# JIM BEARDEN, CSP



### BEARDEN'S TIPS ON LEADERSHIP

## Understanding Employees' Definitions of Value, Part One

### CONCEPTS

In this and the next few tips I will share some of the premises on which understanding & delivering value to employees is based, and a series of four types of questions I encourage you to use for understanding what I call their Definitions of Value. Here's the first of the four premises:

The only reason employees will do the things you expect them to do is if they believe that they will receive sufficient value to justify their doing so

On first reading, that statement may sound a bit harsh. It makes employees sound like a bunch of self-centered mercenaries! But if you think about it, doesn't that premise apply to all of us? I'm not saying that people are incapable of generous, selfless, even sacrificial acts. All I'm saying is that even such exemplary behavior is related to some form of value the people who exhibit such behavior believe they will receive.

Value, as we're using it in this series, comes in two forms: tangible and intangible. The tangible is the easier to recognize because it's, well, tangible. A mistake many organizational leaders make is assuming that the only form of value employees are seeking is tangible.

But in truth, the intangible forms of value are often the more powerful. As we move through this series of pieces I'll be offering specific suggestions for understanding and delivering the value your employees are seeking.

But for now, here are a few things I want you to do to get comfortable with this process before you begin facilitating it with your employees.

### THEORY TO PRACTICE

- Since few of you will have much experience facilitating processes such as the one I'll be outlining for you, I want you to complete some preliminary steps. Doing so will prove beneficial in two ways:
  - It will help you become more comfortable doing the things I'll encourage you to do in subsequent pieces, and
  - It will help you be more empathetic in your interactions with employees
- Begin by making a list of the ten most important things you expect to receive from your employer (this can be the organization for which you work, the executives in that organization and/or your immediate supervisor)
- 3. After completing your list, I want you to rank those ten expectations in their order of importance to you
- 4. Now, starting with the one you've ranked #1 and continuing through your list of ten, I want you to specifically describe the things your employer would have to do to meet that expectation. Be specific; pretend that the description you provide would become the model for the things your employer would do
- 5. Finally, for each of your ten expectations, I want you to define the value you associate with having that expectation met. Why is each of your expectations important to you?

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