

MIND THE GAP: A CASE STUDY OF VALUES-BASED DECISION MAKING
IN A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

BY

Jana L. Craft

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Advisor: Alexandre Ardichvili, Ph.D.

August 2013

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for working through the details and opening doors. With You all things are possible.

Thank you to my husband, Rick, for supporting me emotionally, physically and financially. Thank you to my kids, Devin, Clay, Emily and Maddy for always encouraging me and asking “how’s it going” even though you had no idea what I was talking about when I answered.

Thank you to Dave and Patti Schrenkler for being flexible and supportive during spring and summer class schedules.

Thank you to my pastors, Sonny Misar, James Laughlin and Greta Laughlin, for keeping me in prayer during this long process.

Thank you to Dr. Peggy Johnson, for slicing and dicing my modifiers and your editing brilliance.

Thank you to Dr. Dan Sauers, for encouraging me to get my Ph.D. from a “respectable institution” and mentoring me at WSU.

Thank you to Dr. Michael Goh, for discussing the difficult matter of balancing Christianity and the secular Professorate.

Thank you, Dr. Richard Wright, former president of Bakersfield College. In January 1992, on my first day as a 17-year old college freshman in PSYCH 101, you said to our 250-person class, “My Ph.D. dissertation was the easiest paper I ever wrote.” I never forgot that and it is indeed true. I’m sure you will never see this, but thank you anyway.

Thank you to Ability, Inc. and the three members of the executive staff that gave me permission, access and assistance. I am also grateful to everyone who gave up an hour to speak with me in the focus group interviews.

Thank you to my committee members: Dr. David Christesen, Dr. Catherine Twohig and Dr. Carolyn Garcia for agreeing to hear my dissertation defense during summer and providing great feedback at the discussion.

Sincere thanks to my advisor, Dr. Sasha Ardichvili, for your wisdom (“No! Too big.”), challenging feedback (“What is this you are saying?”) and timely responses to email questions. I feel this is rare in academia, especially with a long-distance, part-time student such as me.

Dedication

I dedicate this project to my family without whom I would not have the courage to do all that I do. Rick, Devin, Clay, Emily and Maddy & Grammy - you are my world and the reason I work so hard every day.

Thanks, Mom and Max, for investing in me.

Abstract

Using an exploratory case study approach, this research examined the consistency between espoused and enacted values within a large nonprofit organization known as an ethical leader in the human services industry. This research explored ethical business culture, ethical decision making, deontological and utilitarian moral paradigms and learning organization theory. The process of values-based decision making was dissected and analyzed in order to understand why and how it was used. Findings revealed a gap between hierarchical levels and corporate and satellite locations in several areas. Yet, strong ethical culture and ethical decision making practices were evident. Further, differing philosophical viewpoints were found to exist between higher and lower organizational levels. The study concluded with recommendations for Human Resource Development-related practices that help address the gap between espoused and enacted values and more fully operate as a learning organization to strengthen the ethical business culture and better understand the benefits of ethical decision making.

Key Words: business ethics, ethical decision making, deontology, utilitarianism, ethics training, Human Resource Development, ethical business culture, qualitative research, case study research, learning organization, espoused versus enacted values, nonprofit

Table of Contents

List of Tables	x
List of Figures	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Research Necessity	3
Purpose of Study	8
Research Questions	9
Definitions	9
Chapter 2: Literature	13
Theoretical Framework	14
Espoused versus Enacted Values	14
Learning Organization	19
Adult Learning	22
Philosophical Perspectives	25
Consequentialism (Utilitarianism)	25
Nonconsequentialism (Deontology)	26
Central Topics	28
The Nonprofit Sector	28
Codes of Ethics	32
Ethical Business Cultures	34
Ethical Decision Making	41
Human Resource Development and Ethics	47

Chapter 3: Methodology	57
Research Design	57
Justification of Method	60
Study Location	62
Data Collection	65
Data Analysis	71
Ethical Considerations	75
Chapter 4: Findings	78
Organization Specifics	78
Demographics	81
Section 1: To what extent have the corporate values of the organization permeated the corporate and satellite locations?	82
Espoused Values	83
Enacted Values	87
Consistent Enacted Values	88
Change	91
Disconnection	92
Ethical Company	96
Personal Values	98
Respect and Fun	100
Nostalgia	101
Innovation	103

Freedom and Independence	104
Fast-Paced	105
Hope	106
Lack of Timely Communication	107
Centralization	108
Dedication	109
Quality	111
Intentions of Leadership	112
Rewarding	113
Inconsistent Enacted Values (gaps)	113
Support/Valued	116
Trust	118
Standardization/Branding	120
Sustainability/Growth	125
Person-Centered	128
Workload	132
Section 2: How do employees use the organization's values-based decision making model in decision making?	137
Situations in which the Values-Based Decision Making Model was used	138
Frame of Reference	138
Employees	140

Clients	141
Vendors	143
Families (of clients)	145
Strategic Planning	145
Situations in which the Values-Based Decision Making Model was not used	146
Training	147
Cultural Emphasis	150
Language	153
Section 3: What factors in the organizational culture contributed to ethical decision making?	154
Values-Based Decision Making Model Components	154
Personal Values	156
Industry Leader	157
Strong Culture	158
Mission as Heart	160
Section 4: What aspects of HRD are currently contributing to ethical decision making?	162
Orientation	163
Training	168
Learning Organization	172
Chapter 5: Discussion	175

Philosophical Approaches	175
Utilitarian	175
Deontology	178
Theoretical Application	181
Espoused Versus Enacted Values	182
Learning Organization	187
Adult Learning	198
Ethical Business Cultures	198
Recommendations	201
Restore What Worked	201
Highlight What is Good	202
Address What is Not Working	203
Focus on What is Needed	204
Chapter 6: Conclusion	207
Limitations	212
Suggestions for Future Research	213
References	215
Appendices	
Appendix A: Table 1 – Focus Group Participants	238
Appendix B: Table 2 – Starting List of Codes	239
Appendix C: Table 3 – Complete List of Codes	240
Appendix D: Table 4 - Codes by Document	249

Appendix E: Focus Group Interview Questions	250
Appendix F: Consent Form	252
Appendix G: IRB Approval	255

List of Tables

Table 1: Focus group locations	238
Table 2: Starting list of codes	239
Table 3: Completed list of codes	240
Table 4: Codes by document	249
Table 5: Documented espoused values	84
Table 6: Consistent enacted values applied to VBDMM components	89
Table 7: Inconsistent enacted values applied to VBDMM components	114
Table 8: A comparison of three learning organization theories	196

List of Figures

Figure 1. Ability, Inc.'s Values Based Decision Making Model	15
Figure 2. Model I	17
Figure 3. Model II	18
Figure 4: Learning organization imperatives	22
Figure 5. Pyramid of learning	24
Figure 6. Number of reporting charities, 2009	28
Figure 7. Sources of revenue from public charities, 2009	29
Figure 8. Total revenue from registered nonprofit organizations by state.	30
Figure 9. Five clusters of characteristics of ethical business cultures	37
Figure 10. Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations	44
Figure 11. Human Resource Wheel (HRD functions)	48
Figure 12. Best practices for improving an organization's ethical climate or culture	55
Figure 13. Conceptual framework for study	60
Figure 14: 2011 employee survey dimension rankings	82
Figure 15: Consistent themes within enacted values	91
Figure 16: Satellite location lean process poster	95
Figure 17: Inconsistent themes within enacted values	115
Figure 18: Excerpt from CEO opening remarks at 2013 Annual Celebration	117
Figure 19: Example of décor depicting mission statement at corporate location	121
Figure 20: VBDMM posted in corporate administrative employee cubical	149

Figure 21: VBDMM posted in corporate conference room	149
Figure 22: VBDMM posted in corporate customized support office	150
Figure 23: VBDMM old version (rainbow calligraphy), pre-2007	151
Figure 24: VBDMM current version, 2007-present	151
Figure 25: VBDMM components evident within language	155
Figure 26: Logo wear (front)	159
Figure 27: Logo wear (back)	159
Figure 28: VBDMM on logo wear	159
Figure 29: Focus group interview transcript wordle	174

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Within the last 30 years in the field of business ethics, numerous empirical studies have examined ethical decision making. Four literature reviews on ethical decision making highlighted the research completed from 1978 to 2011: Ford and Richardson (1994), Loe, Ferrell, and Mansfield (2000), O'Fallon and Butterfield (2005) and Craft (in press). The majority of the studies in these literature reviews used quantitative research designs with respondents in academic or for-profit business settings but was limited to communicating the significance of a particular type of decision making model, validating a theory, or finding correlations between decision making factors. While these studies are important to advance the field of ethics and decision making in the business sector, a gap in the literature exists. Upon review of the recent ethical decision making literature (2004-2011), more qualitative studies in varying locations with a wider range of participants were expected. Further, while the research tended to reveal important factors in ethical decision making and how they worked together, the research did not focus on creating strategies for more ethically sound organizations. As such, approximately 10 percent of the studies reviewed used a purely qualitative design, mostly phenomenology or case study. Research into *how* organizations could train employees to be better ethical decision makers was anticipated, but the business literature featured minimal research in this area.

The role of Human Resource Development (HRD) in ethical decision making has not been explored regarding the extent to which practitioners understand their role in promoting ethics, in creating an ethical business culture and in supporting ethical

decisions. Within the HRD literature, a few authors have written about the importance of ethics within organizations and HRD's role in the development of ethical businesses. Foote and Ruona (2008) discussed the role of HRD professionals in the institutionalization of ethics. Garavan and McGuire (2010) argued that HRD can make a significant contribution to corporate social responsibility, sustainability and ethics by focusing on the "triple bottom line" (Elkington, 1997; Vince, 2005) rather than the short term agenda of profitability and performance. Fisher (2005) contended HRD professionals have a responsibility to help transform their organizations into good corporate citizens and outlined the various roles they play. McDonald and Hite (2005) discussed the ethical issues in mentoring and the role of HRD in the development of an ethical organization. Russ-Eft (2003) called for more scholarly research regarding the role of learning and development in creating ethical business cultures and indicated a shortage of research into the factors leading to ethical or unethical behavior in organizations. However, a lack of research existed concerning the practical nature of how HRD professionals can have a positive impact on the ethical decision making of organization members. HRD professionals significantly contribute to the ethical development, diffusion and preservation of ethical values within organizations. Using a case study approach, this study aimed to address the gap between ethical decision making and HRD research in these ways:

1. explore the consistency between the stated ethics of the organization and the actual use of values-based decision making
2. dissect and analyze the process of values-based decision making

3. highlight the ways in which the values-based decision making model is or is not represented in everyday decision making and
4. recommend HRD-related practices to help address the gap between theory and practice to strengthen the ethical business culture and aid in stakeholders making ethical decisions using the organization's values-based decision making model to ensure decisions are consistent with the organization's values.

Research Necessity

Research was needed to expound on the intersection of ethical decision making, nonprofit organizations and HRD because a combination of the three factors supported the continuing maturation of research in both HRD and business ethics and the growing number of nonprofit organizations. A search in EBSCO for the combined terms *ethics*, *HRD* and *nonprofit* yielded only one research article and one accompanying invited reaction (Rocco, 2001; Wilensky & Hansen, 2001). Clearly, research was being conducted in these fields separately, but research was needed that combined these three subfields. In this section the fields of HRD, ethics and nonprofit research are connected to support the point that the intersection of these three fields elicited a worthwhile research study.

Noted management scholar Peter Drucker (1990) argued that the value of the nonprofit sector is that it:

neither supplies goods or services nor controls. Its product is neither a pair of shoes nor an effective regulation. Its product is a *changed human being* [original emphasis].

The nonprofit institutions are human-change agents. Their product is a cured patient, a child that learns, a young man or women grown into a self-respecting adult; a changed human life altogether. (p. xiv)

If the product of nonprofits is a “changed human being” as Druker stated, then the ultimate goal of HRD fits with this aspiration. A widely accepted definition of HRD offered by McLean and McLean (2001) is that HRD is in the service of “personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation or ultimately, the whole of humanity” (p. 322). Kuchinke (2010) supported this definition and discussed the importance of recognizing “human flourishing” (p. 576) as the guiding value of HRD. It seems research in the field of HRD has matured from searching for the identity of the field to broadening the scope of HRD and how it can improve society. For example, recent issues of *Advances in Developing Human Resources (ADHR)* showed that HRD scholars have expanded their research and theory development from defining HRD to such topics as HRD’s role in incivility (*ADHR*, 2011, 13:1), sexuality and gender issues (*ADHR*, 2009, 11:1), corporate social responsibility (*ADHR*, 2010, 12:5), the meaning of work (*ADHR*, 2009, 11:2) and leadership and African American women (*ADHR*, 2009, 11:5).

HRD’s ultimate goal of developing people, organizations, communities and ultimately society supported a nonprofit existence that aims to fulfill its overarching mission, usually deemed altruistic and for benefit of society as a whole. Nonprofits are mission driven, not profit driven. This is not to say that profits are not important in the

management of nonprofits, but as Brinckerhoff (2009) stated, “For-profits chase profits – nonprofits pursue their mission” (p. 1). Nonprofit organizations by nature are:

grounded in their members’ values and passions and sustained by the bonds of trust that develop within and between them. They are the organizational expression of their members’ ethical stance toward the world: nonprofit organizations, by way of their very existence and practices, convey a public statement of what their members see as a better, more caring or more just world. (Rothschild & Milofsky, 2006, p. 137)

Assuming this connection with HRD and nonprofits, the pursuit of ethics within nonprofits and the utilization of the functions of HRD would complement the mission, values and ethics of the organization and the strengthen the ethical business culture. If an organization’s mission is the driving force, HRD can provide the tools to aid in developing an ethical business culture.

Is ethics still important? The United States is emerging from a period of recession. Prior to this time period, the growing number of business scandals highlighted the need for increased development of future business leaders on how to be ethical and responsible leaders. With the decline of job availability and near stalling of the growth in U.S. businesses, some have asked if business ethics was still a viable, necessary area of research. A survey conducted by the Ethics Resource Center (2009) found the recession negatively impacted the ethical culture of businesses; many businesses were forced to lower their ethical standards in order to stay afloat; a company’s tactics to combat recession could damage employee perceptions of an ethical workplace; and the U.S. business sector seemed to experience an “ethics bubble” (p. 11). When management was

on red alert, employees were less likely to commit misconduct and were also more likely to report whistleblowers. The overall findings by the Ethics Resource Center indicated that misconduct at work was down, ethical cultures were stronger, and pressure to cut corners was lower. The positive results of this study were likely to be temporary, but a growing connection between workplace ethics and the larger economic and business cycle denoted when times were tough, ethics improved.

The continuing maturation and growth of business ethics research was illustrated in the bibliometric analysis of the intellectual structure of research in business ethics by Calabretta, Durisin, and Ogliengo (2011). In their study of over 30 years of research published in the *Journal of Business Ethics (JBE)*, Calabretta et al. found moral theory was the dominant topic of research between 1982 and 1989, which then declined as the field matured. In the second phase of the research (1990-1996), ethical sensitivity emerged as the topic of most interest. Corporate social responsibility dominated contemporary research. Specific to this study, four of the most cited works among all articles in *JBE* included the subfield of ethical decision making (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991; Trevino, 1986). This example illustrated the continuing importance of ethical decision making in business ethics research.

Petrick, Cragg, and Sanudo (2011) contended that “business ethics continues to flourish in North America with high levels of productivity in both quantity and quality of teaching, training and research publication outputs” (p. 51). Yet the dominance of the North American research agenda is waning. From 1995 to 2009, European, Asian and

other regional academic and professional institutions increased their volume of business ethics research, teaching and training. Petrick et al.'s study concluded:

The challenge for business ethics in North America now is to design more normatively robust economic and business models and more practical and effective ways to improve organizational and practitioner moral performance with the goal of fulfilling obligations to market stakeholders while building international legitimacy and justified levels of trust on the part of non-market stakeholders. (p. 52)

Rossouw (2012) summarized the top trends in global business ethics research as governance and management of ethics in organizations, corporate responsibility, stakeholder relations and sustainability. The second tier of common themes included economic ethics, social justice and human rights. Philosophical and religious ethics and corruption are the third most common theme grouping. Surprisingly ethical decision making, ethical dilemmas and ethics and legal compliance were the least studied themes in global business ethics research. What are the drivers of this research? Rossouw contended the reasons for growth in business ethics were business school accreditation, institutional vision, religious orientation, political agendas, business scandals, societal demand, corporate governance reform, corruption prevention and student demand. Rossouw further concluded a single crucial factor was the existence of regional business ethics networks that served to "stimulate entry into the field of business ethics and facilitate reciprocal learning and research" (p. 99). Business ethics research grew in all eight global regions surveyed (North America, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa,

Europe, Central Asia, South and South-East Asia, East Asia, Oceania) with the exception of Central Asia, where the teaching and training of business ethics was rudimentary. Data was not received from the Middle East and North Africa regions.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how the corporate values of a nonprofit organization were used in decision making and how HRD could contribute to the dissemination of ethical decision making within the organization. Learning how corporate values permeated the organization to enhance and encourage ethical decision making was valuable because it allows future HRD practitioners to create strategies for training personnel in the use of ethical decision making methods and strengthen the ethical business culture.

A second purpose for the proposed research was to benefit the organization. In addition to furthering business ethics and HRD research literature, this research provided the organization with the opportunity to examine the alignment between their stated values and actual business practices. In exchange for their support in this study, this researcher prepared a report that summarized findings regarding the consistency between the espoused values and enacted values within the organization; current values-based decision making processes; recommended HRD practices that helped address the gap between actual versus espoused values; and how the organization can strengthen the ethical decision making of stakeholders.

Research Questions

In sum, the necessity of research that explored the connection between ethical decision making, nonprofit organizations and HRD led to the following research questions empirically investigated in the case study.

RQ1: To what extent have the corporate values of the organization permeated the corporate and satellite locations of the organization?

RQ2a: How do employees use the organization's values-based decision making model in decision making?

RQ2b: What factors in the organizational culture contribute to ethical decision making?

RQ3: What aspects of HRD are currently contributing to ethical decision making?

Definitions

There are several important terms that are foundational in this study. As such, the following definitions are provided for clarification. Each definition is expanded upon in later sections of the dissertation. Definitions are listed alphabetically.

Adult Learning – Adults desire recognition and appreciation of their experience and knowledge; a learning design that accommodates the differing ways they learn; an active involvement in the learning process versus being passive recipients of knowledge (Brookfield, 1986; Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1980; Merriam, 1993; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991).

Case Study – Intensive descriptions and analysis of a single unit or bounded system (Smith, 1978).

Code of Ethics – “A formal statement of the organization’s values regarding ethics and social issues” (Daft & Marcic, 2011, p. 137).

Consequentialism – The branch of moral philosophy that determines the ethical course of action based on consequences or outcomes of action.

Deontology – “The preservation of individual rights and on the intentions associated with a particular behavior rather than on its consequences” (Ferrell, Fraedrich & Ferrell, 2009, p. 149). A nonconsequentialist philosophy.

Enacted Values – Indicates behavior which neither the institution nor the individuals may understand. Congruent with the organization’s culture (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Essentially, how the organization’s members define it. *What we do.*

Espoused Values – Signify what organizations communicate as important. Found in documents such as annual reports, mission statements, strategic plans and newsletters. Essentially, how an organization defines itself. *What we say.*

Ethical Business Culture – “Organizations possessing ethical cultures create and maintain a shared pattern of values, customs, practices, and expectations which dominate normative behavior in the organization” (Ardichvili, Mitchell & Jondle, 2009; Trevino, 1990).

Ethical Decision Making – Making decisions that are deemed “right” according to the organization’s values.

Ethics – “The rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or a particular group or culture” (Random House Dictionary, 2012).

Focus Group – A small group of representative people who are questioned about their perceptions and views on a subject.

Human Resource Development –A field of study and practice that aims to develop outstanding workforces. The three main functions of HRD are training and development, career development and organization development. The guiding value of HRD in this study is based on the pursuit of “human flourishing” (Kuchinke, 2010, p. 576). HRD is in the service of “personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation or ultimately, the whole of humanity” (McLean & McLean, 2001, p. 322).

Learning Organization – Organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together (Senge, 1990)

Moral – “Concerned with the principles or rules of right conduct or the distinction between right and wrong” (Random House Dictionary, 2012).

Nonconsequentialism – The branch of moral philosophy that determines ethics by the moral principle or responsibilities involved.

Nonprofit Organization – An organization that is driven by its mission and uses profit to improve services rather than pay dividends to investors.

Utilitarianism – “Defines right or acceptable actions as those that must maximize total utility, or the greatest good for the greatest number of people” (Ferrell, Fraedrich & Ferrell, 2009, p. 149). A consequentialist philosophy.

Values-Based Decision Making Model – A model developed by the organization studied that provides a decision making framework that supports the values of this organization. The four components of the model serve as a guide for all employee decisions: ethical, respectful, responsive and resourceful. If an employee decision meets all four criteria, it is considered a good decision.

Values – Generalized, enduring beliefs about the personal and social desirability of modes of conduct (Rokeach, 1979; Schwartz, 1992).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE

A review of the pertinent literature is organized into three major areas: theoretical frameworks, philosophical perspectives and topics central to the research. Theoretical frameworks included Argyris and Schon's (1978) espoused versus enacted values theory, learning organization theory and adult learning theory. The study was based on the exploration of espoused versus enacted values within a nonprofit organization. The organization studied, Ability Inc., was a large nonprofit institution that served the needs of disabled individuals. Ability Inc., a pseudonym chosen for privacy, was considered a leader in providing innovative services to this population in the mid-western United States. In addition, Ability Inc. had earned a reputation for ethical decision-making over its forty-year existence. Its Values-Based Decision Making Model (Figure 1) communicated the espoused values of the organization. Two opposing philosophical perspectives were discussed: consequentialism as evidenced by utilitarianism and nonconsequentialism as represented by deontology. Applicable topics that applied to the research questions included: an overview of the nonprofit sector, codes of ethics, ethical business cultures, ethical decision making and the impact of HRD on ethics. Within HRD, few authors have written about the importance of ethics within organizations and HRD's role in developing ethical businesses. The identification of philosophical perspectives in practice within this organization, a nonprofit organization with a long history of values-based decision making, highlighted the guiding principles of ethical decision making in order to better understand the inner-workings of an ethical organization. Theories involving adult learning and learning organizations were chosen

because of the importance of these concepts in the creation and maintenance of ethical business cultures. Conceivably, an ethical business culture contains adult learning and learning organization theory components and exhibits consistent ethical values.

Theoretical Framework

Espoused versus enacted values. An important aspect of this study was the role organizational values played in everyday decision making. Values are defined as generalized, enduring beliefs about the personal and social desirability of modes of conduct or "end-states" of existence (Rokeach, 1979; Schwartz, 1992). The concept of values was important when dissecting decision making behavior because it could be applied at all levels of social analysis: cultural, societal, institutional, organizational, group and individual (Kabanoff, Waldersee & Cohen, 1995). According to Williams (1951), an institution is "a set of institutional norms that cohere around a relatively distinct and socially important complex of values" (p. 29), or value structure.

The value structure the organization adhered to in this study was comprised of four distinct values: ethical, respectful, responsive and resourceful. Ideally, decisions that show personal honesty, demonstrate the mission, and follow the code of ethics (ethical); treat people with dignity, see people as worthy of having the best, promote win/win situations (respectful); provide information and opportunities to make choices, demonstrate respect for people's ideas and choices, identify expectations and deliver on commitments (responsive); use resources to support, not replace other resources and use resources wisely (resourceful) were considered ethical. The espoused values of the organization are represented in Figure 1.

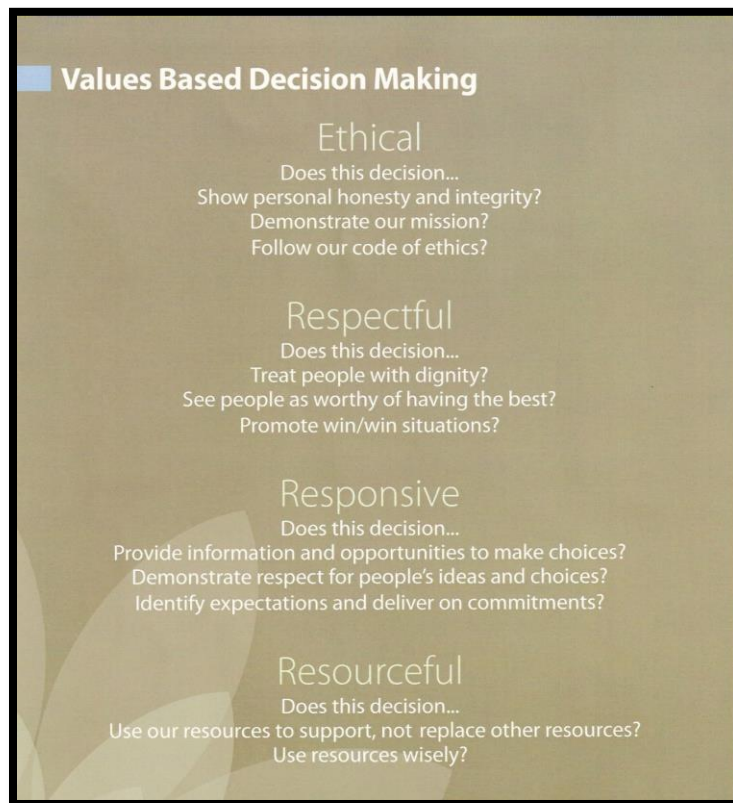


Figure 1. Ability, Inc.’s Values-Based Decision Making Model

Argyris and Schön (1978) separated values into two categories: those that are espoused and those that are enacted. Espoused values signify what organizations communicate as important and are found in organizational documents such as annual reports, mission statements and strategic plans. Enacted values involve a theory-in-use that explains behavior which neither the institution nor the individuals may understand (Argyris, 1999; Argyris & Schön, 1978; Kabanoff & Daly, 2002). Espoused values that are congruent with the organization’s culture strengthen the organizational reputation and external legitimacy. Violation of espoused values may result in loss of credibility and relationship disengagement by those who interact with the organization (Kabanoff &

Daly, 2002; Siehl & Martin, 1990; Sutton & Callahan, 1987). This study investigated the difference between espoused and enacted values in the chosen organization as conceived by Argyris and Schön (1978).

Argyris and Schön (1974) posited that theories of action can “enhance human activity, responsibility, self-actualization, learning and effectiveness and make it likely that organizations will begin to decrease the movement toward entropy and increase the forces toward learning and health” (p. xi). Based on case study research, Argyris and Schön put forth a paradigm named Model I (Figure 2) that accounted for the theories-in-use, encompassing general characteristics, governing variables, action strategies and principal assumptions. Model I theory-in-use included governing variables that incorporated defined goals, win/lose scenarios, minimizing negative feelings and rational behavior. Action strategies comprised ownership and control of the task at hand, protection of individual ambitions, vague or inferred information communicated and clandestine meetings that protected others in the circle from harm. Consequences of Model I action strategies included defensiveness, incongruence between stated and values-in-use, manipulative behavior, defensive norms and low freedom of choice. Single-loop learning, in which the status quo is maintained in favor of constancy of governing variables, was present in Model I. Model I governing variables and action strategies generally resulted in negative consequences of behavior and learning with decreased effectiveness.

Table 1. Model I Theory-in-Use.

<i>Governing Variables</i>	<i>Action Strategies</i>	<i>Consequences for the Behavioral World</i>	<i>Consequences for Learning</i>	<i>Effectiveness</i>
Define goals and try to achieve them.	<i>Design and manage the environment unilaterally (be persuasive, appeal to larger goals).</i>	Actor seen as defensive, inconsistent, incongruent, competitive, controlling, fearful of being vulnerable, manipulative, withholding of feelings, overly concerned about self and others or underconcerned about others.	Self-sealing.	Decreased effectiveness.
Maximize winning and minimize losing.	<i>Own and control the task (claim ownership of the task, be guardian of definition and execution of task).</i>	Defensive interpersonal and group relationship (dependence upon actor, little additivity, little helping of others).	Single-loop learning.	
Minimize generating or expressing negative feelings.	<i>Unilaterally protect yourself (speak with inferred categories accompanied by little or no directly observable behavior, be blind to impact on others and to the incongruity between rhetoric and behavior, reduce incongruity by defensive actions such as blaming, stereotyping, suppressing feelings, intellectualizing).</i>	Defensive norms (mistrust, lack of risk taking, conformity, external commitment, emphasis on diplomacy, power-centered competition, and rivalry).	Little testing of theories publicly. Much testing of theories privately.	
Be rational.	<i>Unilaterally protect others from being hurt (withhold information, create rules to censor information and behavior, hold private meetings).</i>	Little freedom of choice, internal commitment, or risk taking.		

Source: Argyris and Schön, 1974.

Figure 2. Model I (Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985)

A second model labeled Model II (Figure 3) built on Model I in that it “permits progressively more effective testing of assumptions and progressively greater learning about one’s effectiveness” (Argyris & Schön, 1974, p. 86). Model II theory-in-use included governing variables that embraced valid information, free and informed choice

and internal commitment to the choice and constant monitoring of its implementation. Action strategies comprised joint enterprises designed to support congruity and understanding about the environment in which the actors are existing. Consequences of Model II action strategies included a reduced sense of defensiveness; improved interpersonal relations; and group dynamics and learning oriented norms such as trust, openness and transparency. Double-loop learning was present and was designed to challenge the status quo by changing the “governing variables of one’s programs and causes ripples of change to fan out over one’s whole system of theories-in-use” (p. 19). Model II governing variables and action strategies generally resulted in increased, long-run effectiveness.

Table 2. Model II Theory-in-Use.

<i>Governing Variables</i>	<i>Action Strategies</i>	<i>Consequences for the Behavioral World</i>	<i>Consequences for Learning</i>	<i>Consequences for Quality of Life</i>	<i>Effectiveness</i>
Valid information.	<i>Design situations or environments where participants can be origins and can experience high personal causation (psychological success, confirmation, essentiality).</i>	<i>Actor experienced as minimally defensive (facilitator, collaborator, choice creator).</i>	Disconfirmable processes.	<i>Quality of life will be more positive than negative (high authenticity and high freedom of choice).</i>	
Free and informed choice.	<i>Tasks are controlled jointly.</i>	<i>Minimally defensive interpersonal relations and group dynamics.</i>	Double-loop learning.	<i>Effectiveness of problem solving and decision making will be great, especially for difficult problems.</i>	Increased long-run effectiveness.
Internal commitment to the choice and constant monitoring of its implementation.	<i>Protection of self is a joint enterprise and oriented toward growth (speak in directly observable categories, seek to reduce blindness about own inconsistency and incongruity). Bilateral protection of others.</i>	<i>Learning-oriented norms (trust, individuality, open confrontation on difficult issues).</i>	Public testing of theories.		

Source: Argyris and Schön, 1974.

Figure 3. Model II (Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985)

Learning organization. Any organization that desires to thrive rather than merely survive may need to explore the practice of becoming a learning organization. In this study, the nonprofit organization in which the research was undertaken explored how to expand its capacity to serve its customers and its community and develop its employees. As such, it was important to introduce the concept of building a learning organization into this study because many of the principals involved in building learning organizations were used in the research methodology.

Learning organizations are:

...organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together. (Senge, 1990, p. 3)

The basic rationale behind becoming a learning organization is that in industries in which change is a constant, only organizations that can adapt as well as be flexible and productive will endure and reach success. Senge (1990) argued that in order for this to happen, organizations needed to “discover how to tap people’s commitment and capacity to learn at all levels” (p. 4). Senge suggested five dimensions that converge to create learning organizations: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision and team learning. In this study, each dimension was represented to some degree. Systems thinking was represented in that the study highlighted how participants evolved from “seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to

seeing them as active participants in shaping their reality, from reacting to the present to creating the future” (p. 69). Personal mastery was represented in that the study included processes for continual learning and improvement in the organization. According to Senge, “Organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning, but without it no organizational learning occurs” (p. 139). Mental models, “deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures and images” (p. 8), were challenged and explored through reflection, conversations, inquiry, and advocacy and resulted in a change in perspective. Building a shared vision within the organization means employees learn and excel not because they are told to, but because they want to. This study, explored the extent to which the values-based decision making model components of ethics, responsiveness, respect and resourcefulness were used in decision making. These components tied to Senge’s concept of building a shared vision in that stakeholders in the learning organization embrace a vision and actively live it. Team learning, the fifth dimension in learning organizations, was defined as “the process of aligning and developing the capacities of a team to create the results its members truly desire” (Senge, 1990, p. 236). Employees need to be able to, and given the tools to, act together. Growth through team learning, dialogue, thinking together and learning how to recognize patterns of interaction within the team that undermine learning are key aspects of this dimension. The organization in this study was organized into both functional and geographic teams. Members from each team are represented in the focus group interviews and employee satisfaction survey.

Watkins and Marsick (1993), noted scholars on the subject of learning organizations, proposed a framework for the learning organization that included six action imperatives: create continuous learning opportunities, promote inquiry and dialogue, encourage collaboration and team learning, establish systems to capture and share learning, empower people toward a collective vision, and connect the organization to its environment. Figure 4 illustrates how these action imperatives work together to form a learning organization. A learning organization is based on the assumption that employees are willing to undertake learning throughout their lives. In addition to learning collaboratively, the change aspect of learning necessitates a change in thinking from traditional phases and types of learning. As McLagan (1989) stated in the past, approximately 80 percent of most jobs necessitated compliance with rules and regulations, whereas 20 percent involved judgment. Today that statistic is reversed. Bierema (1996) stated an approach to developing individuals within a learning organization is “a holistic approach... [that] produces well-informed, knowledgeable, critical-thinking adults who have a sense of fulfillment and inherently make decisions that cause an organization to prosper” (p. 22). Within the framework of creating learning organizations, organization leaders must remember the needs of learners within the organization and shape opportunities around the needs of adult learners.

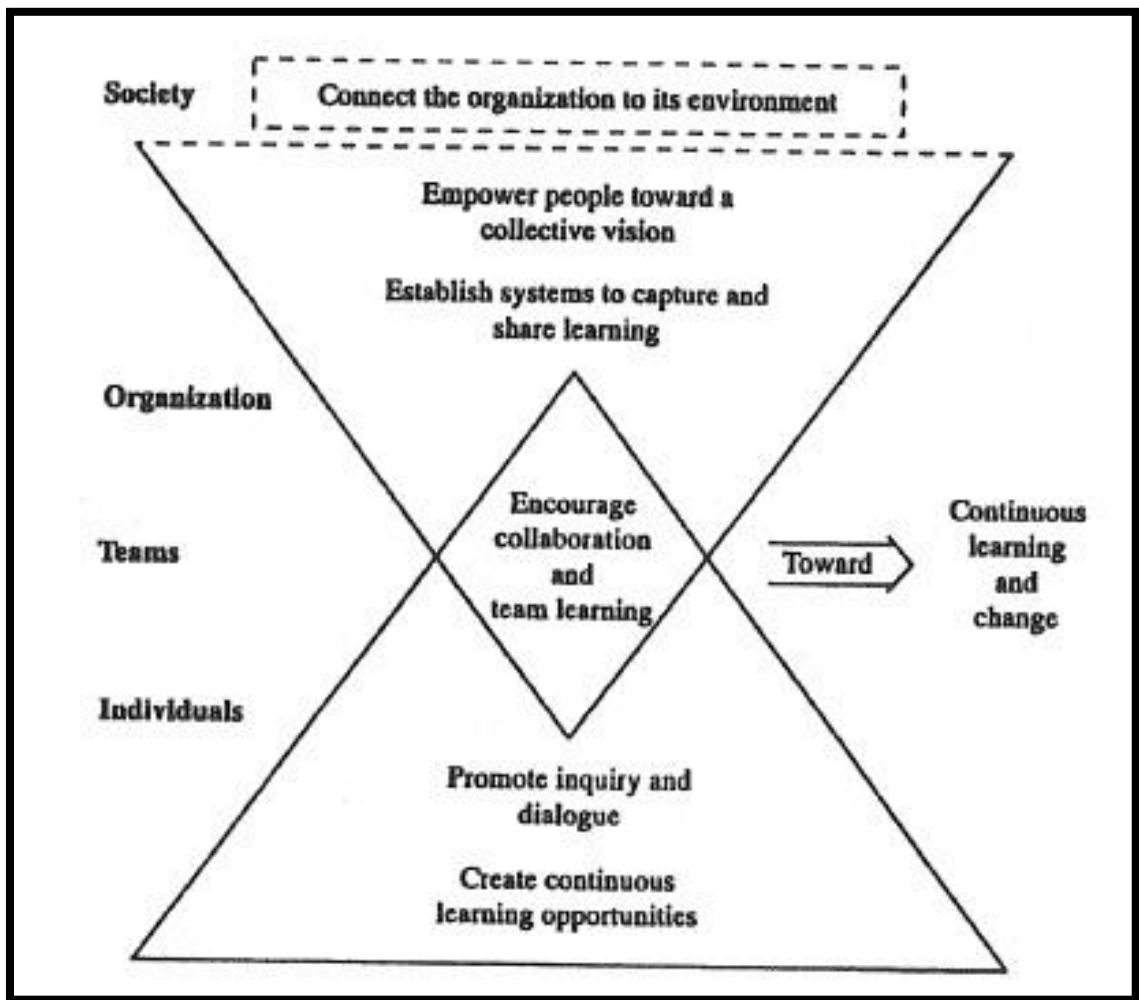


Figure 4. Learning Organization Action Imperatives (Watkins & Marsick, 1993).

Adult learning. Adult learning differs from traditional learning. Adults desire recognition and appreciation of their experience and knowledge; a learning design that accommodates the differing ways they learn; and active involvement in the learning process versus being passive recipients of knowledge (Brookfield, 1986; Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1980; Merriam, 1993; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). Caffarella and Barnett (1994) suggested building a reflective component to any adult learning situation because

“adults tend to be more reflective and dialectic in their thinking, that is, they appear to be more tolerant of contradictions and ambiguities, and they engage more often in problem finding as well as problem solving” (Caffarella, 1992; p. 32). Most adults desire to be actively involved in the learning process. Instructors or facilitators in adult learning situations must realize their role of information givers should also encompass serving as resource advisors and learning facilitators (Brookfield, 1986; Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990). Further, resource advisors help adult learners develop their process of learning via the establishment of their own learning objectives and aid them in choosing learning strategies that best fit their needs (Caffarella, 1992).

Reflection plays a significant role in adult learning. Schön (1983) coined the terms “knowing in action” and “reflection in action” to capture varied learner experiences. Knowing in action refers to people’s ability to carry out actions and judgments without consciously thinking about them prior to or during an experience. An example of tasks completed in the knowing in action phase might be buying bread at the grocery store, driving a car or changing a diaper. Reflection in action differs in that people think about and adapt what they are doing while they are doing it. In essence, “their thinking shapes what they are doing” (Cervero, 1988, p. 44) while they are still engaged in the action. An example of this would be to use learning journals, learning contracts, learning partners and self-assessment schedules in the learning process (Boud & Knights, 1994). According to Cafarella and Barnett (1994), “Both knowing in action and reflection in action are needed components of an experiential learning process” (p. 35). Bierema (1996) addressed the needs of adult learners this way:

Employees deserve the space and support to create and articulate a personal vision and understand how it connects to the organizational purpose and goals. This demands that the organization create an infrastructure promoting holistic individual development and then connect it on a collective level. This infrastructure supports giving employees the space to reflect and plan safely, and share discourse with other people in the organization about plans and goals. (p. 25)

Focusing exclusively on individual development would violate the tenets of systems thinking and Senge's (1990) model for learning organizations as stated in the previous section. However, organizations must be cognizant of the needs of the individual learner as well as how adults learn collectively. Mumford (1996) recommended a pyramid of learning (Figure 5) that starts with individual learning at the base, continues with one-on-one learning, progresses with group and team learning, and culminates in organizational learning.

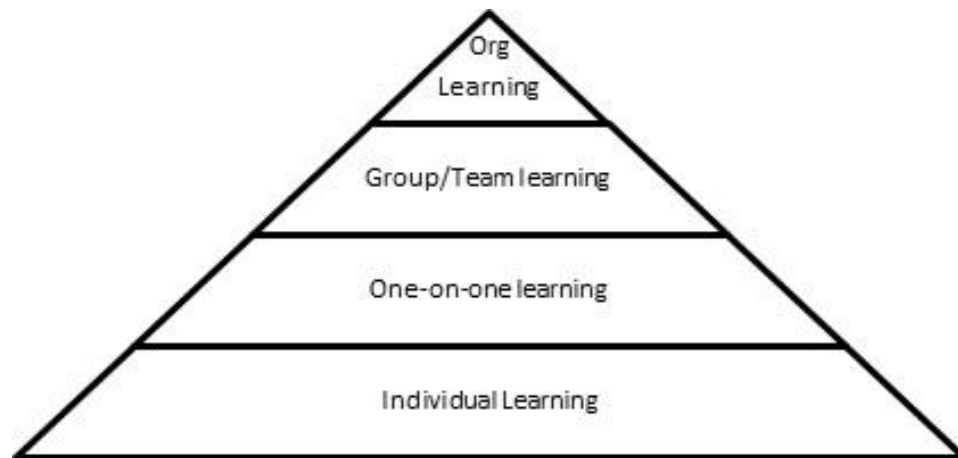


Figure 5. Pyramid of Learning (Mumford, 1994)

Organizational learning can encompass many areas of the organization. This study focused on organizational learning within the realm of ethical decision making in order to better understand how the communication of organizational values as stated in the company's values-based decision making model have permeated throughout the organizational headquarters and multiple satellite locations. Further, the study examined organizational learning as evidenced by the use of the values-based decision making model in everyday decisions within different hierarchical levels and satellite locations. In support of ethical decision making, two philosophical perspectives undergirded this study: consequentialism and nonconsequentialism.

Philosophical Perspectives

Consequentialism. As the label indicates, the branch of moral philosophy that determines the ethical course of action based on the consequences or outcomes of an action is termed consequentialist. According to Pettit (1993), "Consequentialism is the view that whatever values an individual or institutional agent adopts, the proper response to those values is to promote them" (p. 231). Values themselves are not questioned; rather, the behavior and outcomes associated with upholding the values are the central determinant of right and wrong. Nestled within consequentialist philosophy is the utilitarian viewpoint. John Stuart Mill (1861/1957) described utilitarianism as the "common-sense morality which we all learn as children... represent[ing] the accumulated wisdom of mankind about the desirable and undesirable consequences of actions" (in Schneewind, 1993, p. 152). Utilitarianism bases decisions on maximizing positive outcomes and minimizing negative outcomes for the greatest number of people. This type

of consideration for determining what is right and wrong can be used without much training in philosophy (Borowski, 1998) because it uses a cost-benefit analysis calculation that is naturally occurring within most people (Gandz & Hayes, 1988). Classic utilitarianism is, first and foremost, a standard for judging public action. By design, its purpose is to maximize utility, or “the good... consist[ing] essentially in the organic unity of a complex whole” (Goodin, 1993, p. 241). In this study, values maximized were those espoused in the values-based decision making model: ethical, responsive, respectful and resourceful. Following the logic of utilitarianism, the study showed that maximization of these values (the greatest good) by the organization members (for the greatest number of people) lead to positive consequences and was, therefore, deemed acceptable within the organization.

Nonconsequentialism. Nonconsequentialist philosophy determines the ethics of a situation by the moral principle or responsibilities involved rather than the consequences. Decisions are made based on moral worth as defined by one’s duty, which is in contrast to Mill’s utilitarian consequentialist theory. Although there are many aspects of Kantian theory (i.e. Kant’s ethics, “Kant’s ethics” and “Kantian ethics” in O’Neill, 1993), the main viewpoint most often associated with Kant and nonconsequentialist theory is that of autonomy and the categorical imperative. Rather than right and wrong being determined by an outcome determined as the correct answer by a group, Kant proposed a universal law as tenets or fundamental principles that could be adopted by anyone, regardless of the situation or how society (or the group) felt about it. The principle at work here was autonomy. Kant’s Law of Autonomy stated, “A moral agent is an agent who can act

autonomously, that is, as a law unto himself or herself, on the basis of objective maxims of his or her reason alone” (in Sullivan, 1989, p. 48). Kant developed the theory further, stating that one has the independent power to act as a self-directed decision maker; using one’s will and reasoning as the only basis for action (in Bowen, 2004a). Autonomy is the freedom to discover one’s own calling. Principles that could not apply to a variety of people or situations were to be rejected because nothing could be a moral principle that could not apply to everyone. This is where the categorical imperative comes into play. In its best known version, “act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law” (Kant, 1785/1952, p. 88). Deontological philosophy was derived from this maxim and is rule, or duty, based. According to deontological philosophy, “The categorical imperative obligates all decision makers to test the moral principle of a decision through generalizing the proposed rule to all others” (in Bowen, 2004a, p. 315). Thus, if every rational decision maker arrived at the same conclusion based on the rule, it must then be right and ethical. The final test of right and wrong, according to Kant, is intention. What is the decision-maker’s intention with this decision? If a decision is made on the basis of goodwill rather than on more nefarious propositions, then the decision is acceptable. Simply: for an act to be deemed ethical, one must desire to do the right thing and uphold one’s moral duty. Thus, deontological philosophy is based on duty rather than on consequences, in opposition to utilitarian philosophy. In this study, it was assumed the moral philosophy that most applied would be deontological philosophy. Bowen (2004a), in her similar case study of a company deemed an ethical exemplar, summed up the value of applying deontological philosophy :

“Kant’s deontological philosophy provides a clear guide to ethical decision making that can be implemented in counseling the dominant coalition on ethical issues” (p. 315).

However, utilitarian philosophy was also found to exist within the organization, a factor that was not explored in Bowen’s study.

Central Topics

The nonprofit sector. The nonprofit sector grew steadily over the past decade. From 1999 to 2009 the number of nonprofit organizations registered with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) increased 19 percent to over 1.4 million organizations. Not included in this number were small nonprofits with annual revenue or contributions of less than \$5,000 that were not required to file with the IRS. The largest single category of nonprofits was the 501(c)(3) sector, which was entitled *public charities*. Public charities accounted for 70 percent of all nonprofits in the United States in 2011, with revenues growing to 36 percent during the same timeframe (Roeger, Blackwood, & Pettijohn, 2011). As illustrated in Figure 6, public charities with the smallest revenue dominated the sector.

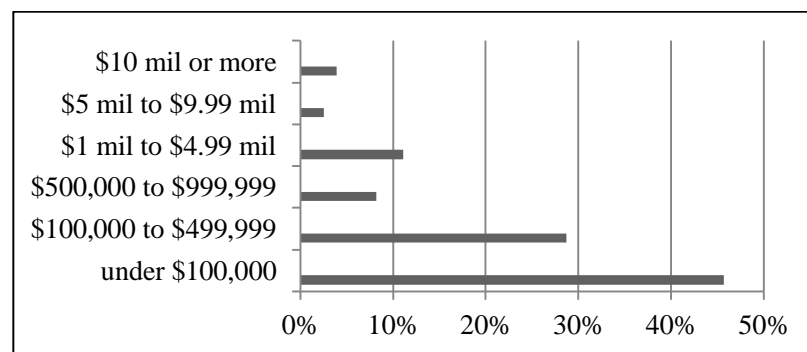


Figure 6. Number of Reporting Public Charities, 2009. Source: Urban Institute, National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2011. Note: Number may not equal 100 due to rounding.

The largest source of revenue for public charities was from the sale of goods and services such as admission tickets and tuition, adding to over 76 percent of all revenue sources. Typically thought of as the driver of revenue sources of nonprofits, Figure 7 shows private contributions accounted for a mere 13.6 percent of revenue for nonprofits. The largest majority of revenue was collected from private sources such as goods and services sold by the organization (52.4%) and government sources such as Medicaid or Medicare, with hospitals accounting for a large portion of those fees (23.3%). Taken together, government revenue sources accounted for 32 percent of all revenue for public charities (Roeger, Blackwood, & Pettijohn, 2011).

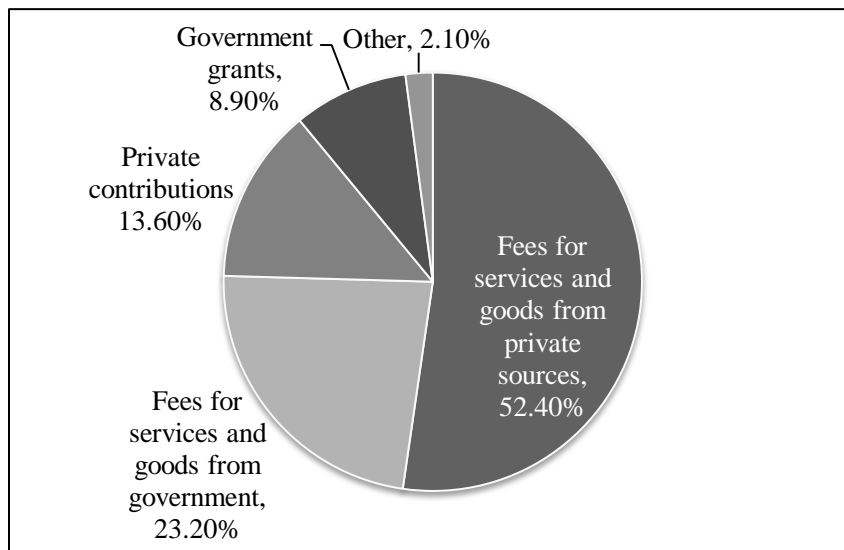


Figure 7. Sources of Revenue from Public Charities, 2009. Source: Urban Institute, National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2011. Note: Number may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Three states dominated the nonprofit registrations in the United States, with 22 percent of all nonprofits registered in California (10.1%), New York (6.4%), and Texas

(6.1%). Curiously, total revenue from nonprofits did not follow the same pattern. Total revenue was highest in the following states, respectively: New York (\$214 million), California (\$200 million), Michigan (\$120 million), Pennsylvania (\$105 million), Texas (\$95 million), Massachusetts (\$92 million), Illinois (\$89 million), Ohio (\$78 million) and Florida (\$73 million). A large gap in revenue existed between these states and others in terms of revenue collected in nonprofits as of March 2012. For example, the next largest revenue collecting state for nonprofits was Minnesota at \$59 million in total revenue (Urban Institute, 2012). Figure 8 illustrates the total revenue for nonprofits of the top ten states.

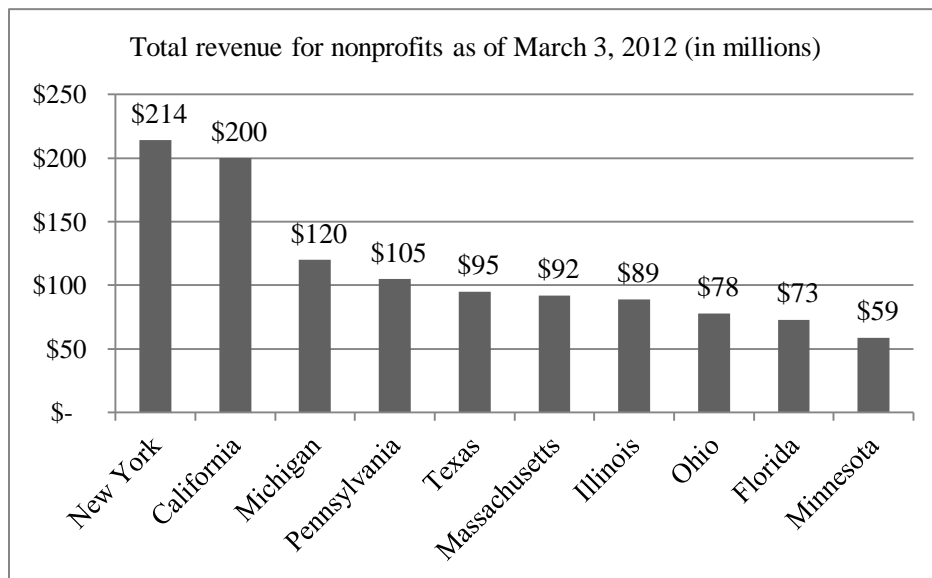


Figure 8. Total revenue for registered nonprofit organizations by state. Source: Urban Institute, National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2011.

Often volunteers are critical drivers of success at nonprofit organizations. For many organizations, the effort expended by volunteers is just as important as cash donations. In

2012, 26 percent of adults (62.8 million) volunteered for or through an organization, spending an average of 2.46 hours per day volunteering. This percentage has remained virtually unchanged in the last five years. The value of these volunteer hours to nonprofits is staggering. In 2010, at average private wages, volunteer time was worth nearly \$284 billion, the equivalent of 8.8 million full-time employees (Roeger, Blackwood, & Pettijohn, 2011).

A nonprofit organization is driven by its mission and uses profit to improve services rather than pay dividends to investors as in for-profit businesses. Organizations registered as nonprofit, or for tax purposes a 501(c)(3), are eligible for certain grants, government programs and tax exemptions. To qualify for a 501(c)(3) tax exemption, an organization must be structured solely for purposes described in the originating documents (IRS, 2012). A 501(c)(3) is considered a public charity rather than a privately supported foundation if it has received a substantial amount of its support from the government, general public, gifts, grants, contributions or “gross receipts from activities related to its exempt purposes, and not more than one-third of its support from gross investment income” (IRS, 2012, p. 1). The reason an organization seeks nonprofit status is not only to encourage donations through tax incentives, but ultimately to benefit the general public. Each nonprofit organization states its purpose and how it will benefit the public through the declaration of a mission statement. Brinckerhoff (2009) discussed the role of mission in nonprofits as “what the organization *does* [emphasis original]” (p. 39). This statement can be amended with the words “and strives to be” because organizations are more than just what they *do* but also what they are *striving to become*. The mission is the

reason for existence, the driver of strategy, the answer to issues that arise in nonprofits when faced with a dilemma –support the mission. If the nonprofit sector is growing and nonprofit organizations exist to enhance the public good, then the nonprofit sector is mission driven. Further, when an organization’s mission is to ultimately serve some sector of the public, executives in the organization should operate within some ethical framework to ensure the constituency is being served and the mission drives strategy. Thus the mission drives the code of ethics held by the organization.

Codes of ethics. A code of ethics is a “formal statement of the organization’s values regarding ethics and social issues” (Daft & Marcic, 2011, p. 137). Since the establishment of business ethics as a research field, codes of ethics and their importance to businesses have been studied to varying degrees with mixed results. Codes can have a positive effect on ethical behavior (Hegarty & Sims, 1979; Laczniak & Inderrieden, 1987; McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 1996; Stohs & Brannick, 1999; Weaver & Ferrell, 1977; Weeks & Nantel, 1992), yet the research also yielded evidence to the contrary. For example, little or weak support was found regarding the connection between ethical behavior and/or ethical decision making and the existence or integration of a code of ethics (Akaah & Riordan, 1989; Ferrell & Weaver, 1978; Glenn & Van Loo, 1993; Hunt, Chonko, & Wilcox, 1984; Murphy, Smith, & Daly, 1992; Nwachukwu & Vitell, 1997; Udas, Fuerst, & Paradice, 1996). Research supported the effect codes of ethics had on the perception of the organization as ethical by employees (Adams, Taschian, & Shore, 2001; Chonko & Hunt, 1985; Stohs & Brannick, 1999), but many also found codes of ethics needed to be combined with enforcement of and sanctions for violating the code in order

to be effective (Allen & Davis, 1993; Weaver & Ferrell, 1977). Further, formal policies surrounding the enforcement of a code generated an increased level of awareness and subsequent reporting of unethical incidents (Allen & Davis 1993; Barnett, 1992; Barnett, Cochran & Taylor, 1993; Dubinsky, Jolson, Marvin, Michaels, Kotabe, & Lim, 1992; Kaye, 1992; Lacaniak & Inderrieden, 1987; Singhapakdi & Vitell, 1990; Trevino & Youngblood, 1990). Research showed that companies with established codes of ethics were more profitable in the long run. Hatcher (2002) cited the example that 85 percent of the 100 top companies listed on the London Stock Exchange had codes of ethics, and a 1999 survey showed that companies with codes of ethics outperformed those without one. Worldwide, 58 percent of the 100 largest companies used ethical codes (Kaptein, 2004), and European companies had increasingly adopted codes of conduct to regulate labor relations (Sobczak, 2003).

The establishment of a code of ethics does not constitute a one-size-fits-all plan to combat unethical decisions. More recent research on codes of ethics centered on the embedding of codes of ethics into the culture and the embracing of them by leadership. In addition, communication of codes of ethics was crucial to the success of a code. Stevens (2008) discussed how codes of ethics can become embedded within an organization:

Managers who lead by setting clear standards and expecting the best from everyone including themselves are able to create ethical cultures. Ones who consider the ethical codes superfluous fail to establish an ethically meaningful culture. Most employees are motivated to commit to higher principles and unite in a common cause. (p. 604)

Schwartz (2001) concluded codes of ethics influenced the behavior of corporate agents and proposed a set of eight metaphors that might help explain how codes of ethics influenced behavior. Codes of ethics helped to (1) clarify expectations of employee behavior; (2) lead employees to consult other individuals on appropriate ethical behavior; (3) confirm acceptable behavior; (4) understand when a note of caution should be exercised when confronted with an ethical decision; (5) challenge unethical behavior and decisions; (6) act as a detector for employees to try to warn others of unethical behavior; (7) lead employees to report ethical violations; and (8) caused employees to comply with provisions for ethical behavior set forth by management. Schwartz, Dunfee and Kline (2005) called for an ethics code for organizational leaders that set an ethical “tone at the top” (p. 79) and included universal core ethical values: honesty, integrity, loyalty, responsibility, fairness and citizenship. The establishment, imbedding and communicating of a code of ethics was crucial to the creation of ethical business cultures.

Ethical business cultures. There is a difference between ethical business culture and ethical business climate. Some of the studies in this section tested ethical business culture, while others tested ethical business climate. Technically, the two concepts are different. In both cases, climate and culture, shared values and beliefs are common premises. While some scholars maintained there was no difference between the two (Trevino, Butterfield, & McCabe, 1998), others believed climate was a subset of culture. Agarwal and Malloy (1999) distinguished between climate and culture in this way: “climate refers to the members’ shared perception of how the organization operates whereas culture refers to the administration’s and the members’ assumption about how

the organization does and ought to operate” (p. 2). Similarly, Victor and Cullen (1988) defined ethical climate as “the shared perceptions of what ethically correct behavior is and how ethical issues should be handled” (p. 51). Schminke, Arnaud and Kuenzi (2007) defined ethical business climate as “how things are done around here,” described as the “prevailing weather” in the workplace (p. 175). Therefore, ethical climate involves how things are done in the workplace in regard to the ethical culture, or “basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by the members of the organization” (Schein, 1985, pp. 5-6). Since the two concepts are relatively similar and exist simultaneously within organizations, the literature reviewed encompassed both ethical business culture and ethical business climate.

Components of ethical business cultures can be categorized into two distinct types: formal and informal. Formal representations of ethical business cultures include mission and vision statements, codes of conduct, indoctrination and orientation rituals, decision making processes, rules and regulations, and so forth. Small (2006) suggested training programs in ethics for managers and leaders within the organization should be part of the formal components of ethical business cultures because ethical behavior and decision sets the right tone for the organization. Informal symbols of ethical business cultures include less obvious components of culture such as norms, values and behavior. Organizational values are “basic determinants of human behavior and social attitudes” that express what is acceptable to individuals and society (Dion, 1996, p. 333). This study collected data on both formal and informal aspects of the organization’s ethical business culture. Sims and Brinkmann (2003) argued that ethical business cultures matter more than codes of ethics;

they used the catchphrase, “Enron Ethics”, which argued that “business ethics is a question of organizational ‘deep’ culture rather than of cultural artifacts like ethics codes, ethics officers and the like” (p. 243). Sims and Brinkmann used Schein’s (1985) five mechanisms for influence regarding an organization’s culture to illustrate the impact of leadership on ethical business cultures. The five mechanisms are: attention, reaction to crisis, role modeling, allocation of rewards, and criteria for selection and dismissal. Sims and Brinkmann illustrated these mechanisms through use of the Enron case, highlighting that the organization used the mechanisms “to reinforce a culture that was morally flexible, opening the door to ethics degeneration, lying, cheating and stealing” (p. 247). Small (2006) investigated ethical culture at four distinct Australian organizations in order to better understand how ethical culture can be developed, encouraged and maintained. Small’s study substantiated Gilmartin’s (2003) conditions in developing an ethical business culture:

1. the top leaders must set the right tone
2. the organization must offer formal training in ethics and standards of conduct
3. the organization must provide formal mechanisms, both internally and externally to the organizational structure, for reporting wrongdoing

Small’s study concluded that “organizational theory and ethical theory are complimentary and that the combination of the two areas can facilitate understanding in developing an ethical corporate culture” (p. 599).

Ardichvili, Mitchell, and Jondle (2009) conducted a grounded theory study that elicited five clusters and statements about the characteristics of ethical business cultures (Figure 9).

These five clusters are:

1. mission and vision driven
2. stakeholder balance
3. leadership effectiveness
4. process integrity
5. long-term perspective



Figure 9. Five clusters of characteristics of ethical business cultures (Ardichvili, Mitchell & Jondle, 2009).

Based on their findings, the significant characteristic of ethical business cultures was described as the “lifeblood of the organization” (p. 449), the mission and vision. For an organization to survive, and ultimately thrive, it needs to connect its mission and vision to its long-term strategic goals and objectives. The alignment of mission and vision is vital in developing organizational norms that result in codes of conduct and ethics. Relating this to an earlier section, nonprofit organizations are founded on and driven by their mission. Thus, the connection between ethical business culture and nonprofit organizations is again illustrated.

The second characteristic found by Ardichvili et al. (2009) was stakeholder balance. This characteristic was in contrast with Friedman’s (1970) popular theory that making a profit for stockholders is the sole goal of the organization. Rather, respondents believed in balance of customer value and profit, keeping in mind competing needs of stakeholders (i.e. customers, employees, owners, and community) and respecting and fairly compensating employees. Echoing Small (2006) and Gilmartin (2003), Ardichvili et al. (2009) also found the ethical “tone at the top” or the example set by leadership, to be the third characteristic of ethical business cultures. Respondents indicated the decisions and actions of senior management were an important trait as well as consistency between words and actions. Recalling Model II in Argyris and Schön’s (1978) theory, congruency between words and actions resulted in increased, long-term effectiveness. The fourth characteristic of an ethical business culture found by Ardichvili et al. (2009) was process integrity, indicated by the statements describing a dedication to quality and fairness, investments in ongoing ethics training, outstanding corporate governance processes, and

transparent decision making. Lastly, ethical organizational cultures must also elicit long-term perspective by “placing mission above profit and long-term over short-term; acting in the best interests of customers, over the longer term; connecting environmental sustainability with corporate social responsibility and profit” (p. 448); and the CEO taking a long-term approach to building the organization. The culmination of these five characteristics is illustrated in Figure 9.

How prevalent are ethical business cultures throughout the rest of the world? Ardichvili, Jondle and Kowske (2010) explored “whether patterns of ethical behavior are similar or different in business organizations” (p. 300) using survey data collected from over 23,000 managers and employees of large business organizations from thirteen countries on three continents. Three clusters of responses emerged regarding the ethical business practices within their respective country: low, middle and high. Japan and Italy scored in the low cluster. Ardichvili et al. (2010) speculated contributing factors to the low perception of ethical business cultures in Japan to be the increase in corporate scandals and the “public’s repeated exposure to apologetic senior leadership of scandal ridden companies” (p. 310) both of which have eroded Japan’s tradition of trust in its family centered business arrangement. In light of Italy’s recent breakdown of public trust and government, Ardichvili et al. speculated that Italian respondents may have had a difficult time believing the words and actions of business executives were congruent. Countries that scored in the middle range included Brazil, the Netherlands, Germany, China, Mexico and Saudi Arabia. The consistent theme from Ardichvili et al. in this category centered on a lack of performance. Competition in the global marketplace in

conjunction with rapidly developing economies and a growing recognition of the need for globally adopted ethics standards were common among countries in this category. In addition, a perceived lack of institutionalized ethics within organizations, processes for ethical decision making, and the tension between “traditional cultural expectations and new workplace values, emerging as a results of recent transfers of Western technology, management methods and personnel” (p. 311) could thwart employees’ ability to behave ethically. In addition, responses from Germany and the Netherlands were generally inconsistent and suggested an “uncertainty about the roles of ethics in their business community” (p. 310), perhaps a result of the strict adherence to legal statutes created by legislative authority or expert pronouncements rather than judicial system interpretation. Countries in the high cluster included Australia, United Kingdom, United States, Canada and India. While business ethics awareness was still at an embryonic stage in many Indian companies (Seshadri, Raghavan, & Hegde, 2007), the findings from Ardichvili et al. (2010) showed promising growth in corporate ethics. Ardichvili et al.’s supposition for the high clustering of the U.S., U.K., Canada and Australia is that they all shared “common heritage as members of the British Empire” and had a “legal system based on common law under which legal precedent is established by decisions of courts and judges,” not executive statues and orders (p. 310; Shedd & Corley, 1993). While not exhaustive, this overview of ethical business culture provided context with which to understand the importance of establishing and supporting an ethical business culture within organizations and the impact of culture on ethical decision making.

Ethical decision making. Definitions of key terms are provided before a review of the ethical decision making literature is undertaken. The definition of *ethics* that pertained to this study was “the rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or a particular group, culture” (Random House Dictionary, 2012). Often used interchangeably with the term *ethics*, the term *moral* is “concerned with the principles or rules of right conduct or the distinction between right and wrong” (Random House Dictionary, 2012). Behavior that is *ethical* is often deemed correct by the society in which the behavior exists. In contrast, *moral* behavior can be considered more of an individual choice between right and wrong. While a technical distinction exists, the two terms were often used interchangeably in prior research among various authors. In the analysis and findings of this study, the term *ethics* was used because the study involved organizational and ethical business culture and ethical decision making, not necessarily individual, *moral* behavior.

Several studies confirmed the importance of developing and supporting an ethical business culture and provided linkages to other organizational factors such as moral imagination, ethical perception, moral identity and judgment. Caldwell and Moberg (2006) found that individuals exposed to an ethical culture displayed higher moral imagination than those who were not exposed, but the interaction between moral imagination and organizational culture was complex. Moral imagination is defined as:

The ability to perceive that a web of competing economic relationships is, at the same time, a web of moral relationships. Developing moral imagination means becoming sensitive to ethical issues in decision making, but it also means searching out places

where people are likely to be hurt by decision making or behavior of managers. This moral imagination is a necessary first step, but because of prevailing methods of evaluating managers on bottom-line results, it is extremely challenging. It is essential, however, before anything else can happen. (Carroll, 1987, and Powers & Vogel, 1980, in Werhane, 1999, p. 5).

Further, Werhane (1999) contented that moral imagination is the missing element in many instances of corporate wrongdoing.

Ho (2010) discovered similarities in ethical perception occurred when a situation was viewed as an accepted and institutionalized part of doing business, or stated another way, as part of the organizational culture. Zhang, Chiu and Wei (2009) determined the perception of employees regarding their organization's ethical culture promoted whistleblowing. In addition, employees who thought the culture would support whistleblowing were less concerned about retaliation and more confident that their report would be taken seriously. Armstrong, Williams and Barrett (2004) found a culture that consisted of an environment where unethical business practices were commonplace resulted in increased ethical violations.

Earlier studies also supported the connection between ethical climate and ethical decision making. In a review of the ethical decision making literature from 1996-2003, O'Fallon and Butterfield (2005) reported sixteen findings on ethical climate or ethical culture that influenced ethical decision making processes. Of the sixteen, twelve findings reported at least one dimension of ethical climate or culture positively influenced ethical decision making (see Singhapakdi, Karande, Rao, & Vitell, 2001; Trevino, Butterfield, &

McCabe, 1998; VanSandt & Neck, 2003; Weber & Seger, 2002). Loe, Ferrell, and Mansfield's (2000) earlier review of ethical decision making literature revealed support for the connection between ethical culture or climate and ethical decision making, albeit with fewer studies published (see Ferrell & Skinner, 1988; Jones & Hildebeitel, 1995; Verbeke, Ouwerkerk, & Peelen, 1996). More recently, Craft (in press) reported ten findings related to ethical culture in the areas of awareness, judgment and intent. Studies showed ethical decision making was significantly impacted by workplace ethics, standards and practices (Elango, Paul, Kundu & Paul, 2010); age and perceived ethical climate types (Forte, 2004); management's efforts to encourage ethical decision making and the tone at the top (Sweeney, Arnold & Pierce, 2010); and ethical norms and incentives (Shafer & Simmons, 2011). As a final point, Zhang, Chiu & Wei, (2009) found a positive correlation between employee perception of an ethical culture and their whistleblowing judgment.

Several important theories buttressed the ethical decision making literature. The two most prevalent models, Rest's (1986) four-component model for individual ethical decision making and Jones' (1991) Issue-Contingent Model, which synthesized prior ethical decision making models and used Rest's (1986) model as a foundation (Figure 10).

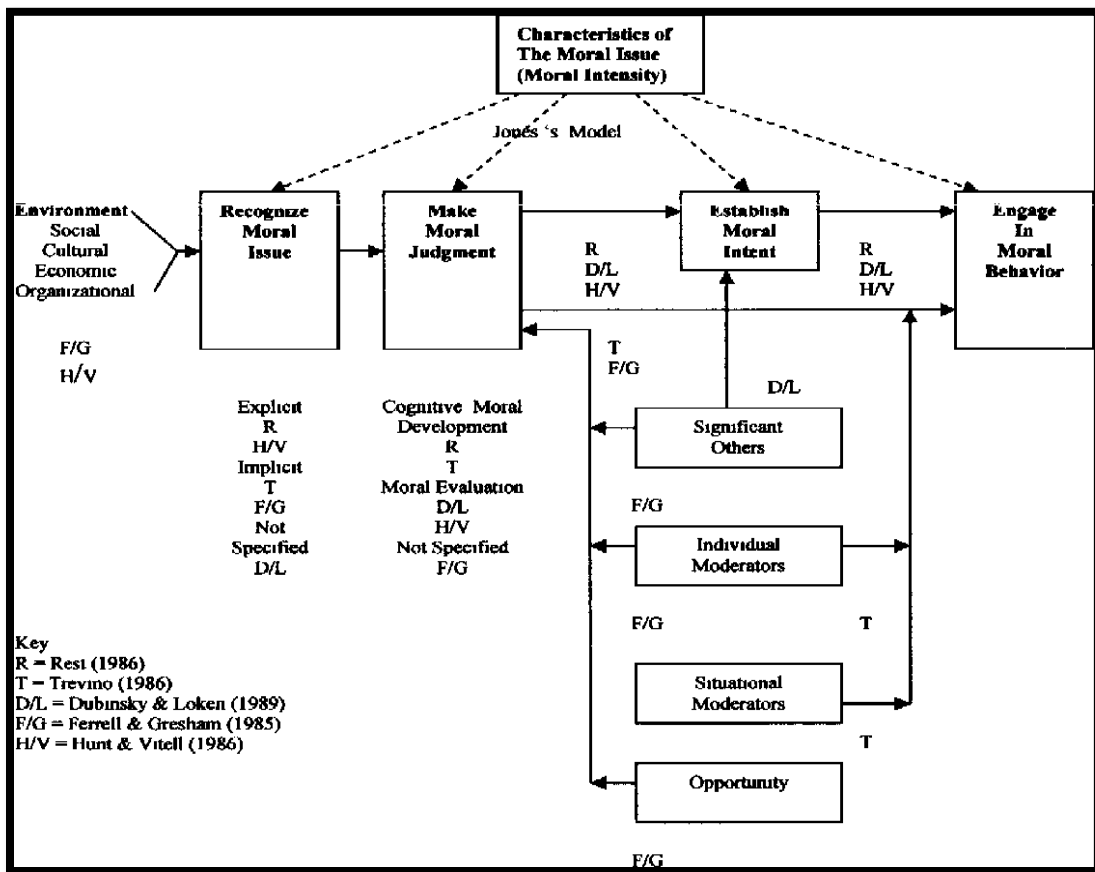


Figure 10. Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations (Jones, 1991).

Rest's (1986) model for individual ethical decision making and behavior includes four steps: (1) recognize the moral issue, (2) make a moral judgment, (3) resolve to place moral concerns ahead of other concerns and (4) act on the moral concerns. Further research using the model compacted the four steps to: awareness, judgment, intent and behavior. Building on Rest, Jones (1991) coined the term "moral intensity", which is comprised of six components:

1. magnitude of consequences: the sum of the harm/benefits of the moral act to those involved
2. social consensus: the degree of social agreement that a proposed act is good or bad
3. probability of effect: the probably the act will actually take place and will harm/benefit those involved
4. temporal immediacy: length of time between the present and the act
5. proximity: the feeling of immediacy to those involved
6. concentration of effect: strength of consequences for those involved.

Over 1,600 articles cited Jones (1991), including numerous articles that tested at least one example of the model (i.e. Carlson, Kacmar & Wadsworth, 2002; Davis, Johnson & Ohmer, 1998; Harrington, 1997; May & Pauli, 2002; Paolillo & Vitell, 2002; Singhapakdi, Vitell & Kraft, 1996) or revised the model itself (i.e. Kelley & Elm, 2003; McMahon & Harvey, 2007). Recent research in ethical decision making using Jones (1991) concluded female managers were more inconsistent than male managers in their ethical decision making and in their responses to items on the discrimination scale (Hopkins, Hopkins, and Mitchell, 2008). They related this conclusion to the proximity component of Jones' model and suggested that decisions made by females in regard to ethics and discrimination may affect them personally and have a more immediate impact on an individual's personal life, thus being in close proximity. Hayibor and Wasieleski (2009) found the availability of consequences associated with an act was positively related to Jones' perceptions of the magnitude of consequences of the act. Karacaer,

Gohar, Aygun and Sayin (2009) found the perceptions of moral intensity influenced both ethical judgments and behavioral intentions (Jones, 1991; Rest, 1986) in their study of Pakistani and Turkish auditors. McMahon and Harvey (2007) found mixed results for the effect of perceived moral intensity on ethical decision making. Further, both probable magnitude of consequences and social consensus had a significant effect on ethical decisions, whereas proximity did not. In addition, ethical judgment was found to be a stronger predictor than perceived moral intensity in one of their studies. Leitsch (2006) found that two dimensions of moral intensity, perceived corporate concern and perceived involvement effect, when combined, significantly predicted accounting students' moral intentions.

Ajzen (1991) proposed a theory that linked attitude and behavior, aptly titled "theory of planned behavior". The theory improved on the predictive power of the "theory of reasoned action" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, 1980) because it included perceived behavioral control. Rabl and Kühlmann (2008) used this theory to investigate the connection of behavioral elements leading to corrupt action. They found three major factors were important in ethical decision making processes: the individual's attitude, the norms within the organization, and the perceived behavioral control. They suggested implementing measures such as creating corruption-aversion norms, communicating management's self-commitment against corruption and including a check for corruption-averse attitudes in the hiring process. Buchan (2005) proposed an extension to Ajzen's theory of planned behavior. Results from his study showed strong support for a direct relationship between attitudes and ethical intentions, for norms and attitudes, and for

attitudes toward ethical issues that clearly influence intentions. However, subjective norms did not have an effect on ethical intentions, which was contradictory to other studies (Flannery & May, 2000; Randall & Gibson, 1991) and yet supported others (Chang, 1998; Kurland, 1996). Buchan (2005) suggested adding moral sensitivity as a measure of moral norms. This is by no means a complete discussion of the instruments and theories involved in ethical decision making research. Rather, it serves as context for the larger framework of ethical decision making research and provides an adequate foundation for the study.

Human Resource Development and ethics. How can Human Resource Development (HRD) professionals support ethical decision making practices within organizations? McLagan (1989) assigned 11 human resource functions to HRD and Human Resource Management (HRM), as seen in Figure 11. Seven functions were assigned specifically to HRD:

1. training and development (T&D)
2. organization development (OD)
3. career development (CD)
4. organization/job design
5. human resource planning
6. performance management systems
7. selection and staffing

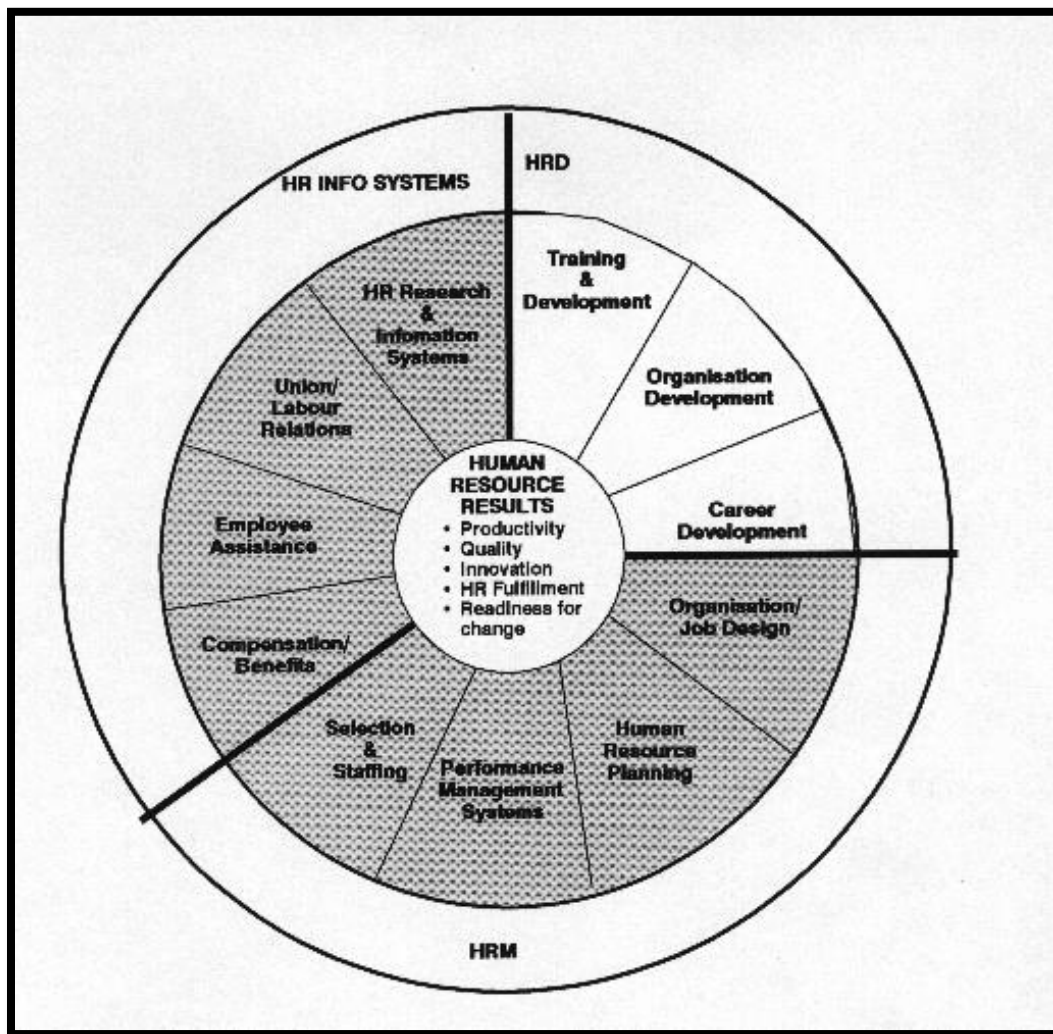


Figure 11. Human Resource Wheel - HRD functions. (adapted from McLagan, 1989).

McLean (2006) indicated that the first three, T&D, OD and CD, belonged exclusively to HRD. Therefore, how did these three main functions, exclusive to HRD, assist in enhancing ethical decision making? Garavan, McGuire, and O'Donnell (2004) contended that HRD should be framed via the levels of analysis approach. Three levels of analysis should be considered in the deployment of HRD practice: individual, organizational and societal. The individual level accentuated the human facet of HRD and included such

concepts as self-esteem, learning motivation, personal development and managing learning expectations. Individuals must take responsibly for mapping their own career path and taking advantage of development opportunities (Rummler & Brache, 1995). The organizational level stressed the resource aspect of HRD in that the organization provided the context and drivers for human system and performance. The organization was responsible for issues surrounding “resource maximization, productivity enhancement and realizing the full potential of employees toward achieving organizational goals” (Garavan et al., 2004, p. 421). Third, the societal level of analysis focused on the development of communities, societies, national competitiveness and network facilitation. According to Garavan et al. (2004), “The purpose of HRD at this level is concerned with the provision of education and the development of human capital toward improving national competitiveness and the quality of life of citizens” (p. 423). Most appropriate to this study was Garavan et al.’s first and second level of analysis. HRD can facilitate and make available resources for individuals to improve themselves individually, which would also include developing their ethical decision making skills and moral reasoning ability. Second, HRD should be involved at the organizational level in the training of organizational ethics as a whole, as evidenced in the code of ethics, code of conduct, policies surrounding ethics of the organization and ethical behavior. Wood and Rimmer (2003) suggested a range of measures be in place to communicate, train and support the understanding of an organization’s existing code of ethics during orientation (McDonald & Zepp, 1989); strategic planning (Robin & Reidenbach, 1987); staff performance appraisal (Fraedrich, 1992; Harrington, 1991; Laczniak & Murphy,

1991) and in the protection of whistleblowers (Grace & Cohen, 1998). Dean (1992) contended that merely having a code of ethics in place would not guarantee employees will act ethically. According to Dean, “Although codes of ethics do establish expectations for behavior and serve as criteria for evaluating the decision making of corporate and governmental officials, they do not necessarily result in consistently improved ethical behavior” (p. 286.) Rather, employees must be trained in how to think and act ethically. HRD practitioners can benefit an organization by providing training and development in ethical decision making.

Adult education and training principles, as discussed earlier in this chapter, involved giving space for reflection on and participation in learning goals and dialogue. Bierema (1996) cautioned against considering individual development as a one-size-fits-all approach to workplace learning because it violated the principles of systems thinking. Briefly defined, a system is a “collection of parts which interact with each other to function as a whole” (Kauffman, 1980, p. 1). Bierema cautions against developing a one-size-fits-all method of workplace learning, but ignored the whole (organizational development and learning) in lieu of fixing the part (individual thinking and behavior). Rather, once individual development has been nurtured, “it must be integrated into the organization if it is to benefit the learning of other employees and the productivity of the organization” (p. 25). This integration can be applied to Izzo, Langford, and Vitell’s (2006) study of using interactive ethics education within organizations to develop better ethical decision makers. Organizations should not expect adult learners to “passively absorb facts related to complex ethical decisions by reading, self-study, or

lecture/demonstration” (p. 239) because it violates the very heart of adult learning concepts as discussed in the earlier section (Bierema, 1996; Brookfield, 1986; Caffarella and Barnett, 1994; Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1980; Merriam, 1993; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). Using Kohlberg’s (1969) Six Stages of Cognitive Moral Development and Rest’s Defining Issues Test (1986), Izzo et al. concluded that participation in interactive ethics education may contribute significantly to the cognitive moral development of their test subjects (in this case, real estate professionals). They concluded that interactive ethics education could not transform an immoral person into a moral one. Rather, “immoral actions or decisions made by an otherwise moral individual due to poorly developed ethical decision skills may be avoided through proper training” (p. 245). Yet HRD practitioners often encounter challenges in training employees in the field of ethics.

Fisher (2005) contended that HRD departments played a leadership role in converting organizations into good corporate citizens and proposed 12 roles for HRD professionals within four stances to the ethical aspects of HRD. While the details of each of the 12 roles are beyond the scope of this literature review, the larger is that there were many limitations and dangers HRD practitioners are exposed to in this training field. While the argument has been made for ethics training to be both interactive and ongoing (Ardichvili & Jondle, 2009; Craft, 2010), HRD practitioners should be aware of the limits of their ability to influence completely the moral fabric of the organization. Keep (2007) addressed these limitations in her article that discussed the “fitness to practice” of HRD professionals. She suggested the need for an intentionally thoughtful approach to become more self-aware and astute when functioning in the role of HRD. She provided six

strategies for staying well-balanced and focused, many involving physical and mental health, ongoing professional development and training, and the sharing of concerns with others in the field. An example of using adult learning principles by HRD practitioners to develop ethical decision making is the use of an ethics training behavior simulation. The simulation used by LeClair and Ferrell (2000) combined formal and informal learning techniques that allowed for structured ethics training and unstructured discussion and group interaction that more closely resembled actual work patterns. The findings associated with the use of this training method were positive for the organization in LeClair and Ferrell's study.

Support for ethics training was found in various ethical decision making models, many of which were discussed in a previous section of this study. Specifically, Ferrell and Gresham (1985) discussed the importance of opportunity in influencing ethical decision making; Hunt and Vitell (1986) recognized the value of culture; and Trevino (1986) combined both organizational culture and organizational learning factors to influence ethics training.

A common challenge for HRD professionals is teaching smart people how to learn. Assuming everyone in the organization is smart, teaching employees how to think about their thinking (i.e. reflection, self-analysis, and ethical decisions) can be exhausting. Argyris (1991) discussed the difficulty he faced when leading change efforts within organizations in his seminal article "Teaching Smart People How to Learn" in *Harvard Business Review*. Based on his single-loop (i.e. learning how to problem solve) and double-loop (i.e. learning from a failed problem solution) theories, Argyris noticed as

long as attempts to learn and change were the focus, external organizational factors such as job restructuring, benefit and compensation plans, leadership training, and performance review, the participants were excited and involved. He stated, “Indeed, creating new systems and structures was precisely the kind of challenge that well-educated, highly motivated professionals thrived on” (p. 5). When the focus turned internal, learning collapsed upon itself. The moment the pursuit of continuous improvement turned inward with a focus on the professionals’ own performance and limitations, the commitment to excellence and growth halted. Why? Argyris (1991) explained the espoused values versus enacted values (values-in-use) theory:

[Professionals] argued that people shouldn’t be judged by inferences unconnected by their actual performance – but they judge management in precisely this way. They insisted that management define clear, objective, and unambiguous performance standards – but they argued that any humane system would take into account that the performance of a professional cannot be precisely measured. Finally, they presented themselves as champions of learning – but they never proposed any criteria for assessing whether an individual might be unable to learn. (p. 10)

It is no wonder HRD professionals felt daunted by the expectation to “question” and place a “continual focus by organizations on efficiency and performance” while also being conscious of the role HRD fulfills in the business itself (Garavan & McGuire, 2010, p. 487). Garavan and McGuire stated that HRD is only focused on short-term results and suggested HRD take a more long-term, strategic approach to business that

involved making contributions to corporate social responsibility, sustainability, and ethics on an international scale. Two examples of HRD on the global stage involved studies done in Russia and China that shared a key premise of successful global HRD: the influence of culture. The incorporation of culture in international HRD practices is encouraged (Ardichvili & Kuchinke, 2002), and the Chinese context is no exception. Recognizing the importance of Confucianism as a central feature governing Chinese organizational life and integrating these values into HRD practices was found to be important (Wang, Wang, Ruona, & Rojewski, 2005). This is supported by Zavyalova's (2009) exploration of values-based management within Russian enterprises and her assertion that "the ability to create a corporate culture where the personal values of employees and organizational values are reconciled and where the interests of the top management and company employees are aligned should be considered as one of the core tools of HRD" (p. 456). Aligning organizational values with the interests of management and employees can also be stated as Argyris and Schön's (1978) espoused values versus enacted values (values-in-use theory). In other words, talk the talk and walk the walk.

Ultimately, the goal of HRD in developing ethical organizations involved a dedication to incorporation of ethics at all levels of the organization, in leadership programs, in the creation of mentoring and career development programs, and in programs that encouraged an ethical business culture (Ardichvili & Jondle, 2009). HRD professionals have a responsibility to "make a positive contribution to ethical practice in business" (Doran, 2005, p. 36). Foote and Ruona (2008) concluded in their synthesis of frameworks and the implication of institutionalizing ethics that HRD is, based on the

model (Figure 12) published by Carroll and Buchholtz (2006), “interconnected with the key components [that are] instrumental in the facilitation of the building of the infrastructure, developing the stakeholders, working with the leadership of the organization, and helping to lead and manage ethics in the workplace” (p. 301). Recognizing the importance of HRD’s role in the building and support of ethical businesses will ultimately result in developing the largest and most valuable resources within the organization: the people within.

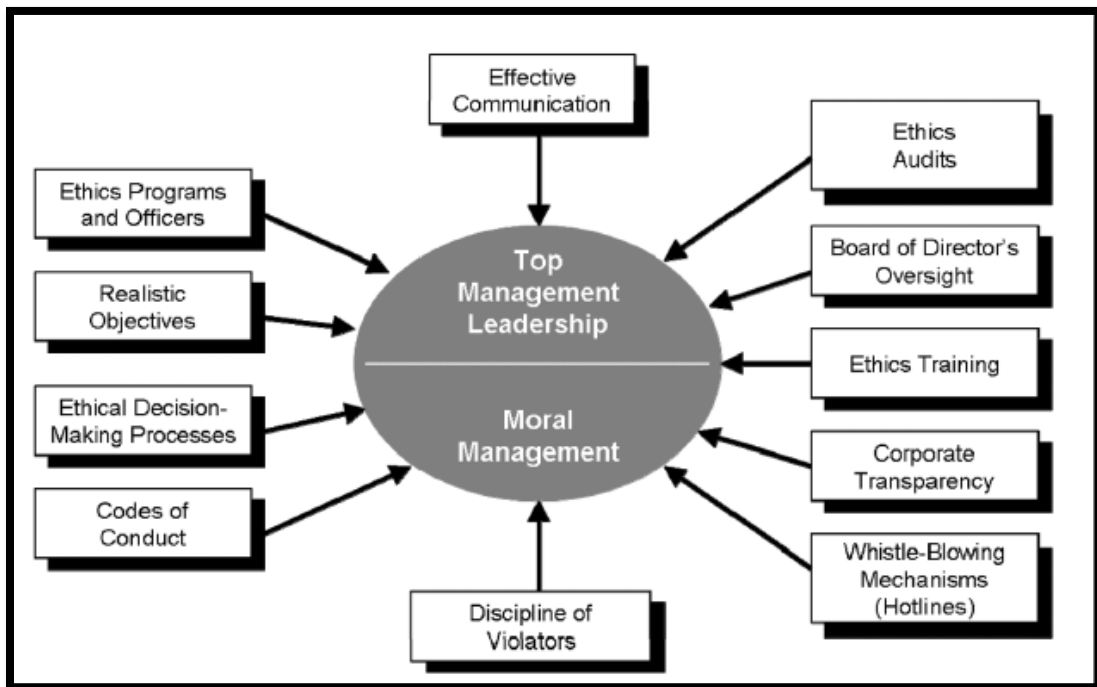


Figure 12. Best practices for improving an organization’s ethical climate or culture (Foote & Ruona, 2008, adapted from Carroll & Buchholtz, 2006)

In summary, literature that provides the foundation for this study is concentrated in three areas: theory, philosophy and key topics in the fields of ethics and HRD. Each

area informs the study differently. First, the three theories provide a base on which the study is grounded. By examining the congruence between espoused versus enacted values, a shared understanding of culture and classification of Model I and II behaviors emerged. This was essential in the evaluation of learning organization components within Ability, Inc. Within successful learning organizations lies an assumption that adult learning principles are in use. Thus, in combination, these three theories inform the research. Second, two philosophical perspectives represented different approaches to ethical decision making. By investigating which approach was most represented in an ethical decision making culture, an understanding of what motivated ethical decision making was obtained. Third, topics central to the research included the nonprofit sector, codes of ethics, ethical business cultures, ethical decision making and HRD. Literature in these areas provided background for the study, affording comparisons to earlier research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the method by which the study was conducted. The research design section delineates and justifies the choice of a single-case descriptive qualitative case study design; explains how the philosophical worldview of constructivism applies and introduces the conceptual framework of the study. A justification of case study design, its appropriateness for this research and details on the location of the study follow. The chapter concludes with an explanation of data collection, analysis and ethical considerations.

Research Design

The design of the study was a single-case descriptive qualitative study. The following tools were used in data collection: document analysis, focus groups and existing survey data. A qualitative research design was chosen because of the value of “discovery, insight and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and the practice of education” (Merriam, 1998, p. 1). This study concentrated on a single phenomenon, values-based decision making, and uncovered the interaction of significant factors that were characteristic of the phenomenon. Holistic description and explanation were utilized. Factors that comprised a phenomenon cannot be separated from their context, which adheres to Yin’s (2009) requirements for case study design.

The philosophical worldview, or “basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990, p. 17), that is most appropriate for this study is constructivism. The meaning gleaned from the experiences of participants was varied, leading me to discover the

complex intersection of views rather than assuming that employees made ethical decisions within the organization based merely on the organization's values. The research "relied as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation," and the questions were "broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, typically forged in the discussions or interactions with other persons" (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). See Appendix E for the list of focus group interview questions. The importance of this study was based on the impact of the values-based decision making model on everyday ethical decision making. A quantitative design would not have unearthed the richness of experiences nor the depth of understanding required to address the research questions.

Case study methodology was chosen as the approach to inquiry. Merriam (1998) stated, "A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved" where the interest is in the "process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation" (p. 19). Smith (1978) contended that case studies are often differentiated from other types of qualitative research in that they are intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system. This case study explored an in-depth process (decision making) that occurred within the bounds of one organization over a fixed period of time and collected detailed information using the data collection procedures of document analysis, focus group interviews and existing survey data (Creswell, 2009; Stake, 1995). Merriam (1998) described the single most important defining feature of case study research as the "object of study" (p. 27). In this instance, the object of study was the decision making process of members of one nonprofit organization. The

phenomenon under study, values-based decision making, was intrinsically bounded within the system comprised of the organization itself; the data collection was finite within those boundaries. There was a limit to the number of people who were involved because only those employed by the organization were part of the focus group and interview sample. Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995) cited these as necessary components for case study research. This was a single case design with a single unit of analysis; the case rested within the context of the organization under study (Yin, 2009) and included contextual conditions (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

To further explain the components of the study and show how they interacted in support of the research questions, Figure 13 illustrates the conceptual framework of the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested creating a conceptual framework in the early stages of the study to combat information overload. In this case, it was very helpful to work within the bounds of a framework. It was posited that the values of the organization would be reflected in the everyday decisions of the employees through the use of the values-based decision making model by both employees of corporate and satellite locations (RQ1). If language consistent with the stated values frequently occurred in the documentation and employees confirmed the use of the model (or components of the model) in regular decision making (RQ2a), it would be evident that the organization's values had permeated throughout the organization. Evidence of the permeation would also exist in the findings and degree of alignment of espoused values and enacted values (values-in-use). Further, if RQ2a was supported, then factors in the organizational culture that contributed to ethical decision making would be revealed

(RQ2b). Application of HRD concepts throughout the process of discovery, analysis and recommendation were evident, thus describing the contribution of HRD to values-based decision making (RQ3).

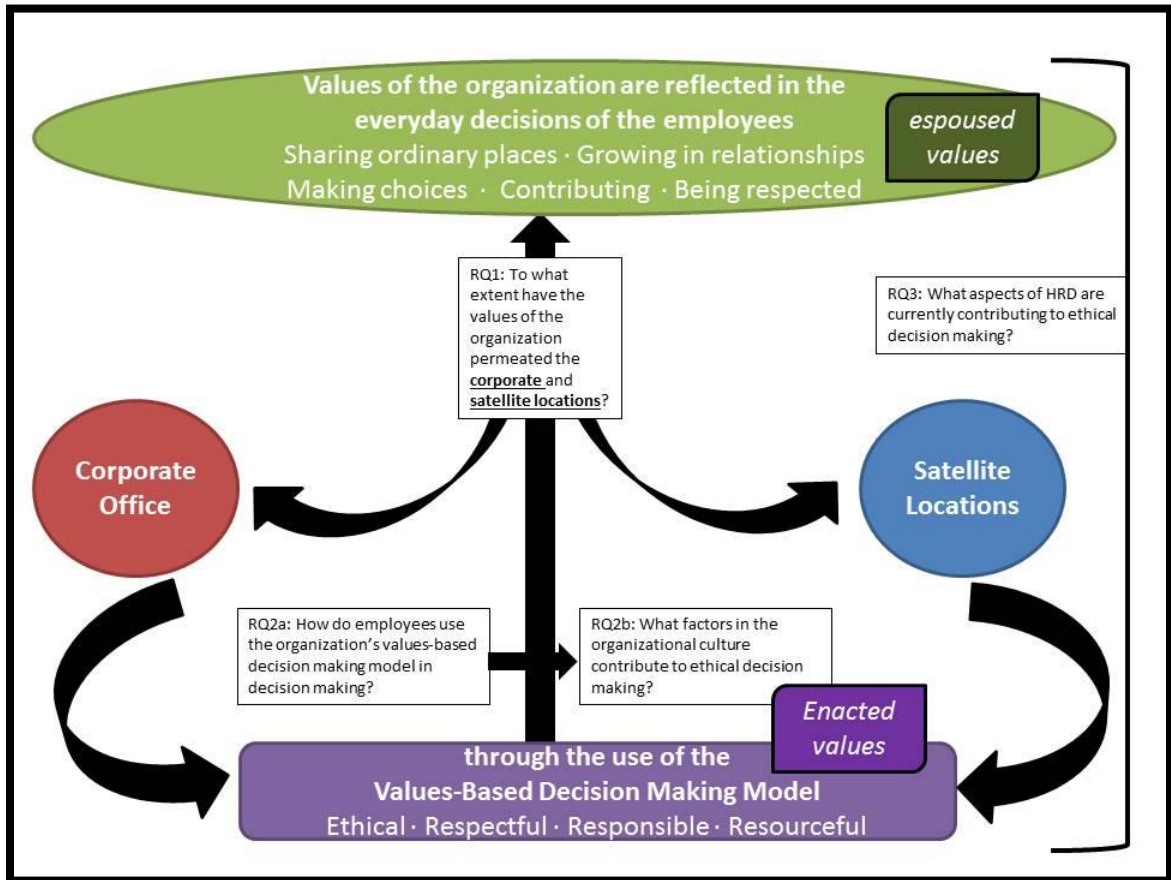


Figure 13. Conceptual framework for study

Justification of Method

Why was a case study appropriate for this investigation? Perhaps it is best to explain rationale for choosing case study as the most appropriate method by starting with what this study was not. The research questions were not appropriate for a quantitative

study in that it did not seek to answer research questions related to “how many” or “how much”, questions that would generate a list of pre-determined answers, categories or items. This study was not predictive of a phenomenon or certain outcomes, as in economic research. This study did not seek to determine “who”, as the participants were already established, or “where”, as the location was also established. This study did not aim to build theory, as in the grounded theory method, nor intend to explore the lived experiences of the participants in this organization as in phenomenology (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009).

The justification for using case study as the method for the research was based on Yin’s (2009) criteria. Per Yin, case study is an appropriate method when research questions asking “how” and “why” are posed; when behavioral control over event is not required; and when the study focuses on contemporary events. Specifically Yin stated, “‘how’ and ‘why’ questions were more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies, histories and experiments as the preferred research methods” (p. 9). In this study, two “how” questions were proffered that related to the dissemination of an organization’s values-based decision making model throughout various locations and hierarchical levels.

Case study methodology has been used in various studies to examine the impact of diverse factors on ethical decision making. Bonner (2007) examined how the sale of students’ personal information by the Calgary Board of Education escaped ethical questioning using the Actor-Network Theory. West (2008) examined the ability to make ethical decisions by comparing a case study involving affirmative action in South Africa to demonstrate the way Sartre’s existentialism model reframes ethical dilemmas in terms

of individual freedom and responsibility. Bowen (2004a) used case study methodology to study the organizational factors that encouraged ethical decision making at a for-profit pharmaceutical company. The framework for examining ethical decision making in this study was patterned after similar elements in Bowen's study, with these notable exceptions: the context of the case existed in a nonprofit organization rather than a multi-national pharmaceutical corporation; and the application of Argyris and Schön's (1978) espoused values versus enacted values theory was used rather than McGregor's (1960) Theory X and Y management.

Study Location

The location of the case study was Ability, Inc., Inc., a large nonprofit organization that provided customized services for people with disabilities. The name and specific locations of the organization have been blinded for privacy. Ability, Inc. was founded in 1965 by families of children with special needs such as mental retardation, cerebral palsy, autism and epilepsy. Ability, Inc. currently operates eight program locations in a large Midwestern metropolitan area. In 2012, Ability, Inc., Inc. earned over \$54 million revenue and has projected 4.5 percent annual revenue growth through 2014. Revenue minus expenses for 2012 amounted to over \$1.89 million. Fundraising increased in 2012 compared to the prior year by over \$6.6 million to \$1.45 million. Ability, Inc. enjoyed the benefit of 498 volunteers and employed 4313 clients and staff during fiscal year 2012. Hence, it is a rather large organization.

In December 2000, Ability, Inc.'s Customized Support Services (CSS) department was formed to serve people with all types of disabilities as well as the elderly. CSS now

comprises the majority of revenue dollars by providing fiscal support entity services in which individuals with disabilities and their families can hire personal care support and can purchase needed services and equipment. Ability, Inc. In 2011, the organization served over 855 day service clients and 1,445 fiscal service clients. The average client wage was \$8.50 an hour in 2012, up from \$8.35 in 2011. The CEO of Ability, Inc. clarified the difference between the two types of clientele:

Regarding day service clients, Ability, Inc. provides person-centered services to adults with disabilities. We focus on exploring and defining their interests and preferences and then support them to find a job, plan their career, participate in learning opportunities and we provide for their personal care needs. Our highly trained staff offer opportunities for personal growth and meaningful experiences every day, helping individuals gain skills, confidence, and a sense of community. We also arrange transportation to and from work or one of Ability, Inc. 7 centers. Regarding fiscal support clients, under certain funding options, [our state] gives people with disabilities and their families control over the services they receive. These services require that families select a Fiscal Support Entity Services (FSE) that has been approved by [our state] to collect funding on behalf of the client for their government approved plan, and to make all payments for needed services or purchases. Ability, Inc. commonly serves as the employer of record for personal care staff. We also monitor spending and send reports to the client and the county. These services allow children to continue to live at home, give families the freedom to live a more normal life, and saves money for [our state's] taxpayers.

Ability, Inc., Inc. collaborates with employers, volunteers and government agencies to create expanded opportunities for people with disabilities to have valued roles and to experience:

1. Shared community
2. Meaningful relationships
3. Honored choices
4. Being a contributor
5. Gained respect

These five values are the core of Ability, Inc. Inc.'s mission. In addition, Ability, Inc. created a Values-Based Decision Making Model (Figure 1) that puts its mission into context in order to make decisions based on the mission and values.

Ability, Inc., Inc. was chosen as the case study site because of its long history with using values-based decision making. Originally adopted in 1992, the values that govern Ability, Inc. had not changed in over 20 years. Often revisited by the board of directors and executive leadership, the values continued to be the driving force behind the organization's mission and vision. What motivated me to seek out an opportunity to work with this organization was the prior experience with Ability, Inc. clients, client supervisors and volunteers from different locations. While on a tour of the company headquarters in early 2002, the values-based decision making model was observed as a tool for everyday decision making and was clearly evident throughout the building. This sparked my interest in the way the organization communicated its values and provided a tool for making decisions using the values. When interviewed about this phenomenon, an

Ability, Inc. employee (who was still employed with the organization a decade later) stated she and her colleagues use the tool to make and justify decisions. Simply, if the decision maker could justify the decision as ethical, respectful, responsible and resourceful (Figure 1), it was often made. In a decade of research, I had never come across mention of a company providing a device for making ethical decisions and have subsequently found the idea of an ethical decision-making tool a unique and noteworthy idea to be explored.

Data Collection

Three sources of evidence were used to collect data on values-based decision making within the organization: documentation, focus group interviews and existing survey data. These sources were chosen because they represented multiple layers of information gathering that overlapped to provide a variety of data for generating appropriate findings. Patton (2002) stated the combination of document analysis and interviewing (in a group or individually) was valuable. Specifically,

By using a combination of observations, interviewing, and document analysis, the fieldworker is able to use different sources to validate and cross-check findings.

Each type and source of data has strengths and weaknesses. Using a combination of data types – triangulation – increases validity as the strengths of one approach can compensate for the weaknesses of another approach. (Patton, 2002, p. 306).

Patton (2002) provided an example of his use of triangulating these three types of research in a study of staff communication in a wilderness education evaluation and how the combination of the three was valuable. According to Patton, “The documentation

would not have made sense without the interviews, and the focus of the interviews came from the field observations. Taken together, these diverse sources of information and data gave me a complete picture of staff relationships” (p. 307). By using a variety of sources, Patton argued, the evaluator can “build on the strengths of each type of data collection while minimizing the weaknesses of any single approach” (p. 307).

Patton (2002) further suggested four types of triangulation in data evaluation: data sources, different evaluators, theory and methods. Yin (2009) illustrated triangulation as the convergence of evidence within a single study as the types of data evaluation adding to a set of facts that are derived from the data. This study replicated the convergence of evidence through the triangulation of data as information was collected from multiple sources (documents, focus group interviews, and existing survey data) that corroborated the same fact or phenomenon. Yin contended, “When you have really triangulated the data, the events or facts of the case study have been supported by more than a single source of evidence” (p. 116). Triangulation of the data by using three types of sources provided construct validity because “multiple sources of evidence essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon” (p. 117).

The first layer, documentation, revealed the espoused values of the organization, through application of Argyris and Schön’s (1978) theory. Espoused values existed in documentation in annual reports, the employee handbook, and employee training materials, corporate governance procedures and newsletters. Documentation was obtained in multiple ways. Numerous documents were available to the public on the organization’s website such as newsletters, annual reports, family satisfaction surveys

and employer surveys. Internal documents such as training and orientation materials, company-wide communication and the Employee Satisfaction Survey results were acquired by the researcher through the Vice President of Human Resources and the Training Manager. The organization was not hesitant to share internal information.

According to Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012), content analysis of documents “enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communications” (p. 478). The contents of virtually any type of communication can be studied from which to glean a person’s or group’s values (Hodder, 1994; Jones, 1996). Miller (1997) suggested analyzing institutional documents in order to “demystify institutional authority” (p. 91). Document analysis was used to:

illuminate the practical social contexts of everyday life within which they are constructed and used. Texts are one aspect of the sense-making activities through which we reconstruct, sustain, contest and change our senses of social reality.

They are socially constructed realities that warrant study in their own right. (p. 71)

Document analysis revealed the depth in which values in the values-based decision making model were widely, marginally or scarcely represented. Themes, a grouping of codes that emerge during the coding process (Fraenkel et al., 2012), were formulated from codes generated that helped to organize and make sense out of the large amount of descriptive data. Context for the continued data analysis was provided by focus group interviews by providing a mechanism by which to measure if the values were widely represented in the documentation but scarcely represented in the focus group interviews.

A gap was evident and thus the values had not completely permeated organizational processes. The procedure for analyzing content from documents is discussed in the data analysis section.

Focus group interviews, the second layer of data analysis, were conducted with various stakeholders within the organization specifically targeted to represent various levels and locations in the organization (Table 1). “Everyday nuances – the ordinary details – which others might miss” (Fraenkel et al., 2012, p. 453) provided rich illustrations and significant quotations that illustrated themes and findings. Feelings, thoughts and intentions cannot be observed, nor can behaviors that took place at a prior point in history. “We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things” (Patton, 2002 in Fraenkel, et al., 2012, p. 451).

Research question 1 focused on how the corporate values of the organization had permeated the headquarter and satellite locations of the organization, so conducting focus groups with various levels of organization members and employees at several of the larger satellite locations provided an adequate overview of the process by which employees make decisions. Krueger and Casey (2009) argued the purpose of conducting focus groups is to “listen and gather information” and is a way to “better understand how people feel and think” (p. 2) about something. Focus groups were used to gather opinions. Participants were selected for a reason and had certain characteristics in common that related to the subject of the focus group. In this case, all focus group participants were internal stakeholders of the organization. Perhaps external stakeholders

would have a differing opinion on the permeation of values throughout the organization, but it was beyond the scope of the study. According to Krueger and Casey (2009), focus group interviews work when “participants feel comfortable, respected and free to give their opinion without being judged” (p. 4) because the intent of a focus group interview is to promote self-disclosure among participants.

While all focus group interviews shared the common purpose of gathering data regarding what people feel and think, there are several styles of focus group research. This study utilized the more practical and immediate needs of the public/nonprofit approach. The purpose was not to develop theory, as in an academic approach, but to “gather information in order to make decisions, improve services or programs and be responsive to customers” (Krueger & Casey, 2009, p. 147). Public/nonprofit focus groups tend to be small (5-8 participants), which allows each participant a greater chance to talk, rather than the traditional market-based approach, which calls for 10-12 participants. No outside observation techniques were used (e.g. one-way mirrors), but the moderator was an outsider, as typical in academic focus groups, and the sessions were audio recorded with permission for aid in preparing a transcript for analysis. The organization favored the use of focus groups in the study and will share the results with internal and external stakeholders upon completion, which is typical of public/nonprofit organizations (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

Steps for conducting focus group interviews as outlined in Krueger and Casey (2009) were followed. Focus group interviews utilized a multiple-category design, which means focus groups were conducted with “several types of participants, either

sequentially or simultaneously” (p. 25). This allowed me to compare data across groups and from one category to another. In this case, as Table 1 shows, multiple groups and locations were represented in the focus group sample. This design was necessary in order to explore and understand the degree to which the values had permeated across headquarters and the satellite locations. Participant consent was obtained prior to the start of the research. I recruited participants with support from the leadership of Ability, Inc. I did this by reaching out to employees via email with a letter of support from the CEO encouraging participation. In addition, I created a video of a short slide show that was posted to the organization’s YouTube channel to explain the research and reasons why employees should choose to participate. Since human subject participation was involved, approval from the university’s Institutional Review Board was obtained prior to the start of research (Appendix G) and each participant signed the consent form (Appendix F) prior to the start of a focus group interview.

Questions were developed using the questioning route outlined by Krueger and Casey (2009): opening question, introductory questions, transition questions, key questions and ending questions. Questions were open ended and designed to explore how employees made decisions, how the values were represented in every day decisions; were the values thought of on a regular basis; and was the values-based decision making model used as a tool for making ethical decisions. An important aspect of question development is to keep the questions conversational in order to maintain a relaxed and friendly environment in the room. Providing a hands-on question in which the participants listed, organized or drew an answer worked well in the past. Proper sequencing of the questions

(general before specific) and positive before negative questions helped to maintain an organized and positive atmosphere. Feedback on the questions was obtained from executive staff, and questions were tweaked for further clarification. Krueger and Casey (2009) suggested asking summary questions at the end and then providing a recap for the group, which was included in the focus group procedures in this study. An audio recording was created from each focus group from which a detailed transcript was created to aid in coding and analysis. Note takers were present in each focus group interview to record non-verbal data not captured in the transcript or the audio recording. The procedure for analyzing focus group results is discussed in the data analysis section.

The third source of evidence was originally planned as individual key informant interviews. However, after seven focus groups, the organization's leadership rescinded permission originally granted prior to the start of research to conduct one-on-one interviews with staff. I suspected this might be the case, so questions originally included in the key informant interview question route were woven into the focus group sessions. In addition, existing survey data findings from the 2011 employee satisfaction survey, conducted by professional research firm Kenexa, were used to supplement focus group and document analysis findings. Photo-documentation was used to capture components in the environment that were important in the three other sources of data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis, the process of simplifying data to comprehend its meaning (Fraenkel et al., 2012), was conducted in accordance with Miles and Huberman's (1994) suggestions for data reduction, creating a data display matrix, drawing conclusions and

verifying data. Themes obtained from the data analysis were put into a matrix to allow for theoretical clarity in emergent findings. Data was archived, coded and analyzed using Dedoose, an online qualitative software program and reflexively verified with participants to safeguard meaning congruence.

Document analysis was the first step in the data analysis process. Performed prior to the commencement of the first focus group interview, document analysis provided a foundation and context for the development and communication of values within the organization. For example, examining language regarding values that was widely disseminated and was represented frequently at all levels of communication and types of documentation showed a commitment by the organization's leadership to create strategy based on organizational values. In contrast, if documents showed scarce mention of values in both external and internal documentation, a gap would surface between espoused and enacted values. Focus group questions were tailored to further explore themes present from document analysis. Fraenkel et al. (2012) suggested defining important terms in the document analysis and specifying the unit of analysis. Important literature terms were defined in Chapter 1 and important organizational term were defined in Chapter 4 titled "organization specifics." The units of analysis were phrases, sentences and frequency of word count applied to the components of the values based decision making model and the five values of the organization. Location of relevant data was based on the access granted to documents by the organization. The rationale for document choice was based on obtaining a balanced mix of internal and external communication, policies, procedures and board governance documents. This was

considered a purposive sampling design (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Coding categories were developed that represented the values stated by the organization (Figure 1, Table 2, and Table 3) in both actual verbiage and latent content. Latent content represents the underlying meaning of what was written and provided an understanding of the intended meaning behind written documents.

Data analysis of focus group interview findings followed a similar process. I personally transcribed each focus group in order to retain verbatim comments. Transcripts were read multiple times and coded for meaning. Miles and Huberman (1994) described coding as analysis by “review[ing] a set of field notes, transcribed or synthesized, and to dissect them meaningfully, while keeping the relations between the parts intact” (p. 56). Codes are tags or labels that assign units of meaning to the data compiled during a study. Three types of codes were used: descriptive, interpretive and pattern. Descriptive codes were a straightforward application of a label of a class of phenomena to a segment of text. Interpretive codes were more complex in that they often involved coding for context and meaning. Pattern codes were more inferential and explanatory in that they grouped together similar labels into an inferred theme or pattern. As coding became more subjective, it also became more difficult and time consuming. However, applying three levels of coding to the transcripts aided in discovering the process of ethical decision making and the factors associated with it. A starting set of codes (Table 2) was created from the conceptual framework, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). As data were collected, more codes were added. See Table 3 for the complete set of codes.

An inductive coding technique was used (Strauss, 1988; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to search for categories and the relationship and patterns between and among categories (Janesick, 2000) and cultural themes or domains (Spradley, 1980). Inductive coding required constant comparative analysis to “look for statements and indices of behavior that occur over time and in a variety of periods in the study” (Janesick, 2000, p. 390).

Moustakis (1990) provided a heuristic approach to inductive analysis in five phases:

1. immersion in the setting
2. incubation allows for thinking and becoming aware of nuance and meaning in the setting and capturing intuitive insights
3. illumination that allows for expanding awareness
4. explanation and description
5. creative synthesis of the data (Janesick, 2000)

I was relatively immersed in the setting, but not on a daily basis. Immersion occurred through the conducting of multiple focus group interviews (see Table 1). In combination, time spent in the organization totaled approximately four months during data collection. While this may not seem like a significant amount of time to be immersed in the setting, Merriam (1998) stated that case studies undertaken from an etic perspective (outsider), rather than an emic (insider) viewpoint may lend itself to a more objective and neutral view of the data.

Inductive coding was described in Miles and Huberman (1994) as:

Initial data are collected, written up and reviewed line by line, typically within a paragraph. Beside or below the paragraph, categories or labels are generated, and

a list of them grows. The labels are reviewed and, typically, a slightly more abstract category is attributed to several incidents or observations. The incidents can then be put onto a qualitative data category card. (p. 58)

As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), coding and recoding must be conducted until the analysis has reached saturation – that is, when all of the incidents can be classified and patterns regularly emerge. In addition to coding transcripts, field notes and reflective journaling were transcribed into notes for further analysis.

Memoing was completed to tie together different pieces of data into recognizable clusters of meaning that show a general concept. As stated by Glaser (1978), memoing is the “theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding... It can be a sentence, a paragraph or a few pages... It exhausts the analyst’s momentary ideation based on data with perhaps a little conceptual elaboration” (p. 83-84). Examples of memo content included illustrations, metaphors, temporal notations, insightful observations and comparisons.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations within the study involved the use of human subjects, informed consent, privacy, confidentiality and accuracy. Those who participated in the study were informed of the study’s purpose, rewards, and risks, and the voluntary nature of their participation was indicated. Participants were informed that they could choose to terminate their participation at any point in the process. Participants signed a statement that they were aware of this information and agreed with it (see Appendix F and G). Names were blinded during transcription to aid in the confidentiality of the information

shared in the focus groups and key informant interviews. All personal data was secured and kept confidential. A pseudonym was been chosen, Ability, Inc., to keep the company name confidential. All mention of specific locations has been replaced with location numbers.

Ensuring that data is interpreted and reported accurately is perhaps the most important principle in social science research (Christians, 2000). Every attempt was made to represent the information gathered and provide an accurate response to the research questions. Validation of the data through member checking was used to aid in accuracy in interpretation and reporting. One participant withdrew permission to use her interview comments at the member checking stage. Subsequently, the researcher did not use her direct comments, but her comments were coded for meaning and used in the analysis.

In 1978 the U.S. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects in Biomedical and Behavioral Research was established to review and monitor the use of human subjects in research studies. As a result, three principals were established that constitute the moral standards for research: respect for persons, beneficence and justice. Respect for persons requires subjects to participate voluntarily and be adequately informed about the experiment's purpose, procedures and consequences. The principle of beneficence charges the researcher with securing the well-being of the subjects and minimizing harm. Justice involves distributing both benefits and burdens of research fairly among participants and not overusing easily manipulated and available subject groups (University of Illinois, 2011). Similarly, the University of Minnesota requires the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to review projects involving human subjects to ensure

two broad standards are upheld: human subjects are not placed at undue risk and uncoerced, informed consent is given for their participation (University of Minnesota, 2011). IRB approval was obtained for this study prior to the start of data collection (Appendix G).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter describes the findings in the study. It is organized into four sections. Section one presents findings for research question one. It discusses the extent to which the corporate values had permeated the corporate and satellite locations of the organization. Section two describes to what extent and how the employees used the values-based decision making model. Section three reports what factors in the organizational culture contributed to ethical decision making. Section four discusses what aspects of HRD practices contributed to ethical decision making in the organization.

Organization Specifics

Ability, Inc. was a large non-profit organization in the Twin Cities serving people with developmental and physical disabilities. There were several constituency groups:

Clients – People with disabilities served by the organization.

Employers – Businesses who employed clients, either directly or through Ability, Inc.; also called customers.

Families – Families of clients who hired Ability, Inc. to provide services or coordinate employment.

Employees – Employees who worked for the organization as either direct care (work directly with clients) or supporting direct care (accounting, call center, management, etc.)

There were several types of employees who participated in this survey.

Executives – Employees who were in executive leadership positions within the organization who were located at the corporate office.

Administration – Employees in supporting roles such as accounting, marketing, call center, human resources, etc. who were located at the corporate office.

Managers – Employees who were in charge of a department such as payroll or human resources. Employees who were in charge of multiple satellite locations or regions; located at the corporate office.

Supervisors – Employees in charge of individual satellite locations. They were based at the satellite office they supervised, but were at the corporate office often for meetings.

Staff – Employees who were in direct care positions such as job coach, service facilitator, social enrichment, employment and career development. They worked directly with clients.

The mission of Ability, Inc. is to “serve our community and people with disabilities as we live and work together (Ability, Inc., 2013).

The four components of Ability, Inc.’s Values-Based Decision Making Model (VBDMM) were:

Ethical - Does this decision show personal honesty and integrity? Demonstrate our mission? Follow our code of ethics?

Respectful - Does this decision treat people with dignity? See people as worthy of having the best? Promote win/win situations?

Responsive - Does this decision provide information and opportunities to make choices? Demonstrate respect for people’s ideas and choices? Identify expectations and deliver on commitments?

Resourceful - Does this decision use our resources to support, not replace other resources? Use resources wisely?

Ability, Inc.' core values, also referred to as the five valued experiences, were:

1. Sharing ordinary places
2. Growing in relationships
3. Making choices
4. Contributing
5. Being respected

Survey results from the 2011 Employee Survey, conducted by professional research firm Kenexa, were compared to focus group and document analysis results to provide context and validation. The survey results were received after all focus group interviews had been conducted and the data coded. Survey results did not influence focus group data collection, analysis or themes discovered. Rather, application of survey data was necessary to show changes over time and consistent findings that existed within the organization.

This study focused on the values in the VBDMM (Figure 1). The primary goal of this research was related to ethical decision making. The mission and values in this document related to employees and how they made decisions. The core values specifically related to *clients*. Because clients were considered vulnerable adults, they were not part of the study. However, values related to the *relationship* between employees and clients were represented in the research.

Demographics

Seven focus groups were held during a four-month period: 4 at the corporate location and 3 satellite centers (Table 1). These satellite centers were chosen because they provided a good mix of size, offerings and people. Location 3 was small, far from the corporate office and offered career development, social enrichment and employment. Four participants (female) attended the focus group at Location 3. Location 2 was large and spacious and offered all three services. Three participants (2 female, 1 male) attended the focus group. Location 1 was smaller and only served clients at employer sites. Five people attended the Location 1 focus group. Corporate focus groups were held over a three-day period. The executive focus group consisted of 5 people (3 women and 2 men). The program manager focus group consisted of 7 people (2 men and 5 women). The supervisor focus group had five participants (1 male, 4 female). The corporate administration focus group had 9 participants; 2 male and 7 female.

The 2011 employee survey was administered in October and November of 2011 via the internet by Kenexa research group. Kenexa has provided free survey services for Ability, Inc. as an act of service to the community since 1999. Kenexa conducted three previous surveys and continued to conduct other multiple surveys for Ability, Inc. in the areas of family and employer satisfaction. The response rate for this survey was 84 percent, 173 responses total. All locations and hierarchical levels were represented in the survey results. Figure 14 shows the dimension ranking from the survey; all areas were favorable. Survey results were found to link to the focus group and document analysis

findings, where appropriate.

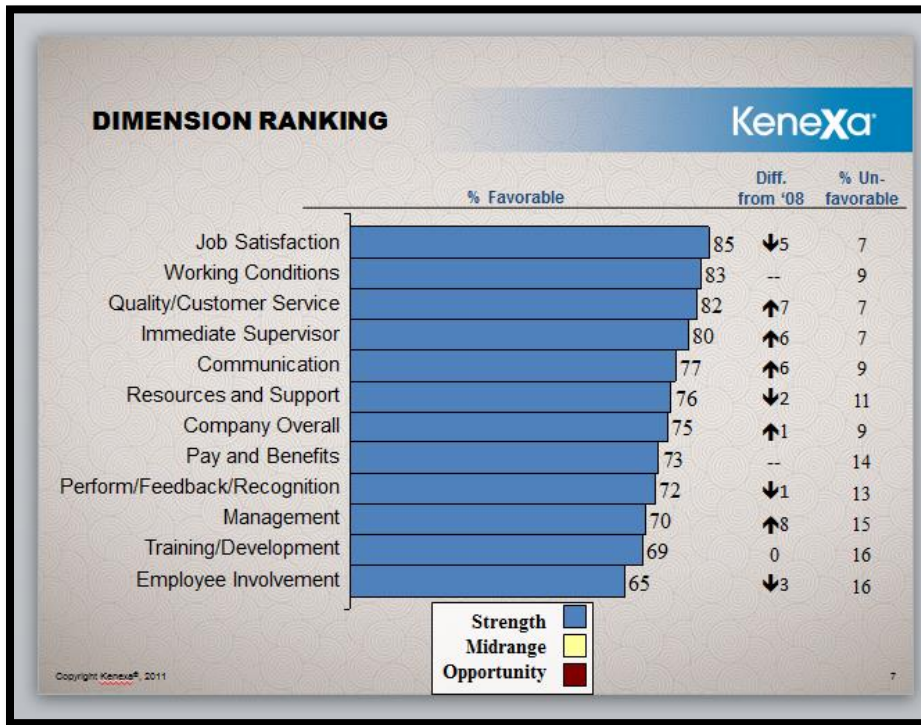


Figure 14. Employee survey dimension ranking (Kenexa, 2011).

Section 1

RQ1: To what extent have the corporate values of the organization permeated the corporate and satellite locations?

Argyris and Schön (1978) separated values into two categories: those that are espoused and those that are enacted (values-in-use). Espoused values signified what organizations communicated as important in documents such as annual reports, marketing materials, strategic plans and training materials. Enacted values demonstrated the actual values that were present in the organization, which were not necessarily congruent with the espoused values. They illustrate the answer to the question, *what's it*

really like to work here? and give insight into organizational culture. This study found differences between espoused and enacted values in several categories. Conversely, many values were both espoused and enacted at all levels of the organization.

Espoused Values

The framework for espoused values was based on the organizations' long-standing Values-Based Decision Making Model (VBDMM) which described four criteria that should be used in making ethical organizational decisions: ethical, respectful, responsive and resourceful. A review of 34 documents published by the organization on their website, and internal training documents revealed consistent themes related to the values outlined in the VBDMM. Table 5 summarizes the findings.

Parts of each document may relate to more than one of the four values; hence they may be listed in more than one cell. As seen in Table 5, document analysis revealed a strong emphasis on being responsive to clients, employers and families and resourceful with funds, growth and sustainability for the future. As expected, internal training documents such as the employee resource manual and decision making training manual explicitly instructed employees on the use of the VBDMM. Strategic planning documents (i.e. Balanced Scorecard 2012, 2013) and annual reports (i.e. Form 990 and end of year financial reports), as expected, concentrated on long term goals in fundraising, sustainability and growth. Marketing materials published in the last two years showed a noticeable concentration in two subject areas: client success stories (57%) and fundraising (24%). Less mentioned subjects included employers (12%) and rarely mentioned (2% respectively) were advocates, volunteers, diversity and employees. In

fact, the absence of employees in marketing was considerable because they work directly with clients, families and employers. One would think with over half of the subjects pertaining to client stories, employees who work with them on a daily basis would be recognized more often. Further, the one mention of employees in two years of newsletters profiled a newly hired director of sales, who did not work directly with clients. This gap in employee recognition was a significant trend throughout the study.

Table 5

Documented Espoused Values

Values → Espoused Documents ↓	Ethical <i>Does this decision show personal honesty and integrity? Demonstrate our mission? Follow our code of ethics?</i>	Respectful <i>Does this decision treat people with dignity? See people as worthy of having the best? Promote win/win situations?</i>	Responsive <i>Does this decision provide information and opportunities to make choices? Demonstrate respect for people's ideas and choices? Identify expectations and deliver on commitments?</i>	Resourceful <i>Does this decision use our resources to support, not replace other resources? Use resources wisely?</i>
Marketing	Client employment success stories Client recognition Client programming Client education Family satisfaction	New Employee Diversity Public communication Advocates Volunteers	Client employment success stories Client recognition Client programming Client education Family satisfaction Employers/Customers Public communication Fundraising Growth	Fundraising Sustainability Growth Employers/Customers Public communication
Training	VBDMM should be used as a tool for decision making Code of ethics Responsibility to clients, co-workers, company. Professional responsibility	VBDMM should be used as a tool for decision making How to communicate change effectively. How to negotiate in a respectful manner. Professional responsibility	VBDMM should be used as a tool for decision making Problem solving process (addressing needs) Decision making styles Professional responsibility	VBDMM should be used as a tool for decision making Problem solving process (addressing needs) Professional responsibility

Strategic Planning	Client employment success stories	Leadership training	Employer satisfaction	Employer satisfaction
Annual Reports	Family satisfaction “Elevated constituent engagement”	Volunteers “Elevated constituent engagement”	Process improvement Client employment success stories Family satisfaction Fundraising Sustainability Growth	Process improvement Replication of cost effective service models Fundraising Sustainability Growth Employee turnover rate

In addition to document analysis, espoused values were evident in the language used by executives. An email to the organization from the CEO during the four-month focus group research period addressed major changes that were occurring. With the help of a consulting team and in response to the fluctuating government funding and changes in the human services industry, non-profits were being asked to do more with less; in other words, to be more efficient. Specifically, the CEO wrote:

We are involved in these changes because our clients, their families, and our county and state government funding partners want: services that are self-directed, services delivered in community settings and services tailored to specific needs.

[The consultants we are working with] have recommended to the Executive Team ways we can do our work more efficiently - without sacrificing the extraordinary client care that we and our families value.

Espoused values present in the remainder of the email included: provide excellent service with reduced costs; process improvement; being responsive to client and family needs; employee roles; sustainability; and the company’s stated values.

Our biggest advantage is you, our employees. You know us well and you are analyzing how we can do our work better. We all want our changes to be in line

with our Values-based Decision Making process ensuring that all changes are ethical, respectful, responsive, and a match to our resources.

Our challenge for the future is to continue to provide excellent quality care with lower costs. We are directly impacted by actions taken by our state legislature and several state agencies who, along with the disability community, are working hard on what is called Reform 2020. To continue to be a leader in our field for our clients and families, we are examining every process we use and every client contact and service.

In sum, 34 documents were reviewed. Of this, nearly half were marketing materials or public communication to staff, such as this email from the CEO. With the exception of the one story about the new director discussed in the previous section, this email contained one of the few direct mentions of employees and their value to the organization. This sentiment, *our biggest advantage is you, our employees*, was rare when seen in context of the other public documents available on the website.

Perhaps the largest gap in employee recognition was witnessed at the 2013 Annual Celebration, of which I attended with my spouse. There were three awards given at this event: employer of the year, advocate/volunteer of the year and client personal achievement awards. Descriptions of each follow.

Employer of the Year Award

This award honors a business that employs people with disabilities through Ability, Inc. The Employer of the Year considers employees with disabilities as an integral part of the team and workplace culture and looks for opportunities to expand the job duties or careers of people with disabilities.

Advocate/Volunteer of the Year Award

This award honors an individual or group who plays a vital role at Ability, Inc. through advocating for jobs at businesses or giving generously of their time through volunteering.

Personal Achievement (two awards given)

This award honors an individual who is served by Ability, Inc. who has made considerable effort on or off the job to reach out to others, learn new skills, or grow socially, professionally or emotionally (Ability, Inc.

Held at a large modern banquet facility Ability, Inc. hosted 892 guests in celebration of its theme: *Breaking New Ground*. In addition to celebrating the award winners, the event raised \$26,500 through the art auction (client art) and over \$80,000 for a new bus. Employer sponsorship of the event in the areas of video production, captioning, awards, printing and décor totaled over \$137,000 in donations for the event. However, there was no award related to employees. Even more was that many of the employees transported clients to the event, using their personal vehicle, which was beyond their job duties. And yet, there was no recognition for employees at the Annual Celebration.

In summary, espoused values demonstrated by corporate leadership focused on being resourceful and responsive to employers, clients and families. The following two values, *ethical* and *respectful*, were somewhat represented. However, there was a large gap in the *responsive* and *respectful* categories in regard to employees and their value in the organization.

Enacted Values

The largest gap in values was revealed during the focus group interviews. It was quickly apparent after focus group 1 and confirmed at every subsequent focus group interview that there would be a gap in values related to geographic location: between employees based at the corporate office and employees based at satellite offices. The

2011 employee survey found significant variation in responses across job types and locations as well. Specifically, gaps were present in employees' ability to use the VBDMM and recognize the importance of the tool after orientation. Surprisingly, there were more categories in which there were relatively few differences in values. When comparing espoused versus enacted values, 16 categories illustrated congruence between corporate and satellite employees. Nearly half as many categories (6) were found to have significant differences between corporate and satellite. However, the importance of the categories in which differences were present should be noted as being much more impactful on organizational culture than some of the harmonious values.

Consistent Enacted Values. Table 6 illustrates the values that were expressed by both corporate (executives, managers, and supporting administrative staff) and satellite employees (supervisors, service facilitators, job coaches, social enrichment). Themes for enacted values were categorized and applied to the espoused values of ethical, respectful, responsive and resourceful, as outlined in the VBDMM. Themes are listed in order of descending frequency. Figure 15 depicts the breakdown of consistent enacted values by frequency. Themes and values combine in a descriptor cell that illustrates how the theme and value were connected in the research. Some cells are empty, such as themes focusing on feelings like *hope* and *nostalgia*. Feeling descriptors remained in the list of enacted values because they were consistent themes in the research even though they may not directly relate to the VBDMM components. Regardless, feelings are important indicators of organizational culture. Excerpts from focus group interviews supported how themes and values were connected. Cells that have a negative indicator were shaded. Cells with a

positive indicator were un-shaded. Consistent enacted values illustrated themes that were similar across locations (corporate versus satellite locations) and levels (executive to front-line staff).

Table 6

Consistent enacted values applied to VBDMM values

Values →	Ethical <i>Does this decision show personal honesty and integrity? Demonstrate our mission? Follow our code of ethics?</i>	Respectful <i>Does this decision treat people with dignity? See people as worthy of having the best? Promote win/win situations?</i>	Responsive <i>Does this decision provide information and opportunities to make choices? Demonstrate respect for people's ideas and choices? Identify expectations and deliver on commitments?</i>	Resourceful <i>Does this decision use our resources to support, not replace other resources? Use resources wisely?</i>
Consistent Themes ↓				
Change Constant change and rapid adaptation is necessary	Change necessary to demonstrate mission.	Changes promoting win/win for clients and company in future.	Needed to respond to changing industry, government funding	Emphasis on efficiency and doing more with less. Saving money.
Disconnection Administration and satellites are disconnected				
Ethical Company Ability, Inc. is an ethical company and has an ethical culture	Ethics clearly identified in culture.	Ethical cultures include respect for people.	Ethical cultures include fulfilling expectations and responsive to needs.	Ethical cultures aim to use resources wisely.
Personal Values Ability, Inc. ethics are aligned with my personal ethics.	This is how I live anyway. Being ethical comes natural.	Dignity and respect are part of ethics.	I try to do my best for my clients every day.	I naturally try to use resources wisely, to get the most out of my budget.
Respect & Fun I have respect for my coworkers and have fun with them.		Respectful interactions. We have a close-knit team.		

Nostalgia Ability, Inc. has become too big, too corporate and impersonal. Wish for smaller in old-days.		I used to know more people at corporate. People don't know me there anymore.	Employees used to be listened to more. We used to be part of decisions.	We seem to focus on money a lot more than we used to when we were smaller.
Innovative Creative, flexible, innovating client programs.			We customize programs to meet the diverse needs of our clients	
Freedom & Independence Free to do my job, like my independence. Not micromanaged.		I like the freedom I have to do my job the way I need to. I'm trusted as a professional	I feel free to do what I need to do to serve my clients or perform my duties.	I hope the changes don't impact my freedom. Larger case load now.
Fast-paced Hectic, busy, crazy, burned out		I don't get a break. I don't like not getting paid to do paperwork.		Need more help on the floor. More clients but not more staff?
Hope Hopeful changes will sustain for the future.				
Communication Lack of timely communication about changes.		Admitted lack of communication about change.	Sometimes decision need to be made quickly, without input from employees.	
Centralized Decisions are centralized at corporate office.		I don't like not being asked my opinion about what can be improved. Used to be more decentralized.	I see the need for changes to be sustainable.	Sometimes the decisions they make for our center are dumb. We could do better because we know our clients and community better.
Dedication Dedicated to the mission. Work hard.	I believe in our mission.	I am committed to my clients and their families.	We get the job done, even if we have to stay late.	We're not here for the money.
Quality We have quality client programs.	I want the best for my clients.		We try really hard to have good, quality, innovative and creative programs.	We do the best with what we have. When I purchase supplies, I make sure they can do double duty.
Intentions Leadership has good intentions, doing their best.	I trust the people who are making decisions have the best of intentions.	The leaders are good people. They are trying their best.		

Rewarding Best part of my job is working with clients, love my clients	Love for clients is evident at all levels.		The best part of my day is knowing I've served clients well/done a good job.	
--	--	--	--	--

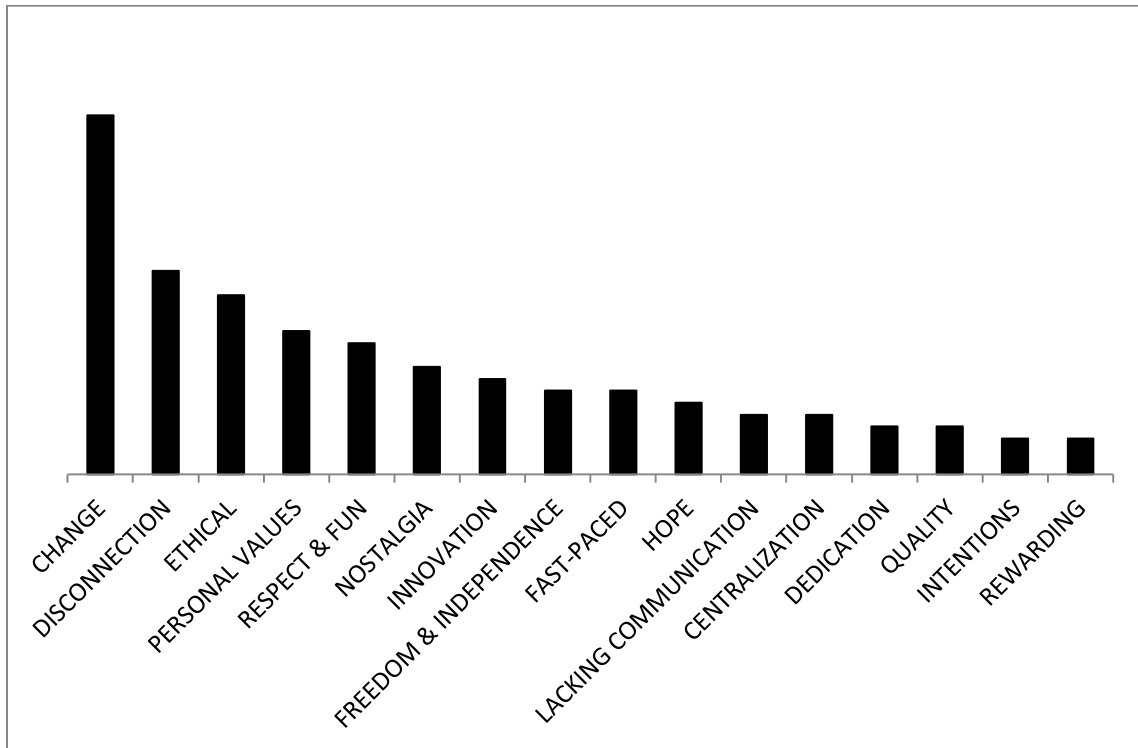


Figure 15. Consistent Themes within Enacted Values

Change. The theme found to be most consistent between employees at all levels, tenure and locale involved change. Timing for this research was such that a major change initiative was being implemented in stages that involved a reorganization of the whole company. Changes were personal to employees as turnover was perceived to have increased and was rumored to be linked to attempts to implement efficiencies for cost

saving measures. For example, during the three days of focus group interviews at the corporate office, the reorganization had been announced on day two, along with the elimination of a Vice President who was, incidentally, in the focus group interview on day one. None of the focus group questions asked about change (see Appendix F), and yet it was the major theme that emerged across all focus groups. Responses to change varied by location (discussed in the next section). Even though employees were nervous about the individual impact of change, these key quotes revealed recognition of the necessity for change:

I think that for two years we've been going through better process improvements. I think some people have loved it and some people have hated it. But then we had the opposite. It is so much better and so much more organized [after previous changes].

The changes that do come are not just to the program centers. The actual whole company is in a state of waiting to see what the big changes are going to be in the programs. The perception is that the changes will impact their job in a way that they don't like. If I were in their shoes, I would question why those decisions that they're making are ethical and respectful and responsive. But, they don't feel that way to me.

I like change. I think change makes you go to a better place. To get you where you need to go, but it's scary.

I think that we are always changing and growing. While that's positive and innovative, there's always fear. I think that there's that fear, but then you also feel very reassured too.

So see, [these changes] may be our light at the end of the tunnel. Maybe there's hope. Maybe it will just be a new kind of work.

Disconnection. This section described consistent enacted values, but it did not limit the consistency to merely positive values. A consistent theme in all levels, types and locations was the existence of a disconnect between corporate and satellite locations.

There was clear agreement on this issue, and many quotes illustrate this disconnection. Staying focused on research question number one, *to what extent have the corporate values of the organization permeated the corporate and satellite locations?*, a clear theme was the communication that there was *a great divide between our service staff and our administration*. *Growth and change* were diagnosed as significant contributors to the divide and were discussed frequently in every focus group. A sense of sadness and regret often accompanied a statement about the disconnection between corporate and satellite locations. Note takers in several focus group interviews noted nonverbal cues that accompanied descriptions of disconnection such as: *shrugged shoulders, remorseful, sad, big exhale, silence, everyone is looking around at each other not saying a word but looking down at the table, eyes downcast*. The disconnection was recognized and prevalent. Consider these quotes:

I think it's gotten a lot bigger. So spread out and disconnected with the main office. I don't know people there. The core values are there but are overlooked at times. We're all here for the clients. We're all here for that level. And when we see things affecting clients through us, there's a disconnect, more so than there used to be. It's computerized so you don't have to work with people. We don't even have to make phone calls. I don't know people unless they've been here for a long time.

When I first started, we weren't half the size we are now. It was easy, but there was more communication, more understanding. But, we got so big that I think you lose something. We can't do everything [the executive team asks] us to do.

As it's grown Ability, Inc. has had to be more corporate.

The descriptor *more corporate* was synonymous with *growth* and *becoming too big*. This seemed to contribute to the disconnect and resulted in the loss of familial organizational culture. Becoming more corporate was considered negative. Family did not equal

corporate. As a result of growth, necessitated by change and resulting in disconnection, an agreed upon gap became apparent, represented by this quote:

I think we're just in the place where we are leaning more towards resources and less towards our people.

A resource, in this case, referred to human capital. In context, this quote denoted the organization's increasing focus on dollars instead of clients. However, the following quote also represented a common sentiment from all participant groups that resources were becoming scarcer.

It just amazes me now what we have become. We never used to talk about money or profit. Like, 'what's your bottom line with clients?' That's been an evolution through the years.

The response from the corporate office to remain competitive in the marketplace was to combat shrinking budgets and install leaner processes. This was evident at a satellite location opened in the past few years that highlighted lean processes on a large poster in the conference room (Figure 16).

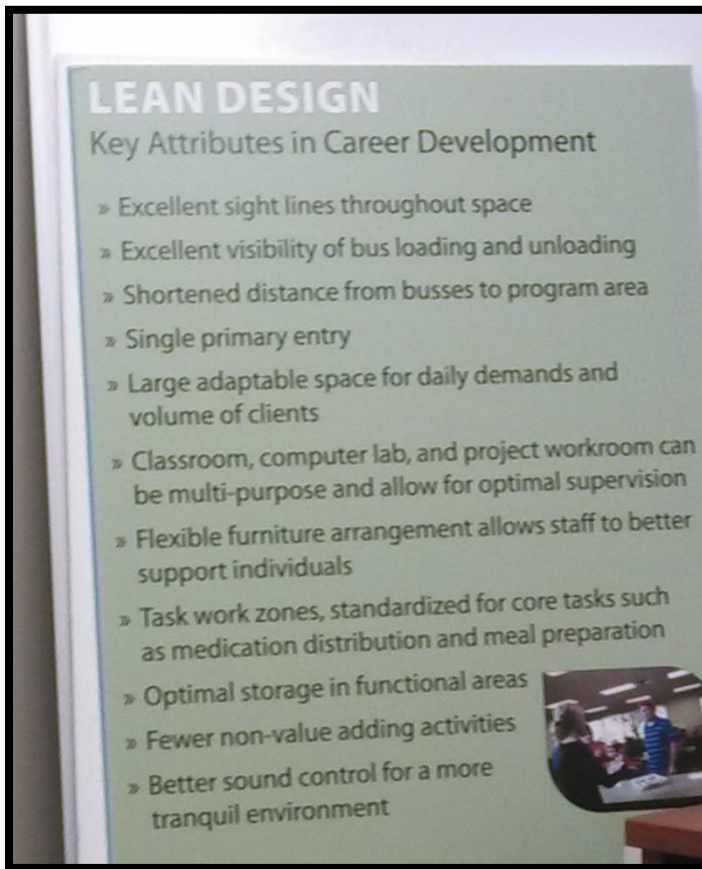


Figure 16. Lean design on display at a satellite office

Disconnection between corporate and satellite locations is widely known and acknowledged. Some satellite administrators desired a more decentralized approach to decision making, which is discussed in the next section as an inconsistent value. Corporate administrators saw the need for centralized decision making to increase efficiency. Satellite administrators desired decentralized decision making because they felt corporate administrators could not address the needs of their specific location as well as they could themselves. Each center believed they were different from each other, as seen in these excerpts.

There might be a difference between how resources are used – how we [center] feel resources should be used versus how corporate feels we should use our resources is different. Silly decisions [come down] from corporate that the center doesn't agree with regarding resources.

Corporate wants us to be just like them, but we are a small community. We can't be just like them. We don't want to be.

Others agreed that disconnections existed between sub-groups. Multiple brief excerpts bluntly stated these connections. Several disconnections were present between those who cared for clients and those who provided support for those who cared for clients. There existed a shared sense that support staff did not understand the pressure to serve clients well while also meeting budgetary guidelines set forth by the corporate office. Further, there was a shared sense of corporate personnel not understanding the daily struggles of satellite-based staff and satellite staff not understanding the struggle to sustain the organization. This gap is discussed further in the next section within multiple themes including gaps in *sustainability/growth, support and trust*.

I was told on my first day at a center, 'There's the admin world and then there's the real world. We placate the admin world. They appear once in a while, but then there's the real world.' It was day one.

Ethical Company. A question in the focus group interviews asked if participants thought Ability, Inc. was an ethical company. A similar question in the 2011 employee survey asked employees if they felt ethical issues could be discussed openly. I expected to hear that changes and the fear expressed about the changes impacted employee views of Ability, Inc. as an ethical company. This was not the case; as the findings indicated that changes did not affect how people saw the company insofar as ethical or unethical. The survey reported 75 percent of employees responded favorably in this category. While

change was a major theme in the focus group, so was *ethics*. I expected people to struggle to describe an ethical culture and be hard-pressed to give examples. This was not the case. Various descriptor words were used to describe ethics in the culture, including *overarching umbrella*, *ethical base*, *foundational*, *pervasive* and *consistent*. Consider these two key quotes that illustrated the first two descriptors.

We follow the rules, so I think that we do that from an ethical base, not from trying to make people dance to what we tell them to do – [it's] not a control issue.

There does seem to be a cultural norm that is an overarching umbrella that I would call ethical. How it's taught, how it's modeled in our interactions with our clients -- that can be radically different from company to company [in this industry].

Ethics was also described in relation to serving clients as a natural extension of the mission and industry. Many employees talked about ethics being *innate* and *natural* to those working in the human services industry. In fact, asking participants about the degree to which people were ethical in the industry seemed to strike them as odd, as if it was commonly known. The following quotes illustrated the connection between ethics and clients.

[Ability, Inc. staff] are really ethical people. They really do think: is this a good decision for Ability, Inc. for the clients?

Our clients are treated very ethically just because of who we are and the people in this field. The people working here wouldn't be here if they didn't have that value and that passion and that love for working with other people. I would argue that ethics is one area that you see within our direct service staff. Overall, our direct service staff members have very high ethics for themselves very highest standards for the people they're serving.

How is that respectful of our clients? How is that keeping Ability, Inc. in a client's best interests? How is it ethical? [My boss at the time] talked like that a lot when I was [in my previous position]. It didn't make the most sense to me at that time, but it does now [in my current position].

Regardless of how heated the conversation became in regard to change, ethics remained a constant, positive theme. In discussions with organization management prior to the start of this research, the impact of the impending changes on the ethics of the company was discussed as a concern. Would the changes cause employees to be negative about the company? Would that bias the research? I argued if the values were truly foundational, changes would not negatively impact those values. The VBDMM had been in existence since 1992. Would this season of budget cuts and downsizing cause people to lose faith in the company? Would they begin to see it as an unethical organization? In the end, management saw the value in permitting the research to go forward, even amidst the impending changes because they had faith that the values were foundational and would not change in the midst of reorganization.

Personal Values. When asked about how the VBDMM is used in ethical decision making, invariably the comments revealed the theme of personal ethics. In each focus group interview, employees at all levels mentioned that the four components of the VBDMM were merely a representation of how they made decisions normally. The word *alignment* was mentioned frequently to describe how they made decisions, as in this quote from an administrative employee at the corporate office:

People I know and myself, I live it in my own life too. The [VBDMM] is used in Ability, Inc. because people believe in, agree with and relate to those ethics. It is aligned with their personal ethics.

In response to a question whether or not the actual document illustrating the VBDMM hanging throughout the office impacted their decision making, this sentiment was echoed frequently:

I know we don't all hit the mark within 100% of the time, but you kind of live the life. I don't need it in front of me, it's how I live.

This demonstrated the degree to which corporate values were ingrained in the culture. Employees at both the corporate headquarters and satellite offices agreed that people either *had it or they didn't* in regard to ethics. One 17-year administrative employee in finance stated she could tell by noon on a person's first day if they were going to make it or not. After sharing several specific examples with the focus group participants, several others agreed that she could, indeed, judge this accurately most of the time. Focus group members wondered aloud, as indicated in this quote, if the human resource staff screened for ethical tendencies.

I think the hiring that happens generally they want to hire people who already kind of live life like this. As much as you can tell from interviews... if you don't live that can you learn that?

Two focus group members at a satellite location had this exchange when discussing the alignment of personal and organizational ethics:

Employee 1: *Our clients are treated very ethically just because of who we are and the people in this field. The people working here wouldn't be here if they didn't have that value.*

Employee 2: *... and that passion and that love for working with other people*

Employee 1: *So, I don't think it's something that's necessarily needed to be talked about*

Employee 2: *I don't think it's learned*

Employee 1: *no*

Moderator: *Is it embedded in the culture?*

Employee 2: *Either you have it or you don't. I think that's why you see so many females in this field of work because we have that stereotypical cushy nurturing mothering type of thing. It just comes natural to us taking care of others.*

Respect and Fun. The respect co-workers had for one another was clearly evident at all levels and locations within the organization. At times, the discussion devolved into a complaint session about inconsistencies in values. At this point, as the focus group moderator, I asked questions about how they felt about their co-workers or what it was like in the groups in which they identified. Groups were often small and had similar skills or services. Three different examples of small groups were departments (i.e. finance), levels (i.e. managers) and satellite locations with smaller staff numbers (i.e. Locations 1-3). Micro groups existed as well, especially at satellite locations. The term “micro” is used because even smaller groups existed within the satellite locations that specialized in different services. For example, social enrichment staff versus career development staff at one specific location was described with the phrases, *us and them* and *those people over there*. Yet, even with a demarcation between small and micro groups, a shared respect existed among co-workers. This was described as *respectful interactions* by an executive and is seen in these key quotes from employees of different levels and at different locations.

We have our little irks that get on my nerves. I like the people and can talk to them if we get on each other's nerves. But I still like everyone.

We have a quality program here, with enriching things. We all work hard at what we do. We have fun. Staff gets along. We are close-knit at work and outside. We are a smaller group and that's a difference [here].

[I believe] *what [another person in the focus group] said, too. Being person-centered is one of our core values. We tell staff, [regardless of level] ... about*

respectful interaction. We treat one another [well] among other things. So, I do think that's part of our culture over all. It's not just a corporate slogan.

Employee 1: *I think with respect to... I feel we still respect one another. [My boss] always says you can talk to any of the executive team. You don't have to follow the chain of command to get to a certain person. We're all valued. Our opinion matters. We also respect the clients. Their opinion matters. What they want matters. That's part of the culture.*

Moderator: *So, respect is part of the culture?*

Employee 1: *I don't think you're hushed or dismissed.*

Employee 2: *Your opinion is valued.*

I hope that I always work in an environment that's fun and say 'hello' to people as I passed them in the hall. That's the most fun part. I need [a fun] work environment.

Nostalgia. A shared sense of nostalgia for *the way it used to be* was heard among employees with a relatively long tenure in the organization (15 years or more). Stories of when Ability, Inc. was smaller and more familial were prevalent in the focus group interviews. Often, these employees were eager to tell stories about what it was like when they were hired or when they *knew everyone's name in the organization*.

16-year employee: *We definitely aren't known if we go to corporate.*

Moderator: *Do you want to be known?*

16-year employee: *Well, it's our company. Of course! We work there!*

A “sentimental wistfulness”, as described by the focus group note taker, was present when long-term employees were asked about their orientation to the company in regard to an oft-mentioned cultural hero, the former president:

17-year employee: *[My first impression of the company] was also very positive. What I remember most was the informal orientation. I had a bunch of training at the corporate office and we sat with the [former] president and had coffee. It was powerful. He took the time to meet with you and he knew you personally. The program itself was in direct service and was supportive. There were things you did yourself, that you were expected to know, but a lot of support and training.*

18-year employee: *Mine was exactly the same except that we were in the kitchen because it was winter. We had a cup of coffee. [The former president] was there.*

Moderator: *Did you get materials?*

18-year employee: *No, not really. It was just a conversation. Where did you come from? Where did you grow up? What are you interested in? He talked about himself; we talked about ourselves.*

Strangely, the sentiment seemed to be shared by relatively recent arrivals to the

organization, as described by this young employee:

4-year employee: *[My orientation] was really good. It was a while ago. Everybody seemed really nice. Everybody remembered my name - people at [corporate] that I had done trainings with, so I always liked that. I always had faith in the company because of the services that we provide. I guess I gave them the benefit of the doubt that they really would do well just considering the vulnerable population that we work with. I had a lot of fun those first two summers I worked here and I liked that.*

A few employees at lower levels and satellite locations agreed that they missed the way it

was before, but *the core values are still there*. After hearing the positive discussion, I

began to wonder if I would hear anything that was critical or even somewhat realistic

about the organization. Finally, during focus group 3, I stated:

Moderator: *Well, it sounds like the perfect place to work!* [sarcastically]

Nervous laughter by the group

25-year employee: *Well, you know, it's changed a great deal over the years. It was smaller.*

23-year employee: *It was like, "ma pa".*

That statement, *it was like ma pa*, perfectly described the evolution from an organization

founded 40 years ago by families of disabled children to a non-profit with \$55 million

annual revenue. Long-term employees missed the familial atmosphere. Currently,

familial atmospheres are cultivated in smaller groups and satellite locations instead of

among the company as a whole.

Innovation. *Innovative, creative and flexible* client programming was a point of pride for employees regardless of level, tenure or location. Multiple values were connected to innovation including *quality, sustainability, freedom and growth*. *Growth* seemed to be connected to *innovation*. Now that Ability, Inc. was larger, it could offer more innovative and custom programming. The customized support office was a good example of how Ability, Inc. attempted to customize programming in the areas of employment and social enrichment for the specific needs of clients. Consider this quote from an executive who combined *sustainability, innovation, creativity and change* in one statement:

I think one of the ways to describe Ability, Inc. is sustainable. I'm hoping to retire in 15 years. We offer such a great service that hopefully, whoever is younger here, chooses to be here. But, also, for families and clients who have young children, that we [continue to be] a resource for them. That we are able to be innovative, be creative, and navigate so that the stuff that we're going through now, that is painful for Ability, Inc., [hopefully it] will pay off 20, 30, 40, 50 years from now. Or, maybe it's all center-based, too? We're always looking for different ways to provide a service. I hope that we'll continue to do that in a variety of ways.

The variety of ways Ability, Inc. responded to the needs of clients was illustrated in this quote from a quarterly newsletter from summer 2012. This excerpt was a good example of innovative programming and how Ability, Inc. invested for the future by building a state-of-the-art facility:

Come see Ability, Inc. Apple Valley for yourself! Explore the state-of-the-art facility including the sensory garden, dedicated autism space, project work center, art studio, and more. Save the date for the open house on Thursday, October 25; join us from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. We hope to see you there!

During a satellite focus group interview, a participant illustrated the tension between balancing *innovation, growth* and *freedom* with this statement:

We were more nimble [when we were smaller] even though I think people feel free to do things, be innovative. I think there's much more of that, just by the very nature of the beast. As we grow, we're trying to make sure we have consistent programming and consistent curriculum to make sure that those cultures that may vary by individuals will still be [served].

Freedom and Independence. *Freedom and independence*, that is, the absence of micro-management, was a consistent theme with all levels and locations, but not among all job types. Corporate administrative satellite staff working at employer locations frequently stated they loved their independence and the freedom to do their job. These three quotes from corporate administrative employees sum up the appreciation for *independence and freedom* in their jobs:

There are high expectations but it doesn't feel burdensome, it feels freeing. Nobody is saying, "Did you get that done? Get that done?" No one's micromanaging.

It was kind of interesting when I came on. I was like, okay, this is what we are and will be. I need to be this. This is the vision and [I have the] freedom to get it done. It was nice because I felt supported and free to do my job.

I've been on two different teams and a couple different positions. I've had great people in my team. And supervisors, I always could go to them. So I've been really lucky. I don't ever feel like there's someone checking off the list about what I've done. They just assume you will. That's nice, to have that freedom.

A change in independence and freedom was stated as one of the fears associated with the reorganization changes, but only at the satellite offices; not at corporate. Specifically, satellite staff members who worked off site supervising one or more clients at job sites valued their independence and the ability to travel to various job sites. I believe they

related *freedom* and *independence* to being treated as professionals. This was illustrated by this exchange between two satellite employees, one who was solely center-based. The other was solely offsite at various employers:

Offsite employee: *I don't have a lot of coworkers that I have to work with and pay attention to because I'm off on my own. I'm leery of the changes that are happening because I feel that there are some changes to different levels that make me nervous.*

Center-based employee: *Like it's going to impede on your independence?*

Offsite employee: *You bet! I like my independence!*

Independence was also a theme at a satellite location whose only services were offsite; there were no center-based programs. Maintaining individual independence and relationships with clients through the change were of critical importance to this group of employees.

We are told to have the relationships with clients and their families trust us, yet we are making quite a bit of transitions [moving people around, impacting relationships].

Fast-paced. The nature of the human service industry coupled with the economic downturn and reduced government funding caused many non-profits to do more with less: serve more people with less staff and offer more programs to more people with less funding support. Because of this perfect storm, employees, especially center-based staff, felt the pain. As part of every focus group I asked, “What’s it like to work here?” to start the discussion about corporate culture. Quotes from two separate satellite offices illustrated the daily grind:

Moderator: *What's it like to work here?*

[silence and smiles – knowing looks exchanged between participants indicating a resistance to honesty.]

Moderator: *I can't record smiles.*

Quote from Location 1: *It can be trying at times. Hectic, but I really like teaching the classes and the clientele. We try to give [clients] life enriching things and have fun too. At the end of the day it's rewarding to see how you can help clients do certain things that some people have said they thought they couldn't do. That's the best part of the job. We really support people in the community with employment.*

Quote from Location 2: *It is definitely a very busy atmosphere. You're on your feet and the culture is fast-paced. There's a lot of multitasking. A lot of distractions. You will be logging into the computer because you need to do something and all of a sudden someone's like, somebody's in the hallway and you have to go deal with that. It's just crazy. It can be crazy.*

Hope. Many negative feeling descriptors were included in the *change* excerpts including *fear, mistrust, skepticism* and *doubt*. However, a consistent positive descriptor was *hope*. Employees at nearly all levels (with the exception of executives) expressed both negative and positive feelings about the possible outcome of the sweeping changes that were about to occur. As expected, people resisted change, especially when all information was not readily available. One long-term administrative staff member said it best:

The further you are from the center of the decisions about change, the more skeptical you may be.

Nonetheless, a large majority of employees, while skeptical, were also hopeful. The first two excerpts expressly mentioned hope, while the latter two expressed a hopeful sentiment:

I am really thinking and hoping these new changes in all this stuff will hopefully help.

So see, [these changes] may be our light at the end of the tunnel. Maybe there's hope. Maybe it will just be a new kind of work. It will still consume that much time, but that's how I feel.

I think hiring another supervisor to work just with the social enrichment program and one for a career development program is good. That's how it used to be. I think that it can be much better, especially training new staff.

So, truly, changes always happen. In our process right now, we're going to get some big wins.

Lack of Timely Communication. Employees at all levels and locations agreed that with the advancing number of changes rapidly occurring, communication of changes was not always handled well:

[Executives] just send the message down from above and then it filters out. They don't know that we're getting hit from all these different directions. It's been really bad the last couple of years, but it's probably that the issue has been going on for a while. For the longest time, up until this past couple of months, whenever people got moved into positions, they were just moved. Nothing was ever posted.

Changes are told rather than being asked [how] this would affect us.

Now all the changes.... No one was asked for feedback. No one was asked what they thought. Makes you feel left out going into the change.

I think some things definitely don't get communicated as effectively as they could be. I don't know that it's intentional. We're not always as powerful as we should be and we communicate some of the changes in a very timely [manner]. Sometimes we made may be too late; we just throw out [decisions] and it's like, 'like it or lump it'. Sometimes decisions have to be made about a change [now]. Sometimes we could be better. When I say "we" I mean whoever is making a decision we had to put out there. From [the] staff [side] we're not always on top of our game when dispersing information.

As mentioned earlier, during the first four focus group interviews over three days at the corporate office, on day two the CEO emailed the entire organization about the impending changes. Major sections of the email included: *What's going on? How will it impact me? Why change? Who is helping us? What's going on right now? What's the timeline? We've already begun to change. There are lots of things working in our favor.*

A personal visit from me and the Executive Team. The email outlined answers to each question and addressed major top-level changes such as a reorganization of the executive team. Each section was short and simple. Meetings were held with employees at each level and at each satellite location to let employees know reorganization was underway, but no one seemed to know exactly how the change would affect them. A wait and see attitude was prevalent.

In the 2011 employee survey, employees rated the level and effectiveness of communication (a combination of several questions) at an average of 77 percent favorable. This indicated room for improvement in this area and supported focus group findings surrounding communication. Compared to the 2008 employee survey, significant improvements had been achieved in communication.

Centralization. Ability, Inc. has become more centralized. Decisions that were once made at satellite locations have now been elevated to program managers or executives. Satellite employees did not seem to know why significant changes were necessary since it seemed to *work just fine* when they were in control of budgets. Regardless, a consistent theme was that Ability, Inc. was centralized, not decentralized like it once was:

When I first started out as a service team leader we were reviewing budget and talking about how we'd have more of a role. We did all that tech [training]. I've seen those revenue sheets forever - for a good five or six years. That was kind of taken off of our plate and given to a higher level.

What it feels like to me is that the direction seemed to be driven by program and now it feels more like it's driven by operations in accounting. So, it's not program setting. After all, we're bringing in all the revenue so we should be the ones saying how it needs to happen. But, it's not working that way. It's like the caboosie is driving the train, so I don't quite get how that works.

I think along with that, when I started. I think much more before I started, it seemed like decision making was so decentralized that it was kind of like each staff was out there and they were creating a program. They were very flexible very dynamic. Do what you have to do to keep the client successful. As the organization has matured, we've become more process oriented. Part of that was centralizing some decisions.

When I started it was very much decentralized. I remember I had my budget for [satellite location] and my boss at the time ... said, 'here's your budget, you can do whatever you want. You can spend money. Here, you have the money.' And it's like cripes, I can spend whatever I want to? I know that has changed because we had to. We've got a really good foundation. Now I acknowledge that, you know, we aren't perfect. We don't need to be perfect. We always have a goal. We are always focused. I've really come to trust [CEO] leadership. We can question, but I feel like the leadership is taking us where we need to go, at this point. But it is really funny how we were so loosey-goosey with our budgets. (Imitating prior boss) 'You want to spend \$1000 bucks in January on recognition? That's fine, but you won't have it the rest the year'. Or, 'if you want to go to Red Lobster for the recognition celebration for Christmas, don't overspend.' But, it just amazes me now what we have become. We never used to talk about money or profit. Like, 'what's your bottom line with clients?' That's been an evolution through the years.

Regardless of whether or not *centralization* is the best way to organize and decide upon resources, the theme of *centralization* was prevalent at all levels and locations as a consistent descriptor in the culture.

Dedication. If I had a mechanism for weighing values, I would have included the theme of *dedication* in the same area as the first three themes: *change*, *disconnection* and *ethical company*. Regardless of how many negative comments were heard about *change*, *fear*, *workload* or *stress*, it was clear that every employee was dedicated to the mission of Ability, Inc., “to serve our community and people with disabilities as we live and work together” (Ability, Inc., 2013) The staff of this organization cared for their clients – even if they did not work directly with them on a daily basis. Their dedication to maintaining

an ethical culture that combined *respect*, *resourcefulness* and *responsiveness* was expressed in verbal and non-verbal ways. For example, before the last focus group interview, held at a satellite office, a member of management met me at the location. She was my contact person who assisted with conference room booking, training times and scheduling. Organizational changes and pressure were beginning to take their toll on everyone, including this employee. She looked tired as she sighed and sat down in the conference chair an hour before the start of the focus group interview. “How’s it going?” she said. “How’s it going with you?” I replied. “Ok” she said, with fatigue in her voice. At this point I felt everyone at the executive and managerial levels were somewhat nervous about what I may have been hearing from employees over this four-month period. I said, “Would you like a preview of what I’ve found?” Yes; she was curious. At this point I was certain about two themes:

1. Ability, Inc. clients are cherished.
2. I had never seen a more dedicated, harder-working crew in all my years in business.

At this point, she started to cry and said, “It’s so good to hear you say that” while she dug tissues out of her purse. I knew I was on to a big theme. I think people just wanted to hear that what they felt was what everyone else felt:

- I don’t want these changes to impact clients any more than they have to.
- I don’t want to be forced to look for another job.
- Please let me maintain the relationships I have built with my clients and their families.

- I want this company to stay in business for the future.

Since the research findings are listed by frequency mentioned in the actual excerpts, I felt it necessary to include the theme, *dedication*, somewhat down the list.

Consider these excerpts that exemplified dedication:

[The best part of my job is] working with clients, being a meaningful part of their life and helping them make decisions.

I love my job. I don't love the paperwork, but I love the clients I work with. You can't work in this business for the money.

The way we treat people – very ethical, respectful, professional. All staff very dedicated to work. No one is here just for the paycheck.

I think there's an overall culture that people are dedicated to their work; committees, difficult things in process improvement - which are always challenging for any organization - and do it very well. There have been changes in turnover, but it's really a culture of dedication to the mission. That's the one overriding thing in this workplace.

I look at our staff of dedicated people and I hear upper management talking. Well, are they doing this? Are they doing that? I want to say, hey man, they're doing that plus more and back off! They are working hard! I have this to say about a lot of our staff. My gosh, the work they put in, the dedication and the integrity that they have... they really care about what they're doing for these people.

Quality. Budget cuts to the human services industry has forced all companies such as Ability, Inc. to balance maintaining quality programs with cutting costs and working within tight budget constraints. Providing quality programming in this environment was a source of great pride and great stress for employees. It was a constant struggle, but because of the dedication to the mission and clients, somehow quality happens, even in less than favorable budgetary conditions:

We've worked really hard to develop a quality program.

I started when we had a big, not very nice center. We didn't do very much; didn't have the right staff; didn't have quality programming and jobs. To having really great jobs and great ratios. Then more budget cuts [forced us to step] up quality but with maybe less staff. It's always about serving our clients the best way we can.

The 2011 employee survey results showed highly favorable ratings in two areas of quality: a strong emphasis on customer service (82%) and team production of high quality work (95%). A third area of quality, problems addressed quickly, only received a 69 percent favorable rating.

Intentions of Leadership. I asked employees, with the exception of the executive staff, if they thought the change would turn out all right. One employee summed up her feelings as *skeptical, but not cynical*. People were nervous, but there was an underlying trust in the leadership. It was a skeptical trust, but nonetheless, it was somewhat present. People wanted to believe the impending changes would improve the company. It seems as though they forced themselves to trust leadership even though they did not like the lack of communication and uncertain future. Impactful statements in this area showed that most employees thought leadership staff had the *best of intentions*, which showed the frustration was not personal:

I know [executives] are trying and I trust them completely. I know they have the best of intentions. I'm still up in the air if this is the right direction. I really feel like the people up in the office really have the best of the intentions. I really do. I feel this company really cares about people.

I think they had good intentions when they started this process [but] now it's going to cost them.

I think across-the-board I really think Ability, Inc. has the best of intentions.

Employees recognized that it was difficult to make decisions that impacted the strategic direction of an organization. It was a tough job, one that many employees were happy not to have. One front-line satellite employee stated this in response to being part of the decision-making executive staff:

I wouldn't pay a million bucks to be in their shoes, neither.

The 2011 employee survey showed a 70 percent favorable rating for managers' demonstration of employees' importance and confidence in management's direction for the future of Ability, Inc.

Rewarding. In conjunction with the theme of *dedication*, employees described their jobs as rewarding. Rewards mentioned included client satisfaction, relationships with clients and families, client achievement, and helping people do more than they thought possible.

Those clients, they grow on you. They do, they do.

You've gotta like what you do. If you didn't like it you'd never make it.

At the end of the day it's rewarding to see how you can help clients do certain things that some people have said they thought they couldn't do. That's the best part of the job.

Inconsistent Enacted Values (gaps). Table 7 illustrates values in contrast between corporate (executives, managers, and supporting administrative staff) and satellite employees (supervisors, service facilitators, job coaches, social enrichment). Themes within inconsistent enacted values were categorized as *ethical*, *respectful*, *responsive* and *resourceful*, as outlined in the VBDMM. Themes were listed by order of descending frequency. Figure 17 depicts the breakdown by frequency. Themes and values

intersecting within a descriptor cell illustrate disconnection between the theme and value. Some cells are empty because they did not appear to link directly with values in the VBDMM. Excerpts from the focus groups support the various inconsistencies or “gaps” in the research between espoused and enacted values. The cells that have a negative indicator are shaded. The cells with a positive indicator are un-shaded. Cells that are split into two rows represent administrative themes (IN CAPS) and satellite employee themes (in lowercase) to clearly show inconsistencies.

Table 7

Inconsistent Enacted Values Applied to VBDMM Values

Values → <i>Inconsistent</i>	Ethical <i>Does this decision show personal honesty and integrity? Demonstrate our mission? Follow our code of ethics?</i>	Respectful <i>Does this decision treat people with dignity? See people as worthy of having the best? Promote win/win situations?</i>	Responsive <i>Does this decision provide information and opportunities to make choices? Demonstrate respect for people’s ideas and choices? Identify expectations and deliver on commitments?</i>	Resourceful <i>Does this decision use our resources to support, not replace other resources? Use resources wisely?</i>
Themes ↓ Support/Valued Difference between perceptions of support and being valued by the organization	EMPOWERED VALUED SUPPORTED		HIGH EXPECTATIONS	DO MORE WITH LESS
	Unsupported not valued workload unmanageable		expectations due to changes is lacking	cost-cutting making workload unmanageable
Trust Difference in opinion of trust and mistrust of leadership		I TRUST THE LEADERS IMPLICITLY		
		I’m not sure they are doing the right thing		

Standardization/ Branding Centers and corporate should look and function the same		BRANDING- ALL CENTERS LOOK SAME	STANDARD PROCEDURES	EFFICIENCY
		disregarding of our own culture	not all procedures work at all locations	efficiency is hurting programming
Sustainability/ Growth Importance for the future.	GROWTH NECESSARY FOR THE FUTURE	WE CAN'T KNOW EVERTHING	GROWTH BY RESPONDING TO INDUSTRY NEEDS	EFFICIENCY
	Growth disregarding our mission of serving clients well	I don't feel part of the change	unsustainable growth	Effectiveness
Person-Centered Person versus client centered	PERSON CENTERED	PERSON CENTERED		
	client centered	employees left out of the equation		
Workload "Come do our jobs for one day"	WE ALL WORK HARD	SATELLITE EMPLOYEES DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT WE DO	EMPLOYEES OUT OF TOUCH	WE BRING IN THE MONEY. WE SHOULD DECIDE WHERE IT GOES
	exhausted	admin should come do our job for a day	administration out of touch	We bring in the money. We should decide where it goes.

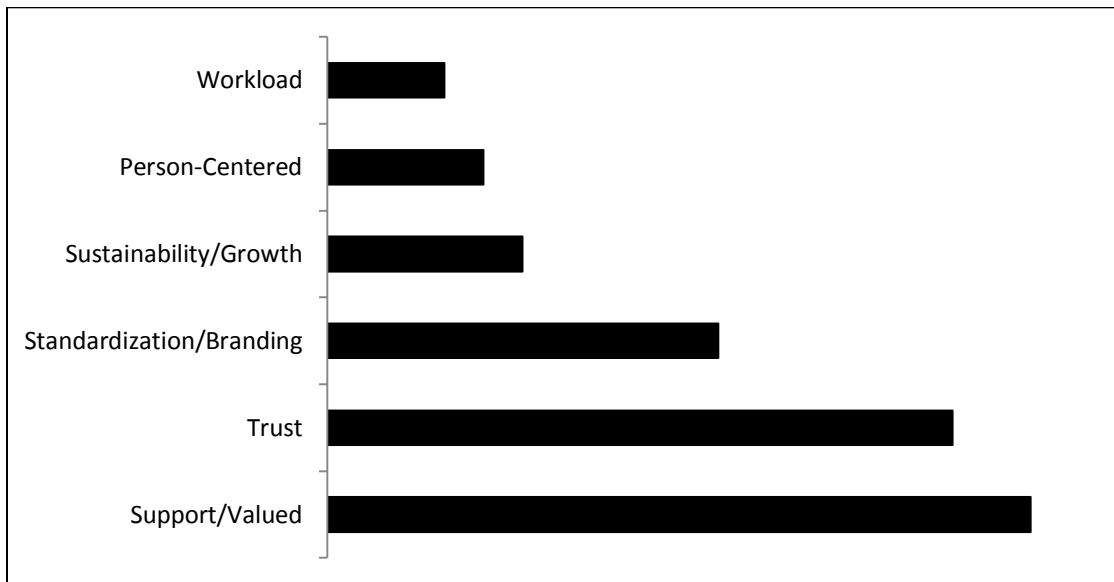


Figure 17. Inconsistent Themes within Enacted Values

Support/Valued. A large gap existed between corporate and satellite employees in the area of feeling *supported* and *valued*. In general, corporate employees felt *supported, valued* and *heard*. No excerpts from the corporate office existed that discussed the opposite. Overall, satellite employees expressed that over time they have felt more ignored, dismissed and invisible. No excerpts from satellite offices occurred that discussed feeling *valued, recognized* or *heard*. Excerpts from each location supported these findings.

Corporate	Satellite
<p><i>I don't know if the right word is empowered, but just the fact that this is what you should be doing and people don't have to look over you make sure you're doing that.</i></p> <p><i>I feel supported. I don't hesitate to ask for help. We're all valued. Our opinion matters. We also respect the clients. Their opinion matters. What they want matters. That's part of the culture.</i></p> <p><i>Not hushed or dismissed.</i></p> <p><i>Your opinion is valued.</i></p> <p><i>It was nice because I felt supported and free to do my job.</i></p>	<p><i>Not impressed with anymore – I feel like I had more of a say before. Now all the changes. No one was asked for feedback. No one was asked what they thought. Makes you feel left out going into the change. You almost feel like if you say something about it that you will be viewed as being negative.</i></p> <p><i>I remember the recognition we would get back [number of years] ago. A card, a cookie, etc. That's gone now. They are focusing on the clients. Our team is very different because we are employment focused. So when they are coming up with these classes for social enrichment it's complicated to incorporate that with the clients we have because they are here to work. Does corporate see that? Maybe they haven't gotten to this piece yet. They've asked for our feedback, and even though it wasn't going to go the way we wanted it to, they still asked us. Now, just do it.</i></p> <p><i>I would have said at one point that this was the best place in the world to work. You'd be so lucky to be hired by Ability,</i></p>

	<p><i>Inc. But, we were so valued then. We're not valued anymore. It kinda hurts.</i></p> <p><i>We're not paid attention to – the employees. Changes are told rather than being asked if this would affect us. They used to say that the employees were the backbone, the whole heart of Ability, Inc. It used to be our decision to hire someone or not. Not participatory any more.</i></p> <p><i>We used to matter more, us a staff and clients.</i></p> <p><i>Employee 1: I know they are not staff focused. Like, the annual celebration. It's so huge. You feel so great about your job. People get recognized. But I don't think they even know what any of us do.</i></p> <p><i>Employee 2: [laughing.] They give you dinner for one night and, that's it? You're recognized. [laughing]</i></p> <p><i>Employee 1: And then we're not even recognized... staff, employees. I didn't even go this year. I didn't want to. It used to be fun, an honor to be recognized. You feel a part of something and you don't feel like that anymore.</i></p>
--	---

This category also included a lack of employee recognition as seen at the 2013 Annual Celebration, discussed earlier. When asked in 2011 about resources and support received, employees rated this category as 75 percent favorable.

"Tonight we recognize the talents, strength of character, and the desire the people we serve have to succeed .We also want to showcase our commitment to providing excellent, innovative, and quality services to the community."

Throughout the evening, the Annual Celebration honored awe- inspiring people for their achievements, their embrace of diversity, and the talents that they have contributed toward the greater good.

Figure 18. Excerpt from CEO's opening remarks at the 2013 Annual Celebration

Figure 18 shows an excerpt from a corporate blog posting about the Annual Celebration, highlighting a segment from the CEO's opening remarks. I attended the event with my spouse, and both of us were inspired by the awards, stories and fundraising. We clapped when money was raised and cheered for award recipients. It did not occur to me until later that none of the employees had been recognized. I am told that little recognition exists beyond a supervisor's pat on the back and the intrinsic reward obtained from helping clients. This is a major shortcoming that was brought up repeatedly at each satellite location and was echoed in the 2011 employee survey. Only sixty-two percent of employees were satisfied with the recognition they received in 2011.

Trust. In an earlier section discussing consistent values, *leadership intentions* emerged as significant. Interestingly, corporate employees tended to trust leadership and the changes they were initiating, perhaps because they were closer to the action, as the final excerpt in the corporate column indicates. Satellite employees tended to mention their distrust and fear of the changes but did not doubt that intentions of leadership were good. This was an important distinction. Could mistrust and good intentions co-exist without negatively impacting the corporate culture? Would better and more frequent communication of changes remedy this mistrust? In addition, satellite employees stated they did not know who to trust to share their concerns, as seen in the last two excerpts.

It seems as though satellite employees wanted to "believe everything would be all right", but could not see it at this point. Yet, the respect that had built up over time by leadership essentially caused employees to have faith in the changes and leadership, even

in their fear for the future. This was especially evident in multiple quotes from corporate employees that cited their trust in the CEO, a 36-year employee. This trust in the CEO was not evident from satellite employees, perhaps because they were physically removed from her daily presence, unlike at the corporate office:

After talking with the CEO I always feel like it is... an ethical place. I get that feeling from her.

You run into the president of the company in the bathroom and she asks how your kids are and tells some funny joke, and then it's ok.

My prediction, beyond this research, is that the longer the changes are in limbo the more that trust and respect for leadership will erode, causing damage to the foundation and corporate culture they have cultivated over the last 40-years.

Corporate	Satellite
<p><i>I do trust my boss because I feel like I have to. She's my boss. She's the one [that has to make the tough decisions]. How could you work somewhere where you don't have trust? I don't think that I could if I didn't trust [her]. But there's this undercurrent when somebody is let go. You feel this little bit of [mistrust] while the person is let go. Does that mean my job is in trouble, or whatever else? I have to trust that I don't know the whole story; I don't know everything and don't know what went into it.</i></p> <p><i>You have to trust your leaders because there's information to be processed down to the direct care staff or the program supervisors and sometimes that can be interpreted as having a gap. If you really step back into the big picture it would follow those values.</i></p>	<p><i>I think they had good intentions when they started this process and now it's going to cost them. They are changes all these people around, more chiefs than Indians again, once again.</i></p> <p><i>I'm leery of the changes that are happening because I feel that there are some at different levels that it makes me nervous as to what can happen.</i></p> <p><i>Employee: It's confusing who's in charge. [It's like we are in] limbo-land.</i> <i>Moderator: How do you think it will turn out?</i> <i>Employee: [thoughtful] I don't know. Not sure. Too early to tell.</i></p> <p><i>Moderator: Do you trust the strategic direction of the company is going in right direction?</i> <i>Employee: I don't know. I know they are</i></p>

<p><i>I've always believed what [the CEO] said that if you take care of Ability, Inc., Ability, Inc. will take care of you. I hang onto that one.</i></p> <p><i>I trust in leadership. I know Ability, Inc. is going to exist in 5, 10, 15, 20 years. I never fear that with all the different budget cuts. I know it will be here because [those in leadership] are forward thinking.</i></p> <p><i>I do think I have been pretty lucky in that the people that I worked for, almost all of them I have really, really trusted. Not all of them, but a lot of them I've trusted.</i></p> <p><i>I've really come to trust [the CEO's] leadership. We can question, but I feel like the leadership is taking us where we need to go, at this point.</i></p> <p><i>If you are further away to where the actual decisions are being made, that that adds fear and distrust.</i></p>	<p><i>trying and I trust them completely. I know they have the best of intentions. Still up in the air if this is the right direction.</i></p> <p><i>I really feel like the people up in the office really have the best of the intentions. I really do. I feel this company really cares about people.</i></p> <p><i>If I were in [satellite employees'] shoes, I would question why those decisions that they're making are ethical and respectful and responsive. They don't feel that way to me. You might get that perception. I think it's valid, especially if there's an anticipation of fear and what might happen.</i></p> <p><i>A concern I have is [not] knowing who you can share you concerns with for this change. For me, personally, I like what I do. I've gone through the transition and I don't want to do it again.</i></p> <p><i>You don't dare bring up anything negative. You'll be out the door.</i></p>
--	--

Standardization/Branding. Movement had been made in the past decade or so toward standardization of procedures and décor at all Ability, Inc. locations. During my research, I visited the corporate office and three satellite locations. The similarity in color scheme stood out. First, walls were painted a soothing variation of blue, tan and green. Second, the values-based decision making model was framed and hung at every site in numerous locations. Third, the five core values or other inspiring quotes of a similar nature were boldly stenciled or painted on select walls (Figure 19).



Figure 19. Example of décor depicting mission statement at corporate office

The decor emphasized one company, not individual satellite communities.

Location 3 had the strongest independent streak. Before I visited, I heard this location was considered to be different. People at the corporate office gave each other knowing looks whenever Location 3 was mentioned, as if to say *that center is a little bizarre*. At Location 2, one young female employee described Location 3 employees as *a little backward, because, you know, they wear scrunchies and stuff. It's small town*.

Immediately when I arrived for my focus group interview at Location 3 I saw staff members sitting in the day room at the end of their work day, all clients gone. These 10 staff members, all female, made up the entire staff for this smaller site. They laughed and enjoyed each other's company, a little breather at the end of a long workday. They seemed to genuinely enjoy being together. In contrast, corporate employees who started in centers (mostly all) mentioned that standardization was necessary to avoid centers

going rogue. This was said with an almost reverent, hushed tone, as the note taker recorded in one focus group. This seemed like the most feared reality – corporate culture run amok.

The distinction made between *us and everyone else* illustrated the strength of their particular culture, but was also worrisome for corporate administration. Standardization was necessary for increased efficiency, but at what cost? How strong is too strong in relation to culture? At what point does it become necessary to disrupt a well-functioning team? Perhaps these questions were reasons why decisions have been centralized, as stated in the prior section. Is motivation impacted at each location because community identities are essentially sanitized? Most likely, Location 3 knows what is best for the clients it serves and the community in which it exists, so how much corporate control is detrimental to motivation at satellite offices?

Corporate employees briefly mentioned that Ability, Inc. had become too image conscious in recent years. This notion was not mentioned at satellite offices, perhaps because they are too busy to notice. However, the corporate office is a different story. In the last few years the organization's marketing has become much more, for lack of a better word, slick. For example the Annual Celebration festivities featured polished video presentations, a professionally narrated event, a humorous and entertaining auctioneer, flashy advertising and well-rehearsed lines. While this event suited a company with \$55 million in annual revenue, it felt at odds with the organization's mission. Clients were well dressed, but most did not stay past the meal due to the auction length and multiple fundraising requests. It felt more like a fundraiser, not a celebration.

Corporate	Satellite
<p>Employee 1: <i>I think that being satellites is fine ... until you are almost a rogue team.</i></p> <p>Employee 2: <i>Yeah, I've seen it go too far.</i></p> <p>Employee 1: <i>We both know that it takes a lot of work to bring it back. Not that we all want to be a cookie-cutter team, but you have to have the same mission, the same customer service, the same process standardization. We've had teams that have been extreme...</i></p> <p>Employee 3: <i>...and just do what they want.</i></p> <p>Employee 1: <i>I had one that said when he leaves they will discover we were doing it.</i></p> <p><i>There does seem to be a cultural norm that is an overarching umbrella that I would call ethical. How it's taught. How it's modeled in our interactions with our clients -- that can be radically different from company to company. When I've been to different centers at Ability, Inc., more or less that approach seems to be fairly consistent with the centers I've worked for.</i></p> <p>Employee: <i>This is the fourth location that I've worked at within Ability, Inc. All four have been different cultures within Ability, Inc...</i></p> <p>Moderator: <i>Can you explain how they've been different cultures?</i></p> <p>Employee: <i>There is a common thread towards the mission, how people generally provide services, more or less how people interact with the clients. I think that's true, but probably because culture is what you make of it. Depending on who was on each team, there is a very different feel. Some teams are little more playful and creative in the way that they approach same things.</i></p> <p>Moderator: <i>By teams, you mean locations?</i></p>	<p><i>Corporate wants us to be just like them, but we are a small community. We can't be just like them. We don't want to be.</i></p> <p><i>It's sanitized – it all looks the same.</i></p> <p><i>It would be nice if we didn't all have to be the same, look the same. We are not the same. That's what it's been like since we've all started with more programs, career development, and social enrichment. It's never going to be identical.</i></p> <p><i>We are very “pro Location 3”. We promote what we need here.</i></p> <p><i>Instead of trying to turn Location 3 into the Cities, maybe the Cities should come and see what we are doing.</i></p>

Employee: *Yes. Centers versus the administrative offices. Other teams are more like employment focused and just had a very different communication style among people who work there. sometimes that was driven by having corporate people that have worked together for very long time and many work for some young teams where turnover occurs more frequently and had a very different style of working in collaboration. People who had worked together for really long time versus the experiences of people entering these teams as new employees that I had hired were very different from team to team. Now, working for two years at the administrative office, we have a very different culture, also, than all the other sites in the way that people communicate and collaboratively work together. So, it's one of the things that I've liked working for Ability, Inc... Having worked in a few different places it's an education every time you move.*

I think the company is far too image-conscious. I think that we put [not enough emphasis] on departments that do not show up in a year-in-review. This does not show up in a mailing that says, 'look at what we did this year'. It's an administrative department [and] doesn't lend itself to quality pictures. So, sometimes I worry that we [spend so much time] looking for the new thing that we don't spend enough time asking, 'how do we pay for everything?' I do think we are too image-conscious, to our detriment sometimes.

I love working here. We're very idealistic as a company. Sometimes I worry the bubble will pop.

Sustainability/Growth. A demarcation was clear on the subject of sustainability and growth between corporate and satellite employees. Corporate employees were overwhelmingly positive about growth through change and sustaining Ability, Inc. for the future. They saw the need for short term pain to obtain long term gains or *big wins*, as stated in the last excerpt in the corporate column. However, there was trepidation on the part of corporate employees; they were unsure of the direction of the organization and how it would affect them in the long run, but they were aware of the necessity and importance of change to sustain and grow for the future. An understanding of the big picture was evident by corporate employees.

Conversely, satellite employees saw how the changes promoting growth and sustainability directly impacted their clients in the areas of decreasing quality programming; increasing employee-to-client ratios; increasing the number of programs but not increasing staff; organization of services; and communication with clients and families. The most striking quote came from a satellite employee in reference to the effects of growth at Ability, Inc. Simply,

We seem to have lost our heart.

Intrigued, I asked the participant to explain the heart of Ability, Inc. and how and when it was lost. The participant could not say, only that it had diminished. No one else in that focus group offered an opinion. I introduced it in all of the other focus group interviews. The conversation progressed in one group in this way:

Employee: When we moved [to this location] it was great considering the clients that we had at the old place. Moving into a new facility, a nicer facility... it was great. We were really excited. Then it was like just more clients coming in, more

and more coming in. Bigger caseloads [are the norm]. When I started as a facilitator I had eight people and now I have 16 or 17.

Moderator: *So, doing more with less? Aren't all businesses struggling with this?*

Employee: *I think that's the state that every single company is in, that we were being stretched to the max and being asked to do as much as we can with the same resources without anything additional. There was no additional support. It was basically like we are bringing in these new people and it started to feel like they weren't people they were just revenue and we are just packing them in. Just revenue. That was really disappointing to me.*

Moderator: *That's a really good quote.*

Employee: *I think that was the biggest thing that I struggled with. I understand we need to make money. I understand we need to be sustainable. I understand that. But at what point is that devaluing the services we provide to the people?*

Moderator: *So, what would the heart of Ability, Inc. be?*

Employee: *I think it's what I said before. We no longer work with people, we work with revenue and that's how people are being seen. I don't think it's intentional. I think we get in between a rock and a hard place. We need to survive as a company, we need to serve people. Which one's got to give a little bit?*

The gap between corporate and satellite employees was evident in this area.

Perhaps the recent changes had changed employee's views on the future direction of the organization. In 2011, 74 percent of employees reported they were confident in the future direction of Ability, Inc. Corporate employees saw the need for sustainability and growth as a utilitarian venture: Ability, Inc. needed to survive for the next generation in order to do the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Satellite employees made individual sacrifices that affect day-to-day lives of clients and families. Essentially they were operating from a deontological perspective: it is our duty to serve clients to the best of our ability. This gap in philosophical perspectives is explored further in Chapter 5.

Corporate	Satellite
<p><i>I came from a company that went through big change. People were just completely disoriented and scared to death of the sort of change, right now, that we're going through. It's kind of like the norm to me. I like change. I think change makes you go to a better place. To get you where you need to go, but it's scary.</i></p> <p><i>So see, [these changes] may be our light at the end of the tunnel. Maybe there's hope. Maybe it will just be a new kind of work. It will still consume that much time, but that's how I feel.</i></p> <p><i>Employee 1: I think that for two years we've been going through better process improvements. I think some people have loved it and some people have hated it. [They are thinking] "Now you are telling me what to do and how to do it; my freedom and my flexibility is limited."</i></p> <p><i>Employee 2: [They think] you don't respect my work.</i></p> <p><i>Employee 1: Yeah, but then we had the opposite. It is so much better and so much more organized.</i></p> <p><i>I think that we are always changing and growing. While that's positive and innovative, there's always fear. I think that there's that fear, but then you also feel very reassured too.</i></p> <p><i>So, truly, changes always happen. In our process right now, we're going to get some big wins.</i></p>	<p><i>I do think we are dipping into too many things. We do have to survive in what's changing and funding and how all of that is going to come down. We have to be able to provide a variety of services. I think we are still struggling with how we organize. I think that's maybe where some of the things that we say we're going to do get kind of pushed aside and it seems like it's more like this is a quick fix this is a long-term fix</i></p> <p><i>Employee 1: I think we are into too many things.</i></p> <p><i>Moderator: As far as services for clients? The answer is less clients more focus?</i></p> <p><i>Employee 1: I think more focus on the clients that we have instead of having so many different programs. Just not have so many and more focus on the client so we can provide services for the clients.</i></p> <p><i>I also think the positions that they are developing are going to be hiring for the sake of hiring instead of giving us more layers. Give us more staff to work with people, not supervision.</i></p> <p><i>But, we got so big that I think you lose something. The executive team- I think they lose that because we're so big. we can't do everything they ask us to do</i></p> <p><i>I am really thinking and hoping these new changes in all this stuff will hopefully help with th[e feeling of clients as walking revenue].</i></p> <p><i>I think they had good intentions when they started this process and now it's going to cost them. They are changes all these people around, more chiefs than</i></p>

	<p><i>Indians again, once again. I thought when they first started this process that maybe some of us would get some help. Lighten the load a little bit. Let us have more direct care with clients rather than all paperwork and the caseloads being so huge. They used to be 4-6 people and now they are 13-16 people! Are you kidding me? No time to do it except when you are working or at home.</i></p> <p><i>We need to survive as a company, we need to serve people. Which one's got to give a little bit?</i></p> <p><i>To me that's part of losing our heart because the service is not personalized [anymore].</i></p>
--	--

Person-Centered. As indicated by the responses at the end of this section, it is clear that corporate employees had more to say about being *person-centered* than satellite employees. The language, pervasive at the upper levels of corporate staff, was jargon-laden and industry specific. As a result, I wanted corporate employees to clarify the meaning of *person-centered*. I had not been to any satellite offices at this point and had no knowledge that I would not hear the term *person-centered* from satellite employees. In their clarification of *person-centered*, corporate employees included ethical culture, quality, staff, and doing the best for people as being *person-centered*. One corporate employee said *human-service focused* and then simplified to *human focused*.

Person centered = Looking at each person as an individual and what's most important to them. Trying to develop programs and job services that meet their needs.

I believed “human focused” should have included employees, so I pushed the issue. The exchanges are excerpted in the table below. The phrase below was mentioned three times in three corporate focus groups and was linked to being *person-centered*:

If you take care of Ability, Inc., it will take care of you.

I believed this statement was indicative of being more *client-centered* or *employer-centered* rather than *person* or *human-centered*. The lack of employee recognition at the Annual Celebration was further evidence that employees were being left out of the definition of *person-centered*.

Corporate	Satellite
<p><i>Person-centered. I do think we would say we're also employee centered. If you take care of Ability, Inc., it will take care of you. So, I do believe people feel that as part of our culture.</i></p> <p><i>[I believe] what [exec] said too, being person centered is one of our core values. We tell staff, whether it's different levels of finance or other staff ... about respectful interaction. We treat one another [well] among other things. So, I do think that's part of our culture over all. It's not just a corporate slogan.</i></p> <p><i>Here, the culture is very person centered. You'll hear it in words and language [used to describe] the philosophy. You will hear it across all locations. Sometimes it has different meanings. The person centered means doing what's best for the person, making a great day. On the other side, it is doing everything for everybody and [making a] difference.</i></p> <p><i>Person centered = Looking at each person</i></p>	<p><i>I remember the recognition we would get back 14 years ago. A card, a cookie, etc. That's gone now. They are focusing on the clients more now.</i></p> <p><i>I think the focus is primarily client focused, but we as staff that provide the services also very important.</i></p> <p><i>I think the focus is primarily client focused</i></p>

as an individual and what's most important to them. Trying to develop programs and job services that meet their needs.

Sometimes I remember [the CEO] saying we were spending public dollars and that comes back too. We are asked to look at our budgets [and ask], 'are we overstaffed?' Do we have enough staff? We shouldn't frivolously spend the few dollars that we have. So, to me that's ethical and that's resourceful. We all know there's public outcry about [spending public dollars on] people with disabilities. They look at the cost for them to come to our programs, but it's up to us to be ethical and to show this to our stakeholders. There is a gap, absolutely. I see the [gap between] direct service [and finances], not so much related to the values-based decision making. But, it's about the person. Are you going to be ethical, resourceful, responsible, and respectful? If you're doing person centered, then yes.

Employee: human service focused

Moderator: human service focused?

Employee: human focused

I wouldn't say catch, but sometimes, in the [pre-employment] screening we try to screen on the phone. In the interview you can catch things that people say that don't sound very ethical. Sometimes [we can see ethics] by asking questions around working with our clients or respect. I think it's ethical, too, when staff thinks they can control clients, but the client should drive it. That's respect for the client, so I don't know if that's ethical or respectful, but that's the kind of stuff we have. Or, how to use person-first language, person-centered language.

That's right! So, to me, being ethical, being respectful, being resourceful... that frames our company culture. Every decision we make throughout the course of the day and our whole response, we're making decisions and fulfilling our role that follows a culture of being ethical, resourceful, responsive and respectful of each other here. What [Employee 1] says about person centered is part of it too, but I think that's an offshoot of values based decision making

Moderator: Does person centered also mean employee centered?

Employee 1: I think we've always thought we should, but I do think we would say we're also employee centered. If you take care of Ability, Inc., it will take care of you. So, I do believe people feel that as part of our culture.

Employee 2: [I believe] what [Employee 1] said too, being person centered is one of our core values. We tell staff, whether it's different levels of finance or other staff ... about respectful interaction. We treat one another [well] among other things. So, I do think that's part of our culture over all. It's not just a corporate slogan.

Employee: Here, the culture is very person centered. You'll hear it in words and language [used to describe] the philosophy. You will hear it across all locations. Sometimes it has different meanings. The person centered means doing what's best for the person, making a great day. On the other side, it is doing everything for everybody and [making a] difference.

Moderator: By "person centered" do you mean the person that you're serving, your clients?

Employee: doing what's best for our clients

<p>Moderator: <i>okay</i> Employee: <i>Looking at each person as an individual and what's most important to them. Trying to develop programs and job services that meet their needs.</i></p>	
---	--

Workload. Workload was a significant factor at satellite offices. As seen in the excerpts, workload was not mentioned as a significant factor from any corporate focus group. However, the daily impact of increasingly heavy workloads clearly rested on front-line satellite staff. Descriptor words such as *exhausted, tired, burnt out* were commonplace. Supervisors were especially affected by workload because they straddled corporate and satellite worlds. The level of frustration on the part of both supervisors and employees was visible. In regard to feelings about workload and how it impacted culture, the word *tense* was often used. The research indicated increasing demands on lower level employees to shoulder rising case loads, and non-replaced line staff added to the gap between corporate and satellite offices.

I asked how often executive staff members went to satellite offices. A member of the corporate office said, “October is Disability Awareness Month. The executive staff goes out every October and does what they call a Road Show.” The executive team traveled to all seven satellite locations. I asked satellite staff how the Road Show fit into the company culture.

When the executives come down during October, they kind of look around and we feel we're being “snubbed a little bit.”

All of a sudden, when they come down, we have 20 million little things that work for us that we have to change.

[Referring to the Executive roadshow] *Well, they take a tour and it's like, 'make sure everything looks nice because the executive team is coming!'*

The executive team's road show contributed to the gap by creating more work and providing little value. In fact, the visits probably widened the gap because they were rare and special instead of often and typical. Further, the road show visits occurred after clients had departed for the day. Satellite employees viewed this as executives not wanting to see "what really goes on" with clients. Executives viewed this timing as respecting employee's; being able to spend time with center-based staff without distraction; and not wanting to upset the daily routine of clients. Satellite employees often mentioned that a good lesson for executives would be for them to *do our job for one day or I'd like to see them spend a day in my shoes*. There was a misperception that executives had not worked in this industry before they became executives. In reality, only 2 of 8 executives had come from a non-human service background. All program managers had worked their way up from lower level positions in the company as well. Misperception on both sides was prevalent.

Satellite employees mentioned time management was critical skill in order to have a good day. The phrase *we're not paid for paperwork* was commonly stated. Paperwork was supposed to be completed within the 30 minutes between client departure and the end of the scheduled work day. Rising client caseloads made this difficult, especially if there were clients who required more documentation. The 2011 employee survey found much the same as indicated in the focus group interviews in this area. Only 48 percent indicated they were paid fairly for the work they do.

I feel like they are stretching me thin here.

One example of time-saving efficiency for in-center staff was to relocate the computer where employees entered data on client time spent for billing (Web Time) to a public space instead of a back office. This way, employees did not have to spend time away from clients. Yet, one employee was disappointed by this change. In trying to be ethical with resources, corporate administrators forgot that resources are people.

Employee 1: It's great that you want to do Web Time on the floor, but sometimes the only break I get is in the back room for 5 minutes entering web time. It saves my sanity. I'm ON from 7:45-3:00 all day with clients. I know we don't get paid to do paperwork, but I'd like a break. I don't get a break to be by myself – ever.

Employee 2: I have 180 hours of vacation that I never use because I feel guilty to leave my coworkers to pick up my slack if I'm off or my kid is sick [single mom]. I find somewhere else for my kid to go [grandma] if they are sick because I don't want to burden my coworkers to be gone.

While this spoke well of the camaraderie at the satellite location, it also illustrated a high degree of burnout and exhaustion employees experienced. The decision to move Web Time to the floor without employee input was a powerful example of employees being disregarded in the participation of changes and efficiencies within the organization. A decrease in turnover rate was a goal in the organization's 2012 Balanced Scorecard. This seemed to be a conflicting goal because the burnout rate seemed to be on the rise. Related to burnout, the 2011 employee survey reported that overall, 70 percent of employees were satisfied with their job. However, a breakdown of that statistic revealed corporate employees to be, on average, 90 percent satisfied. Satellite employees including supervisors reported only 65 percent satisfaction. Clearly, a demarcation between locations existed in this area. Simple changes may improve workload for exhausted, tired and stressed out employees. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Corporate	<p>Satellite</p> <p><i>Somebody in Accounts Payable [for example] never sees the client. I think it would be very good for administration people to do our jobs for a day. I think that would be very good especially for the detachment of the center and community based employment.</i></p> <p><i>I think they had good intentions when they started this process and now it's going to cost them. They are changes all these people around, more chiefs than Indians again, once again. I thought when they first started this process that maybe some of us would get some help. Lighten the load a little bit. Let us have more direct care with clients rather than all paperwork and the caseloads being so huge. They used to be 4-6 people and now they are 13-16 people! Are you kidding me? No time to do it except when you are working or at home</i></p> <p><i>We are all exhausted.</i></p> <p><i>I am exhausted most of the time. So are my people.</i></p> <p><i>It's not feasible to keep up the expectation of our workload long-term, so it's nice to know there may be an end to it. Because, boy oh boy, I can't even tell you how many hours we're expected to work - to get what we need to get done. It's over 40 (hours per week), way over. You're looking at 50 (hours per week) probably.</i></p> <p><i>When the executives come down during October, they kind of look around and we feel we're being "snubbed a little bit." All of a sudden, when they come down, we</i></p>
-----------	---

	<p><i>have 20 million little things that work for us that we have to change.</i></p> <p><i>[Referring to the Executive roadshow] Well, they take a tour and it's like, 'make sure everything looks nice because the executive team is coming!'</i></p> <p><i>I think that [executives] are so out of touch. They ask [employees to donate money] because we're in nonprofit, they'll ask for employees to donate. They're asking, "give me five" from all the staff. Some staff are supporting a family of three on \$32,000 year and you want them to give you money!</i></p> <p><i>We lost two floor staff, but gain more admin staff? That doesn't make sense to help with our [increasing] workload</i></p> <p><i>Employee 1: They talk about "three deep coverage" and they want people to train for three deep and you're making a Sophie's choice during the day. And you don't have staff to do it, but you'd better do it otherwise you will be held responsible. But, you're not supposed to</i></p> <p><i>Employee 2: Right, you're not supposed to and it's not your job</i></p> <p><i>My people know that whatever is going to happen, it is going to fall on me. They know that it's going to be my problem and I'm going to be covering. Whatever I had to do that day, whatever the impact is on my job, it will fall on me. I'll be covering it and I've developed a strong relationship with them that they trust me and they don't want to do that to me. But that makes me feel guilty too. It is difficult.</i></p> <p><i>But, we got so big that I think you lose something. The executive team- I think they</i></p>
--	---

	<p><i>lose that because we're so big. we can't do everything they ask us to do</i></p> <p><i>I think that's the state that every single company is in, that we were being stretched to the max and being asked to do as much as we can with the same resources without anything additional. There was no additional support.</i></p> <p><i>I feel like they are stretching me thin here.</i></p> <p><i>It's great that you want to do Web Time on the floor, but sometimes the only break I get is in the back room for 5 minutes entering web time. It saves my sanity. I'm ON from 7:45-3:00 all day with clients. I know we don't get paid to do paperwork, but I'd like a break. I don't get a break to be by myself – ever.</i></p> <p><i>I have 180 hours of vacation that I never use because I feel guilty to leave my coworkers to pick up my slack if I'm off or my kid is sick [single mom]. I find somewhere else for my kid to go [grandma] if they are sick because I don't want to burden my coworkers to be gone.</i></p>
--	---

Section 2

RQ2a: To what extent do employees use the organization's Values-Based Decision Making Model in decision making?

This section discusses the use of the Values-Based Decision Making Model (VBDMM) (Figure 1) and explores the factors of ethical decision making culture at Ability, Inc. There was no distinction between corporate and satellite employees because that distinction was not the focus of the research question. The importance was to what

extent the VBDMM was used and how. The first question was if the VBDMM was used at all. Findings showed that overall the VBDMM was used both formally and informally. Formal use related to the actual language used and if employees could recognize if their decision was specifically based on the four components of the VBDMM: ethical, respectful, responsive and resourceful. Informal use related to employees who stated they used values-based decision making naturally as part of their own personal values that reflected the four components of the VBDMM. Specific situations in which the VBDMM was used are outlined in this section. In addition, statements in which VBDMM was said to have not been used or lacking were included as weaknesses in the use of the VBDMM within the organizational culture.

Situations in which the VBDMM was used

Both corporate and satellite employees stated specific examples when they used the VBDMM as a tool in a situation to make an ethical decision. The assertion by an executive that the VBDMM was used in *every decision we make, whether it's big or right down to the small decisions and how they are made* may be grandiose. Yet the use of the model was shown to be actively present in the culture. Six specific themes emerged that were consistent between corporate and satellite locations in regard to this research question.

Frame of reference. The VBDMM was used as a frame of reference for difficult decisions. Another word used to describe this was *guide*. Executives specifically referred to the VBDMM as a tool for remaining unbiased and balanced and as a judgment instrument to remain clear on difficult decisions.

In my experience and my working several years, [it's used] as a pillar of the company, in every decision we make. Whether it's big or right down to the small decisions [and how they] are made based off of [the VBDMM].

There are times when in a meeting with my staff, the team will be having a conversation about [using the VBDMM] to make a decision about something. [They would use it] as a guide for making decisions.

If I know that it is ethical, I will talk about it. I know I do not look at it every week, but it is a frame of reference [to use] when maybe there's not agreement or you are not sure to go this route.

We've used it a lot in these last two years. There's been a lot of organizational change and understanding the work to get people on the right side of the bus. I find myself using it quite a bit. What needs be done and who is the person to do it? I use it as my judgment. Is it okay? I'm thinking about this from all sides to ensure I'm not biased or some other factor. I'm making sure it's balanced.

If you have a problem making a decision, I always say is it ethical, respectful, responsible and resourceful? If you say no to one of them, you need to think about that question. You need to think about that decision. So, I if I have a tough time making a decision, I'll do that and, pretty much, my decision is more clear.

For many, the question about examples of use of the VBDMM in specific situations made them pause, reflect and consider if it was an oft-consulted piece of paper or merely part of their normal decision making process. Results were mixed. Some stated they would actually consult the document and filter their decision through the four components. This usage was coded as *formal* use. Others declared they did not have to look at the document to make ethical decisions, but their decisions reflected the VBDMM. This practice was coded as *informal* use. About half of the statements reflected each type of procedure. Sub-themes that use the VBDMM as a frame of reference included situations involving employees, clients, vendors, families and strategic planning. Sub-categories are listed by descending order of situational examples mentioned.

Employees. Frequent use of the VBDMM by supervisors, managers and executives centered on situations involving employees. Several participants at the corporate level stated they used it as a tool for justifying personnel decisions such as corrective action, performance reviews, coaching and even a termination.

I used it in a corrective action for staff and also a termination. I used it to be sure that what I was writing up was in those values. It is a great tool.

Using during corrective actions. How does this affect the organization? And, we will just put it as “does not follow the values based decision making model or the code of ethics”

I was encouraged to use it for, like, performance reviews as part of my function as a supervisor.

As part of my staff’s review, their goal is to learn the values-based decision-making tool, the mission and the shared experiences.

I think for me, it was mostly the training but (the values based decision making) really touched my job when I spent five years as a supervisor before doing what I do now. I know that as a supervisor, when I really got it or when I really was able connect it with my job was when there were difficult performance evaluations to do or that something difficult was going on that need to be corrected.

In coaching, we always talk about, ‘what’s your responsibility?’ and ‘what’s your decision-making framework?’ and within that, you can make decisions. You should come back to this. It’s almost always used in a coaching environment and with program supervisors and managers.

I use it for coaching employees. When we have performance things or whatever, especially in the interaction. It really helps and I think it’s a foundation[al] document [that helps] to recognize ‘oh yeah, this is what I’m supposed to do’. I use it in my approach as a supervisor. More like [that of] a coach. I use [the VBDMM] in corrective actions.

It appeared that when there was a difficult decision or a need to justify a problematic situation, the VBDMM was used as a tool. While, this sub-category only

applied to executives, managers and supervisors, probably more telling is when the VBDMM was used with clients by lower level staff.

Clients. Secondary only to employee situations was usage of the VBDMM to make decisions regarding clients. Multiple situations were mentioned including decisions involving incident reporting, wage setting and programing. All of the following excerpts were articulated by satellite employees.

I think when you have to write a [client] incident report is when we think about those things. You have to present it in a way that gets the information out there, but is also respectful. If somebody has an [unacceptable] behavior, maybe wiping their feces on the wall then you have to talk about that in a professional manner that doesn't demean a person and doesn't disrespect that person. You just have to state the facts. You are making this sort of judgment about it, except I think this person acted this way because he had a stomach ache and he's nonverbal he can only tell us in THIS way. This is his way of telling us to bring that up. It's the reality of what we do.

This excerpt made it clear that writing an incident report needed to balance both facts and respect; the VBDMM was a positive tool to use for a balanced approach.

Clients were paid a Special Minimum Wage (SMW) that was lower than federal or state minimum wage based on the severity of their disability. The U.S. Department of Labor (2012) defines an SMW as a “wage paid a worker with a disability that is commensurate with that worker’s individual productivity as compared to the wage and productivity of experienced workers who do not have disabilities performing essentially the same type, quality and quantity of work in the vicinity where the worker with a disability is employed” (n.p.). For example, say I was a fully capable worker who can clean a toilet in 5 minutes. Thus, five minutes was determined to be the standard time that it took to do this one task. Wage setting occurred when a client was asked to perform the

same task in the center as a test of their ability. These were also referred to as *time studies*. The client took 10 minutes to do the same task, which meant they were 50 percent capable of performing this task. Their special minimum wage would be 50% of whatever the going rate for a 100 percent capable person was for that task. It was clear that using ethics in wage setting was important so neither clients nor employers paying for the services were taken advantage of. The excerpts specifically mentioned wage setting and job development, two tasks that were represented by the toilet cleaning example.

*I think we use it a lot in job development. As you look for jobs that pay a wage that is equitable both internally and externally, it is related to both ethics and respect. Being responsive to the client is important too, so really you often times look at all those and also our resources. Is this a good use of our resources?
We use the VBMM when we set client pay for client jobs.*

The VBMM was also used in programming decisions. Specifically, at the satellite offices, three instances were mentioned: planning classes, staff planning and supply purchases. Component number four, resourceful, was mentioned often by employees; they try to use the company's money wisely. This was illustrated by the following excerpts:

When I'm planning classes (social enrichment) in center I use it to decide whether this would be a good class.

We use it when we are doing the board (staff planning). Is this the best way to use this person today? Are the clients getting the best services we can today?

I use it when I make supply purchases for art classes.

Managers mentioned using the VBMM when they were in supervisory roles with day-to-day contact with clients. When deciding what activities to pursue, they also used the

resourceful component. This example was cited between two managers deciding upon a situation in their past whether or not to take a group of clients bowling on the company's dime.

Employee 1: *Do you guys remember the bowling stuff that really wasn't Ability, Inc. sponsored? When I first became a supervisor that was the kind of question you had to figure out. It was the question of what clients want versus what was best for Ability, Inc. resources.*

Employee 2: *I think using that example of bowling [was good]. I've used it too in the past, in similar situations. What's ethical, resourceful, responsible and resourceful for the select few may not be for the whole. So, to that group of clients and staff, oh yeah, that was a great deal. But, perhaps it was denying other people resources and the same experiences because of that choice.*

This example illustrated the tension to balance the needs of the many versus the needs of the few, a key argument in utilitarian philosophy. These managers recognized that spending money on this situation for these few clients may have deprived other clients of resources. Recall in section 1 of this chapter that corporate employees displayed utilitarian philosophy while satellite employees tended to view deontological practices as more beneficial to clients. The philosophical friction is discussed in Chapter 5.

Vendors. Corporate staff mentioned using the VBDMM with vendors and *outside folk*, billing issues, bids and reporting. Having the VBDMM clearly displayed for vendors removed pressure for employees to explain why a decision may not be in a client's or the organization's best interest.

I keep it [VBDMM] on my desk. I think it's created a culture that outside folks [vendors] understand when they walk in the door. It keeps me personally accountable, as well, when I have to make decisions.

Referring to the VBDMM when fixing mistakes was also mentioned as a way the model was integrated into ethical decision making. Reporting correct time and wages was critical to maintaining the reputation of the organization as an ethical entity. Correctly billing employers was critical to ensure repeat business and sustained relationships for future job opportunities. Two examples illustrated the billing issue:

When I was briefly at [a satellite office], there were some billing issues. There was a service authorization change that we wanted to be ethical. We wanted to make sure that we were billing correctly. But we also wanted to make sure we were actually getting paid for the services that were provided. So that's what I've used the [VBDMM] for. At the center, one of the ethical ways we try to bill [is to make sure] we're not overcharging or under billing. Also, we have put it in with performance reviews. When you have to hammer home 'this is what we expect you to show clients'.

When we make a mistake on a bill, we have to give that back. We have to go and fix our mistake. When we made a mistake, the ethical thing to do, you know, versus saying 'oh well' we made a mistake and we're human. But I see [ethics] when I think about that time with the background studies [a specific example]... having to call all the contract people and say what happened in the billing was a mistake

Reporting to the government is also a regular part of Ability, Inc.'s responsibilities.

Working with a vulnerable adult population required staff to be ethical not only in treatment of clients, but also correctly reporting when situations occurred that need to be documented. Several staff members at both corporate and satellite offices cited examples when Ability, Inc. had to report itself for incorrect billing which was declared as unethical by corporate staff. Billing issues, as mentioned above, were the most common examples of unethical behavior that had to be corrected.

I've used it before with staff. As supervisors, we had to file a vulnerable adult [report] with [our state] on ourselves. We have walked them through, 'do you see

how this choice at Ability, Inc. made on behalf of this individual was ethical and responsive? ' I've walked through it that way to help them understand why this didn't fall in line with our mission and why this was an okay decision and why we did it that way and why it wasn't.

Families. Corporate staff mentioned using the VBDMM when working with client's families more often than satellite staff. One example was from an employee in finance and one example was an employee in customized support. Both examples illustrated the use of one or more components of the VBDMM to make decisions that were in the best interest of the client. Explaining these decisions to family was difficult but necessary. The VBDMM made it easier to say "no" when it was clearly the best answer.

I think in finance it is a big piece. I know I did follow the four. We run into a lot of people will want to feel like [when asking if they can do something], can we...? No. Or can't we just... no, it's not ethical. We just know you can go through that whole [VBDMM] but then a lot of people try to be helpful, but you're not really being helpful because you're breaking the law. We could lose our license. How would that affect the family of the client? For finance it's a big part of our day-to-day, there are so many different laws and regulations. You can say no respectfully. A lot of newer people don't quite understand that. When and how to say no - without thinking that they're doing something wrong. But there's ways to say something to people without making them look like the bad guy or that we're still trying to help them try to work things out.

One of things we have it respect for each other. We help each other out. We all have that same bottom line, how people go the extra mile for our clients. A lot goes on when working with each other and with the families we serve.

Strategic Planning. Referring to the first theme in which the VBDMM was used as a frame of reference tied into this final category. Executives in charge of strategic planning cited the VBDMM as an important tool used in this process.

[The CEO] tied every business plan to one or more of those ethics [four components of the VBDMM] last year. That's pretty high-level.

Further, the VBDMM was seen as an instrument that gave Ability, Inc. a competitive advantage in the industry. Ability, Inc. had a reputation for being a rules setter, operating by the book, and setting the standard in the human services industry in this region. For that reason, I believed this competitive advantage could be developed further.

I can give you a pretty concrete example of that. In the department where I work, there are 12 other companies that do what we do. We are seen as the rules company. I'll go to meetings with all the other companies and we are seen as... people will call us for clarification on how to set rules, how does that work?

This excerpt summarized the benefits of using the VBDMM in many areas and varied situations within the organization. Overall, I believed the findings indicated the VBDMM is generally used and valued.

What's great about it is that it applies no matter where you are in this company. I started out at a program location and I thought about it in terms of when I worked with clients or families on jobsites and then five years later I moved into administration and then it was; okay, now I'm supporting these direct care staff in an administrative role. It still applies. When I'm working with them as a project manager, we have all kinds of vendors and consultants coming in. I love having [the model] on the wall in the board room or wherever so that they know what they're going to get when doing business with us. Or when making decisions collaboratively with other companies who have different cultures - this is on a wall and this kind of sets the bar. It almost takes pressure away from having to explain why this is the reason that we do want to do this is... We don't have to explain it.

Situations in which the VBDMM was not used

Both corporate and satellite employees cited only a few examples where they thought the VBDMM was not prevalent or lacking. While the use of the model was shown to be actively present in the culture, these excerpts illustrated where improvements

could be made in the communication and use of the VBDMM and its components. This is discussed further in the recommendations section of Chapter 5.

Training. All participants indicated they were trained on the VBDMM during orientation. For some, that was a long time ago. For others, even though the training may have been more recent, the overload of information in a one, two or three day orientation session (depending on their start date) was enough to diminish the training received on the VBDMM and the use of it as a tool. Consider this excerpt from an employee who was part of the current orientation training team.

I spent that first day at the administration office and went through employee handbook. I got a benefits presentation. We went over values based decision-making and how to do respecting others and core values.

This is an insightful example of the lack of communication between the supervisory versus corporate level:

I think it's really interesting to hear [that supervisors train on the VBDMM] because I give it to them during orientation. I give the cardboard thing [VBDMM printed page] out just like that. But to hear you say that you actually train them on it... I don't know that I've ever been told that.

Training budgets have been slashed. Coupled with process improvement and efficiency measures that moved many satellite based employees to hourly status, the opportunity for additional training was significantly reduced.

I think that we are lacking in our trainings. You don't get to go out. You don't get any type of in-service very often. I went to one this year and it's the first one I've been to in five or six years.

One specific example of additional training was the leadership-track training program.

Now defunct, this training seemed beneficial and missed. Consider this exchange

between supervisors illustrating the benefit of the leadership training track and lamenting the lack of it now.

Employee 1: *The best thing I remember [about orientation] was the leadership training track. They had this training track that was the best. It was really concentrated on building your skills as a leader. People from all levels of the organization could go to it.*

Moderator: *They don't do that now?*

Employee 1: *No. Remember that program? That was so great because it really captured and connected you to it. One of the mentors was also our vice president. It took all of the fear out of being around somebody in an executive position and made it feel like you were really part of the big picture*

Moderator: *Why do you think they don't do that anymore?*

Employee 1: *Time and budget*

Moderator: *Time and budget. Do you all think time and budget?*

[all heads nodding]

This additional excerpt demonstrated the VBMM's retreat into the background. While not purposefully, other priorities seemed to have overshadowed the importance of using the model.

[The VBDMM] *was mentioned at the leadership training session. We spent a lot of time with it. I kind of feel like, as of late, we're not talking about it as much and it's not up around the office. I don't have it my cube anymore. I don't think of it as lost, we've just redirected it somehow. I don't know.*

In fact, the VBDMM was prevalent in the physical space. On a visit to the corporate office prior to the three day focus group interviews, I photographed the VBDMM poster that hung in nearly every cube, office and public space with the exception of the break room and women's restroom (Figures 20-22). The poster was hanging in several locations at the satellite offices as well. However, this over placement may be detrimental because it becomes merely part of the background. This links to the next situation, cultural emphasis.

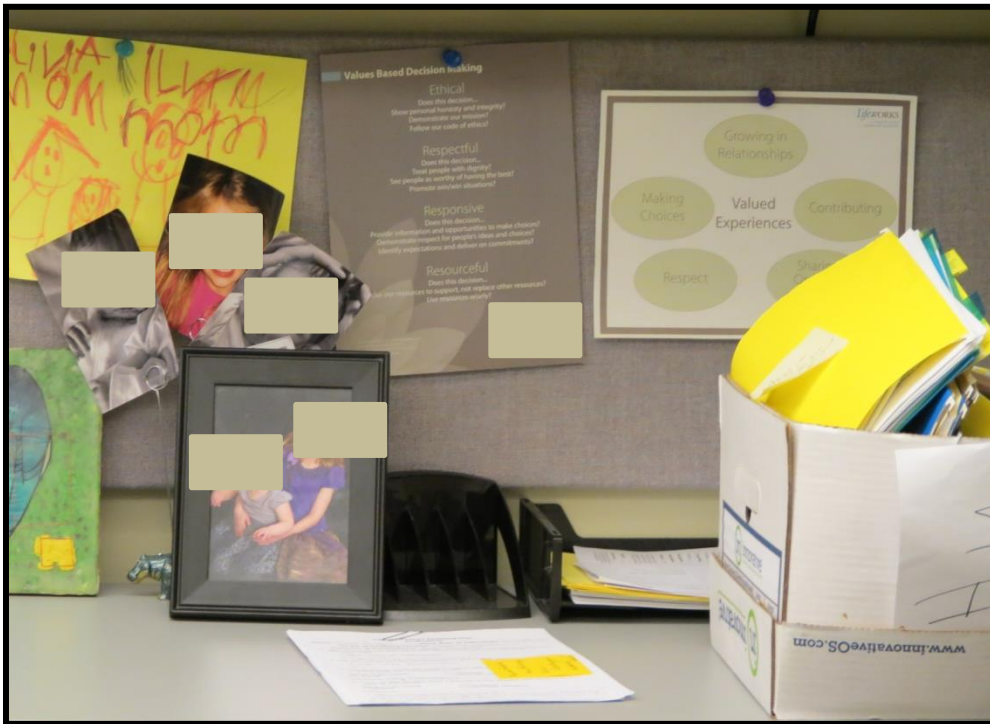


Figure 20. VBDMM posted in a corporate administrative employee cubical



Figure 21. VBDMM in corporate conference room



Figure 22. VBDMM in corporate customized services office

Cultural Emphasis.

[The VBDMM] is on my wall, but it's so much a part of the image of Ability, Inc. that to me, it's as common as the coffeemaker.

I began with this excerpt because it illustrated the problem with an abundance of cultural artifacts. Five categories of cultural artifacts depicted the values, beliefs and ideals of an organization: stories, slogans, heroes, ceremonies and symbols. Since my dealings with Ability, Inc. at the start of 2002, the VBDMM poster, now in its second revision, had been prevalent in the physical space.



Figure 23. VBDMM old version hanging in a cubical, rainbow calligraphy, pre-2007

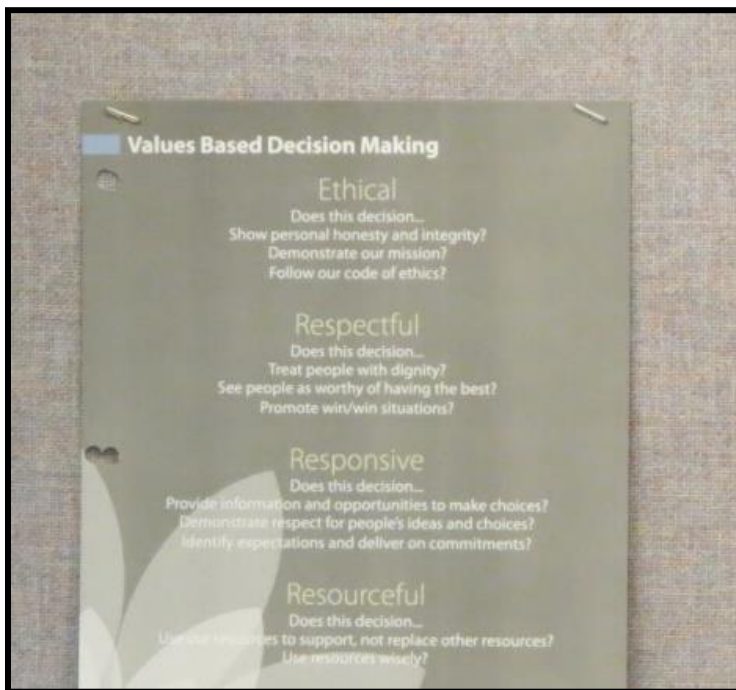


Figure 24. VBDMM current version hanging in a cubical

Small poster versions on desks, large mural size versions painted on walls, posters, and business card sized reminders had all been part of Ability, Inc.' culture. Since its inception in 1992 the VBDMM had been a core part of the belief system Ability, Inc. has cultivated. However, perhaps because of its prevalence, it became virtually invisible: you did not see it anymore. It blended into the background like a neglected office plant.

[The VBDMM] is not talked about as much, that's true. I never noticed that before until you mentioned it. It's not that it's not part of our culture, but it's not as heavily emphasized as it was in my earlier years here. It's been a while [since it was used].

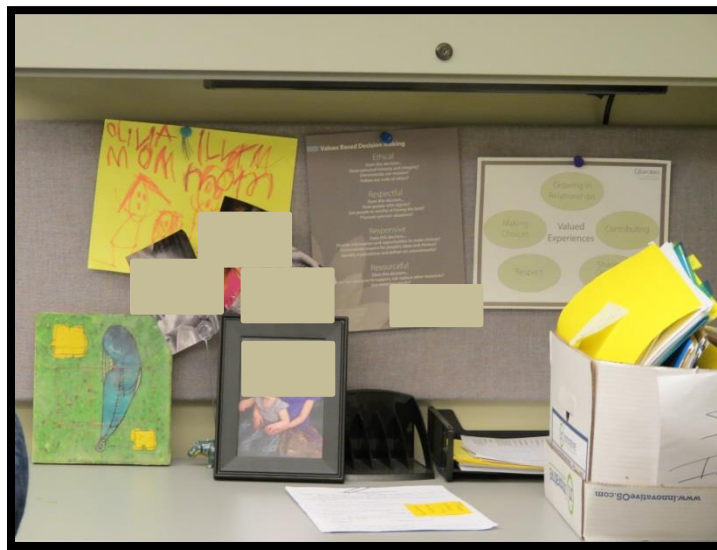


Figure 20. VBDMM posted in corporate administrative employee cubicle blends in with other desk accessories

Regardless, employees still viewed the VBDMM as an important tool, if needed.

Consider this manager's lengthy quote that sounds rather apologetic.

[Just because] it's in the background doesn't mean it's unimportant. I don't see the need to [use it all the time]. I don't feel like I'm not using it. No, I'd be lying if

I said I got this email and I wonder what I should do and I turned my chair and looked at it and thought, and asked myself these four questions. I've never done that. I'm not diminishing doing that. I'm just saying that I haven't. I don't believe I've ever had a supervisor take it out in a meeting and say, 'let's consult this'. But, like I said, I've been very lucky. I'm not suggesting that it isn't important. I'm just saying I haven't had that moment; that it guided me to a decision. No, I'd be lying if I said I got this email and I wonder what I should do and I turned my chair and looked at it and thought, and asked myself these four questions. I've never done that. I'm not diminishing doing that. I'm just saying that I haven't.

Finally, the measurement of awareness seemed to be linked to the prevalence of the VBDMM in the physical environment. An assumption was made that because employees posted it in their cube or carried it in their binder, they were operating ethically. One administrative employee cited an instance in which an employee, who had recently left Ability, Inc., *had it in her binder until her last day*. In other words, even though she was leaving, she was still ethical because it was on her person. Further, this comment from another administrative employee illustrated the importance placed on the physical placement of the VBDMM and the assumption that training and compliance had occurred and was in full force.

Well, [name], who's new, she has it [the VBDMM] up in her cube, so....

Language. Corporate staff indicated they thought satellite staff were using components of the VBDMM but would not be able to readily identify that they were actually using it. On some points, they were correct. Satellite based staff talked about making good choices (ethical), saving money (resourceful), serving clients well (responsive) and treating clients and family with respect (respectful). When prompted, satellite staff recognized the connection to the VBDMM components in their own behavior. However, as the corporate staff hypothesized, there was a language barrier

preventing them from verbalizing their behavior to VBDMM components. A satellite employee aptly summed it up this way:

I think we use it but we're not using the actual terms.

Perhaps a lack of follow up after orientation and initial training on the VBDMM contributed to the language barrier. If the components of the VBDMM were not part of the everyday language and employees could not articulate both the values themselves and the meaning behind the model, it seems they would not readily identify with the “actual terms” as stated in the quote above. In essence, if one cannot identify behaviors and decisions as ethical, then are they truly acting in accordance with the VBDMM?

Section 3

RQ2b: What factors in the organizational culture contribute to ethical decision making?

As seen in research question 2a, the Values-Based Decision Making Model was used in various situations, thus contributed to a culture that encouraged and embodied ethical decision making. Research question 2b augmented the ethical decision making culture exploration by asking what factors contributed to a culture of ethical decision making. Now that the use of values-based decision making has been found to be prevalent in the culture, an examination of the factors that contributed to the culture will be discussed.

Values-Based Decision Making Model Components

Figure 25 depicted the use of the terms *ethical*, *respectful*, *responsive* and *resourceful* in the language. Enacted documents (focus group transcripts) showed a

greater number of terms used compared to espoused (employee handbook, decision making training, newsletters, and 2012 Balanced Scorecard). Rather than examining the difference between *espoused* and *enacted*, the more important takeaway from this chart was that the four components were truly active in the culture.

As discussed in section 1, ethical values were consistent in both corporate and satellite locations and played a significant role in the culture. Overall, employees believed Ability, Inc. was an ethical company, regardless of the impact of change in the current timeframe. Respect was shown to be a consistent value as well in application to coworker and client relationships. Resourcefulness was seen as balancing efficiency with effectiveness and doing more with less while keeping quality programs intact. In addition, remaining responsive to client needs and maintaining the dedication to serving them was paramount in the research.

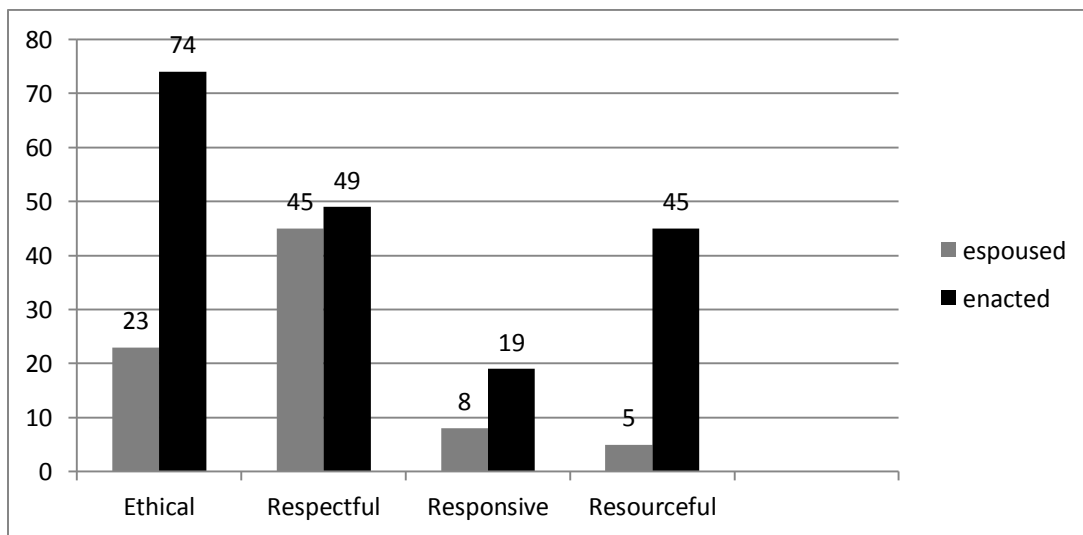


Figure 25. VBDMM Components in Language

Personal Values

A clear link was seen between personal and corporate values. A strong enacted value without a gap between corporate and satellite locations, *personal values*, spoke strongly about ethical decision making and maintaining an ethical business culture. When the question was asked, *do you hire ethics or develop them?* Invariably respondents thought people who were hired could be screened for ethics that match the organization's ethics. However, staff members who trained new employees did not concur. In their view, people who were hired were trained by their peers and coworkers in the area of ethical decision making. Meaning, *this is how it's done here*, was translated across the hierarchy and from immediate supervisors rather than naturally existing in employees.

This disjunction contrasted with the respondent view, yet it seemed as though people with a caring, serving character were naturally attracted to this field. Perhaps participants were merely accustomed to their lives mirroring the four components and could not distinguish if they came into the organization with these values or if they were developed, or, at least, enhanced. Further, it may be possible that Ability, Inc. had given employees the language of personal values that mirrored their own and employees were able to better articulate the values now than at their point of hire. Regardless, clearly, personal values played a large part in ethical decision making and the influence of an ethical business culture. Highlighting this finding are three excerpts from varying locations within the organization:

Employee 1: Our clients are treated very ethically just because of who we are and the people in this field. The people working here wouldn't be here if they didn't have that value.

Employee 2: *...And that passion and that love for working with other people People I know and myself, I live it in my own life too. The tool is used in Ability, Inc. because people believe in, agree with and relate to those ethics. It is aligned with their personal ethics.*

I don't need [the VBDMM] in front of me, it's how I live

Industry Leader

As discussed in sections 1 and 2, Ability, Inc. was considered an industry leader, with a reputation of being ethical and playing by the rules. One manager stated that some social workers purposely did not refer clients to Ability, Inc. because *they know we won't bend the rules*. Employees in multiple locations told stories of self-reporting mistakes to vendors, families or government, which illustrated the responsibility of the organization for maintaining an ethical reputation. Employees told stories about working for competitors or residential care facilities in which they saw unethical practices abound. One manager stated that the best lesson he received in the importance of ethics occurred when he worked for multiple competitors before coming to Ability, Inc. Only after he started working for this firm did he see the difference in ethical business culture.

When I came, I firmly thought we were light-years ahead in terms of professionalism. But since being here and going through process improvement and some tough leadership changes, it's gotten even better to the point where we are recognized at a level we've never been before. The business community, as well as with our peers and other industries similar to ours, so that just makes me so much more proud to work here - being part of that.

Executives used the four components in strategic planning and long-range forecasting, which I believe gave them a competitive advantage in the industry. There were high expectations to maintain their industry leader status, grow, improve and excel. There were also high expectations of employees to remain ethical, serve clients, work

hard and do their best. Strategic changes may have impacted short term attitudes and the faith employees had in leadership, but research showed, specifically in consistent values such as *intentions, dedication, innovation and hope*, that the direction the leadership was taking the company was the right one.

There are high expectations but it doesn't feel burdensome, it feels freeing. Nobody is saying, "Did you get that done? Get that done?" No one's micromanaging.

Strong Culture

Beyond the four individual components, I witnessed a strong culture in general. Respondents identified with Ability, Inc. in various ways, including purchasing popular logo wear, joking about common occurrences and realizing ethics was also important in sticky situations. During the executive focus group interview, I learned that Ability, Inc. created logo wear with the VBDMM emblazoned on t-shirts and polo shirts (Figures 26-28). That was my first indication that a strong culture surrounding the VBDMM and ethics existed. When describing the logo wear, two executives had this exchange about color:

Executive 1: *it was light blue*

Executive 2: *it was **our** blue*



Figure 26: Logo wear (front)



Figure 27: Logo wear (back)



Figure 28: VBDMM on logo wear

Saying the shirts were *our blue*, indicated a strong identification with color in addition to employees feeling enough connection to the VBDMM to don clothing showing it.

Employees also felt comfortable enough to joke about ethics as if it were just another part of the work day. In the administrative focus group interview, two employees joked about ethics in this way, illustrating that ethics had become part of the daily routine:

Employee 1: *It's like when you're on hold in your office and you're just looking around and you think "this is not ethical, I'm on hold!"*

Everyone laughs

Employee 2: *I'm on hold in this is not ethical!*

Topics that can be mutually joked about became part of the culture because a shared joke is powerful. A common viewpoint shared seriously was that ethics was visible in times of trouble.

I think ethics is really used when we make mistakes.

Ethics was present even when it caused the company to admit mistakes, which supported the earlier point about remaining an ethical leader and protecting the company's ethical reputation. In earlier examples, ethics was used in correcting billing issue, vendor bids and state reporting. Building on these examples, ethics was described as:

lived and breathed

Mission as heart

The mission of Ability, Inc. is to serve our community and people with disabilities as we live and work together.

Ability, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that helps people with disabilities live fuller lives that are integrated into the flow of community experience. Through employment at area businesses, social enrichment opportunities, and customized

support services, Ability, Inc. provides the tools clients need to build the lives they want to live.

The excerpts above were from documents published by the organization and were often seen on the website, in annual reports and newsletters. Overall, Ability, Inc. was committed to its mission. The employees referenced mission-driven decisions and improving client services frequently, as seen in the consistent enacted values categories of *dedication, quality, rewarding* and *innovation*. Taken together, the mission seemed to be the heart of the organization.

Early in the focus group research, a supervisor divulged this secret: *it seems like we've lost our heart*. The room went silent. After a pause, the remaining participants agreed. I probed with this question: *what's the heart?* No consensus was reached. In subsequent focus group interviews, I asked the same question to try to identify the heart of Ability, Inc. I heard varying explanations that included the mission, core values, clients and employees.

I would agree that there is always a vision mission out there. There are always goals, but at least when I started, it felt more like the goals were very professional; more process oriented. But it's more... the heart is still there. (+)

I remember there just being this overwhelming sense that everybody was committed to the mission. Being just out of college, I mean, I was not really committed to anything! It was kind of interesting and over time, it kind of sunk in a little bit. (+)

Ability, Inc. is still Ability, Inc. Internally, so many changes have happened. Changes are here to make sure things work out. The core values are still there. (+)

There have been changes in turnover, but it's really a culture of dedication to the mission. That's the one overriding thing in this workplace. (+)

There is a common thread towards the mission, how people generally provide services, more or less how people interact with the clients. (+)

We no longer work with people, we work with revenue and that's how people are being seen. I don't think it's intentional. I think we get in between a rock and a hard place. We need to survive as a company, we need to serve people. Which one's got to give a little bit? (-)

To me, that's part of losing our heart because the service is not personalized. (-)

They used to say that the employees were the backbone, the whole heart of Ability, Inc. It used to be our decision to hire someone or not. Not participatory any more. (-)

What is interesting about this spread of opinion about the *heart of Ability, Inc.* is that all positive comments (+) were from corporate staff. All negative comments (-) were from satellite employees. Every level and location within the company was represented by these excerpts. Examining these comments and taking into consideration the remaining research, I concluded the heart of Ability, Inc. to be the mission, which mainly involved serving clients. The concerns with *losing our heart* centered on two main aspects: clients and employees (i.e. not serving clients in the best way possible and failing to properly recognize employees). Support for this statement was seen in nearly all of the inconsistent enacted values. There may be a bit of heart damage if the organization does not recognize the importance of exercising its strongest muscle – employee satisfaction and participation.

Section 4

RQ3: What aspects of HRD are currently contributing to ethical decision making?

The case has been made that Ability, Inc. has an ethical business culture, and the four components of the Values-Based Decision Making Model were present in the

culture. The final research question asked what aspects of Human Resource Development (HRD) contributed to ethical decision making and, in turn, promoted an ethical business culture. Three aspects were found in the research that contributed to ethical decision making and culture: orientation, training, and a proclivity toward becoming a learning organization.

Employees mentioned HRD practices in several areas, first as part of their diverse orientation process. Second, the VBDMM was part of their initial training. Third, opportunities for training had decreased in the past few years. Fourth, co-workers and peers were responsible for the bulk of new employee training when they arrive at a satellite location.

Orientation

Orientation quality depended on an employee's length of service. A clear demarcation was present between those who started more than fifteen years ago and those who were more recent hires. Human resource practices became more sophisticated as the organization grew. The employee handbook stated that orientation and the amount of new employee training (as opposed to in-service training) depended on the number of hours worked by the employee. Ability, Inc.'s accrediting body, Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), outlined orientation requirements for new employees, which was reflected in this paragraph from the Ability, Inc. Employee Handbook (2012), Staff Orientation and Training section:

All employees of Ability, Inc. complete a comprehensive orientation to their specific job and to the organization in the first six months of employment.

Orientation includes required training as outlined by CARF, licensing Rule 245B, Ability, Inc. policies and procedures, health, safety, and customer service. Direct service employees must complete a minimum of 30 hours of training in their first 60 days of employment, new employees must complete 15 hours of supervised orientation prior to being alone with clients. Administrative and Customized Support employees receive a minimum of 10 hours of training their first year (p. 52).

For purposes of this research, orientation referred to the formal process for introducing new employees into the workplace. Training referred to additional instruction after a new employee began work on site in a new position.

Orientation was described by those who had been at Ability, Inc. longer than 15 years as generally *informal, personal, disorganized* or *nonexistent*. Essentially, in the third category, they often said they used the metaphor of being *thrown into the deep end of the pool* where they proceeded to just *figure it out*.

They didn't have one 17 years ago. You walked in and they said there's the job.

They did do a quarterly meeting with the president; like half-day in the boardroom.

The training was sitting down with the president back at the center. It was a brand-new center and was a little bit disorganized, but that was okay because that's what I was hired to do - to get things together and I love [doing] that. (27-year employee)

Employee 1: *They didn't have an orientation when I started 25 years ago.*

Employee 2: *There was none 23 years ago either.*

Moderator: *You pretty much showed up and they said 'here's your job'?*

Employee 1: *Pretty much. We said, tell us what to do*

Employee 1: *It was very informal. When I started they were [at the old location] and we were inside for a while with some training inside the building. Outside at a picnic table, we sat and talked to [the former president] for a while.* (25-year employee)

Employee 2: *Mine was exactly the same except that we were in the kitchen because it was winter. We had a cup of coffee. [The former president] was there.* (18-year employee)

Moderator: *did you get materials?*

Employee 2: *No, not really. It was just a conversation. Where did you come from? Where did you grow up? What are you interested in? He talked about himself; we talked about ourselves.*

Mine was also very positive. What I remember most was the informal orientation. I had a bunch of training at the corporate office and we sat with the [former] president and had coffee. It was powerful. He took the time to meet with you and he knew you personally. (17-year employee)

It was a very long process. I was hired at the corporate office and I came to the office several days. There was a group of us that were all new employees. I know it was more than one day - several days, I think – in the conference room. The other thing that we did in orientation was trading jobs with someone else.

Moderator: *Oh, like cross training?*

Yes, I went to Apple Valley for a day. It was like three months. The orientation was a pretty long process. I remember being very impressed with what we had. It was my third job out of college. We had it together. (25-year employee)

The experiences described by long-term employees seemed stressful, yet personal and powerful. Several quotes mentioned the participation of the president at the time as an important person in their career at Ability, Inc. A personal connection was forged during orientation where they felt accepted into a family and given the control to create their job as they saw fit. I believe this exemplified *empowerment*, which was found to be a gap between corporate and satellite employees (see: *support/valued* in section 1).

Orientation in the past decade or so had been renovated to include more formal processes and content. According to human resources staff, new employees were trained in vulnerable adult policies and employee handbook policies, and they met with the

executive team (VBDM reviewed during this meeting) on or after an employee's first day. New employees stated they had *a whole day of training at corporate* and it seemed to be *well done, organized and prepared*. In contrast, other employees said they spent two days at the corporate office and some time at their satellite location. For some who started employment upwards of eight years ago, their recollection tended to be fuzzy at best. Regardless, what was recalled was the overload of information that came at them all at once.

[There was] *a lot of information at once. A lot of reading. I got a binder. It's in my trunk. I still have the book but so many things have changed. We have it online now.* (8-year employee)

[My orientation] *was a little different because we had to do a lot in a different department, but I think we actually had new employee orientation in the main boardroom and all the departments. But I think that was only a day. The beginning was kind of weird because they only had orientation at a certain time and I wasn't brand-new, so by the time I went I kind of knew stuff.* (11-year employee)

[I had] *the three-day whirlwind [that I] vaguely remember.* (8-year employee)

It was a whirlwind; a lot of information. I think the first half of the day was spent with [my new supervisor] at administration office just on the basic stuff and then the other half of the day was out at the program center where I was assigned. Then with your new direct service staff, which is how I started at Ability, Inc., you have 40 hours of training in your first year I think. So, it seemed like orientation never ended. (11-year employee)

The *whirlwind* description occurred many times through the focus group interviews. Especially with the CARF accreditation regulations, there are so many mandatory trainings for new employees due to working with vulnerable adults that orientation materials were bound to be overwhelming. Yet orientation was generally spoken about in positive terms.

My experience was good. I spent that first day at the administration office and went through employee handbook. I got a benefits presentation. We went over values based decision-making and how to do respecting others and the core values. So, you go over that stuff and you go over the employee handbook and you go over vulnerable adult training. You get transportation training. It's all kind of in one day. (4-year employee)

What I really appreciated about my entry is that it was very impressive. I remember to this day... seven years is a long time... I very quickly came to the realization there was an orchestrated, organized process around my entry into the organization. I recall [HR employee] was somewhat like my coach and gatekeeper for the first few weeks. I was taken out and introduced to all the program locations and employees. I spent time with HR folks. I still remember someone telling me the core skills. They were going around each of the employees. In the handbook there was a clear process for that. I don't know if you call it "on boarding" or not, but it seemed like there was a plan for me to come in. I felt very supported when I first started. I felt like people who were in the organization, played a role in ensuring that my entry into Ability, Inc. ... that I felt supported and there was someone [from which] I could ask questions at every step of the way. (7-year employee)

The 2011 employee survey revealed only 57 percent of respondents rated new employee orientation as favorable in giving timely information.

An interesting observation by mid-length employees (about 8 years in tenure) was the executive parade. This reminded me of the executive road show mentioned in the *workload* value in section 1, whereas executives came through (or the new employee comes through the executive office area) and meets everyone at once. This practice was seen as positive because everyone was able to meet each other. While the executive parade was less personal than the picnic bench discussion with the former president, it was viewed in an affirming light by the employees at that time.

Employee 1: They had like three days of orientation. I came onboard as a supervisor and I spent time with [leadership and the HR director] and it was pretty good, I thought. (7-year employee)

Moderator: How so?

Employee 1: *All of the executives came in. Leadership people came in and talked and I thought, wow this is great!*

Employee 2: *Sounds about right. When I started, we must have started the same time, I believe it was multiple days of orientation. We had an executive parade. (8-year employee)*

Moderator: *An executive parade? What is that?*

Employee 2: *They paraded; you got to meet everyone when they came and sat down. I don't know if they still do that.*

Surprisingly, a relatively new employee (7-months on the job) described orientation as *an eight hour thing* – so, one day at corporate. Then, he was *thrown in* at the satellite location to which he was assigned. This sounded like the orientation from the early days of Ability, Inc., 20+ years ago, where people were also *thrown in*. However, there was much more structure now, so what changed?

Employee's assessment of orientation and new employee training varied depending on tenure in the organization. Employees who had been trained over a decade ago seemed to feel their orientation was more impactful and powerful because of the personal connection made between themselves and important personnel in the organization. As Ability, Inc. has grown, the orientation and training has become more comprehensive, yet impersonal. The amount of information presented is overwhelming, but necessary. Ability, Inc. should explore how to better connect to new employees on a more personal level beyond just the one to three day orientation session. Connection with a peer mentor or formalized department or satellite-based long term training program might be more beneficial than the current approach to orientation.

Training

Employees agreed that the Values-Based Decision Making Model was part of their training regimen. They were familiar with the document, even if they could not

recite the four components word-for-word. They knew enough to recognize the VBDMM as part of their decision making process. However, initial training on the VBDMM did not seem impactful. The greatest influence on values-based decision making was from co-workers and peers, as stated in section 1. This was supported by three excerpts, all from different locations and levels within the organization:

[The VBDMM] was mentioned at the leadership training session. We spent a lot of time with it. I kind of feel like as of late we're not talking about it as much and it's not up around the office. I don't have it my cube anymore. I don't think of it as lost, we've just redirected it somehow. I don't know.

I think we've had lots of different companies coming in helping us with the lean training. It was a goal for the year. Maybe [the VBDMM] could of just survived as a sub goal, but it never did.

No, I don't remember any overt training on it. I remember when I became a supervisor. [HR] talked about it quite a bit. Interestingly, though, we do have a decision-making module that talks about it.

The lack of impactful VBDMM training possibly occurred because the VBDMM is lumped in with the *whirlwind* of orientation material. Perhaps the most influential training on values-based decision making was mentioned as part of the now defunct Leadership Training Track program. Multiple people mentioned this particular training by name and that they benefitted from it. They were disappointed it had been discontinued (see section 1 – *employee*).

According to HR staff, employees received much more training than was originally understood from the focus group interviews. For example, training within the first six months for direct-care employees (those working directly with clients) included communication, multi-sensory environments, person-centered services, and employment and teaching techniques. In 2011, 71 percent of employees indicated training provided an

opportunity to improve skills. The VBDMM was reviewed as a tool to be used during decision-making “at some point in the content of all these trainings.” In addition, medical administration, CPR, crisis prevention and positive behavioral support training is completed annually. Each direct-care staff member had a standardized plan and completed an onboarding plan with their supervisors. Finally, systems training updates and mandatory Ability, Inc. updates were received throughout the year.

Trainings conducted within the context of an employee’s immediate job seemed to be most valuable, probably because this training impacted an employee’s day-to-day job. This excerpt was from a satellite employee and ties together VBDMM training and the training mentioned frequently by satellite employees as the most common way people learn their job:

If you have it [ethics], you have it. If you don’t have it before, once it’s pointed out to you, you have to have it. I think it’s situational. If you came into Ability, Inc. right now and you weren’t familiar [with the VBDMM], your coworkers would explain it to you. We used to have mentors. You would go to your mentor coworker in the old days for specific questions. If you are not confident in a decision, you have to talk to someone (supervisor, peer, coworker, etc.).

Was this the preferred system for ongoing, on-the-job training? What happened to the mentor program? How does the co-worker on-the-job training norm impact workload?

Consider this excerpt from another satellite employee:

[With regard to coworkers training new people], we all have to complete our job too and that’s hard to do if somebody is constantly coming to you, asking ‘how I do this and how I do that’? It’s not that I don’t like helping anybody, but sometimes it’s like, ‘go ask your supervisor, where’s the supervisor?’

Additionally, employees at all levels and locations mentioned that trainings seemed to have gone by the wayside. In my experience, people complain about having to go to

training. However, in this organization, people were bemoaning not being able to go anymore. Or they were lamenting that the corporate training position was eliminated, which meant that trainings did not come to the satellite locations as frequently as it once did.

Not to get off the topic, but I'm finding that the trainings have been really lacking [for years]. We used to have a trainer. People would come in and train you on vulnerable adult training and they were good trainings. Ever since those people left their positions haven't been filled again. So we don't have the kind of training. If we don't have a trainer...

I think that we are lacking in our trainings. You don't get to go out. You don't get any type of in-service very often. I went to one this year and it's the first one I've been to in five or six years.

Is on-the-job training with a stressed-out workforce beneficial? Rising client caseloads required in-center employees to take more clients out in larger groups. This was mentioned as *something we are not really trained on*. Specifically,

[Being in the community with a group of clients successfully] depends on who you take with you and where you are going. That's something we were not really trained on. When you go out in the community with a group of people you have to know what their alone time is and you have to know if you're going to see them again if they walk away.

This lack of formal training and impact on workload can negatively impact clients, leading to a weakness in mission fulfillment. Was this being addressed at the corporate office? Did the executive staff realize the impact that a dearth of training combined with increased caseloads can have on morale, turnover and satisfaction rates of both clients and employees?

Learning Organization

A foundational theory in HRD is that of the learning organization. By definition, a learning organization is:

...an organization where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together (Senge, 1990, p.3).

The focus group interviews did not include a question that specifically mentioned this theory, nor did I verbally discuss it. However, corporate employees specifically described Ability, Inc. as a *learning organization*. This was a prevalent theme that was absent from all satellite focus group discussions. Rereading the transcripts for meaning rather than verbiage, I am convinced neither the term *learning organization* nor the benefits of being a learning organization were present during any satellite discussions. Nonetheless, at the higher levels of the organization, employees used the term liberally. A review of the published documents also revealed use of the term in the 2010 Family Satisfaction Surveys.

As a learning organization and one of the most trusted service providers in [this state], we are always looking for ways to improve.

I believe Ability, Inc. has embraced the concept of being a learning organization in most areas because they consistently look for ways to improve efficiency and quality.

I think the theme that has stayed consistent is that Ability, Inc. is a learning organization. That was there from the beginning and our whole training was about learning and having the support you need to do your job.

When I started I think my first impression was the respect for the individuals who work for people who are in centers [clients]. Some didn't have employment as a goal. Some had real challenging behaviors since the state hospitals had closed not that long ago. So, lots of up and downs and so forth. But I do know I was so impressed with the respect the staff had for the clients. It's a part of what is here, that this is a learning organization. The opportunities as staff that I have to learn were phenomenal. I was given many opportunities to learn and find my skills and probably have had at least six positions in the company.

Nevertheless, changes abounded and leadership seemed willing to learn from their mistakes and move forward in a productive fashion. Unfortunately, employee participation, an important component of learning organization theory, seemed to be a weakness (see section 1 – *employee*).

We talked about a learning organization. We also admit to and learn from mistakes. And we put that into practice. Really, when someone makes a mistake, depending on the severity, or if it has to be written off or they were dismissed from Ability, Inc. - usually that is the best learning opportunity someone can have.

People are pretty good about it. I think the question of being innovative goes back to what [another participant] was saying. When our centers didn't look so great, we started getting people in employment. We were learning one of the great things... what's important for the people we provide services for? We were always looking for what's next. What's the next thing we can do as an organization that's part of [being a] learning organization? [How can we] continue to grow? That's where you might hear people [say Ability, Inc.] is always changing. You could hear that [as a] downside to the organization.

During one of the corporate focus group interviews, two employees had an exchange that resulted in a mini-history lesson about the development of the VBDMM and how it affected Ability, Inc. This last quote is from a 25-year employee to the larger group:

You know, I think it was more an evolution. This was the time we looked at ourselves that at least I felt like Ability, Inc. was learning how to be a learning organization.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter examines how findings, philosophy and theories correlate; and provides recommendations for the organization from an HRD perspective.

Philosophical Approaches

The findings reveal two philosophical approaches within ethical decision making at Ability, Inc.: utilitarian and deontological. As examined in Chapter 2, a utilitarian approach to ethics is rooted in consequentialism. Deontological approaches to ethical decision making are derived from a nonconsequentialist belief system. Both were actively found within this organization, yet the philosophical stance adopted tended to be different depending on the level of the individual employee within the organizational hierarchy or the employee's proximity to clients in day-to-day duties.

Utilitarian

As employees were promoted in the organizational hierarchy, their view on how to be mission-driven tended to become more conceptual. A focus on maximizing positive outcomes and minimizing negative outcomes for the greatest number of people was evident in ethical decision making language. Often, examples of cost-benefit analysis-type decisions were used to describe decisions that were in the best interest of the client and thus were mission-driven and ethical. Executives and managers who were responsible for functions or multiple satellite locations tended to balance the needs of the many with the needs of the few.

As decision-makers in a large non-profit organization whose mission was to serve the people with disabilities, at what point does it become necessary to choose between

needs of the many versus the needs of the few? A lower-level employee specifically stated the utilitarian viewpoint as such:

[This is what I] *had been told. We have to consider the needs of the many versus the needs of the few. I've actually heard that twice. We work with people with disabilities! It is all about the few!*

Whether this is an accurate translation of the viewpoint of managers and executives is unknown as perceptions of upper management by lower-management or line-staff swung between extremes. Regardless, when employees make the transition from individual responsibility to corporate responsibility, does their philosophical viewpoint change? Can a non-profit successfully operate by focusing solely on mission and not on money? Can a successful, growing and innovative organization focus on the needs of a few? Is a utilitarian viewpoint necessary to successfully compete in the human services industry? Maximizing the greatest good for the greatest number of people while also remaining responsive to budgetary restrictions and mindful of a sustainable future appeared to be the framework with which strategic decision-makers operated. Therefore, a more complex version of utilitarian philosophy appeared to exist at higher echelons.

Bowen (2004a) cited problems with a utilitarian perspective to ethical decision making. First, a utilitarian standpoint can be used with little training in philosophy (Borowski, 1998) because to do so require the application of a cost-benefit analysis that is inherent in most people (Gandz & Hayes, 1998), but often leaves out human considerations that are important in the human services industry. Second, utilitarian decisions must accurately predict potential consequences which ignores the changeable human spirit and disregards free will (Bowen 2004b). Third, criticisms of operating an

organization based on utilitarian ideas must define “good” and how “good” is measured. Can “good” be quantified?

The application of a cost-benefit analysis is typical in weighing business decisions. Yet, when making business decisions about serving people with disabilities in a non-profit organization, is a cost-benefit approach appropriate? At some point, it must be part of the decision making process, otherwise the organization will become insolvent. Executives and managers often expressed a desire to be *resourceful* and *ethical*. A balance clearly existed between the two priorities, along with *respect* and *responsiveness* as a second set of priorities.

I believe “good” was determined by the organization’s mission statement. If an organization is fulfilling or actively working toward its mission, is that action deemed “good” by organizational standards? If so, in this case, “good” was serving the community and people with disabilities in an ethical, responsive, respectful and resourceful manner, as outlined in the Values-Based Decision Making Model (VBDMM). If these values were evident in the decision-making language, as had been illustrated in the research, then was “good” already being done? Is the consequence of “good” a fulfillment, or at least execution of, mission? Organizations determine their own “good” when deciding upon a mission to undertake. If decision making was driven by mission and the mission was inherently ethical, then logically “good” was a consequence of a mission-driven institution. Utilitarian philosophy exists within Ability, Inc. and was not fundamentally flawed. Serving more people with disabilities while balancing budgetary realities was a noteworthy cause. However, utilitarian philosophy was mainly seen at the

upper echelons of the organizational hierarchy and was not necessarily what drove direct-care staff.

Deontology

Employees and supervisors in the direct-care areas of social enrichment, career development and employment and who worked with clients on a regular basis tended to operate from a deontological perspective when making decisions. A focus on autonomy, dignity, respect and duty was evident throughout. The duty to serve clients ethically was heard frequently from employees at the lower ranks of the hierarchy. This did not assume that ethical duty was not present with high-level staff; it was just not as frequently mentioned at the higher levels compared to lower levels. The intensity differed, not the intent.

In Bowen's (2004a) study of a pharmaceutical company as an ethical exemplar, deontology dominated the ethical decision-making framework. Specifically noted was the impact of the healthcare industry on ethical decision-making. When dealing with life and death issues, one tended to consider more than a cost-benefit analysis consequentialist approach. Similarly, when making decisions involving vulnerable adults, employees demonstrated a duty-based approach to decision making, often disregarding the costs associated with the decision. When asked to give an example of an ethical practice that demonstrates any of the four VBDMM components, a satellite staff member had this to say:

Fraud and waste. That's a big thing. We don't want be fraudulent and it's always talked about. We go beyond a legal standard to ethical. Like, the way we take attendance. We are writing it on paper and doing all that stuff. We don't have to do that, it's not part of state law that says we have to, but that's we do.

Going beyond the legal standard to ensure billing accuracy is an example of deontological thinking. It costs more to document both on paper and electronically, but accuracy is an important aspect of *ethics*. The reporting of mistakes was also said to show the values of Ability, Inc.: “I think where we see ethics the most in in our mistakes.” Employees stated their personal values meshed with the organization’s values in statements such as, “It’s just now I make decisions naturally” and “I don’t have to look at the model to know what’s right.”

In contrast, an employee offered her opinion that the answer to problems at Ability, Inc. was fewer clients, which was the opposite stance the organization had adopted for sustainability. While costs and efficiencies should be taken into consideration, employees reiterated that quality service should not suffer because of budgetary considerations. Perhaps this was why inconsistency existed between the espoused values of *workload* and *sustainability*. All employees were doing more with less, impacting both *resourceful* and *responsive* values. In order for quality service to remain consistent, direct-service employees were working to maintain the status quo.

Kantian theory highlighted autonomy and the categorical imperative. Rather than right being determined by outcome, as in utilitarian theory, it was determined by discovering one’s own calling. The component of *respect* typified Kantian ethics by asking decision-makers to consider the dignity and worth of others. As reported in Chapter 4, *respect* repeatedly emerged in both espoused and enacted values. The second test of right and wrong, according to Kant (1790/1952), was intention. If a decision was

made on the basis of goodwill rather than selfish reasons, the decision was acceptable and right. As stated in Chapter 2, for an act to be deemed ethical, the desire must be present to do right and uphold a moral duty. The consequences are moot. *Leadership intentions* were a consistent value, yet *trust* was inconsistent. My interpretation of this difference was slight, but significant. Lower-level employees, driven by deontological principles, overwhelmingly agreed that the intent of leadership was to make the best decisions possible. Yet, they did not trust that the decisions being made were correct. This important distinction was not easy to explain, but it illustrated a gap. According to Kantian ethics, good intent equals right. Employees believed the decisions being made, albeit painful, were made with good intentions. Thus, deontological philosophy was applied in this example.

A final theme that supported a deontological viewpoint was the use of the VBDMM as rationale for reasoning. As outlined in Chapter 4, the VBDMM and its components were ubiquitous in decision-making. Examples of situations in which the VBDMM was used and its components cited as being major factors were stated in the findings. Decisions were made that were not necessarily easy, but by using the VBDMM as a framework for ethical choices and as a judgment tool, a deontological perspective was clearly seen.

While both philosophical perspectives were conveyed in the findings, I believe the predominant perspective that drove ethical decision-making rested within the deontological framework, similar to Bowen's (2004a) findings. A non-profit organization serving the needs of vulnerable adults with a twenty-year history of values-based decision

making and considered an industry leader and rule setter could not have been successful if the dominant culture rested in consequentialism. Based on these findings, one can conclude the organizational culture was dominated by a duty-based approach to ethics, even though both viewpoints were expressed in the data. As such, a balance must be struck between decisions that are favorable in light of a cost-benefit analysis and decisions that serve the greater good.

Theoretical Application

An important aspect of this study was the role of organizational values and personal values in ethical decision making. As such, three theories undergirded the research: espoused versus enacted values, learning organizations and ethical business culture. The combination of these three theories provided a theoretical framework in which this study is grounded. Theories in action (espoused) versus theories-in-use (enacted) helped to identify gaps between beliefs that were merely stated and beliefs that were evident in behavior. Consistent values can “enhance human activity, responsibility, self-actualization, learning and effectiveness and make it likely that organizations will begin to decrease the movement toward entropy and increase the forces toward learning and health” (Argyris & Schön, 1978, p. xi). Model I and Model II depicted individual governing variables, action strategies and principal assumptions. Any organization that desires to flourish rather than subsist should consider adopting the principles of a learning organization. In industries in which change is a constant, as in the human-services industry, only adaptable organizations that are flexible and productive will succeed

(Senge, 1990). The final theory completes the trifecta by applying the ethical business culture model to Ability, Inc.

Espoused versus Enacted Values

Researchers discussed the importance of HRD in helping nonprofit leaders ensure their foundational support, endowments, boards and staff to encourage investments that build both leadership competencies and organizational capacity. Specifically, organization development practices can “help nonprofit leaders recognize the interconnectedness of the individual, the organization, the communities it serves, and society and support nonprofit leaders in evaluating whether the espoused values are congruent with the behavior and actions of the organization as a whole” (Wirtenberg, Backer, Chang, Lannan, Applegate, Conway, Abrams & Slepian, 2007, p. 192). This statement echoed the importance of having consistent, or at least compatible, espoused and enacted values.

Research question 1, based directly on Argyris and Schon’s (1978) espoused versus enacted values theory, asked to what extent have the corporate values of the organization permeated the corporate and satellite locations? Rather, to what extent have the espoused and enacted values remained consistent? Espoused values are not necessarily the same as organizational values. In their study of post-merger performance, Daly, Pounder & Kabanoff (2004) made the distinction between espoused values and organizational values. Espoused values are values that are expressed by senior managers in published public statements such as annual reports, newsletters, balanced scorecards and strategic plans. Organizational values are values shared by all or a large share of the

organization's members. In Daly, Ponder and Kabanoff's view, regardless of whether or not a firm's espoused values reflect its enacted value, the consequences of difference may be significant. "The process of developing shared understandings was more predictive of outcomes than was the content of individual understandings" (p. 336).

As found in this case study, sixteen values were consistently enacted and espoused (Table 6). This study differed from others in that the application of consistent values (espoused = enacted) to the four Values-Based Decision Making Model components was evident. Consistency between these three categories strengthened the organization's reputation and external legitimacy. Inconsistent values (espoused \neq enacted) were only found to exist in six categories, but the importance of these categories must be considered. Violation of espoused values may result in loss of credibility and relationship disengagement by those who interact with the organization (Kabanoff & Daly, 2002; Siehl & Martin, 1990; Sutton & Callahan, 1987). Disengagement was expressed as both espoused and enacted, which was a consistent yet negative value. It seems appropriate to conclude, then, that the presence of inconsistent values showed the loss of engagement within this organization.

An important aspect of Argyris and Schon's (1978) theory was the development of Model I (Figure 2) and Model II (Figure 3) classifications. Each model included the same categories: governing variables, action strategies, consequences for the behavioral world, consequences for learning and effectiveness. Model I behaviors included single-loop learning. Single loop-learning, in which the status quo is maintained in favor of constancy of governing variables, would not support an environment conducive to

learning organizations. Model II behaviors relied on double-loop learning. Double loop-learning effectively tested assumptions and “permits greater learning about one’s effectiveness” (p. 86). This was conducive to learning organizations.

In application to the findings, Model I consequences were found to exist in multiple areas. First, according to Argyris and Schön (1978), governing variables in Model I incorporated defined goals, win/loss scenarios, minimizing negative feeling, and rational behavior. The organization clearly defined goals as present in the 2012 and 2013 balanced scorecard, fundraising targets and turnover rates. Win/loss scenarios were not present and contradict the VBDMM area of *respectful* interactions that specifically guide employees to *promote win/win situations*. Minimization of negative feelings and suppression of the ability to express concerns or negativity was present in the findings at lower-levels of the organization. Employees shared concerns that applied to this area of Model I, such as:

You don't dare bring up anything negative. You'll be out the door.

A concern I have is [not] knowing who you can share your concerns with for this change. For me, personally, I like what I do. I've gone through the transition and I don't want to do it again.

Rational behavior sounds positive, but in this case it protected others from being hurt by withholding information, creating rules to censor information and behavior and holding private meetings. In this case, Ability, Inc. shared small bits of information regarding how strategic changes would affect employee jobs based on the timing recommended by a consulting team. Tidbits of information were released over the four-month focus group research timeframe that caused concern among employees. When asked about the change

progression in focus groups, at every juncture there were comments that expressed confusion, concern and a lack of knowledge about how employees would be affected. Information of the changes released was not adequate, which caused trepidation among staff, as seen in the findings in which *change* was the largest consistent value. Everyone talked about change, but no one felt they knew anything about the changes.

Mistrust, an inconsistent value, was part of Model I consequences for behavior. Clearly seen as a gap between lower-level and higher-level staff, the mistrust of decisions regarding the strategic direction of the organization was a key concern. Yet, contrary to Model I consequences, *good leadership intentions* were consistent among all employees and locations, which contradicted consequences such as manipulation, controlling, fear of vulnerability and selfishness. In the Model I category of consequences and rationality, a disparity existed between corporate and satellite employees in terms of *freedom*, *empowerment* and *independence*. Corporate employees felt free, empowered and supported. Satellite employees felt unsupported and were worried about decreased independence resulting from changes taking place. The fact that satellite employees did not know how their independence would be impacted four months into the change typified Model I action strategies of withholding information, creating rules to censor information and holding private meetings. Were these leadership decisions or was leadership following the advice of outside consultants? Change practices seemed incongruent with past change decisions and behavior. Employees emphatically stated this as well.

Model II variables were exemplified in the consistent themes of *innovation* and *independence*. Employees confirmed the presence of situations in which they were able to be innovative in determining programming needs, creative services and employment for clients. High freedom of choice and independence was evident. It seems as though employees responsible for tasks rooted in determining client services were empowered more than in other tasks. Process improvements did not typically involve participative decision making. One satellite employee described the method of determining process improvements as non-participatory: “They don’t ask us anymore.” Employees would be asked to attend a meeting at the corporate office to help improve a process only to discover the decision had already been made. They felt disregarded and that their time was wasted. “Just tell me what to do, then” seemed to be a common phrase. “Don’t ask if you don’t want to incorporate my ideas,” was another. This is contradictory to Model II behavior.

Model II variables reflected inconsistently in the research included *person-centered*, *support*, and *value* and *workload*. As stated in the findings, a gap was found between satellite and corporate experiences in these areas. Joint control of tasks, bilateral protection of others, open confrontation of difficult issues and minimally defensive situations can be applied to these three inconsistent values. Joint control is ineffectual if all parties are not involved in decisions that affect all parties. Bilateral protection of others is contrasted to the feeling of increasing workload and burdensome processes. Not feeling valued conflicts with a positive quality of life as a consequence in this model. In short, double-loop learning, learning from learning, seemed to have slowed during this

high period of change. Double-loop learning seemed to have existed at one time, as seen with the evidence of *nostalgia* and a shared desire for the way it used to be when Ability, Inc. was smaller and less corporate. People used to feel valued and supported. How did Ability, Inc. evolve into a corporate behemoth that operated less like a learning organization?

Ability, Inc. had some alignment of personal and corporate values, as discussed in Chapter 4. The alignment of espoused and enacted values is considered an important first step toward becoming a learning organization. Within upper-management, it was assumed Ability, Inc. was already a learning organization and had been operating as such. Clearly, some important components of learning organizations were missing.

Learning Organization

Executives and administrative staff at the corporate location talked of Ability, Inc. as a learning organization; not so at any of the satellite locations. (The term *learning organization* may be more of a buzz word in executive and management circles rather than in the human services industry in general.) Was Ability, Inc. actually a learning organization? Did the organization exemplify the components of a learning organization? Three approaches to learning organizations were used to undergird the case study research. Learning organization theories according to Senge (1990), Watkins and Marsick (1993) and Bierema (1996) were applied to the findings in order to understand whether Ability, Inc. was a learning organization as indicated by these three quotes:

I think the theme that has stayed consistent is that Ability, Inc. is a learning organization. That was there from the beginning and our whole training was about learning and having the support you need to do your job.

We were always looking for what's next... what's the next thing we can do as an organization that's part of [being a] learning organization? [How can we] continue to grow? That's where you might hear people [say Ability, Inc.] is always changing. You could hear that [as a] downside to the organization.

I worked in program. When I started I think my first impression was the respect for the individuals who work for people who are in centers. Some didn't have employment as a goal. Some had real challenging behaviors since the state hospitals had closed not that long ago. So lots of up and downs and so forth, but I do know I was so impressed with the respect the staff had for the clients. It's a part of what is here, that this is a learning organization. The opportunities as staff that I have to learn were phenomenal. I was given many opportunities to learn and find my skills and probably have had at least six positions in the company.

Senge (1990) described a learning organization as a system to be viewed holistically in which all employees work together at all levels to solve problems across traditional boundaries. Innovative solutions are also a part of Senge's philosophy. The five disciplines that exist within a learning organization, according to Senge, were (1) systems thinking, (2) personal mastery, (3) mental models, (4) shared vision and (5) team acquisition of knowledge. Well known scholars in the field of learning organizations, Watkins and Marsick (1993), asserted that this type of organization enacted six action strategies:

1. Creation of continuous learning opportunities
2. Promotion of inquiry and dialogue
3. Collaboration and team learning
4. Systems that capture and share learning
5. People empowered toward a collective vision
6. Connection between the organization and its environment

Watkins and Marcisk further contended that individual learning should enhance organizational learning by increasing the organization's capacity to adapt to environmental pressures. Bierema (1996) argued that organizations should take a "holistic approach to the development of individuals in the context of a learning organization [that] produces well-informed, knowledgeable, critical-thinking adults who have a sense of fulfillment and inherently make decisions that cause an organization to prosper" (p. 22). Bierema further contended that employees "deserve the space and support to create and articulate a personal vision and understand how it connects to the organizational purpose and goals" (p. 25). Together, these three approaches to learning organizations provided a well-rounded backdrop against which to compare the research findings in order to conclude whether Ability, Inc. was a learning organization.

Perhaps the most important aspect of Senge's (1990) theory was a shift of mind; how can one change from seeing oneself as a part to seeing oneself as part of a whole? How would organization members shift from seeing themselves as reactionary to active participants in shaping reality: from reacting to present to creating future? The systems viewed often related to long-term strategic thinking. In the long-term, feedback loops and consideration over an extended period of time were important to establish perspective on the whole system. Evidence of systems thinking at Ability, Inc. was seen in multiple aspects of the organization. Weakness in systems thinking was also evident.

Systems thinking was evident in the areas of *sustainability, growth, and standardization* and *branding*. The strategic direction of the organization was oriented toward adapting to changes in the industry and remaining sustainable for future

generations. Standardization of processes and consistent branding showed a tendency toward using systems thinking to remain competitive. Further, the consistency of the four components of the values-based decision making model was another indication of systems thinking. It was evident that long-term, systematic changes were decided upon while keeping values-based decision making in mind. However, weaknesses in systems thinking were evidenced by not considering long-term consequences of decisions and how they affected all parts of the system. This was seen in the contradiction between *trust*, *intention*, *support* and *value* of employees. If systems thinking was in practice, employees would see the benefits of standardization and consistent branding at the lowest levels; they would trust leadership in addition to knowing their intentions were good; and they would feel supported and valued through this change. The necessity and benefits of change were not being communicated down the chain of command, which uncovered a weakness in the system.

Personal mastery, the second component in Senge's (1990) learning organization theory, is the "discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, developing patience and seeing reality objectively" (p. 7). Personal mastery goes beyond skill building and incorporates one's calling. It has a spiritual component but is not religious. Personal mastery involved developing a personal vision and striving toward that vision, realizing it will never be fully achieved. I believe personal mastery was seen in the desire for more personal and professional training expressed by employees and the *dedication* value that was consistent at all levels and locations. People did not work at Ability, Inc., or in the human services industry in

general, for the money. The work of caring for developmentally and physically disabled people was mentally, physically and emotionally exhausting. In essence, people did this work for a living because they were driven by a personal vision and calling. This was supported by employees at all levels and locations.

The third component described by Senge (1990) is the development of mental models, “deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, pictures, and images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action” (p. 8). Senge was influenced by Argyris and Schön (1978) in this area in his incorporation of reflection in and on action, part of Model II behavior. Specifically, mental models involve the ability to carry on “learningful” (p. 9) conversations that balance examination and promotion of their own thinking in order to hold it up to public scrutiny and the influence of others. Entrenched mental models at Ability, Inc., longing for the way it used to be, were seen in the consistent value of *nostalgia*. Employees at all levels and locations who had been employed for over a decade expressed a desire for or recalled with fondness the familial nature of a once-smaller organization. While a smaller Ability, Inc. could not successfully compete in today’s industrial climate, the familial corporate culture was missed. Can familial corporate culture be achieved again without having to constrict growth? A second mental model was the conflicting view of *person-centeredness* in the culture. While the culture of *person-centeredness* is espoused, in actuality, the culture was client-centered. The term “person” or “human” includes employees, too. Finally, a third mental model was that Ability, Inc. was considered by insiders and outsiders to be ethical. This was both espoused and enacted in the research. As a consistent positive

mental model, it was a good example of one aspect that had been ingrained within the culture – a hallmark of a learning organization.

Senge's (1990) fourth component is building a shared vision. Ability, Inc. successfully built a shared vision of an organization that was ethical, treated clients with care, and provided quality and innovative programming. Client choice and advocacy of client independence was clearly shared among all employees. According to Senge (1990), "People excel and learn, not because they are told to, but because they want to" (p. 9). A desire for more training and development was evident throughout because employees wanted to be more knowledgeable about their industry and profession. Ability, Inc. could improve by building a shared vision around sustainability, the need for change and adaptability, and valuing employees. This is discussed further in the recommendations section that follows.

Finally, Senge (1990) contended team learning was the culmination of personal mastery, shared vision and the ability for people to act together. This is complicated because Senge asserted team learning was based on the ability to "suspend assumptions and enter into genuine thinking together" (p. 10). Team learning also recognizes the need for teams to realize patterns of communication that would weaken learning opportunities in teams. All employees, regardless of locale or level, agreed there was a lack of timely communication and a disconnect between satellite and corporate employees. The recent move to centralize decisions contributed to the disconnect as well. The combination of these elements would certainly impact team learning. Where team learning was best seen was at the individual satellite locations. Employees identified within their locations (i.e.

teams) much more than with Ability, Inc. in general. Community identification (i.e. “we’re Pro-Location 3[our community]”) was important but could go too far, as seen in the transcripts that identified “rogue teams” as a problem that needed to be dealt with immediately in the past.

In comparing the work of Senge (1990) and Watkins and Marsick (1993), similarities between their approaches emerge. Three disciplines within Senge’s definition of learning organizations related to four imperatives of learning organizations as defined by Watkins and Marsick (1993). Table 8 shows the relationship between these areas. Examples from the research that related to Senge’s areas of personal mastery, team learning and building a shared vision, can also be applied to Watkins and Marsick’s (1993) framework in the areas of creating of continuous learning opportunities, promotion of inquiry and dialogue, encouragement of collaboration and team learning, and empowering people toward a collective vision.

Differences in the two approaches to learning organizations are illustrated in Table 8 in the shaded areas. Whereas Senge (1990) espoused systems thinking and transcending entrenched mental models, Watkins and Marsick (1993) took a different approach. They recommend establishing systems to capture and share learning. Employees were often overloaded with the amount of information that was passed along electronically and verbally. “A learning organization saves the gains without overloading the system” (p. 16). Building in systems for the storage and retrieval of information supported efficiencies and reduces workload stresses. Watkins and Marsick used multiple examples to illustrate knowledge storage systems, including electronic bulletin board

systems, on-demand electronic maintenance records and computerized information to aid self-directed teams in quick decision making. While the technology has changed since their book chapter was published in 1993, the concept remains valid.

Ability, Inc. utilized multiple technologies to record client work time, route transportation and bill employers. The organization used an online environment to house employee training materials, manuals and a daily announcement system. Yet, as Watkins and Marsick (1993) pointed out, “often, an employee gains real insights into a recurring problem but has no way of passing these insights on to someone else struggling with a similar problem” (p. 17). There was virtually no sharing of information between satellite locations. Everything was routed through the corporate office, which was supported by the movement to centralize operations and decisions. This is not a hallmark of a learning organization. Decision making became top-down in regard to process improvements and efficiency. Learning organizations involve employees at all levels. Satellite employees who had been at Ability, Inc. for over a decade indicated they were often asked to participate in a focus group, but frequently the decision had already been made, resulting in a waste of their time. Employees started to view their role in organizational decision making as corporate pandering, not participation. Managers and executives agreed that they had not been good at providing timely communication about changes because “everything has had to move so fast.”

The weakness in this area is seen mainly in the inconsistent value of *workload*. Perhaps building more infrastructure for the sharing of knowledge and more efficient communication horizontally between satellite locations and vertically from satellite

offices to corporate would improve the areas of *workload* and *disconnection* and foster a more efficient use of centralized decision making without disregarding employee feedback and participation. Essentially, centralized decision making can remain. But if a mechanism for employee feedback was established for information to travel across and up, rather than just down, the perception of disconnection between and among satellite and corporate offices might improve. Further, the ability to better communicate workload struggles may provide the corporate office with timely and accurate information for staffing needs.

Table 8

A comparison of three learning organization theories

Senge (1990) Mental Models			
Systems Thinking	Personal Mastery	Building Shared Vision	Team Learning
Bierema; systemic and holistic	Watkins & Marsick: Create Continuous Learning Opportunities		
	Bierema: well-informed, knowledgeable, critical- thinking adults who have a sense of fulfillment and		
			Watkins & Marsick: Promote Inquiry and Dialogue
			Watkins & Marsick: Encourage Collaboration and Team Learning
		Watkins & Marsick: Empower People Toward a Collective Vision Bierema: expression of an individual vision and how it connects with the organization	
Watkins & Marsick (1993) Establish Systems to Capture and Share Learning			

Bierema’s (1996) view of developing learning organizations focused on systematic holistic individual development and the development and expression of an individual vision and how it connected with the organization. Bierema’s two conditions are loosely plotted on Table 8. Because Bierema’s conditions were individual, not necessarily collective or team-based, it was difficult to compare the three theories. However, Bierema’s assertion that individual development should be “systemic and

holistic” can be applied to Senge’s (1990) systems thinking in that there should be a strategic plan in place company-wide for the development of individuals within the organization. Further, this concept connected with Watkins and Marsick’s (1993) component involving creating continuous learning opportunities which are necessary in a comprehensive development program. One could not exist without the other. Bierema’s statement that learning organizations should produce well-informed, knowledgeable, critical-thinking adults with a sense of fulfillment connected to both Senge and Watkins and Marsick in that these attributes were the byproduct of personal mastery and the creation of continuous learning opportunities. Additionally, Bierema’s final statement was that learning organizations should encourage the discovery and expression of a personal vision and how it connected to the larger organizational vision. Building a shared vision and empowering people toward a collective vision related to this final point. However, Bierema added an individual element of self-discovery that was not seen in the other two theories.

In application to the findings, Bierema’s (1996) focus on the development of the individual employee as a larger part of the organizational system was the largest gap. Together, the inconsistent values, negative consistent values and Bierema’s theory pointed toward a need for individual employee development to flourish in this organization. Development of the individual leads to a more productive workplace. If Ability, Inc. developed a renewed commitment to individual employee development at all levels, perhaps this would increase efficiency, production and satisfaction among satellite employees.

Adult Learning

Since organizations comprise adults and a central theme of learning organizations rests in learning, adult learning must be addressed. Adults desire to be actively involved in the learning process, not just kept apprised of the outcomes. Just as instructors or facilitators in adult learning situations must include serving as resource advisors and learning facilitators (Brookfield, 1986; Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990), so should this organization realize the need for inclusion of employees. As seen in the findings, informing employees of the outcome of major changes was not enough to sustain job satisfaction. Organizations such as Ability, Inc. must be aware of the needs of individual learners as well as how adults learn collectively. Recall Mumford's (1996) pyramid of learning from Chapter 2, which starts with individual learning and progresses through group and team learning, culminating in organizational learning. Adults need to be involved in the full process to feel part of the organization's decision making, as evidenced in the findings. Further, Bierema's (1996) assertion of adults needing "space and support to create and articulate a personal vision and understand how it connects to the organizational purpose and goals" tied in to the needs of adult learners in becoming a valuable part of a learning organization.

Ethical Business Culture

Ethics was a clear and consistent value in the research. Regardless of the other inconsistencies between satellite and corporate offices or between employee hierarchical levels or negative consistent values, the crux of this research was grounded in ethics. Echoing Sims and Brinkmann (2003), ethical culture at Ability, Inc. was "deep" rather

than merely witnessed in cultural artifacts. The organization used mechanisms to reinforce ethics as seen in the consistent presence of *ethics, respect, resourcefulness* and *responsiveness*. Ethical values were present at all levels and locations. A commitment to operating in an ethical environment and doing the best for clients existed. Conditions for developing an ethical business culture were evidenced. Gilmartin (2003) contended that top leaders must set the right tone through formal ethics training, enforced standards of conduct and formal mechanisms for reporting wrongdoings. These were all present at Ability, Inc.



Figure 9. Five clusters of characteristics of ethical business cultures (Ardichvili, Mitchell & Jondle, 2009).

The five characteristics of ethical business cultures, as developed by Ardichvili, Mitchell and Jondle (2009) were also evident at Ability, Inc. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the model developed by Ardichvili and his colleagues. The significant

characteristics of ethical business cultures, the “lifeblood of the organization” (p. 449), were the mission and vision. The mission of Ability, Inc., to serve people with disabilities, drove the culture. Alignment of mission and vision is vital in developing organizational norms. This was seen in the alignment of personal values and organizational values, agreement that Ability, Inc. was an ethical organization, and the shared dedication to innovation and quality. In the findings, ethics was referred to as *lived and breathed*, which was a metaphor for the “lifeblood” referred to by Ardichvili and his colleagues. However, it was also stated that Ability, Inc. had *lost its heart*. So, if the mission was the *lifeblood*, what was the heart? Perhaps employees are the heart, which was why they seemed to doubt the direction of the organization and its sustainability. Along these lines, alignment of vision was unclear due to inconsistencies in sustainability and growth values. Stakeholder balance was weakened because of the lack of attention placed on employee welfare and satisfaction. However, as seen in the employer and family satisfaction surveys, these categories of stakeholders were consistently pleased with the value received for services. Findings indicated process integrity in the areas of dedication to quality and investments in values-based and ethics training. These areas were clearly and consistently positive. Corporate governance processes were outside the scope of the research, and decision-making was not transparent overall. Leadership effectiveness received mixed results in that leaders were praised for their good intentions, innovation, quality, hope and ethics; yet, leadership effectiveness was hindered by mistrust, lack of support and a desire to rebrand and centralize. Finally, long-term perspective was evident in the placement of mission above profit and long-term gain over

short-term benefits. Changes at Ability, Inc. occurred in order to sustain for the future in anticipation of reduced government funding and the desire to increase efficiency. In short, a long-term perspective had been adopted even though some gaps in the short-term widened.

Recommendations

Recommendations from a Human Resource Development perspective were based on an amalgamation of findings, philosophical perspectives and theoretical framework. Eight specific recommendations conclude this chapter. These recommendations form the structure of the report that was given to Ability, Inc.

Restore what worked

The shared value of *nostalgia*, for a return to a smaller Ability, Inc. was an important consideration. Ability, Inc. could not contract in size, but it could try to re-establish the familial culture that attracted and retained many long-term employees. Knowing people by name when they come to the corporate office or when executives visit satellite offices was part of familial culture. People wanted to be known and to feel like part of the larger whole. Restoration of a formal peer mentorship program, which findings showed previously existed, may help reduce supervisor training burdens. In addition, leadership track training was mentioned as an excellent program for employee development, which resulted in employees feeling part of the larger whole. One comment about this now defunct program was that it allowed employees to spend time with executives with barriers removed. This training alleviated the disconnect, albeit briefly, between hierarchical levels.

Highlight what is good

Ability, Inc. had many strengths. Several aspects of the organization were robust and should be reinforced and publically highlighted. Employee dedication to the mission and their work ethic was undeniably strong. Commitment to and love for clients was paramount. In this time of job-hopping and high employee turnover, I recommend emphasizing and honoring this dedication at any opportunity in conjunction with client success stories, employer profiles and family narratives. Co-workers and peers were already training new people at satellite locations. Why not formalize that program and recognize it? Families were satisfied with the services provided by Ability, Inc. and client programming was both innovative and responsive. There was an overwhelming devotion to maintaining an ethical workplace, even amid daunting structural changes and unknown results. I recommend highlighting the ethical nature of Ability, Inc. in industrial journals and trade magazines. Ethical workplaces are a hot topic in business. Why not use Ability, Inc. as an ethical case study exemplar? In combination with the non-profit status and size of Ability, Inc., this could make great press that could generate more fundraising opportunities in the region. Finally, employees desired more engagement and participation. This should be looked upon as an opportunity. In the HRD literature, research is being conducted in strategies for encouraging employee engagement and participation; and, here, Ability, Inc. already has a natural base of employees who desire it. I recommend developing these important resources and using them to transform the organization into a genuine learning organization.

Address what is not working

As in most organizations, Ability, Inc. had weaknesses. A clear disconnect between corporate and satellite locations existed. In addition to myriad issues discussed that related to the disconnect, one most often mentioned was the executive road show. Labeling the visit of executive staff to satellite offices as a “road show” demeaned the outing. Visiting when the clients are gone for the day reduced credibility with the staff. Further, visiting once a year in October for National Disability Awareness Month was too infrequent. This deepened the divide between hierarchical levels. I recommend finding a way to re-brand or schedule more frequent visits and promoting them as co-workers coming to communicate, assist, or share ideas with other co-workers.

Another weak point was a lack of timely communication about changes, why they were occurring, and when the results would be revealed. In relation to the changes taking place, if employees were being told why the corporate office was adding more supervision (“middle management”) and not replacing floor staff, the message was not getting across. Direct-care staff, those working directly with clients on a day-to-day basis, did not understand why middle managers were being added but direct-care staff was not being replaced. Staff saw this as an affront to the mission that caused client programming and supervision to suffer. This was the main reason employees think that clients were regarded as “walking revenue.”

The standardization and rebranding of all satellite centers communicated a consistent brand that was Ability, Inc. However, clients and staff at those centers lived, worked, shopped and went to school in those communities. They identified with the

locale. Extinguishing local identity by sanitizing each satellite's unique community identifiers was not advantageous to the organization. A bit of local identification and community uniqueness should be present at each location as a point of pride that could be nurtured. Policies and procedures should remain consistent, but community building should be encouraged.

Focus on what is needed

If Ability, Inc. continues to refer to its mission as “person-centered” or “human-centered,” the mindset should change to include employees. Satellite employees were on the front-lines of client care. They did not feel valued. This was a problem. Words such as “stretched thin” and “exhausted” were prevalent. Managers and executives stated an oft-repeated phrase, “If you take care of Ability, Inc., Ability, Inc. will take care of you.” To whom did that apply? Satellite employees did not echo this phrase. At what point did that occur? Public recognition and private acknowledgment of employees is needed. For example, add an employee recognition category at the Annual Celebration and actually celebrate everyone, not just clients, employers, board members and volunteers. Add an employee feature that involves success with a client or employer to the quarterly newsletter. In two years of newsletters, only one mention of an employee, a new director, occurred. Employee connections to clients were strong and should be highlighted as an asset to Ability, Inc. and the community. Recognize departments that do not typically make great copy in an annual report like finance, billing, call-center, etc.

Develop a common language of ethics that comprises the four components: ethical, respectful, responsive and resourceful. Employees were making ethical choices

and did not even know it. If employees are trained to use the language of ethics, they will better articulate the mission and vision of the company as it relates to ethics. Respect and resourcefulness were well known, but showing personal honesty and integrity (ethics) and the identification of expectations and delivery of commitments (responsive) were not as well known. In addition, the VBDMM should apply company-wide, not just to clients. Employees were trained in the use of the VBDMM, but it should be reiterated by supervisors and managers at all locations. Consistent referral to the components by direct supervisors and managers in everyday situations may keep the components of the VBDMM in the forefront instead of being relegated to the background like wallpaper. Respect for employee workload and commitment, responsiveness to their ability to make choices, delivery of commitments to employees, identification of expectations on the job, and treating employees with dignity are areas that should be addressed. If the goal of Ability, Inc. was to be person-centered or human-centered, then all persons and all humans should be part of the equation.

In regard to respect, an open discussion of satellite workload and perceptions about changes should be undertaken. Employees were scared to say or ask questions about impending changes because, as multiple employees stated, people were branded as negative if they question anything; employees are “shown the door.” While this is may be a misperception, if employees felt this way, something was feeding the paranoia. Turnover of valuable and respected members of the staff was correlated with strategic changes and process improvements. If this was an incorrect assumption, it should be openly addressed.

Finally, stabilize changes soon. Process improvements and efficiency modifications occurred frequently. Employees mentioned being trained in a new process or software only to have it change again in six months. Please be aware that corporate changes on a sweeping scale that involved technology or process improvements were not seen as valuable by employees. Rather, changes were mocked and described as the “flavor of the month.” Changes were happening so rapidly and so often that there was no time for consequences to take hold. As Senge (1990) advised, taking a systems approach to change is a hallmark of a true learning organization.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The opening line to Tim Hatcher's book on Ethics and HRD (2002) is, "Doing good is not easy" (p. 3). Balancing "doing good" with budgetary constraints is a struggle for all organizations, profit-centered and nonprofit. "Good" is defined differently by each organization. In Ability, Inc.' organization, "doing good" was characterized as following the mission, a critical piece of which is ethics. This case study illuminated the role of HRD in ethical decision making, which had not been fully explored by scholars. After reading this case study, HRD practitioners and scholars may better understand their role in promoting ethics and helping to create an ethical business culture. Practical recommendations for HRD professionals and scholars and their role in ethical decision making and contribution to the ethical development of a workforce were included to support the need for research in this area. Additionally, by studying ethical decision making in this organization and illuminating its practices, my hope is that other organizations may engage in similar methods for promoting a more profound dedication to ethics.

The study explored several aspects of ethical decision making. First, the study investigated the consistency between the stated and actual values of the organization and applied the values identified to the four components of the Values-Based Decision Making Model: ethical, respectful, responsive and resourcefulness. Espoused values that were consistent within the organizational culture strengthened an organization's reputation and provide external legitimacy (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Kabanoff & Daly, 2002; Siehl & Martin, 1990; Sutton & Callahan, 1987). The organization's reputation as a

leader in ethical behavior in its industry was found to be prevalent in the espoused values of the employees. Additionally, external legitimacy was strengthened by the organization's well-known commitment to ethics. Doing business ethically was evident in the research and consistent within espoused values, which strengthened its external legitimacy. Positive consistent values also existed in the necessity for change; alignment of organization and personal values; respect for coworkers; enjoying a fun work environment; committing to innovative and flexible programming; empowering the work environment; providing hope for the future; and dedicating to quality and customer service. Together, these consistent and enacted values illustrated a strong, positive corporate culture.

Undesirable consistent values existed and were represented by a shared perception of disconnect between corporate and satellite offices; a longing for a more familial work culture; an admitted lack of timely communication regarding strategic changes; dissatisfaction with centralized decision-making; and the shared burden of a frenetic pace. Argyris and Schön (1974) cautioned that such behaviors would eventually lead to organizational entropy, the unavoidable and steady decline of a system or culture. According to Senge (1990), systems thinking is crucial in the development of learning organizations, to which Ability, Inc. aspires. As such, while values were found to be consistent, negative values that were agreed upon at all hierarchical levels and locations should serve as a warning to this organization and others that aspire to become learning organizations.

Inconsistent values, those that differed between either hierarchical levels or organizational locations, illustrated the need for intervention in several areas. Differences in these areas further elucidated variation in perceptions in regard to support and value within the organization; level of trust in leadership; standardization and corporate branding; sustainability and growth for the future; the definition of person-centeredness; and an understanding of how changes affect workload burnout rates. If left unaddressed, all of these areas may eventually corrupt an otherwise positive, strong, ethical culture.

Incongruent philosophical viewpoints were found to exist between hierarchical levels. A utilitarian approach to ethics was demonstrated more often within higher organizational echelons. In focus group discussions of decisions that necessitated a choice between the needs of the many versus the needs of the few, employees expressed tension between being mission-driven and operating efficiently. Conversely, a deontological approach to decision making was more prevalent at lower hierarchical levels. It is assumed more direct contact with those who are served and a greater distance from strategic and budget-based decisions impacted this viewpoint. Regardless, this was an important finding in the study: differing philosophical viewpoints may negatively impact the consistency of espoused values, which may lead to an erosion of shared values that strengthen the organizational culture.

Second, the study focused on the organization's Values-Based Decision Making Model and its use in ethical decision making. Employees used the VBDMM, or individual components of it, in various ways. Common situations involved the use of the tool as a guidepost or frame of reference against which to justify decisions such as

corrective action or performance reviews. The VBDMM was frequently used to support ethical decisions regarding vulnerable adults, a common concern in the human services industry. Additionally, the VBDMM was relied upon as a standard when doing business with vendors or preparing government reports. The VBDMM was also used as an important instrument for strategic planning.

Third, since the study found that the VBDMM was used in ethical decision making, further examination revealed consistent themes were present in the culture and reflected in the use of the VBDMM, which resulted in ethical decision making. A clear link was evident between personal and corporate values. Bowen (2004a) asserted that a high degree of consistency between personal and organization values supported an ethical decision making culture; this study further supported Bowen's assertion. Employees frequently stated that ethical decision making was a natural consequence of their own personal values and instinctively carried through to their corporate decision making. Evidence was found for a shared identification as an ethical industry leader with a strong culture of shared ethics. One example of this strong culture was the creation of clothing that depicted the VBDMM components and the description of the color as "our blue." Perhaps most important was the value placed on the mission. Brinckerhoff's (2009) statement that nonprofits pursue their mission rather than chasing profits and Rothschild and Milofsky's (2006) assertion that nonprofits exist to convey a "public statement of what their members see as a better, more caring or more just world" (p. 136) reverberated throughout the findings in this area. The mission was described as the "heart" of the

organization that was both “lived and breathed.” Dedication to the mission and a commitment to supporting the core values were vital within the culture.

Finally, based on research findings, numerous HRD-related practices were recommended to help address the gap between espoused and enacted values and to strengthen the ethical business culture. A strong orientation and new-employee training program that emphasized ethics and trained employees in values-based decision making was essential. An improvement in clarity and frequency of communication about changes to organizational structure and the impact of the changes to individuals was recommended. Encouragement of embracing unique attributes of satellite offices to develop a local identification was suggested to alleviate further gaps between the corporate office and satellite locations. Most importantly, the chief recommendation was to recognize employees at all levels and locations. A major weakness in the culture stemmed from the lack of employee engagement on the part of the employer, not the desires of the employees.

The lack of employee engagement was a key component missing in repeated assertions by corporate employees that it was a learning organization. Components of learning organizations, as defined by Senge (1990), Watkins and Marsick (1993) and Bierema (1996), were clearly missing. Inconsistent values, negative consistent values and a decline in investment in individual employee development were suggested as major disparities between the idea of being a learning organization and the practice of being a learning organization. The recognition of adult learning needs and the inclusion of active and flexible learning situations was an area of improvement that was needed.

According to Drucker (1990), the product of a nonprofit is a “changed human being” (p. xiv). McLean and McLean (2001) declared HRD to be in the service of “the whole of humanity” (p. 322). Kuchinke (2010) further postulated the guiding principle of HRD to be “human flourishing” (p. 576). Ardichvili, Mitchell and Jondle (2009) posited the significant characteristic of ethical business cultures is the mission, or the “lifeblood of the organization” (p. 449). The fusion of these ideas, along with the findings from the research, showed that the benefit of HRD practices, coupled with a strong commitment to organizational ethics, can be assets to any organization. As such, the use of an ethical decision making tool, as evidenced in the long-term use of the Values-Based Decision Making Model, further supported the need for an instrument that both guided and exemplified ethical behavior.

Limitations

This study utilized three data collection tools: document analysis, focus group interviews and existing survey data. Limitations of each collection method, as well as of qualitative research in general, are common. Focus group data limitations include distorted responses due to personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics and simple lack of awareness. Emotional states can have a significant impact on the interviewee. Interview data are also subject to recall error, reactivity of the interviewee to the interviewer and self-serving responses. Document and record review limitations include the possibility of inaccuracy or incompleteness and variability of quality or detail. Focus group limitations include the impact of thoughts, opinions or feelings of individuals by others in the group, inaccurate statements, dominant individuals and researcher bias in interpreting nonverbal

data. A further limitation exists because the study elicits data from a single source within one industry. As with any qualitative research design, findings are exploratory and not generalizable. Care should be taken when viewing the study results in context of another organization or industry with decision making methods, codes of ethics or ethical cultures that differ from the organization in this case study.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research into ethical decision making may include a survey component using any of the instruments mentioned, in addition to others used in prior literature reviews involving ethical decision making (Ford & Richardson, 1994; Loe et al., 2000; O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005; Craft, in press). Survey data that correlates ethical decision making with behavior may be useful in supporting qualitative results of this study. This study could also be replicated at other types of organizations such as smaller nonprofits, government entities or for-profit companies. An interesting comparison would be to reproduce this study at a similarly sized for-profit organization and compare the results to assess the differences in ethical decision making between the two types of institutions. Additionally, a study investigating other organizations that use values-based decision making models and how the models influence ethical decision making may be valuable.

Supplementary research questions might investigate the differences in communication strategies of the values-based decision making model or evolution of work processes if discrepancies were found between hierarchical levels or satellite locations in the use of the model to make ethical decisions. Research into the appropriate

communication strategies and ethics training methods to further embed the values-based decision making model into the organizational culture is applicable to a future study.

In conclusion, all organizations should be mindful of the “do as I say, not as I do” approach to ethical decision making. Attempts should be made to thoroughly understand all components of learning organizations and fully involve employees at all levels of learning processes. In short, organizations should mind the gaps between what is said and what is done.

References

- Adams, J., Taschian, A., & Shore, T. (2001). Codes of ethics as signals for ethical behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics, 29*(3), 199-211.
- Agarwal, J. & Malloy, D. (1999). Ethical work climate dimensions in a not-for-profit organization: An empirical study. *Journal of Business Ethics, 20*, 1-14.
- Akaah, I. & Riordan, E. (1989). Judgments of marketing professionals about ethical issues in marketing research: A replication and extension. *Journal of Marketing Research, 26*(1), 112-120.
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50*(2), 179-211.
- Allen, J. & Davis, D. (1993). Assessing some determinant effects of ethical consulting behavior. The case of personal and professional values. *Journal of Business Ethics, 12*, 449-458.
- Ardichvili, A. & Jondle, D. (2009). Ethical business cultures: A literature review and implications for HRD. *Human Resource Development Review, 8*(2), 223-244.
- Ardichvili, A., Jondle, D., & Kowske, B. (2010). Dimensions of ethical business cultures: Comparing data from 13 countries of Europe, Asia and the Americas. *Human Resource Development International, 13*(3), 299-315.
- Ardichvili, A & Kuchinke, P. (2002). The concept of culture in international and comparative HRD research: Methodological problems and possible solutions. *Human Resource Development Review, 1*(2), 145-166.

- Ardichvili, A., Mitchell, J., & Jondle, D. (2009). Characteristics of ethical business cultures. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 85, 445-451.
- Argyris, C. (1991). Teaching smart people how to learn. *Harvard Business Review*, 4(2), 4-15.
- Argyris, C. (1999). *On organizational learning*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Argyris, C., Putnam, R., & Smith, D.L. (1985). *Action Science*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Argyris, C. & Schön, D. (1978). *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective*. Reading, PA: Addison-Wesley.
- Argyris, C. & Schön, D. (1974). *Theory in Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Armstrong, R., Williams, R., & Barrett, J. (2004). The impact of banality, risky shift and escalating commitment on ethical decision making. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 53, 365-370. doi:10.1023/B:BUSI.0000043491.10007.9a.
- Barnett, T. (1992). A preliminary investigation of the relationship between selected organizational characteristics and external whistleblowing by employees. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 11, 949-959.
- Barnett, T., Cochran, D., & Taylor, G. (1993). The internal disclosure policies of private-sector employers: An initial look at their relationship to employee whistleblowing. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 12, 127-136.
- Bierema, L. (1996). Development of the individual leads to more productive workplaces. In L. Bierema, (Ed.), *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Development of the Individual* (pp. 21-28). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Bonner, S. (2007). *Judgment and Decision Making in Accounting*. New Jersey; Prentice Hall.
- Borowski, P. (1988). Manager-employee relationships: Guided by Kant's categorical imperative or by Dilbert's business principle. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 17, 1623-1632.
- Boud, D. & Knights, S. (1994). Course design for reflective practice. In N. Gould and I. Taylor (Eds.), *Reflective Learning for Social Work: Research, Theory and Practice* (pp. 23-34). Aldershot, Hants: Arena.
- Bowen, S. (2004a). Organizational factors encouraging ethical decision making: An exploration into the case of an exemplar. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 52, 311-324.
- Bowen, S. (2004b). Expansion of ethics as the tenth generic principle of public relations excellence: A Kantian theory and model for managing ethical issues. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 16(1), 65-92.
- Brinckerhoff, P. (2009). *Mission-based management: Leading your not-for-profit in the 21st century*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Brookfield, S. (1986). *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning: A Comprehensive Analysis of Principles and Effective Practices*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Buchan, H. (2005). Ethical decision making in the public accounting profession: An extension of Ajzen's theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 61, 165-181.
- Caffarella, R. (1992). *Cognitive development in adulthood*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Project for the Study of Adult Learning, Chicago, IL.

- Caffarella, R. & Barnett, B. (1994). Characteristics of adult learners and foundations of experiential learning. In L. Bierema (Ed.), *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Development of the Individual* (pp. 29-42). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Calabretta, G., Durisin, B., & Ogliengo, M. (2011). Uncovering the intellectual structure of research in business ethics: A journey through the history, the classics, and the pillars of *Journal of Business Ethics*. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 104(4), 499-524.
- Caldwell, D., & Moberg, D. (2006). An exploratory investigation of the effect of ethical culture in activating moral imagination. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 73, 193-204. doi: 10.1007/s10551-006-9190-6.
- Carlson, D., Kacmar, K., & Wadsworth, L. (2002). The impact of moral intensity dimensions on ethical decision making: Assessing the relevance of orientation. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 14(1), 15-30.
- Carroll, A. (1987). In search of the moral manager. *Business Horizons*, 30(2), 7-15.
- Carroll, A. & Buchholtz, A. (2006). *Business and Society: Ethics and Stakeholder Management*. Mason, OH: Thompson.
- Cervero, R. (1988). *Effective Continuing Education for Professionals*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Chang, M. (1988). Predicting unethical behavior: A comparison of the theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 17, 1825-1834.

- Chonko, L. & Hunt, S. (1985). Ethics and marketing management: An empirical examination. *Journal of Business Research*, 13 (August), 339-359.
- Christians, C.G. (2000). Ethics and politics in qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Craft, J. (2010). Making the case for ongoing and interactive organizational ethics training. *Human Resource Development International*, 13(5), 599-606.
- Craft, J. (in press). A review of the empirical ethical decision-making literature: 2004-2011. *Journal of Business Ethics*. Retrieved from <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10551-012-1518-9>.
- Creswell, J. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Daft, R. & Marcic, D. (2011). *Understanding Management*. Mason, OH: Cengage.
- Davis, M., Johnson, N., & Ohmer, D. (1998). Issue-contingent effects on ethical decision making: A cross-cultural comparison. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 17, 373-389.
- Dean, P. (1992). Making codes of ethics 'real'. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 11, 285-290.
- Dion, M. (1996). Organizational culture as matrix of corporate ethics. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 4, 329-351.
- Doran, M. (2005). *HRD and Business Ethics*. www.ahrd.org/conference.
- Drucker, P. (1990). *Managing the Non-profit Organization: Principles and Practices*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

- Dubinsky, A., Jolson, M., Marvin, A., Michaels, R., Kotabe, M., & Lim, C. (1992). Ethical perceptions of field states personnel: An empirical assessment. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 12(4), 9-21.
- Elango, B., Paul, K., Kundu, S. K., & Paudel, S. K. (2010). Organizational ethics, individual ethics, and ethical intentions in international decision-making. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 97, 543–561. doi:10.1007/s10551-010-0524-z.
- Elkington, J. (1997). *Cannibals with forks: The triple bottom line of 21st century business*. Oxford: Capstone.
- Ethics Resource Center. (2009). *2009 National Business Ethics Survey: Ethics in the Recession*.
- Ferrell, O., Fraedrich, J., & Ferrell, L. (2009). *Business Ethics: Ethical Decision Making and Cases*. Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning.
- Ferrell, O. & Gresham, L. (1985). A contingency framework for understanding ethical decision making in marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 49(3), 87-96.
- Ferrell, O. & Skinner, S. (1988). Ethical behavior and bureaucratic structure in marketing research organizations. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 25, 103-109.
- Ferrell, O. & Weaver, K. (1978). Ethical beliefs of marketing managers. *Journal of Marketing*, July, 69-73.
- Fishbein, M. & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

- Fisher, C. (2005). HRD attitudes: Or the roles and ethical stances of human resource developers. *Human Resource Development International*, 8(2), 239-255. doi: 10.1080/13678860500100616.
- Flannery, B. & May, D. (2000). Environmental ethical decision making in the U.S. metal finishing industry. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43, 642-662.
- Foote, M. & Ruona, W. (2008). Institutionalizing ethics: A synthesis of frameworks and the implications for HRD. *Human Resource Development International*, 7(3), 292-308. doi: 10.1177/1534484308321844.
- Ford, R. & Richardson, W. (1994). Ethical decision making: A review of the empirical literature. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 13, 205-221. doi: 10.1007/BF02074820.
- Forte, A. (2004). Business ethics: A study of the moral reasoning of selected business managers and the influence of organizational ethical climate. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 51, 167-173. doi:10.1023/B:BUSI.0000033610.35181.ef.
- Fraedrich, J. (1992). Signs and signals of unethical behavior. *Business Forum*, Spring, 13-17.
- Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N.E., & Hyun, H. H. (2012). *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*. 8th ed. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Friedman, M. (1970, September 13). The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits. *New York Times Magazine*.
- Gandz, J. & Hayes, N. (1988). Teaching business ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 7, 657-669.

- Garavan, T. & McGuire, D. (2010). Human resource development and society: Human resource development's role in embedding corporate social responsibility, sustainability and ethics in organizations. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 12(5), 487-507. doi: 10.1177/1523422310394757.
- Garavan, T., McGuire, D., & O'Donnell, D. (2004). Exploring human resource development: A levels of analysis approach. *Human Resource Development Review*, 3(4), 417-441.
- Gilmartin, R. (2003, November 10). Ethics and the corporate culture. Raytheon Lectureship in Business Ethics, Center for Business Ethics, Bentley College, Waltham, MA.
- Glaser, B.G. (1978). *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glenn, J. & Van Loo, M. (1993). Business students' and practitioners' ethical decisions over time. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 12, 835-847.
- Goodin, R. (1993). Utility and the good. In P. Singer (Ed.), *A Companion to Ethics*, (pp. 241-248). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Grace, D. & Cohen, S. (1998). *Business Ethics: Australian Problems and Cases* (2nd ed.). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Guba, E. (1990). The alternative paradigm dialog. In E.G. Guba (ed.), *The Paradigm Dialog* (pp. 17-30). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Harrington, S. (1991). What corporate America is teaching about ethics. *Academy of Management Executive*, 5(1), 21-30.

- Harrington, S. (1997). A test of a person – Issue contingent model of ethical decision making in organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics, 16*, 362-375.
- Hatcher, T. (2002). *Ethics and HRD*. Massachusetts: Perseus.
- Hayibor, S. & Wasieleski, D. (2009). Effects of the use of the availability heuristic on ethical decision making in organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics, 84*, 151-165.
- Hegarty, W. & Sims, H. (1979). Organizational philosophy, policies and objectives related to unethical decision behavior: A laboratory experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 64*(3), 331-338.
- Hiemstra, R. & Sisco, B. (1990). *Individualizing Instruction. Making Learning Personal, Empowering, and Successful*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ho, J. (2010). Ethical perception: Are differences between ethnic groups situation dependent? *Business Ethics: A European Review, 19*(2), 154-182. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8608.2010.01583.x.
- Hodder, I. (1994). The interpretation of documents and material culture. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hopkins, W., Hopkins, S., & Mitchell, B. (2008). Ethical consistency in managerial decisions. *Ethics & Behavior, 18*(1), 26-43.
- Hunt, S., Chonko, L. & Wilcox, J. (1984). Ethical problems of marketing researchers. *Journal of Marketing Research, 21* (August), 304-324.
- Hunt, S. & Vitell, S. (1986). The general theory of marketing ethics: A revision and three questions. *Journal of Macromarketing, 6*(1), 5-16.

- Internal Revenue Service. (2012 January 30). What must a 501(c)(3) organization do to be classified as a *publicly supported* organization (rather than as a private foundation)? *EO Operational Requirements: Requirements for Publicly Supported Charities*. Retrieved June 5, 2012 from <http://www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=139020,00.html>.
- Izzo, G., Langford, B., & Vitell, S. (2006). Investigating the Efficacy of Interactive Ethics Education: A Difference in Pedagogical Emphasis. *The Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 14(3), 239-248.
- Janesick, V.J. (2000). The choreography of qualitative research design. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Jones, M.O. (1996). *Studying Organizational Symbolism: What, How, Why?* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Jones, S. & Hildebeitel, K. (1995). Organizational influence in a model of the moral decision process of accountants. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 14, 417-431.
- Jones, T. (1991). Ethical decision making by individuals in organizations: An issue-contingent model. *Academy of Management Review*, 16(2), 366-395.
- Kabanoff, B. & Daly, J. (2002). Espoused values of organisations. *Australian Journal of Management*, 27(special issue), 89-104.
- Kabanoff, B., Waldersee, R., & Cohen, M. (1995). Espoused values and organizational change themes. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(4), 1075-1104.

- Kant, I. (1952). *Critique of Judgment*. In J.C. Meredith (Ed.). Translation 1952. Oxford University Press, Oxford. (Original work published 1790).
- Kaptein, M. (2004). Business codes of multinational firms: What do they say? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 50, 13-31.
- Karacaer, S., Gohar, R., Aygün, M., & Sayin, C. (2009). Effects of personal values on auditor's ethical decisions: A comparison of Pakistani and Turkish professional auditors. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 88, 53-64.
- Kauffman, D. (1980). *Systems one: An introduction to systems thinking*. Future Systems.
- Kaye, B. (1992). Codes of ethics in Australian business corporations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 11, 857-862.
- Keep, J. (2007). Fitness to practice: Can well-balanced, supported HRD practitioners better deal with ethical and moral conundrums? *Human Resource Development International*, 10(4), 465-473.
- Kelley, P. & Elm, D. (2003). The effect of context on moral intensity of ethical issues: Revising Jones's issue contingent model. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 48, 139-154.
- Kenexa. (2011). *Employee Survey*. Internal document present to Ability, Inc. executive staff, January 2012.
- Kidd, J. (1973). *How Adults Learn*. New York, NY: Association Press.
- Kohlberg, L. (1969). Stage and sequence: The cognitive developmental approach to socialization. In Goslin, D. (ed.), *Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

- Knowles, M. (1980). *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy*. New York, NY: Cambridge.
- Krueger, R.A. & Casey, M.A. (2009). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kuchinke, P. (2010). Human development as a central goal for a human resource development. *Human Resource Development International*, 13(5), 575-585.
- Kurland, N. (1996). Sales agents and clients: Ethics, incentives and a modified theory of planned behavior. *Human Relations*, 25(4), 297-313.
- Laczniak, G & Inderrieden, E. (1987). The influence of stated organizational concern upon ethical decision making. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 6, 297-307.
- Laczniak, G. & Murphy, P. (1991). Fostering ethical marketing decisions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 10, 259-271.
- LeClair, D. & Ferrell, L. (2000). Innovation in experiential business ethics training. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 23, 313-322.
- Leitsch, D. (2006). Using dimensions of moral intensity to predict ethical decision making in accounting. *Accounting Education: an international journal*, 15(2), 135-149.
- Lewin, K. (1946). Action research and minority problems. *Journal of Social Issues*, 2(4), 34-46.
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

- Loe, T., Ferrell, L., & Mansfield, P. (2000). A review of empirical studies assessing ethical decision making in business. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 25, 185-204. doi: 10.1023/A:1006083612239.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, C.B. (1995). *Designing Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- May, D. & Pauli, K. (2002). The role of moral intensity in ethical decision making: A review and investigation of moral recognition, evaluation and intention. *Business & Society*, 41(1), 84-117.
- McCabe, D., Trevino, L., & Butterfield, K. (1996). The influence of collegiate and corporate codes of conduct on ethics-related behavior in the workplace. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 6(4), 461-476.
- McDonald, K. & Hite, L. (2005). Ethical issues in mentoring: The role of HRD. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 7, 569-582.
- McDonald, G. & Zepp, R. (1989). Business ethics: practical proposals. *Journal of Management Development*, 8(1), 55-66.
- McGregor, D. (1960). *The Human Side of Enterprise*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- McLagan, P. (1989) *Models for HRD Practice*. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development.
- McLean, G. (2006). *Organization Development*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- McLean, G. & McLean, L. (2001). If we can't define HRD in one country, how can we define it in an international context? *Human Resource Development International*, 4, 315-326.

- McMahon, J. & Harvey, R. (2007). The effect of moral intensity on ethical judgment. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 72, 335-357.
- Merriam, V. (Ed.). (1993). An Update on Adult Learning Theory. In *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, (57). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. & Caffarella, R. (1991). *Learning in Adulthood*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mill, J. (1861/1957). *Utilitarianism*. New York, NY: The Liberal Arts Press.
- Miller, G. (1997). Contextualizing texts: Studying organizational texts. In G. Miller & R. Dingwall (Eds.), *Context and Method in Qualitative Research* (pp. 77-91). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moustakis, C. (1990). *Heuristic Research Design, Methodology and Applications*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Mumford, A. (1996). Building a learning pyramid. In K. Watkins and V. Marsick (Eds.). *In Action: Creating the Learning Organization*. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development.
- Murphy, P., Smith, J., & Daly, J. (1992). Executive attitudes, organizational size and ethical issues: Perspectives on a service industry. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 11, 11-19.

- Nwachukwu, S. & Vitell, S. (1997). The influence of corporate culture on managerial ethical judgments. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 16(8), 757-776.
- O'Fallon, M. & Butterfield, K. (2005). A review of the empirical ethical decision making literature: 1996-2003. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 59, 375-413. doi: 10.1007/s10551-005-2929-7.
- O'Neill, O. (1993). Kantian ethics. In P. Singer (Ed.), *A Companion to Ethics*, (pp. 175-185). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Paolillo, J. & Vitell, S. An empirical investigation of the influence of selected personal, organizational and moral intensity factors on ethical decision making. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 35, 65-74.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Petrick, J., Cragg, W., & Sanudo, M. (2011). Business ethics in North America: Trends and challenges. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 4(1), 51-62. Doi: 10.1007/s10551-012-1262-1.
- Pettit, P. (1993). Consequentialism. In P. Singer (Ed.), *A Companion to Ethics*, (pp. 230-239). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Powers, C. & Vogel, D. (1980). *Ethics in the Education of Business Managers*. Hudson, NY: Hastings.
- Rabl, T. & Kühlmann, T. (2008). Understanding corruption in organizations – development and empirical assessment of an action model. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 82, 477-495.

- Randall, D. & Gibson, A. (1991). Ethical decision making in the medical profession: An application of the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics, 10*, 111-122.
- Random House Dictionary. (2012). New York: Random House. Retrieved September 12, 2012 from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/ethics> and <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/moral>.
- Rest, J. (1986). *Moral Development: Advances in Research and Theory*. New York, NY: Praeger.
- Robin, D. & Reidenbach, R. (1987). Social responsibility, ethics, and marketing strategy: Closing the gap between concept and application. *Journal of Marketing, 51*, 44-58.
- Rocco, T. (2001). Invited reaction: Understanding the work beliefs of nonprofit executives through organizational stories. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 12*(3), 241-246.
- Roeger, K., Blackwood, A., & Pettijohn, S. (2011). *The Nonprofit Sector in Brief: Public Charities, Giving and Volunteering, 2011*. Washington DC: Urban Institute. Accessed June 5, 2012 from <http://www.urban.org/publications/412434.html>.
- Rokeach, M. (Ed.). (1979). Change and stability in American value systems, 1968-1971. In *Understanding Human Values: Individual and Societal*, (pp. 129-147). New York, NY: Free Press.

- Rossouw, G. (2011). A global comparative analysis of the global survey of business ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 104(1), 93-101. DOI: 10.1007/s10551-012-1257-y.
- Rothschild, J. & Milofsky, C. (2006). The centrality of values, passions, and ethics in the nonprofit sector. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 17(2), 137-143.
- Rummler, G. & Brache, A. (1995). *Improving performance: Managing the white space on the organization chart* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Russ-Eft, D. (2003). Corporate ethics: Learning and performance problem for leaders? *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 14, 1-3.
- Schein, E. (1985). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schminke, M., Arnaud, A., & Kuenzi, M. (2007). The power of ethical work climates. *Organizational Dynamics*, 36, 171-183.
- Schneewind, J. (1993). Modern moral philosophy. In P. Singer (Ed.), *A Companion to Ethics*, (pp. 147-160). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Schwartz, M. (2001). The nature of the relationship between corporate codes of ethics and behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 32, 247-262.
- Schwartz, M., Dunfee, T., & Kline, M. (2005). Tone at the top: An ethics code for directors? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 58, 79-100.

- Schwartz, S. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 25, 1-65.
- Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York, NY: Currency Doubleday.
- Seshadri, D., Raghavan, A., & Hegde, S. (2007). Business ethics: The next frontier for globalizing Indian companies. *Vikalpa*, 32(2), 61-79.
- Shafer, W. E. & Simmons, R. S. (2011). Effects of organizational ethical culture on the ethical decisions of tax practitioners in mainland China. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 24(5), 647–668. doi:10.1108/09513571111139139.
- Shedd, P. & Corley, R. (1993). *Business law*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Siehl, C. & Martin, J. (1990). Organizational culture: A key to financial performance? In B. Schneider (Ed.). *Organizational Climate and Culture*, (pp. 284-281). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sims, R. & Brinkmann, J. (2003). Enron ethics (Or: culture matters more than codes). *Journal of Business Ethics*, 45, 243-256.
- Singhapakdi, A., Karande, C., Rao, P., & Vitell, S. (2001). How importance are ethics and social responsibility? A multinational study of marketing professionals. *European Journal of Marketing*, 35(1/2), 133-152.
- Singhapakdi, A. & Vitell, S. (1990). Marketing ethics: Factors influencing perceptions of ethical problems and alternatives. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 47-65.

- Singhapakdi, A., Vitell, S., & Kraft, K. (1996). Moral intensity and ethical decision-making of marketing professionals. *Journal of Business Research*, 36(3), 245-255.
- Small, M. (2006). Management development: Developing ethical corporate culture in three organisations. *Journal of Management Development*, 25(6), 588-600.
- Smith, L.M. (1978). An evolving logic of participant observation, educational ethnography and other case studies. In L. Shulman (ed.), *Review of Research in Education*. Itasca, IL: Peacock.
- Sobczak, A. (2003). Codes of conduct in subcontracting networks: A labour law perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 44, 225-234.
- Spradley, J.P. (1980). *Participant Observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Stake, R.E. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stevens, B. (2008). Corporate ethical codes: Effective instruments for influencing behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 78, 601-609.
- Stohs, J. & Brannick, T. (1999). Codes of conduct: Predictors of Irish managers' ethical reasoning. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 22(4), 311-326.
- Strauss, A.L. (1988). The articulation of project work: An organizational process. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 29(2), 163-178.
- Strauss, A.L. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Sullivan, R. (1989). *Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Sutton, R. & Callahan, A. (1987). The stigma of bankruptcy: Spoiled organizational image and its management. *Academy of Management Journal*, 30(3), 405-436.
- Sweeney, B., Arnold, D., & Pierce, B. (2010). The impact of perceived ethical culture of the firm and demographic variables on auditors' ethical evaluation and intention to act decisions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 93, 531–551. doi:10.1007/s10551-009-0237-3.
- Trevino, L. (1986). Ethical decision making in organizations: A person-situation interactionist model. *Academy of Management Review*, 11(3), 601-617.
- Trevino, L. (1990). A cultural perspective on changing organizational ethics. In R. Woodman and W. Passmore (Eds.). *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, (pp. 195-230). Greenwich, CT: Jai Press.
- Trevino, L., Butterfield, K., & McCabe, D. (1998). The ethical context in organizations: Influences on employee attributes and behaviors. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 8, 447-476.
- Trevino, L. & Youngblood, S. (1990). Bad apples in bad barrels: A causal analysis of ethical decision making behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75(4), 378-385.
- Udas, K., Fuerst, W., & Paradice, D. (1996). An investigation of ethical perceptions of public sector professionals. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 15(7), 721-734.
- United States Department of Labor (2012). Employment of workers with disabilities at special minimum wage. In United States Department of Labor, *Field Operations Handbook*, (electronic). Retrieved from <http://www.dol.gov/whd/FOH/ch64/64atoc.htm>.

- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Institutional Review Board. (2011). Part II: Fundamental Guidelines. In Investigator Handbook. Retrieved July 27, 2012 from <http://irb.illinois.edu/?q=investigator-handbook/index.html>.
- University of Minnesota, Institutional Review Board. (2011). IRB Review Process. Retrieved July 27, 2012 from <http://www.research.umn.edu/irb/>.
- Urban Institute. (2012, March 3). *Registered Nonprofit Organizations by State*. Retrieved June 5, 2012 from <http://nccsdataweb.urban.org/NCCS/VIPub/index.php>.
- VanSandt, C. & Neck, C. (2003). Bridging ethics and self leadership: Overcoming ethical discrepancies between employee and organizational standards. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 43(4), 363-387. DOI: 10.1023/A:1023009728390.
- Verbeke, W., Ouwerkerk, C., & Peelen, E. (1996). Exploring the contextual and individual factors on ethical decision making of salespeople. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 15(11), 1175-1187. doi: 10.1007/BF00412816.
- Victor, B. & Cullen, J. (1988). The organizational bases of ethical work climates. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 33, 101-125.
- Vince, R. (2005). Ideas for critical practitioners. In C. Elliott & S. Turnbull (Eds.), *Critical thinking in human resource development* (pp. 26-36). London, UK: Routledge.
- Wang, J., Wang, G., Ruona, W., & Rojewski, J. (2005). Confucian values and the implications for international HRD. *Human Resource Development International*, 8(3), 311-326.

- Watkins, K. & Marsick, V. (1993). A framework for the learning organization. In *Sculpting the Learning Organization*, (pp. 3-22). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Weaver, K. & Ferrell, O. (1977). The impact of corporate policy in reported ethical beliefs and behavior of marketing practitioners. *AMA proceedings*, 477-481.
- Weber, J. & Seger, J. (2002). Influence upon organizational ethical subclimates: A replication study of a single firm at two points in time. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 41(1/2), 69-84.
- Weeks, W. & Nantel, J. (1992). Corporate codes of ethics and sales force behavior: A case study. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 11, 753-760.
- Werhane, P. (1999). *Moral Imagination and Management Decision Making*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- West, A. (2008). Sartrean Existentialism and Ethical Decision-Making in Business. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 81(1), 15-25.
- Williams, R. (1951). *American Society: A sociological interpretation*. New York, NY: Knopf.
- Wilensky, A. & Hansen, C. (2001). Understanding the work beliefs of nonprofit executives through organizational stories. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 12(3), 223-239.
- Wirtenberg, J., Baker, T., Chang, W., Lannan, T., Applegate, B., Conway, M., Abrams, L., & Slepian, J. (2007). The future of organization development in the nonprofit sector. *Organization Development Journal*, 25(4), 179-195.

- Wood, G. & Rimmer, M. (2003). Codes of ethics: What are they really and what should they be? *International Journal of Values-Based Management*, 16, 181-195.
- Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case Study Research Design and Methods*. 4th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zavyalova, E. (2009). Management by values as a core tool of HRD during the economic transition: An example of Russian enterprises. *Human Resource Development International*, 12(4), 449-457.
- Zhang, J., Chiu, R., & Wei, L. (2009). Decision-making process of internal whistleblowing behavior in China: Empirical evidence and implications. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 88, 25–41. doi:10.1007/s10551-008-9831-z.

Appendix A

Table 1

Focus Group Participants

Number of focus groups	Number of participants	Stakeholder Type	Location
1	5	Executive Staff	Corporate Office
1	7	Managers	Corporate Office
1	9	Administrative Staff	Corporate Office
1	5	Program Supervisors	Corporate Office & Satellite Offices
1	5	Staff	Satellite Location 1
1	3	Staff	Satellite Location 2
1	5	Staff	Satellite Location 3

Appendix B

Table 2

Starting list of codes developed from the conceptual framework

Location		
L:	Corporate Office	L-OC
L:	Satellite Office	L-S
Values		
V:	Sharing ordinary places	V-SOP
V:	Growing in relationships	V-GIR
V:	Making choices	V-MC
V:	Contributing	V-C
V:	Being respected	V-BR
Values Based Decision-Making Model		
VBDM:	Ethical	VBDM-E
VBDM:	Respectful	VBDM-R
VBDM:	Responsible	VBDM-RE
VBDM:	Resourceful	VBDM-RS
Theory		
T:	Espoused Value	T-E
T:	Actual Value	T-A
Philosophy		
P:	Deontological	P-D
P:	Utilitarian	P-U

Appendix C

Table 3

Complete list of codes

Count	Code Number	Code Description
1	100	Theory
2	101	Espoused
3	102	Actual
4	103	Learning Organization
5	104	Corporate Culture
6	105	Gaps
7	200	Philosophy
8	201	Deontological
9	202	Utilitarian
10	203	Do the best we can because it's right
11	300	Great Quotes
12	301	About Ability, Inc.
13	301:1	Collaboration not Competition
14	302	Orientation
15	303	VBDMM
16	304	Ethics
17	305	Change
18	306	Employees
19	307	Clients
20	308	Gap
21	400	Change
22	401	Feelings
23	401:1	Negative
24	401:1:1	Fear/Skeptical/
25	401:1:2	Uncomfortable/Insecure
26	401:1:3	Distrust
27	401:1:4	Unethical as excuse
28	401:1:5	Stress
29	401:2	Positive
30	401:2:1	Hope
31	401:2:2	More Organized After
32	401:3	Personal

33	401:4	Neutral
34	402	More Corporate
35	403	Reorg
36	404	Funding
37	405	Efficiency/Do more with less
38	406	The only constant...
39	407	No input from people working with clients everyday
40	408	Lack of communication
41	409	Changing view of org
42	410	More layers of supervision
43	411	Need more line staff
44	412	Too Big
45	413	Into too many programs
46	414	quick fix/reactive
47	415	all about the numbers
48	416	employee participation
49	417	Community Learning
50	418	clouds values
51	419	Tension
52	420	Centralization
53	500	Personal Values
54	600	Corporate Culture
55	601	Corporate Values
56	601:1	Empowered
57	601:2	Independence
58	601:3	High Expectations
59	601:4	Freedom
60	601:5	Supportive
61	601:6	Open management
62	601:7	Positive Energy
63	601:8	Innovative
64	601:9	Not perfect, but they try
65	601:10	Collaboration/Teamwork
66	601:11	Budget Driven
67	601:12	Ethical
68	601:12:1	Embedded in culture
69	601:13	Trust
70	601:14	Respect
71	601:15	Dedicated

72	601:16	Serving Others
73	601:17	Fast Paced/Busy/Distractions/Multitasking
74	601:18	entrepreneurial
75	602	Core Values/Mission
76	602:1	Sharing Ordinary Places
77	602:2	Growing in Relationships
78	602:3	Making Choices
79	602:4	Contributing
80	602:5	Being Respected
81	602:6	Achievement
82	603	Consistency
83	604	Person Centered Environment
84	604:1	Employee Centered?
85	605	Diversity
86	606	"Us and Them" culture
87	607	Tense/Tension
88	608	Culture shift
89	609	VBDM
90	609:1	Ethical
91	609:2	Respectful
92	609:3	Responsive
93	609:4	Resourceful
94	609:5	apply to employees
95	610	Professional
96	611	Sustainable
97	612	Fun
98	613	image conscious
99	614	Be careful what you say...
100	615	Trust
101	616	clique
102	617	Team
103	700	Leadership
104	701	Calm and Stable Force
105	702	Executive Parade
106	703	Trusted
107	704	Lack of supervision at center
108	705	Road Show
109	706	Perception
110	707	They try to do their best/Best intentions

111	708	Admirable traits
112	708:1	dependable
113	708:2	communication
114	709	out of touch
115	800	Org Structure
116	801	Budget
117	802	Positions
118	803	Reorg
119	804	Vacation/Time Off
120	805	Time Management
121	806	Communication
122	807	Workload
123	808	Executives Going to Centers
124	809	Disconnected
125	810	Centralized
126	900	Goals
127	901	Growth
128	902	Family
129	903	Employee
130	904	Businesses
131	905	Client
132	906	Funds/Revenue
133	907	Improvement
134	908	Communication
135	909	Cost Effectiveness
136	910	process oriented
137	1000	Decision Making
138	1001	VBDMM
139	1001:1	Handbook
140	1001:2	Not emphasized as much lately
141	1001:3	Nostalgic feelings
142	1001:4	Situation
143	1001:1:1	Personnel Decisions
144	1001:1:2	Working with outside vendors
145	1001:1:3	Coaching/Mentoring
146	1001:1:4	Corrective Action
147	1001:1:5	Strategic planning
148	1001:1:6	Writing an incident report
149	1001:1:7	Industry

150	1001:1:8	processes
151	1001:5	applies in all jobs
152	1001:6	Contributes to culture
153	1001:7	Consistency
154	1001:8	Ingrained in culture
155	1001:9	used as a tool
156	1001:9:1	decision making
157	1001:9:2	hiring
158	1001:9:3	bids
159	1001:9:4	Judgment
160	1001:9:5	Frame of reference
161	1001:9:6	performance review
162	1001:9:7	corrective action
163	1001:9:8	reports
164	1001:9:9	clients
165	1001:9:10	planning classes
166	1001:9:11	justification
167	1001:10	4 components
168	1001:10:1	Resourceful
169	1001:10:2	Respectful
170	1001:10:3	Ethical
171	1001:10:4	Responsive
172	1001:10:5	don't remember
173	1001:11	In application to employee treatment
174	1001:12	Suggestions for added components
175	1001:13	recognized/awareness
176	1001:14	Logo wear
177	1001:15	Training/Orientation
178	1001:16	not really used
179	1001:17	Common sense/Natural/Innate
180	1001:18	In vulnerable adult training
181	1001:19	Paper Document/Locations
182	1002	Training
183	1002:1	Communicate decisions
184	1002:2	Change
185	1002:3	Negotiation
186	1002:4	Modeling
187	1002:5	Clarify and Justify Decisions
188	1002:6	Reward positive behavior

189	1002:7	Coaching
190	1003	Decentralized
191	1100	Employee
192	1101	Orientation - ESPOUSED
193	1101:1	Picnic Bench/Kitchen
194	1101:2	Formal
195	1101:3	None/Little/Brief
196	1101:4	executive parade
197	1101:5	Cross Training
198	1101:6	Organized/Orchestrated Process
199	1101:7	Disorganized
200	1101:8	Employee Handbook
201	1101:9	Supported
202	1101:10	onboarding
203	1101:11	Too much info
204	1101:11:1	blue book
205	1101:12	On Site
206	1101:13	Meeting
207	1102	Training - ESPOUSED
208	1102:1	Development Opportunities
209	1102:2	Potential
210	1102:3	Career Plan
211	1102:4	Leadership Training
212	1102:5	Professionalism
213	1102:6	Paperwork
214	1102:7	Annual Planning
215	1102:8	Co-workers/Peers
216	1102:9	Decision Making/VBDMM
217	1102:10	Vulnerable Adult
218	1102:11	Medical Training
219	1102:12	Lacking
220	1102:13	Doesn't mean much/too much
221	1102:14	Blue Book
222	1102:15	A lot the first year
223	1102:16	VBDMM talked about more now
224	1103	First Impressions - ESPOUSED
225	1103:1	Impressed
226	1103:2	Good Reputation
227	1103:3	Industry Leader

228	1103:4	Structured
229	1103:5	Positive
230	1103:6	Way over my head
231	1103:7	Supported
232	1104	Descriptors - ACTUAL
233	1104:1	Feelings
234	1104:1:1	Humor
235	1104:1:2	Never boring
236	1104:1:3	Nostalgic
237	1104:1:4	Positive
238	1104:1:5	Family
239	1104:1:6	Fun
240	1104:1:7	Hurt
241	1104:2	Good Work Ethic
242	1104:3	Proactive
243	1104:4	Participatory
244	1104:5	Exhausted
245	1104:6	Not valued/recognized
246	1104:7	opportunity for growth
247	1104:8	Opinion matters
248	1104:9	developing new people
249	1104:10	Dedicated
250	1104:11	Not just here for \$
251	1104:12	close knit
252	1200	Clients
253	1201	Funding Assistance
254	1202	Support
255	1203	Empower
256	1204	Inspire
257	1205	Achieve
258	1206	Client Event
259	1207	Leadership
260	1208	Independent
261	1209	Opportunity
262	1210	Pride
263	1211	Contribution to society
264	1212	Earn a living
265	1213	Develop Relationships
266	1214	Quality Programs

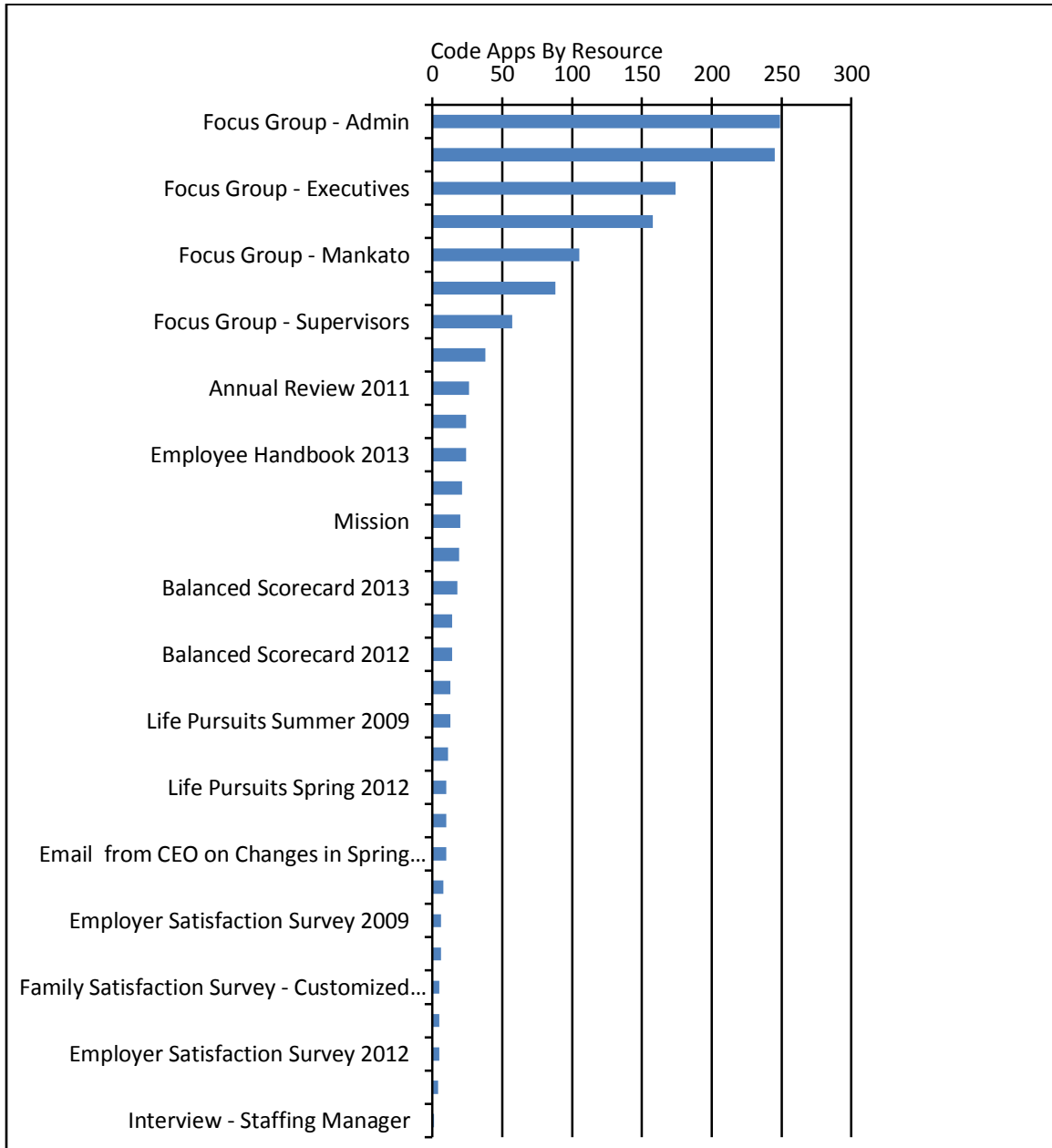
267	1215	Walking Revenue
268	1216	Heart/Losing our heart
269	1217	Personalized Service
270	1218	Negatively impacted by change
271	1219	opinion matters
272	1300	Volunteers
273	1400	Recognition
274	1500	Family
275	1600	Business Community
276	1601	Saves Money
277	1602	Reduce Turnover
278	1603	Increase Efficiency
279	1604	Give back to community
280	1605	Flexibility
281	1606	Story of a client at a business
282	1607	staffing
283	1608	Diversity
284	1700	Important People - HEROES
285	1701	KP
286	1702	JM
287	1703	JL
288	1704	MR
289	1800	Demographics
290	1801	Gender
291	1801:1	Female
292	1801:2	Male
293	1802	Location
294	1802:1	Satellite
295	1802:1:1	Location 3
296	1802:1:2	Location 2
297	1802:1:3	Location 1
298	1802:1:4	Location 4
299	1802:1:5	Location 5
300	1802:1:6	Location 6
301	1802:2	Corporate
302	1803	Tenure
303	1803:1	20+ years
304	1803:2	> 1 year
305	1803:3	11-20 years

306	1803:4	6-10 years
307	1803:5	1-5 years
308	1804	Prior work experience in industry
309	1804:1	Group Home
310	1804:2	Competitor
311	1804:3	None
312	1804:4	Dakota Inc
313	1804:5	Vocational Rehab
314	1804:6	At a business with clients
315	1804:7	periphery involvement
316	1805	Job Category
317	1805:1	Administrative
318	1805:2	Supervisor
319	1805:3	Executive
320	1805:4	Front Line
321	1805:5	Coordinator
322	1805:6	Manager

Appendix D

Table 4

Codes by document



Appendix E

Focus group interview questions using Krueger and Casey's (2009) suggested questioning route, built on the research questions and the Values-Based Decision Making Model.

Type	Number	Question	Rationale
Opening	1	<i>Tell us your name, your position/location and how long you have been working with Ability, Inc..</i>	Opening question to establish rapport, location and tenure.
Introductory	2	<i>How did you come to be employed at Ability, Inc.?</i>	Establishes why they are here. Were they recruited? Did they start as a volunteer? Hopefully will hear they chose Ability, Inc. because of something related to values or reputation in community.
Transition	3	<i>What was your orientation to the company like? First impressions of the company?</i>	Transition question to start conversation about how they were introduced to organization's espoused values. Formal versus informal orientation.
	4	<i>How has your view of the organization changed during your employment?</i>	Expect to hear a gap between espoused and values-in-use after orientation period.
Key Questions	5	<i>Referring to the Values-Based Decision Making Model (handout), how familiar are you with this document?</i>	RQ1. Do they know this document? Level of familiarity may vary between headquarter staff and off-site staff.
	6	<i>Have you ever used this document (or the components therein) when considering decisions for the organization?</i>	RQ2a. Is the document used to make decisions? Expect a discussion about how decisions are made and if/if not using the VBDM Model.
	7	<i>Referring to question 6: If so, can you give an example</i>	RQ2a. Answers will illustrate

		<p><i>of a decision that was based on the VBDM Model?</i></p> <p><i>If not, can you explain the typical process you use to make decisions in the organization?</i></p>	<p>the values-in-use in the decision making process, evidencing the values in the model that are espoused or not. If not, process for actual decision making will be illustrated.</p>
	8	<p><i>Please describe the training you have received on the job that relates to making ethical decision about your job.</i></p>	<p>RQ3. Ethics training is a component of training and development within HRD. Asking about the training they have received will illustrate what components of HRD currently exist and if they have an impact in decision making ability.</p>
	9	<p><i>With regard to ethics, what is it like working here?</i></p>	<p>RQ2b. Refers to ethical climate and the factors involved in an ethical environment. Hoping to find that people refer to deontological or utilitarian practices.</p>
	10	<p><i>Culture is defined as the shared beliefs, values and norms in a group of people. How would you describe the culture at Ability, Inc.?</i></p>	<p>RQ2b. Refers to organizational culture. Hope to hear stories related to the 4 components of the VBDM model.</p>
Ending Questions	11	<p><i>Is there anything you would like to share about working here, including improvements or recommendations?</i></p>	<p>RQ3. Garner information on improvements or suggestions for training, evaluation, etc that can related to HRD practices.</p>

Appendix F

CONSENT FORM

Values Based Decision-Making in a Nonprofit Organization

You are invited to be in a research study of ethical decision making processes within a nonprofit organization. You were selected as a possible participant because you are an employee of Ability, Inc. the study location. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: *Jana Craft, PhD Candidate in Human Resource Development in Organization, Policy and Leadership Development at the University of Minnesota.*

Background Information

The purpose of this study is:

to analyze the process of ethical decision making, highlight the ways in which the values-based decision making model is or is not represented in everyday decision making and recommend HRD-related practices to help address the gap between theory and practice. Narrowing the gap between espoused values (what they organization says it believes) and values-in-use (what actually happens) will aid in strengthening the ethical business culture and aid stakeholders in making ethical decisions using the organization's values-based decision making model.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Accept the invitation to participate in a focus group at the corporate office and attend the focus group for which you have volunteered.
2. While taking part in the focus group session, be candid and honest about your experiences related to the questions asked. I will be audio taping the focus group session in order to transcribe the conversation at a later date. The focus group will not take more than an hour of your time.
3. [If asked] Accept the invitation to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher and attend the interview session for which you have volunteered.
4. [If asked] While taking part in the interview, be candid and honest about your experiences related to the questions asked. I will be audio taping the interview session in order to transcribe the conversation at a later date. The interview will not take more than an hour of your time.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

This study comes with a risk: In group discussion or focus groups with familiar colleagues, one's opinions are not anonymous. Others will hear your opinion on values-based decision making and ethical practices within your organization. Since you know many of your fellow participants, I cannot guarantee anonymity. I will ask the focus group members to keep private what is discussed during the hour, but I cannot guarantee nor control what your fellow participants hear and share with others. I will not record names in the transcripts or notes.

Benefits to participation are: Participants in the study will have the opportunity to help identify and articulate a strength within their organization, the process of values-based decision making. Participants may also, through critical discussion and dialogue, further clarify their own values and how they fit into the organization's values. Research shows that when both personal and organizational values are aligned, employees are happier and more productive in their jobs.

Compensation:

No direct compensation will be received for participation in the study. However, the focus groups and interviews will be conducted during your regular work day, so you will be paid by the organization for your time. In addition, refreshments will be served at the focus group events.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Study data will be encrypted according to current University policy for protection of confidentiality. Audio recordings will be kept only as long as the research writing process continues and then will be erased. The timeframe will not extend more than six months from the day of recording.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or Ability, Inc. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Jana Craft. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Jana at craf0017@umn.edu or XXX-XXX-XXXX. Jana's advisor at the University of Minnesota is Dr. Alexandre Ardichvili and he can be reached at his office at ardic001@umn.edu or 612-626-4529.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Appendix G

IRB Approval

1210E22972 - PI Craft - IRB - Exempt Study Notification
2 messages

irb@umn.edu <irb@umn.edu> Tue, Oct 30, 2012 at 11:09 AM
To: craf0017@umn.edu
TO : ardic001@umn.edu, craf0017@umn.edu,

The IRB: Human Subjects Committee determined that the referenced study is exempt from review under federal guidelines 45 CFR Part 46.101(b) category #2 SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS; STANDARDIZED EDUCATIONAL TESTS; OBSERVATION OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR.

Study Number: 1210E22972

Principal Investigator: Jana Craft

Title(s):
Values Based Decision-Making in a Nonprofit Organization

This e-mail confirmation is your official University of Minnesota HRPP notification of exemption from full committee review. You will not receive a hard copy or letter.

This secure electronic notification between password protected authentications has been deemed by the University of Minnesota to constitute a legal signature.

The study number above is assigned to your research. That number and the title of your study must be used in all communication with the IRB office.

Research that involves observation can be approved under this category without obtaining consent.

SURVEY OR INTERVIEW RESEARCH APPROVED AS EXEMPT UNDER THIS CATEGORY IS LIMITED TO ADULT SUBJECTS.

This exemption is valid for five years from the date of this correspondence and will be filed inactive at that time. You will receive a notification prior to inactivation. If this research will extend beyond five years, you must submit a new application to the IRB before the study's expiration date.

Upon receipt of this email, you may begin your research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at (612) 626-5654.

You may go to the View Completed section of eResearch Central at <http://eresearch.umn.edu/> to view