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it's a  
**way**<sup>TM</sup>  
not a day

*Bringing Your Values to Life*

Leader Guide

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it's a  
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not a day

*Bringing Your Values to Life*

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Dear Colleague,

One of the clearest measures of an effective team is how consistently it lives the values it says it believes in.

We all know how difficult it is to live our values from moment to moment. Our days are filled with pressures and challenges that tempt us to act in ways that are not in line with who we say we want to be. In this program, you will learn how to live your values more consistently with a three-step process:

- Proclaim It
- Live It
- Celebrate It

These strategies will help you live your values with more commitment. Your customers will know clearly what to expect from you, increasing your performance. Your team will know what to expect from each other, increasing trust and accountability. People will feel appreciated, increasing their passion and motivation.

Now more than ever, people are searching for organizations that declare what they stand for and live up to it. I thank you for challenging yourself to be one of those special organizations.

Wishing you passion that lasts,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "John Christensen". The signature is stylized and fluid, written in a cursive-like style.

John Christensen  
CEO, ChartHouse Learning

# program summary

## Before the Film

- Set up the experience: We're going to watch a film about a successful organization that consistently lives its values. What can we learn from them?

## After the Film

- Clarify values: What are we trying to achieve? What behaviors will help us do that?

## Proclaim It

- Make a stand: What are we willing to commit to publicly? If someone asks us about our values, what will we say? How will we proclaim our values?

## Live It

- Put our commitment in action: What does it look like to live our values?
- What gets in our way?
- How do we stay connected to our values throughout the day?

## Celebrate It

- Recognize each other: How does it feel to thank each other and be thanked?
- What behaviors should we be celebrating?
- How can we celebrate each other?

## Create a Values Board

- Sustain momentum: Create a volunteer group to keep the process going with fun ideas.

# three simple strategies

Ranken Jordan Hospital cares for children with complex conditions, from premature infants who weigh little more than a pound to teenagers who have been injured in terrible accidents.

At Ranken Jordan, the staff approaches its difficult work with a spirit that says, “I can’t believe I get to do what I do.” Their passion fuels powerful results. Customer satisfaction is 98 percent. Annual employee retention is 97 percent. Revenues have grown ten-fold over the last 10 years.

When ChartHouse Learning studied Ranken Jordan, we discovered three interconnected strategies that keep them connected to their values:

## proclaim it

One of the first things you see when you walk into Ranken Jordan are four huge banners, each with a statement on it. “These are our values,” a staff member says. “It’s a public proclamation of who we are and what we believe.”

When you tell people what you stand for, they expect it of you—and you expect it of yourself. A proclamation reminds you who you want to be, and how you want your customers and coworkers to experience you.

## live it

When you make a proclamation, if it’s something you value, it’s going to show in everything you do. When Ranken Jordan’s staff look at situations through the lens of their values, they can see clearly if their actions line up with their mission. When stresses and challenges push them off course, they look to their values to lead them back.

## celebrate it

At Ranken Jordan a celebration can be as simple as one colleague saying to another, “Thanks for answering that call light when I was busy.” Or: “I saw how you comforted that overwhelmed parent. Thanks for demonstrating what we’re about.”

Ranken Jordan’s staff are quick to celebrate each other when they see a colleague putting the team’s values into action. Sometimes they give each other small tokens of thanks, like a small plastic fish that symbolizes their shared commitment, or a T-shirt that says on it what the recipient did to make a positive difference. The award isn’t what matters most to the recipient; what matters is that you put the team’s values into action and a coworker noticed and acknowledged you.

Because the staff is intentional about what they celebrate, it reinforces the behaviors that please customers and achieve their mission.

When you tell people what you stand for, they expect it of you — and you expect it of yourself



# leading this program

## This guide includes:

- Background information to help you prepare and guide sessions.
- Questions and thoughts to provoke discussion.
- Exercises to help you clarify your values if necessary.
- Suggestions on proclaiming, living and celebrating your values.
- Ideas on creating a volunteer board to maintain momentum.

We left the guide open enough so you can tailor your presentation to your specific needs and available time. You may decide that one session is enough to determine what you are going to proclaim and how you will celebrate each other. Or you may need to get together several times to discuss and plan each step in the process.

We also have created a PowerPoint presentation. You can use these slides to lead the entire Proclaim It, Live It and Celebrate It process as well as create handouts. Because the content of this guide follows the flow of the slides, the guide will help you prepare for and add depth to your PowerPoint presentation.





# what is a value?

Values are defined as principles, beliefs or philosophies that guide thoughts, decisions and actions.

A value is really a choice: you value certain behaviors enough to choose them over the behaviors you otherwise might select.

These moment-to-moment choices, over time, determine how well you achieve your long-term goals. If you're ever having trouble fulfilling a vision or mission, first make sure you are living your values.



Every person, every team, has values, whether they are stated or not. *Your behavior exposes your true values.* But if you don't identify and focus on what you want to guide you, those behaviors are likely to show up haphazardly and sporadically, based on how you're feeling or how your day is going.

The more effective approach is to identify, as a team, values that help you fulfill your goals, and find ways to make them part of everything you do.

Your behavior exposes  
your true values

# ranken jordan's values

If you are familiar with FISH!, you will see the philosophy in action throughout *It's a Way Not a Day*<sup>™</sup>—even though the word FISH! is never mentioned.

Ranken Jordan embraced The FISH! Philosophy as their values several years ago because it helps them deliver better care. That's why the FISH! practices—Be There, Play, Make Their Day and Choose Your Attitude—are featured on their banners. They say FISH! is who they are.

We learned about Ranken Jordan because of FISH!, but we filmed there because we were fascinated by *how* they had made their values a way of life. Ranken Jordan chose FISH! as its values. Your organization may have *different* values. The important question is: Whatever your guiding principles, how do you anchor them in the hearts and minds of your staff? How do you make *your* values who *you* are?

This program is about the process that does that: Proclaim It, Live It and Celebrate It. The film shows how one organization has used this process to keep their values at the center of their thoughts and actions for years.



# before the film

Before your team watches *It's a Way Not a Day*, it's helpful to give them some context. Here's one way to introduce the film:

*This video is about an organization that's really good at what they do. Their customer satisfaction is 98 percent. Their annual employee retention is more than 97 percent. Their revenues have grown ten-fold in the last 10 years. They're recognized as innovators in their industry.*

*Why are they successful? The answer is values. They know what they believe in, and they've found three simple ways to make those values part of everything they do.*

*After the film, I'd like to talk about what we value. Do our customers know what we stand for? How consistently do we live that? When we get it right, do we recognize and thank each other? If we did these things more often, what impact would it have on us?*

Do we live what we say  
we stand for?

# after the film

After the film you may get a range of reactions—everything from “What do we value?” to “Cute film, but we don’t take care of children. How does this apply to us?”

Whatever comments you receive, they are all starting points for discussion that leads to action. Before your team can move forward, they must believe these ideas are relevant to their lives, and that happens through honest conversations.

## questions:

**1. What stood out in the film? What did they do that you liked? What did you see that we do well already?**

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**2. How do Ranken Jordan’s values help them achieve their goals?**

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**3. What does Ranken Jordan do that we would like to do more of?**

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*Facilitator's note: These early questions are key, especially if you are not in health care. Some may dismiss the behaviors in the film as "touchy feely" or ask what effect they have on the bottom line. The following examples may help them see how staying connected to values leads to success:*

- *Their customers—parents and children—are happy. Happy customers tell other potential customers about their experiences.*
- *Employees go the extra mile for customers, like Joel did for the boy in the wheelchair.*
- *People appreciate each other, and they pass those good feelings onto the customer. Did you see how the woman who got all the applause immediately shared her joy with a patient?*
- *People seem to be smiling all the time. People who aren't uptight think more clearly and make better decisions.*
- *They are passionate about their work. Their passion helps them do a tough job and do it well.*

## clarifying your values

At this point you can go one of two directions:

- If your team is clear on what your values are, and is ready to proclaim them, go to page 19.
- If you are *not* clear about your values or want to talk with your team more about them, go through one or more of the following Clarifying Values exercises before moving ahead.

These exercises will help you find words that describe your values, but the intent is not simply to find the perfect words. What matters is finding words you believe in strongly enough to put into action.

## clarifying values exercises:

### 1. What is our purpose? What values help us achieve that?

Every organization wants to succeed. But success is a result, not a purpose. What does your organization or team really *do* for people? That purpose steers you to values that will help you achieve it.

For example, the owner of one auto dealership focused solely on profit. Essentially he decided that his purpose was to get as much money as possible from customers. This inevitably led to values such as pressure and confrontation. Interactions with customers were a battle. The dealership's values delivered profit, but it turned off customers and burned out employees.

A new owner shifted the dealership's purpose to customer satisfaction. This led to such values as welcoming, listening and flexibility. As the staff focused on what they could *give*, not *get*, customers bought more cars than ever. Profits and market share *increased*.

Ranken Jordan's mission is "Consider the children first in all you do." This points the staff toward other-centered values such as being there and making people's day, and away from self-centered values such as impatience or hurriedness. Ranken Jordan faces financial realities like everyone else, but their passion for caring fuels the organization's health.

What is your organization or team about? What does *your* work do for people? Example: As the dealership mentioned earlier shifted its attention to customer satisfaction, its service team decided when they fix someone's car, "we are helping them go on vacation, we're helping them spend time with family out of town, we're giving them peace of mind."

List your organization's purpose, then list four values that help you achieve that purpose. Write these on chart paper or a whiteboard so everyone can see.

### Our purpose

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### List four values that help you fulfill your purpose

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. What do our customers want from us?

Ranken Jordan's values describe what you can expect from them. From the time you arrive at the front desk to the time your child goes home, you know they will be there for every need you have. You know that in challenging situations, they will take personal responsibility for the attitudes they bring to the issue. You know they will be lighthearted even as they do serious work.





The following exercise will help you clarify the actions that will meet your customers' expectations:

On a whiteboard or chart paper, list four things your customers want from you. Some examples might be: *To always feel welcomed. Quality craftsmanship. If I have a problem, you will work to find a solution.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Now list the values corresponding to each statement above that, if lived, would fulfill that expectation. For example, if you wrote *To always feel welcomed*, values such as *friendly* or *attentive* would make that happen. If your customers are most interested in having problems solved, the appropriate value might be *flexibility* or *creativity*.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

It's not always easy to know what to do to be successful. Focus on serving others—customers *and* coworkers—and the right values will show up.

What does your organization  
really do for people?

### 3. Who are we?

According to CEO Lauri Tanner, Ranken Jordan's banners are a reminder of "who we are." Many factors define who you are, but perhaps the most reliable is your choices. Sometimes the simplest way to identify what's most important to you is to narrow your choices.

1. Working individually, select 15 values that are most important to your team's success. If you need help, check the list on page 18.
2. Get together in small groups and compare lists. As a group, combine those individual lists into one list of 10 values.
3. Bring the small groups together. Trim the list to the five values most important to your team's success.
4. Now trim it to three.



## Values list

Accountability	Diligence	Honesty	Preparedness
Accuracy	Decisiveness	Honor	Proactive
Achievement	Democracy	Hospitality	Professionalism
Acknowledgement	Dependability	Humility	Profit
Adaptability	Determination	Humor	Quality
Aggressiveness	Dignity	Imagination	Recognition
Alignment	Diligence	Improvement	Reliability
Ambition	Directness	Independence	Reputation
Appreciation	Discovery	Ingenuity	Resourcefulness
Autonomy	Diversity	Innovation	Respect
Authority	Drive	Inspiration	Responsibility
Awareness	Effectiveness	Inventiveness	Responsiveness
Balance	Efficiency	Integrity	Results
Beauty	Empowerment	Intensity	Risk
Belonging	Engagement	Involvement	Rules
Boldness	Empathy	Joy	Sacrifice
Calmness	Encouragement	Kindness	Safety
Capability	Energy	Knowledge	Satisfaction
Caring	Enthusiasm	Leadership	Security
Challenge	Ethics	Learning	Selflessness
Change	Excellence	Listening	Service
Clarity	Excitement	Love	Sincerity
Collaboration	Expertise	Loyalty	Skill
Commitment	Fairness	Mastery	Solving problems
Communication	Faith	Meaning	Speed
Community	Family	Money	Spirit
Compassion	Flexibility	Nerve	Stability
Competence	Focus	Openness	Support
Competition	Freedom	Optimism	Synergy
Conformity	Friendliness	Order	Teamwork
Consistency	Friendship	Originality	Thoroughness
Contribution	Fun	Passion	Thoughtfulness
Control	Generosity	Performance	Timeliness
Cooperation	Giving	Persistence	Trust
Courage	Gratitude	Personal development	Truth
Courtesy	Growth	Playfulness	Unity
Creativity	Happiness	Pleasure	Uniqueness
Curiosity	Harmony	Popularity	Value
Customer satisfaction	Health	Power	Variety
Decisiveness	Helpfulness	Precision	Warmth

# proclaim it

The dictionary defines proclamation as an “official, public declaration or display.” It puts a stake in the ground. There is no hiding from it.

A proclamation creates expectations. If your actions do not match your words, you risk being seen as the boy who cried wolf. If you do what you say you were going to do, you will be known as reliable and trustworthy.

But the real power of making a proclamation doesn't just come from external sources, but from

inside you. Often, when CEO Lauri Tanner walks through the lobby and sees the banners, she asks herself, “Am I living it today?” A proclamation calls you back to who you want to be, especially when the pressures of the day tempt you to be someone else.

A proclamation calls you  
back to who you want to be

## questions

### 1. What are we willing to publicly proclaim?

Write your values on chart paper. As you write each value, ask your team: How committed are we to publicly proclaiming this value?

The key word here is *committed*. Which values will your team pour all of its energies and focus into living? If that's *all* of your stated values, great. If it's one of your values, that's great too.

When Ranken Jordan introduced The FISH! Philosophy, they hung one banner at a time and put all their focus into putting that value in action. Only when they felt that value was really part of them did they hang the next banner. And it was staff, not management, that decided when that happened.

The following sign used to be common in buffet restaurants: *"Take all you want, but eat all you take."* Proclaim all you want, but *do* what you proclaim.

### We are committed to proclaiming these values:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. If someone asks us about our values, what will we say?

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When people ask about your values, it helps to have some basic phrases that everybody can easily articulate. But the last thing you want is for your explanations to sound scripted or created by committee.

A story from your experience or from that of your coworkers often helps illustrate what your values look like in action. To explain Be There, Shari Riley, administrator of quality and safety, told us about Gail Williams, a respiratory therapist. A patient was going to be transported to a doctor's appointment outside the hospital. It was bitterly cold and Gail saw the girl didn't have a coat. Her job description does not include getting coats, and nobody told her to do it. But she had a few extra minutes, so she rushed to storage to find a warm coat.

"When Gail came back," Shari recalled, "she held up the coat and said, 'Doesn't this just look like her?' Gail not only got the coat but she also found one that was cute enough for this girl. That's being there."

What are some stories from your team's experiences that sum up *your* values?

### 3. How will our values help us solve difficult situations?

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Ranken Jordan deals with complex medical issues. "These banners, these principles, help us clarify the situation and guide us in making the right decision," says Brett Moorehouse, chief operating officer.

Think of some difficult situations your team has encountered and might encounter again. How do your values help you make these decisions? Will staff be supported if they use your values to make such decisions?



#### 4. How will we proclaim our values?

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### tips

- Hang a sign (or several signs) in your business or work area. Make sure it's large enough or strategically placed so no one can miss it.
- Wear badges or nametags displaying your values. Ranken Jordan's employee badges say, "Ask Me About FISH!" The badges also list each value with a short description of what it looks like (see page 38).
- Take out an advertisement explaining your values and connecting them to what customers can expect from you.
- Put your values on a billboard—as one business did. The billboard invited customers to ask about its values, and these conversations helped staff focus on their commitment.
- Display your values on your website and letterhead.
- If you are in health care, list and describe your values in your patient handbook so they know what to look for from you.

Your team, department or company can make a proclamation. You can start locally, regionally, nationally or globally. How big do you want your proclamation to be?

### action plan

What are one or two steps we will take to proclaim our values?

When will we do it?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## live it



In *The Empire Strikes Back*, one of the Star Wars movies, Yoda commands Luke Skywalker to raise his crashed ship out of the swamp using only his mind. Luke is doubtful but says he will try. “Do. Or do *not*,” Yoda responds. “There is no *try*.”

In the same way, once you have proclaimed your values, the choice is to live them or not. There are moments, of course, where staying true to your values seems as hard as raising a ship from a swamp. That’s why commitment is essential.

Commitment isn’t something you decide once and never think about again. Whatever you believe, Shari says, “you have to keep it the most important thing you do all day.” You have to recommit every day when you wake up, when you walk in to work, when you’re confronted with situations that test your dedication to your values.

The more you put your commitment into action, the easier it gets. “You live it every day, suddenly you find it is who you are,” Shari says.

When Luke fails to move the ship, Yoda concentrates deeply and lifts it out of the swamp. His commitment, not his size or strength, makes possible what Luke believed was impossible. The staff at Ranken Jordan are ordinary people with an extraordinary commitment; that’s what helps patients achieve what others say is impossible.

## questions

### 1. What is my personal commitment to our values?

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No one else can live your values *for* you. What impact do *you* want to have on others? If there are things happening around you that you don't like, do what you can to change it. But don't let it affect how *you* show up. The only person you control is you. Focus on that and you may be surprised how it influences those around you.

### 2. How do we stay connected to our values throughout the day?

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Lots of things, from frustration to fatigue, can blur our focus on what's important. Your values are a lens to help you see if your actions line up with your intentions.

Mary Ranken Jordan, founder of Ranken Jordan Hospital, said, "Consider the children first in all you do." In situation after situation, people ask themselves.

"Am I considering the child first?"  
With that lens, it's easy for them to see how they should handle the situation.

Your values are a lens to help you see if your actions line up with your intentions

### 3. When we live our values, what does it look like?

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Before the big game, athletes visualize the result they want. This helps them rehearse and anticipate the actions they know will deliver the outcome they want. What will it look like when you put your values in action? For Francene Wallace, a certified nursing assistant, it's the smiles on the kids' faces. When she sees that, she knows she's living it.

### 4. What keeps us from living our values?

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There are always things you can do to live your values more consistently. But what are you doing that gets in the way? Maybe it's a habit you don't notice anymore. Maybe it's a perception about a colleague that affects the way you treat them. Whatever it is, usually the only way to find out is to ask others.

It's not easy to change reactions that feel like they are hard-wired, but you can change your wiring. When your brain tells you to react a way that is not in line with your intention, focus on your commitment to that intention. With practice, the old reaction will soften and your commitment will solidify.



**5. When we get off track, how do we get back?**

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Mark Busch, director of purchasing, says, “You’re at work eight hours. See if you can change these kids’ lives by being positive.” Mark focuses on a larger goal. He might not be having the best day but he has eight hours to make the impact he wants to make. Because he stays focused on his greater purpose, it’s easier to let go of temporary distractions and upsets.

**6. When we have crisis or challenge, what values usually show up in our behavior?**

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One of the truest signs of character is how you react in a crisis. It’s one thing to live values when everything is running smoothly; the test is how we hold to them when we’re feeling the heat. A crisis is when you need values the most; they are like a lighthouse to keep you on course in a storm.

That’s essential for leaders. If you habitually abandon your values in tough situations, even if you apologize later, people see that those values only apply in certain situations. But if you stick with your commitments, especially when it’s uncomfortable, people get the message: Our values apply *all* the time.

**7. When we’re focused on our values, what opportunities do we see that we didn’t see before?**

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The Ranken Jordan office staff decided that to be there for a deaf patient, they needed to learn his language. Joel, in facilities, noticed a patient who loved machinery, so he took him to fire up the generator. Tim, who cooks for the kids, saw the patients shooting baskets, so he decided to rebound for them before he went home.

You could say that none of these actions, by themselves, is a huge deal. But small gestures like these, multiplied by the entire staff, have a major impact on patients and families.

These employees acted outside the limits of their positions. Values aren't limited by job descriptions. "We can all be therapeutic for the kids," says CEO Lauri Tanner (who sometimes plays Guitar Hero® with the patients).

What little things can you do to make a special difference for your customers and coworkers? How can you live your values in a way that goes beyond your job description?

## tips

### 1. Wear your value

Think of an action or attitude that helps you put your values into action. For example, if your values revolve around service, a word such as *helpful* or *welcoming* or *problem-solver* gives you a way to approach the situations that come your way throughout the day.

Write your word on a nametag and wear it all day. How responsible do you feel to be true to that identity?

### 2. Live It partner

Invite a colleague to be your Live It partner. Their job is to let you know how well you are living your values. Check in with them every few days.



The more specific you are about the help you want, the better. What are some ways you hope to put your values into action? What will that look like? Are there situations where you may struggle?

Listen with an open heart. This person is honestly trying to help you be the person you say you want to be.

If you are the one who is offering comments, focus your observations on what your partner asked you to watch for. Look for areas where your partner demonstrated their values, not just the instances where they *didn't*. Keep in mind the impact of your words, especially when pointing out areas where your partner fell short of what they intended.

### 3. Think ahead

It helps to think about how you will handle difficult situations before they arise. Think of a tough situation: when I'm living my values how would I handle this situation?

#### Examples:

- A team member needs my help and I'm behind in my own work.
- A customer is angry.
- A colleague I'm working with or depending on makes a mistake.
- I disagree with a team member.
- Pick your own: \_\_\_\_\_

Think about your response. How does it differ from how you typically react? Remember that difference next time you encounter a similar situation.

It helps to think about how  
you will handle difficult  
situations before they arise

#### 4. What does it look like?

Don't assume that if you select a value, everyone automatically knows how to live it. It helps to have a picture of what it actually looks like.

For example, it's not always easy to know how to make someone else's day, so a hospital in Texas compiled a list of what that value looks like for its employees. Some entries include:

- Don't just treat people the way you want to be treated, ask them how they want to be treated.
- When you encounter someone who's lost, don't just point them toward their destination. Walk them there.
- Do at least one nice thing a day for someone else that you don't get paid to do.
- Smile.
- Hold the door for people.
- Ask people how they're doing, especially if you don't know them, and really listen to their response.

Start your list by describing common ways to live your values, and add to it when someone discovers a new way. Eventually you'll have a long list of behaviors for employees to refer to.

#### 5. Gratitude journal

It's tough to stay connected to our values when we focus on what *isn't* going right or what we *don't* have. For a week, at the end of each day, write two good things that happened to you during the day. Focus on those things when you start work the next day. How does it affect your perspective when challenges arise?

#### 6. New choices

Living it sometimes means doing things differently. Think of a situation that frustrates you or gets you off track. Write how you handled that before. How would you handle it if you focused your values?



**Situation:**

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**How I did it before:**

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**Living my values:**

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**7. Attitude board**

Attitudes have a big effect on how well we live our values. Here's a ChartHouse Learning-tested strategy for increasing awareness. Hang a white board or piece of paper by your door. On it, post the attitude you're feeling at the moment—good, lousy, indifferent, whatever. If colleagues comment on your board, ask them to assess how well you're living that attitude. If you're brave, ask them if your attitude is working for them.

If you don't feel good about the attitude you have chosen, see if being more aware of it helps you move to a mental place that is more satisfying. If you change your attitude, be sure to change what's on your board.

## action plan

What are one or two steps we will take to remind us to live our values?  
When will we do it?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## celebrate it



Usually when we prepare for a celebration, we work hard to decorate the physical space with balloons, posters and streamers. What if we put as much effort into decorating our emotional space—with thanks, compliments and encouragement?

We all want to be recognized for our efforts. If the Ranken Jordan staff never congratulated patients for their hard work they do to get better, how successful would the kids be? The same applies to adults; we don't lose our need for encouragement just because we grow up.

As good as it feels to be recognized, it feels just as good to recognize. When we acknowledge our coworkers, not because we want something from them, but because we really value them, it builds trust between us. Trust prepares us for the inevitable challenges all teams face, so when there is a crisis, as CEO Lauri Tanner says, “we're ready to go.”

## questions

### 1. What behaviors should we celebrate to reinforce our values?

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“We’re intentional about what we celebrate,” says Angie Lantz, operations administrator, “because those are things that move us forward.” What moves your team forward? What pleases your customers so they want to come back? What behaviors promote teamwork and trust among colleagues?

### 2. How does it feel to be thanked or recognized?

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The beauty of celebrating a coworker is it reminds everyone within earshot *what is* being acknowledged. Every time you celebrate someone, you are proclaiming your values again.

### 3. How does it feel to thank or recognize a colleague?

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Ranken Jordan’s staff often give plastic fish to each other as a token of their thanks. When you get a fish, you are expected to pass it on to a deserving coworker. “For someone to hand you a fish, it’s like, wow,” says CNA Francene Wallace. “I want to let someone else feel what I felt when I was given a fish.”

#### 4. How will we celebrate each other regularly?

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## tips

### Make it easy and fun

At Ranken Jordan, a fish is a symbol of who they are. When you want to thank someone, you grab a fish from a bucket. The fish have a small slit cut in the tail so they fit on employee badges. You can fit several fish on a badge at once—like football players who get multiple stickers on their helmets for great plays.

Is the plastic fish silly? Of course. “And don’t you love it?” says Di Zuniga, director of clinical services. But it’s not about the fish. The fish is a token, a symbol of their shared commitment. When you give a plastic fish to a coworker, you are saying to that person, “You are living what we are about.”

What simple symbol can you give each other that reminds you of *your* values (and makes you smile)?

### Give something people can use

One year Ranken Jordan designed four T-shirts, each a different color, for each of its values. On the shirts was written one of the following phrases: “You were caught . . . being there/playing/making their day/choosing your attitude.” Staff nominated coworkers they saw living those values. Each quarter the nominations were published in a special newsletter and honorees received a T-shirt corresponding with the value they had demonstrated. On any given day you will see people throughout the hospital wearing their shirts, each one a colorful reminder of what they strive to live.

What can you give people that they can keep using? Some ideas: shirts, hats, mouse pads, bags, screensavers, etc.

### **Create rituals**

New activities are great, but when something works, why not stay with it? Ranken Jordan has several rituals that have lasted for years, such as the monthly Big Fish ceremony. The T-shirt award program is so popular the staff comes up with a new design each year. Rituals create anticipation and connection. They keep shared beliefs alive, especially during change.

### **Create a reason to come together**

At ChartHouse Learning, we fill out cards, writing a short message describing what a colleague did to make our day easier, better, happier, etc. Then we toss the card into a bowl. Once a week we gather, pass the cards randomly around the circle and read the messages aloud. There are always smiles, laughter, applause and occasionally tears. It makes our day just to be there.

### **Invite your customers to join in**

When you walk into the clinical area, you can't miss a large message board. It is filled with notes from young patients (This is a good place for sick kids!) as well as comments from grateful parents ("It was suggested we change the hospital's name to: Ranken Jordan Hospital of Miracles"). Invite your customers to post comments on a board for everyone to see. It will make you feel good when you live up to their expectations and hold you accountable when you don't.

### **Allow people to celebrate in their own way**

Tyler Mathews, a member of Ranken Jordan's FISH! board (page 37), once worked for an organization that made employees join in cheers. "I hated it," he says. When the board gives its monthly employee award, the Big Fish, it announces it to the rest of the hospital with marching and singing. It's an excuse to be silly for a few minutes but mostly to make sure no one misses it. "If you don't like to put on the silly hat and beat the tambourine and sing, you can just go show up and clap for the person," Lauri says. The main thing is letting the recipient know that you value them.

Tyler respects the award and the person who's receiving it. "The selflessness and love it promotes is so valuable," he says, "I don't feel I have to wear a hat to be part of that attitude."

### **Make your praise authentic, specific**

Some leaders deliver one-size-fits-all recognitions that come across as insincere or just going through the motions—especially if they never give you the time of day otherwise.

The more specific your praise, the more it will make an impact on the recipient. Point out what the person did, how they did it and why you think it was great. Example: “I saw you with that parent who was upset, but you listened patiently and it helped them feel better. I know it must have been tough but you were really there for them.”

Specific praise tells the recipient you understand and appreciate the actions you are praising them for. It tells them you are paying attention to them; we all want to know that others notice and care about us.

### **Make the honor meaningful**

The Big Fish recipient gets to park in the spot closest to the front door for one month. “It’s a beautiful thing on a rainy day,” says past winner Carrie Kettler.

The parking spot used to be the only visible sign of the award, until a visitor said to CEO Lauri Tanner, “I thought you weren’t here. I didn’t see your car in the Big Fish parking spot.”

“I’m not the Big Fish,” Lauri responded. She related this story to the FISH! board. Now, besides being honored with the use of the parking spot, the Big Fish’s name and picture are displayed prominently by the front desk so everyone knows who the real honoree is.

### **Make your values part of job appraisals and interviews**

Some organizations promote people who deliver in one way, even if they routinely violate its values. Besides having a toxic effect on everyone around them, it sends this message: “Our values are bogus. If they don’t follow them, why should I?” The negative effect on the entire team outweighs any positives the toxic person delivers.

Ranken Jordan has made its values one of the criteria by which it evaluates performance. This sends a strong message: We reward what we say we value. Employees believe in the organization because it treats people the way it says it wants them to treat others.

In interviews, Ranken Jordan looks for people who exude its values, even if the prospect doesn't know yet what the hospital's values are. When the employee learns the hospital's values, it confirms for them that they are in the right place.

## action plan

What are one or two steps we will take to celebrate our values?  
When will we do it?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# create a values board



Even when your values are a part of who you are, a reminder always helps.

That's why Ranken Jordan's staff created their own values board. (Because they live The FISH! Philosophy, they call it the FISH! board.) Made up of volunteers from each department, the board comes up with new celebration ideas and coordinates fun events that also keep employees connected to their beliefs.

The board develops a new celebration campaign, such as T-shirts and gift certificates, every year. It publishes a newsletter honoring employees nominated by their coworkers for living values. Its members honor a colleague with the Big Fish award once a month. It

developed a suggestion box where employees, parents and visitors offer ideas for making the culture even more welcoming.

Volunteer members run the board, not administration. Anyone can join and anyone can offer ideas.

## To create your own values board:

- Ask for volunteers from each function or department.
- Meet regularly to keep the momentum going. In the beginning it may help to meet as often as once every two weeks. As you get established, you can meet once a month.
- Create a unique name for your board.
- Don't worry about naysayers. Don't force anyone to participate and don't put them down if they don't. All you need is a small but committed group. Focus on celebrating people, celebrating values and having fun. People will naturally be drawn to your energy.

# defining your values

Ranken Jordan came up with detailed explanations of each of its values to help people understand more clearly what these behaviors look like. The staff wears these descriptions on their employee badges.

## Be There

We live in the present.

We soulfully listen (really listen).

We live in the question “Who am I being while I’m doing what I’m doing?”

We are respectful in all our interactions.

## Play

We are child-like.

We live in wonder.

We think.

We keep our curiosity alive and trust it to lead to better solutions.

In our play, new ideas arise.

## Make Their Day

We are passionate about serving.

We are mindful of the needs of others.

We do our best to put “helping others” in balance with our business goals.

## Choose Your Attitude

We live fully engaged lives.

We live in our choices.

We are responsible for how our choices affect others.

We believe in living on purpose and utilizing our talents.

We are students, always open to new learning.

