

## Salvation Army of Canada and Bermuda

### *Bridging Differences through Values*

The Salvation Army is a Christian denomination, yet a profession of faith is not an employment prerequisite for many employees in their Canada and Bermuda territory. The group also operates across a vast geographic spread consisting of significant regional and cultural differences.

How does one foster a cohesive culture in such a highly diverse organisation?

The Salvation Army of Canada and Bermuda regularly monitors their values to create a shared experience among their stakeholders.

Like many organisations, the Salvation Army has long held a set of core values to guide them. They wanted to know how people in the organisation experienced those values. “If we’ve taken the time to articulate a statement of values, we have to be faithful as to why that was important in the first place. Congruency is critical for our health,” explains Sharon Jones-Ryan, Consultant for Management and Organisational Ethics.

First, they internally developed a tool to assess the level of awareness and integration of their core values in their different ministry expressions. However, after reading *Liberating the Corporate Soul*, Sharon recognised the benefit of a tool that explores a wide array of values, both personally and organisationally.

Having a larger set of values for employees to choose from allowed for richer conversations within the organisation. “We can’t presume the language is the same. The value may be living but with a different title,” says Sharon.

The Salvation Army began their evaluative process internally, among leadership. In 2014, the first territory-wide survey was launched, with a broad invitation extended for all personnel (employees and clergy) to participate, and this has been repeated annually. Each year the population of invited participants has grown and in 2016 included volunteers and church members of selected individual ministry units.

Their values play an important role in the day-to-day. “We’ve sought to embed the values in performance reviews, hiring, decision-making; in all aspects of who we are. It’s about how the values are lived, and if we are reflecting the values. Everything we do should be done through the lens of mission and the values augment that,” says Sharon.

“The surveys themselves have raised a level of awareness,” she continues. “By inviting people to participate, it signals that the values are important. In-depth results are spread widely to the leadership teams, who see the results and get the information to support their work.”

By repeatedly measuring their values and increasing input, the Salvation Army was encouraged to revisit their core values. “Now that we know how to work with values and use them as measures of accountability, we are looking to ensure we build a stronger congruence of values and behaviours,” says Sharon.