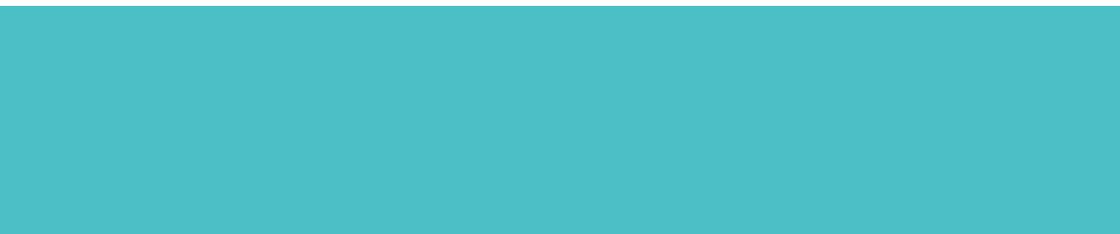


# HOW THE **BEST EMPLOYERS** CREATE A '**CLEAR AIR**' WORKPLACE

The CMP Guide to closing the gap between organisational values and employee behaviours.





# cmpresolutions

*Working with employers to get the best out  
of their people since 1989*

## **Contents**

Introduction	<b>4</b>
How to make your values live again	<b>7</b>
What next?	<b>9</b>

## Introduction

All organisations want thinking and feeling human beings in their teams; not robots complying with the mission, values and objectives.

But when there is a large gap between values like honesty, respect and transparency and actual behaviours among employees, the space fills quickly with a confusion of everyday misunderstandings, tensions and conflict. Worse, poor decision-making and poor performance.

Values are eroded day by day whenever an employee sees poor behaviours that are left unchallenged. No-one talks about problems; tensions are left unresolved.

The slide into disinterest and cynicism happens because of a lack of confidence in the ability of managers and the organisation more generally to listen and talk about what's happening.

Will managers be fair  
if I raise an issue?

“ **Intervening will  
make things worse** ”

Does accountability  
mean blame?

“ **I'll just be victimised** ”

Does the organisation really want honesty?

“ I’ll be told I should be able to handle it ”

Will being transparent just damage my career?

“ It’s better to stay quiet for an easy life ”

Will colleagues respect me for speaking out?

“ Colleagues will think I’m a pain in the neck ”

More organisations are finding ways of closing the gap, so that values play more of a role in guiding and shaping behaviour: how people deal with pressure, challenges and upsets.

This leads to much more than just the avoidance of conflict: a ‘clear air’ workplace where problem-solving is free-flowing, innovation becomes a habit and there’s increased productivity and organisational performance.

## How to make your values live again

To achieve Clear Air™, organisations need to develop the interpersonal soft skills of their employees, ensuring that their teams are backed up by a trusted framework for managing conflict, and supported with:

### 1. Role Modelling

It's essential that leaders are demonstrating visibly the kinds of skills and behaviours expected by employees. Too often development is only provided for senior teams and managers when there's an issue - a change programme, reports of poor engagement or cases of bullying. Some managers have the in-built skills needed to manage conflict constructively and keep their values in place. Others need support.

Management programmes should be reviewed to ensure they include the soft skills used to keep values at the heart of work interactions and relationships. Being able to take a mediation approach encourages empathy, good listening and joint problem-solving. Managers will be able to have constructive, positive conversations no matter what the situation is. It's also critical that leaders are able to demonstrate their handling of situations is fair and consistent, and that employees can see fairness in action. The result is more engaged, productive and self-managing teams.

### 2. Motivating employees

All employees should be encouraged and given training to help them have better conversations - be able to deal with difficult situations, be prepared to be challenging when necessary, to stand up to perceived bullying or inappropriate 'banter', not to instigate disputes but to have the ability to raise and resolve issues themselves. In this way employees become accountable and in a

position to live out the organisation's values in practical ways every day, to see and feel their relevance. There is also a fundamental equality in practice, with everyone having the opportunity to use their skills, not to be the subject of them. Managers are less tied up in managing people issues; conflicts are identified earlier; inappropriate behaviour is tackled directly and constructively.

### 3. Establishing trust

Having a recognised system for dealing with disputes of different kinds means there's a toolkit. Not a knee-jerk process that acts as an escalator towards formal complaints and employment tribunals. There needs to be a spectrum from most to least informal. It means managers and staff can start low, the most informal response using conversations; the options for using mediation and negotiation, as well as a known route - if ever needed - for a fair and independent investigation into any more serious cases. There's always the option of backwards movement to approaches, of de-escalating situations and starting to talk more informally again. Having a system means consistency, more trust and confidence in the organisation and all staff being treated the same way.

## What next?

CMP supports employers with the development of inclusive cultures, where inappropriate behaviour occurs less often, and employees are empowered to speak up and challenge. This drives innovation, productivity, and better wellbeing.

For more information on how CMP can support you in creating a culture of Clear Air™, please visit our website, or talk to us for free, confidential advice.

## About CMP Resolutions

For 29 years, CMP has been the UK's leading independent provider of workplace relationship management and dispute resolution services and training.

Our ambition is to create workplaces where people can really be authentic, bringing their whole-self to work.

We call these Clear Air™ workplaces; places where there are no inhibitors to speaking up, expressing opinions, and challenging the status quo. Where ideas can be shared and challenged without fear of reprisal, where teams have trusting relationships, and can appreciate and respect individual differences and opinions. We know that this leads to employees who are happier at work and more engaged with their organisation.

CMP promote Clear Air™ by supporting the development of Conversational Intelligence™ the interpersonal soft skills needed to harness the differences between us all.

These soft skills to empower individuals to work together more effectively whilst improving innovation and problem solving, whilst preventing the negative consequences of relationship breakdown.

For nearly 30 years, CMP has offered world class Professional Services, such as coaching, investigation, mediation and team development, Consultancy Services, such as policy and process review and development, and Training in managing workplace relationships. These are available to every layer of an organisation, and delivered at all levels of complexity.

Some of our clients:



## Talk to us:

**Richard Peachey, Head of Business Development**

01763 852225 | [richard.peachey@cmpresolutions.com](mailto:richard.peachey@cmpresolutions.com)

### **CMP Resolutions**

Low Farm, Brook Road

Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, SG8 5NT

[www.cmpresolutions.com](http://www.cmpresolutions.com)



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