving issues arising from the visit was a whole different matter.

There were obvious risks in this situation, but the company seemed very slow to address them. There were other more pressing issues, but here lay a real risk that a supplier may not have the attitude on systems in place to ensure consistent delivery of quality raw materials.

This was an interesting situation. When challenged on the issues the leaders explained that they could not be responsible for the behaviors

and culture in an external organization. However, following discussions it became clear that while they could not be responsible for culture and behaviors at an external manufacturer's site, they could create expectations of the type of culture and behaviors they would expect to be there.

In addition, it was accepted that the leaders were one hundred percent responsible for the culture and behaviors within their own organization. The fact that one of their employees felt alone and unsupported while visiting a 'difficult' supplier was their issue. They needed to find ways to ensure the process of external manufacturing site review had a very real and positive impact on the reliability of product supply.

The result was a more thorough risk assessment across the supplier network. Those identified as high risk or difficult were never visited by a sole employee. There would always be two reviewers and in critical instances one of these would be a senior leader. In addition, greater attention was paid to the finding of alternative suppliers for single sourced raw materials.

Given the situation described above, what are the good and not so good behaviors you could see or imagine in your own organisation? Have a go.