



Esprit de Corps

Trust & People|Culture Fit

Recent research reveals that the likelihood of being viewed as a great leader is five times greater when strong relationship skills like empathy and communication are paired with an equally strong focus on achieving results. Leaders demonstrating strength in only one area—either relationships or results—have just a one in eight chance of being viewed as great leaders. For those strong in both, the odds are better than 70 percent.

Unfortunately, less than 1 percent of leaders score high in both of these areas. Enter the concept of *esprit de corps*, the French term for “team spirit” made popular by management thinker Henry Favol over 75 years ago.

Military leaders know that creating *esprit de corps* is literally half the battle. It requires a “mission first, people always” focus, instilled by a “people first, mission always” mindset enabled through trusting connections established at the personal level.

“Harmony, union among the personnel of a concern, is great strength in that concern. Effort, then, should be made to establish it.”

HENRY FAYOL

“Esprit de corps is the devotion and enthusiasm among members of a group for one another.”

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIRFORCE HANDBOOK

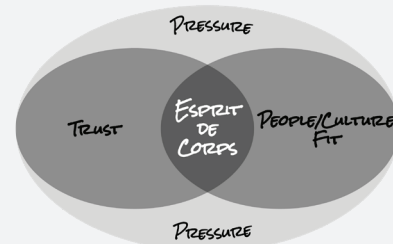
Our operating experience and field advisory work with military and paramilitary organizations gave us the basis for a mental model of *esprit de corps* built on three key factors: the individual factor of trust, the collective factor of “people/culture fit,” and the force multiplier of pressure (i.e., timebound results).

Activating the model requires a strong link between individual values and the collective values of the broader organization. Achieved through guided workshop sessions, this linkage enables a powerful “people|culture fit.”

CORE VALUES ENGAGEMENT

Our Core Values Engagement has the express intent of avoiding the most common mistake we see in developing values: senior teams seeing the goal as a neatly wordsmithed document. The mistake is costly, and misses the power of values entirely. The goal is not to publish a deliverable; rather, the focus should be discovering what truly matters most.

The secret is leveraging our Esprit de Corps model, and understanding that authentic core values are best discovered, not designed.



We start by discovering individual values, then using those to synthesize the collective core. When individuals see their values reflected in the group’s, trust and people/culture fit result. A three-step process is used to achieve this outcome:

Step 1: Key individuals use our Values Finder application to identify their personal values.

Step 2: Create an “advance team” of exemplary operators to cluster and synthesize the top individual value.

Step 3: The advance team (under guided facilitation in a short sprint workshop) evaluates the top values using five criteria:

Would we rather be fired than give up or compromise this value?

If we are penalized in some way for holding this value, would we still keep it?

A generation from now, will this value be as valid as it is today?

If this value actually becomes a competitive disadvantage, would we still hold it as a core value?

If we were to start a new team or organization tomorrow, would we build this value into the new organization?

Only the surviving values get shaped into formal statements of the organization’s collective core.