

# NLP

## FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS

How to get better  
results faster at work

Jeremy Lazarus

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# Chapter 14

## Values

### The key to motivating and influencing

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Motivation is the art of getting people to do what you want them to do because they want to do it.

*Dwight D Eisenhower, former US President*

We referred to values in the Communication Model (Chapter 2) and in the Neuro-logical Levels model (Chapter 8). Values can be defined as the things that we want, look for or which are important to us in any given context. They are one of the most important filters and an awareness of values will be useful for you personally in your own working life as well as for enhancing your ability to influence other people at work.

### Why is a knowledge of values so important?

Values will help you to:

- sell more
- manage so effectively that you will have staff clamouring to work for you
- improve your own satisfaction level at work

- make better decisions and choices about your career
- negotiate more effectively
- recruit better staff
- prevent or minimise the sources of conflict at work
- build more effective teams
- coach other people, including in the topics above.

## Key concepts

Values are usually intangible and, from a Hierarchy of Ideas perspective (Chapter 7), an abstract concept. Examples of values in the workplace for an individual could be *challenge, respect, variety* and *making a difference* and, for an organisation, *service, excellence, innovation* and *empowerment*. Because values are intangible, they might mean different things to different people; **your** definition of, for example, *variety* might be different from that of one of your colleagues.

You might also hear the term ‘criteria’ used by NLP professionals when referring to values; essentially the terms are interchangeable.

Values are those things that we either move towards having, or move away from not having. For example, money might be important to one of your colleagues because they want what money can buy (house, car, clothes etc.) and it might be equally as important to another colleague because they do not want to be without money and have the sparse home life they had when growing up. The first colleague is motivated by moving towards money, and the second is motivated by the thought of not having it (known as moving away from). This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Values link to beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Sometimes a person’s values are formed because of a belief they have; sometimes beliefs are formed because of a value they have. A manager may value honesty, because they believe that it is important to tell the truth. Their attitudes, which are essentially beliefs and values around a

specific topic, will reflect this, and assuming they are congruent (see alignment and congruence in Chapter 8), their behaviour will reflect their beliefs, values and attitudes.

Values are naturally organised in a hierarchy. There will be several things that are important to you at work or in your career or business; some of these will be more important than others. As we will soon cover, this becomes really important when working with values.

Values can and do change throughout a person's life and career, especially when a significant event happens, such as being made redundant, being promoted or becoming a parent.

In the context of motivation at work, there are numerous theories. One that is particularly relevant is by Frederick Herzberg, who found that there are two main types of motivator at work – 'hygiene factors' (such as work conditions, status, salary, and company car) and 'true motivators' (such as recognition, advancement, the work itself and responsibility). For more information on theories about values, see the 'Resources for further learning' section.

## **Working with values**

There are many ways to use values in the workplace. The starting point when working with values is to find out, or elicit, someone's values in the relevant context. For example, if you are managing or acting as a coach for someone around a career choice, the context is 'career'; if you are selling them a car, the context is 'car'.

The process of eliciting values when you have the 'client's' overt permission is described in the following section (later in the chapter we will cover how to elicit values more informally when you might not have overt permission). Let's assume that you have been asked by a colleague to help them with their next career move; the context therefore is 'career'.

### Step 1: Standard questions

Ask your colleague, *'What's important to you in/about a career?'* or *'What do you look for in a career?'* or *'What do you want from a career?'* All of these questions are similar and I usually ask all three together because clients and students have said that they find it useful.

Write down the answers using your colleague's words (**not** your paraphrased version). The word or phrase that they say will mean something specific to them, and this is about them, **not** you.

If the value that they give is stated in the negative, for example, 'not being ignored', ask, *'What do you want instead?'* to get a value stated in the positive (e.g. 'recognition'), which is what you would write down.

If there is a slightly extended pause (as a guide, there is often a pause after the first four to seven values), ask, *'What else is important to you about your career?'* Keep going until the colleague seems to have run out of ideas.

#### TIP 14.1

Keep quiet whilst your colleague is reflecting on their values and resist any temptation to suggest values, as this process is about **their** values, not yours.

### Step 2: Previous situations

Because having your values met will usually make you happy and motivated, an additional way to find out your colleague's values is to ask them to remember a specific time when they felt really motivated or happy in their career, and what was it about that time that led them to feel so happy or motivated. As they describe the situation, listen out for values. It is likely that they will mention some of the values that they mentioned in step 1. If there is a value that they didn't mention previously in step 1, ask them if that is important to them in their career. Assuming that it is, add it to the list. If you are

hearing several values that were not mentioned in step 1, repeat step 2 with a different situation to elicit additional values.

At this stage you will probably have between 8 and 12 values. If it is slightly more or slightly less, then that's fine. Occasionally people will give a lot more than 12, which indicates either that some of the values could be grouped together, for example, *honesty*, *trust* and *integrity* could be similar for a particular person, or that the values are in fact 'behaviours'. As a guide, values are intangible whereas behaviours are tangible. If your colleague mentions a behaviour, ask, *'What's important to you about that?'*, which will lead to their giving you the related value.

### Step 3: 'Catch-all'

Show them the list of values and ask, *'If you had all of this (these values) in your career, would you want it or is there anything missing?'*, which will identify any values not previously mentioned. Occasionally the person might say that there is something missing, in which case add it to the list and repeat the question until there is nothing else that they want to add.

#### TIP 14.2

Sometimes in steps 1, 2 or 3 people will want to explain why each value is important. Whilst this will be useful later, it is not useful at this point. If your colleague explains or gives long-winded answers, politely and graciously suggest that the best way for them to get the benefit from this process is to give a brief answer regarding what is important to them in their career, and that there's no need to explain or justify the values.

### Step 4: Ranking

Although all of the values on the list will be important to your colleague, some will be more important than others. Ask them to rank the values from 1 to 8 with 1 being the most important.

Typically the top four to six values will provide the major amount of motivation in any given context.

Another way of ranking, especially if there are more than 10 values, is to rank the essential values as 'As', the important but not essential values as 'Bs' and the 'icing on the cake' values as 'Cs'. I always ask my clients which method they would prefer or which would be most useful to them given the purpose of the exercise; most people prefer the second method ('As', 'Bs' and 'Cs').

It is not uncommon for people to mention some of the more important values towards the end of the process. This indicates that the person has been searching deeper inside themselves and emphasises the importance of allowing the person time to think quietly, and of asking, *'What else is important to you?'*, and doing steps 2 and 3.

### **TIP 14.3**

When eliciting and ranking values, it is sometimes helpful to people to:

- read out the values mentioned during the process; this might be particularly helpful to people whose preferred representational system is auditory
- sit next to the person so that they can see what you have written (for people with a visual preference)
- let the person write the rankings next to each value (step 4) (for people with a kinaesthetic preference)
- rewrite the list, or let the person do it if they want to, once the person has ranked the list.

### **Step 5: Check**

As a 'check', offer them two careers: one with values 5 to 8 (name them) (or the 'Bs' and 'Cs') and the second with values 1 to 4 (name them) (or the 'As'). I would expect them to choose the second one.

If they were unsure or chose the first one, revisit step 4 and ask them to adjust the ranking.

## Exercise 14.1

**(approx. 10–20 minutes)**

Choose the most appropriate word to reflect the context of work for you (e.g. career, or work, or business, or job) and do the values-elicitation exercise (steps 1–5) for that area so that you can gain greater insight or clarity. If you would find it easier, ask a trusted colleague or friend to take you through the process, bearing in mind the whole process and the tips.

## Exercise 14.2

**(approx. 10–20 minutes)**

If you believe that it would be important to you in your work role to be able to elicit other people's values (if you sell, recruit or manage people, it will be essential), practise the values-elicitation process with willing colleagues or friends.

## Delving deeper – criteria equivalents

As I mentioned earlier, because values are abstract they will mean different things to different people. Therefore, it can be extremely useful (for reasons that I will explain further in the 'applications' sections) to know what the person means by their stated values, and how specifically they would know whether their values had been met (or not). The term 'criteria equivalent' is used in NLP to describe this.

Here is a selection of questions you could ask to find out what each of the values means. Let's assume that one of your colleague's work

values is ‘recognition’. Normally you would ask just one or two of these questions for each value (select the question(s) that are most appropriate).

- What has to happen for you to know that you are being recognised/have recognition at work?
- How do you know when you’re being recognised at work?
- What does recognition mean to you at work?
- How do you know when someone (or something) recognises you at work?
- What is your evidence procedure for recognition at work?
- What causes you to feel recognised at work?
- What would have to happen for you to feel not recognised at work or that your value of recognition was not being met?

Once you have steps 1–5 above, if it were appropriate, you would then find the criteria equivalents for the top few values, normally the top five, or all the ‘As’, and for even more values if you think it would be useful. Using the example of your colleague, it will almost certainly be important to them to know both the values and the criteria equivalents, so that they can make a better choice of career.

Typically, finding the criteria equivalents takes 2–5 minutes per value, depending on how much detail is required. Therefore, within around 45 minutes you will know a huge amount about them and/or have helped them gain that knowledge about themselves.

### **Exercise 14.3**

**(approx. 20–45 minutes)**

Continue Exercises 14.1 and 14.2, eliciting the criteria equivalents for the top few values. Do as many as you (14.1) or the colleague (14.2) would find useful.

### TIP 14.4

Please note that values can and do change over time. I suggest that you revisit your career values periodically, perhaps before your annual appraisal or whenever there is a significant change in your work or personal circumstances. Also, if a few days after doing the values-elicitation exercise you realise that you have not listed an important value, simply add it to the list.

## Applications for individual use

There are numerous ways you can use values at work for yourself or other individuals.

### Making choices

As with the example we used in this chapter, you can help yourself or another person choose a new job or career. Elicit the values and criteria equivalents, then make a list of the alternatives and note whether each individual value is met in each of the choices. The table below gives an example.

Table 14.1

<b>Value (listed in order of importance)</b>	<b>Career D</b>	<b>Option E</b>	<b>Option F</b>
Challenge	✓	✓	✓
Variety	✓	?	✓
Making a difference	×	×	✓
Recognition	✓	×	✓
Development	?	✓	✓

Assuming that the five values are all ‘As’, then Option F ‘ticks all the boxes’! You might prefer to use scores out of 10 for each value rather than ticks, crosses and question marks.

### **Job interviews (as a candidate)**

If you know your values, hierarchy/ranking and criteria equivalents, you will be able to ask the interviewer(s) searching questions regarding the role to find out whether it is truly suitable for you. Whenever I cover values on my training courses, I ask the attendees (most of whom have staff reporting to them) what they would think about a candidate who asked searching and relevant questions about the role. The response is **always** that they would think highly of the candidate, which increases the candidate’s chances of success.

### **Improving your satisfaction at work**

Using the principles detailed in ‘Making choices’ in this section, list your values in order of importance and then score on a scale of 1 to 10 the degree to which each value is being met in your current role. Depending on the situation, it might be appropriate to make specific requests to your boss regarding how to improve your level of satisfaction.

### **Selling to consumers**

When you bought the shoes you’re wearing, you had an idea of what you wanted in a pair of shoes (style, size, price, colour etc.), that is, your values or criteria. A good salesperson would have asked you what you want in a pair of shoes and then showed you shoes that fitted your criteria (see Story 14.1). This ‘informal’ values-elicitation process uses the same principles as the more ‘formal’ process we covered earlier in this chapter.

### **Goal setting**

As discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 8, when setting goals, you need to make sure that you know your values and that your values are in alignment with your goals. In other words, will achieving your

## Story 14.1

Although asking customers what they are looking for may seem very obvious, when I cover the application of values to selling on a course every person admits that they have had experiences of salespeople not doing even a basic values elicitation. A few years ago, Alison, a course delegate who had learned about values in a previous module, was looking for a brand-new, top-of-the-range car. She described walking into one car dealership and being approached by a salesman who proceeded to tell her about the various cars that were available. Amused, and slightly surprised, she listened for around five to ten minutes, hoping that he would actually ask her what she wanted in a car. He did not and, needless to say, she went to a different showroom.

goal give you more of your essential values, or top three or four values?

### Coaching individuals

You could coach individuals in the areas listed above if you are their manager or hired as a business coach.

## Applications within organisations

There are numerous applications of values for organisations.

### Managing and motivating staff

This is a really important use of values and an invaluable way for managers to create or enhance employee engagement. I suggest that every single manager be trained to do the following two-step process.

**Step 1: do a values-elicitation exercise** with each employee at their annual appraisal, which will take up to one hour including the

criteria equivalents. Set the scene by saying something along the lines of:

*As your boss, it's really important to me that you're happy and motivated in your work. Why? Because you'll produce better results, which will benefit you, me, the team and our customers/clients/patients. I consider it my role to help you to be as happy in your work as possible and to help you to have as much of what you want at work and as little of what you don't want. I promise you I will do everything in my power to do this, subject to the various budgetary and organisational limits that exist. And remember, I am not a mind-reader, so if you don't tell me what's important to you, I can't be expected to know. So, on the basis that I'm not a mind-reader and that I promise to do my best for you, would you be willing to answer a few questions?*

I've never heard of an employee reply 'no'. You would then proceed into steps 1–5 and find the criteria equivalents.

### **TIP 14.5**

A couple of weeks before the annual appraisal, ask your employees to think about what's important to them in their job/work/career. This gives them the chance to reflect before the appraisal.

**Step 2: keep your word.** If circumstances change during the year, explain that to the employees affected.

### **TIP 14.6**

Be curious regarding the degree to which your staff's values link to Herzberg's true motivators (as discussed earlier in this chapter). Even in a challenging economic environment, where there might be less scope to use money to motivate staff, there are still ways to get the best from people if you understand what truly motivates them.

## Story 14.2

I teach this process on **every** management-related course that I run. Without exception, all attendees confirm that if their boss did this process, including keeping their word, they would feel highly motivated and want to work for that boss.

### Making choices regarding suppliers or expensive items

As with the ‘Making choices’ section earlier, do a full values elicitation and evaluate according to the list.

### Selling to businesses

The approach is similar to the one outlined under ‘Selling to consumers’ above. If you are selling a larger-scale item to a business, you will probably be having a longer conversation or series of conversations with the prospect. During that time, listen for when the prospect mentions values relating to the product; because values are important, often you will be able to use sensory acuity to notice a shift in posture or voice tonality as the prospect mentions the word or phrase.

You might also be able to do a values elicitation similar to the way we described earlier in this chapter. The scene-setting may go something like this (assume that you are selling consultancy services):

*I find that most of my clients want to be more [value previously mentioned or that is bound to be important, such as profitable/efficient/successful]. I assume that's something that you're interested in. In order that I can help you to become more [value], is it OK to ask you some questions?*

Assuming they say ‘yes’, elicit their values according to steps 1–5 and then elicit the criteria equivalents. You would probably adjust the questions slightly given that it is a formal business situation. For example, you would replace ‘career’ with ‘consultancy provider’

or ‘consultancy services’ in step 1 and, when ranking (step 4), you would probably ask for the most important three or four values, or the really essential ones.

Once you know what’s really important to them in a firm of consultancy providers and what they mean by each of the values (i.e. the criteria equivalents), your role as a salesperson becomes relatively straightforward; demonstrate how your service fits their needs. By selling in this way, you are really serving your client.

### **TIP 14.7**

Occasionally people find selling uncomfortable. When they realise that this process helps them to **truly serve** customers/clients (a win–win approach), their attitude to selling becomes far more positive and enthusiastic.

### **Relationship management**

The approach would be similar to ‘Selling to businesses’ above, that is, eliciting the client’s values around what they want from your company or from the relationship.

### **Negotiation**

Whilst there are many aspects to successful negotiating, it is really useful if you can find out what is important and not important to your counter-party. Use your sensory acuity as mentioned in ‘Selling to businesses’ above to recognise values.

### **Recruitment**

Do a values elicitation for the role, that is, decide which values you want in a candidate, and interview against that list, using an approach similar to ‘Making choices’. Also, elicit the values and criteria equivalents for the candidates’ career/work/job to get a sense of whether they are suited to the role.

### **Team building**

Whilst this is not the only way to build an effective team, asking each team member to explain their values and equivalents to their colleagues normally leads to a greater understanding and empathy. If you are leading the team, please think carefully before doing this exercise. It normally works well with a team that is functioning well but might not be suitable if the team has ‘baggage’.

### **Organisational culture change**

This was covered in the Neuro-logical Levels section (Chapter 8). It is important that the senior management and directors ‘walk their talk’: if, for example, ‘approachability’ is one of the stated business values, it is essential that this applies throughout the organisation – starting from the top.

### **Conflicts**

Often conflicts are caused because there is a clash of values, or because one party disregards (deliberately or accidentally) the values of the other party; by understanding the respective values of both parties and, if appropriate, bringing them to each other’s awareness, negotiators and mediators can work to resolve the conflict.

# UNLEASH your POTENTIAL at work

*NLP for Business Success* is a straight-talking, highly practical guide to using NLP to significantly improve your results at work. Whether you want to be a better leader, manager, negotiator, salesperson or decision-maker, you can learn proven NLP techniques that will boost your career, as well as the performance of colleagues and the organisation itself.

Using **real-life examples** and **easy-to-follow exercises** that apply to individuals, teams and organisations, *NLP for Business Success* shows you how to:

- Improve communication
- Develop your influencing skills
- Remove limiting beliefs which hold you back from the success you deserve
- Achieve your career goals
- Harness the mindset for success
- Gain a greater understanding of what motivates you

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