

Why Values and Vision are Important in the Organisations?

This is a subject on which everyone must have a view and the prime purpose of this paper is to ensure, as far as it is practicable, that those Organisations who are 'in the market place', who are at the 'cutting edge' dealing directly with clients, are fully informed of the issues directly, and indirectly. The main ethical objective is to help every company to recognize when it is appropriate for them to refer problems, initially to their seniors and, ultimately, to the President and the ruling bodies since the circumstances often call for nice judgment which can only come from considerable experience.

1. Values: The word 'values' is loosely bandied about by sociologists, politicians, the clergy and in the media without any attempt at defining just what is meant. It is a term which covers a variety of mental concepts and the best definition that so far has been suggested is 'the mental habits of thinking about ethical questions which each individual acquires as they mature'.

In any given culture (or sub-culture) such 'values' are likely to have much in common they are unique for each individual and therefore in any group a consensus must be established as to what represents 'fair' and 'decent' behavior. Such a consensus can be strongly affected on particular professional questions if there is a conflict between those representing different commercial interests and when a consensus is difficult to establish the profession may be unable to speak with one voice.

At the end of the debate those in authority, must accept their responsibility to decide whether to act, or not, and if to act what action they are called upon to make in 'the public interest' tempered inevitably by their view on its likely effect on the future of the profession or the company as a whole.

While some parts have a wider application this must always be kept in mind.] Here it is useful to put the question as to the extent we, as a profession, can justifiably hold that

our particular view of what action is likely in the longer term to prove to be in 'the public interest' must necessarily over-ride what we understand to be the commercial interests of the client who engages us to give 'best' advice. To what extent should an individual professional put his (and his family's) future at risk by refusing to give such 'best' advice if told by the Company to follow their instruction 'in the public interest'? So far no such case is on record perhaps because so far the Company has seemed reluctant to do so.

2. Vision and Profession: In practice professionals have to operate in a complex ethical environment which is not only changing rapidly but is largely beyond our control. Since our operations now often involve direct relationship with the public (or the clients who represent their interests) in what is increasingly a much more regulated part of the economy we have to come to terms with the fact that both the public and the Government expect us to look beyond purely commercial interests so that a limited view of our responsibilities is no longer acceptable. In these conditions it is no longer safe to rely upon 'common sense' or take for granted 'common values' to see us through.

We must establish far more clearly areas of responsibility and 'educate' (by invitation to speakers from other disciplines) so that all active members of our profession are conscious of the problems and alive to the dangers that ill-advised action, or the neglect of proper action, must represent to our future.

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