

Thinking Managers

Edward de Bono of www.thinkingmanagers.com describes a new framework for focusing on values.

Evaluation of Values

The purpose of thinking is to enjoy and to deliver our values. But what are those values?

There is almost as much lip service paid to values as there is paid to creativity and innovation. Because these things are important they are discussed but it is too much trouble to act on them, and being seen to consider all values is what matters.

Values are vague and not always well defined. We know what they are and can recognise them but seeking them out is not easy because they are not concrete.

If a person who is born blind suddenly gets the use of their eyes back, then it takes quite a while for that person to see things. The brain needs to adjust to recognising shapes and forms. It is the same with values: unless we have a clear picture of the different values, it is hard to see them.

But it is not enough to see values – we also need to talk about them and compare the different values in alternative courses of action. The new framework of the Six Value Medals gives us a means for focusing on values and talking about them.

- The Gold Medal represents 'human values', those which matter to people. They can be positive or negative. Being ignored is negative, while being appreciated is positive.
- The Silver Medal represents 'organisational values', usually relating to a business. Survival is the most obvious Silver Medal value.
- The Steel Medal represents 'quality values', relating to products or services. Quality means fulfilling the desired or offered purpose.
- The Glass Medal stands for innovation, creativity and change.
- The Wood Medal stands for ecological values in the broadest sense – not just nature.
- The Brass Medal stands for perceptual values because brass looks like gold but is not.

One of the advantages of using such a perceptual framework is that it becomes possible to lay out the values in a 'value map', meaning comparative values may be seen at a glance. We can focus more clearly on the various values and see where they are strong and where they are weak or even negative.

About the author:

Edward de Bono is the world's leading authority in the field of creative thinking and the teaching of thinking as a skill.

