

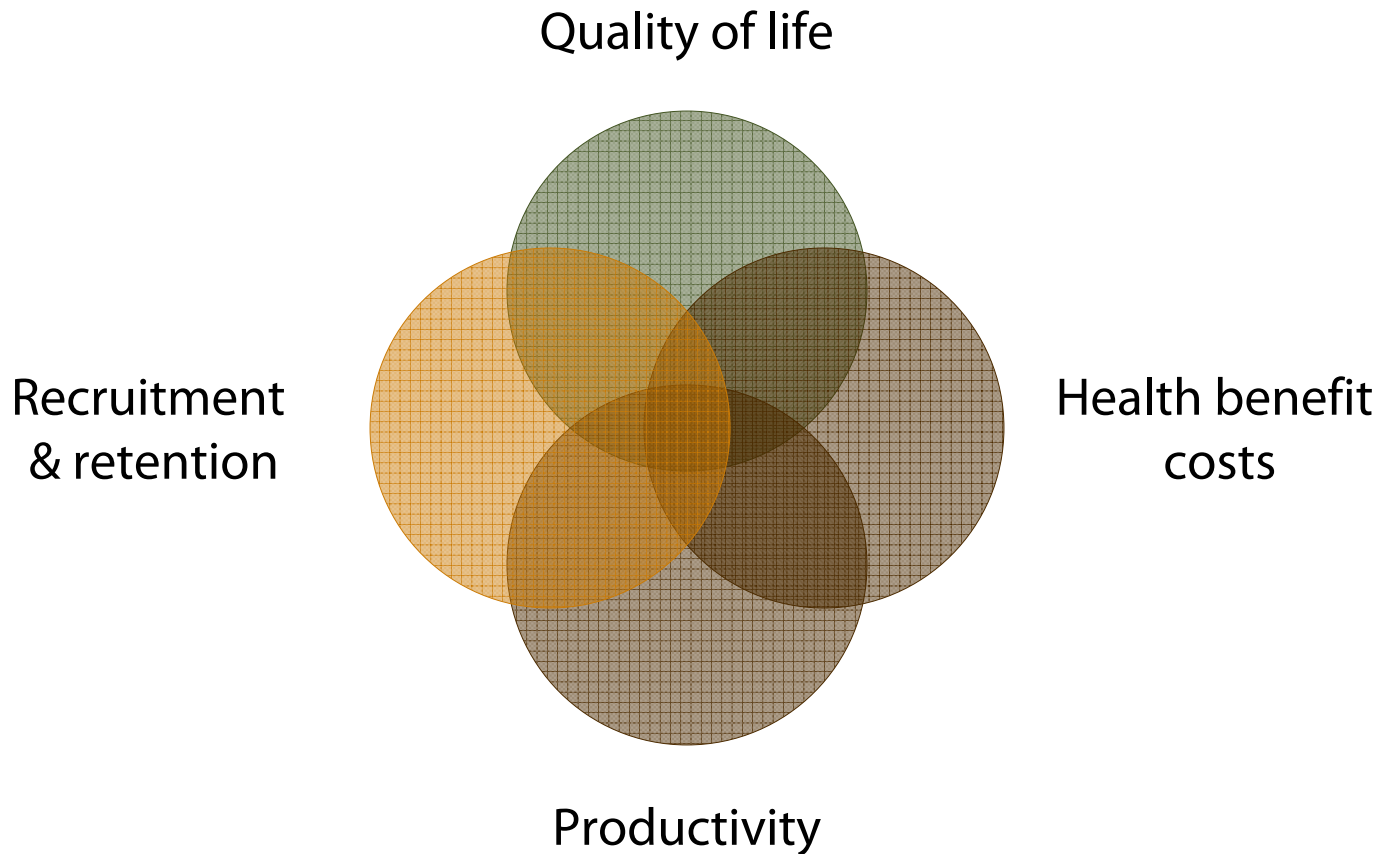
The Healthy Organization: Creating vibrant workplaces that inspire employees

Presentation by Graham Lowe, Ph.D.

**Health Systems Group Client Appreciation Event
Calgary, 4 December 2008**

1. Building on workplace health promotion

Pressures to create healthier workplaces



Workplace health promotion evidence

1. Comprehensive health promotion and disease management programs have clinical and cost pay-offs.
2. The strongest evidence is for reductions of risk factors such as smoking, weight, inactivity and diet.
3. ROI in reduced health benefit costs and absenteeism.

Evidence for moving to the next level

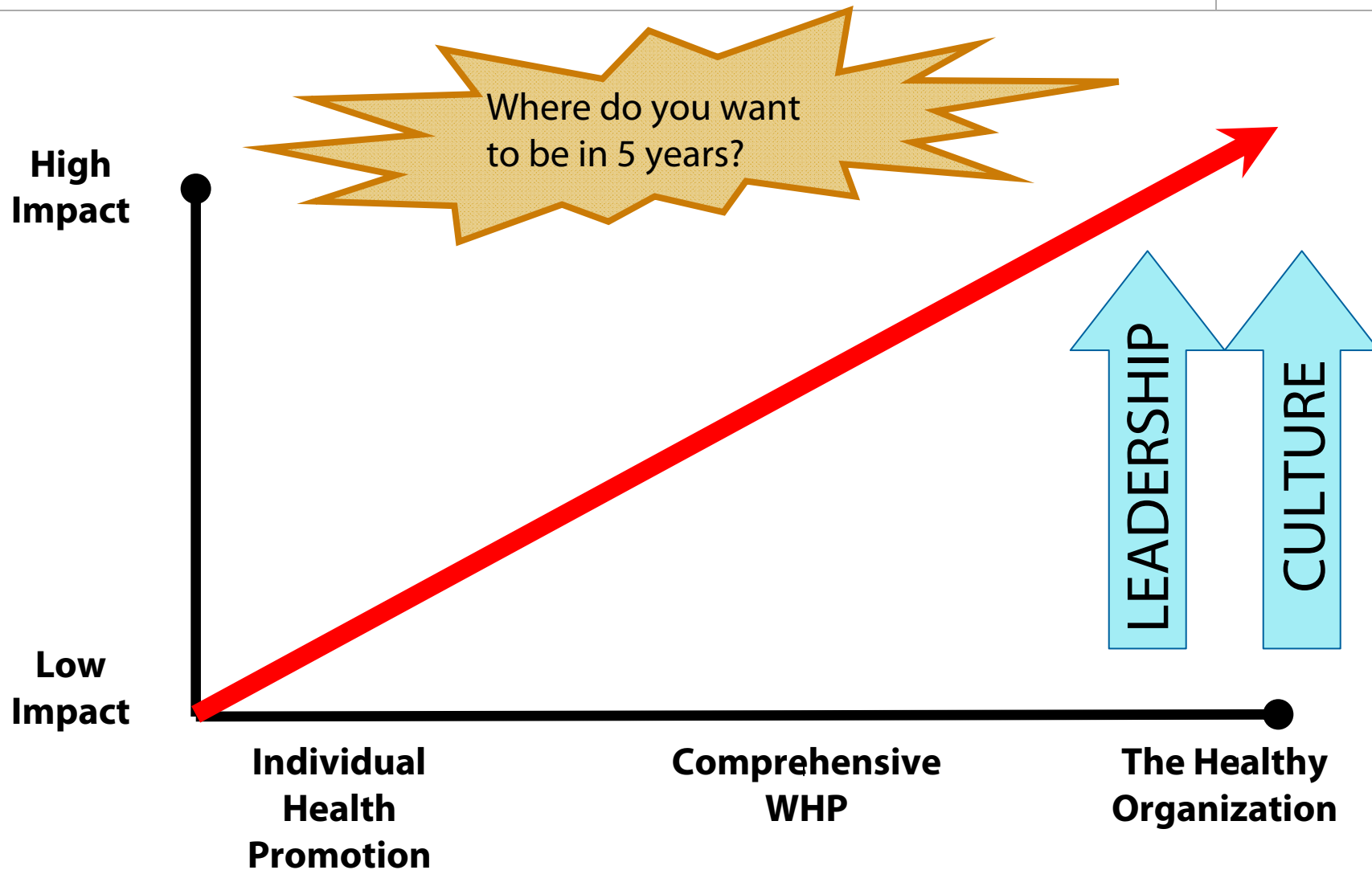
1. Healthy employees in healthy work environments can improve organizational performance.
2. Health and productivity “drivers” are found in organizational cultures, systems, and processes.

Physical activity is a springboard

“Positively influencing behaviour in the workplace requires a shift in focus from individual/personal behaviour change to more strategic, comprehensive approaches. ...This will require a shift in thinking, so that ‘interventions’ are not seen as short-term programs, but as part of the culture of the workplace.”

A. Marshall, Challenges and opportunities for promoting physical activity in the workplace. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 7 (1) 2004.

Strategic impact of health and wellness



2. The healthy organization

A simple idea

US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health defines a healthy work organization as:

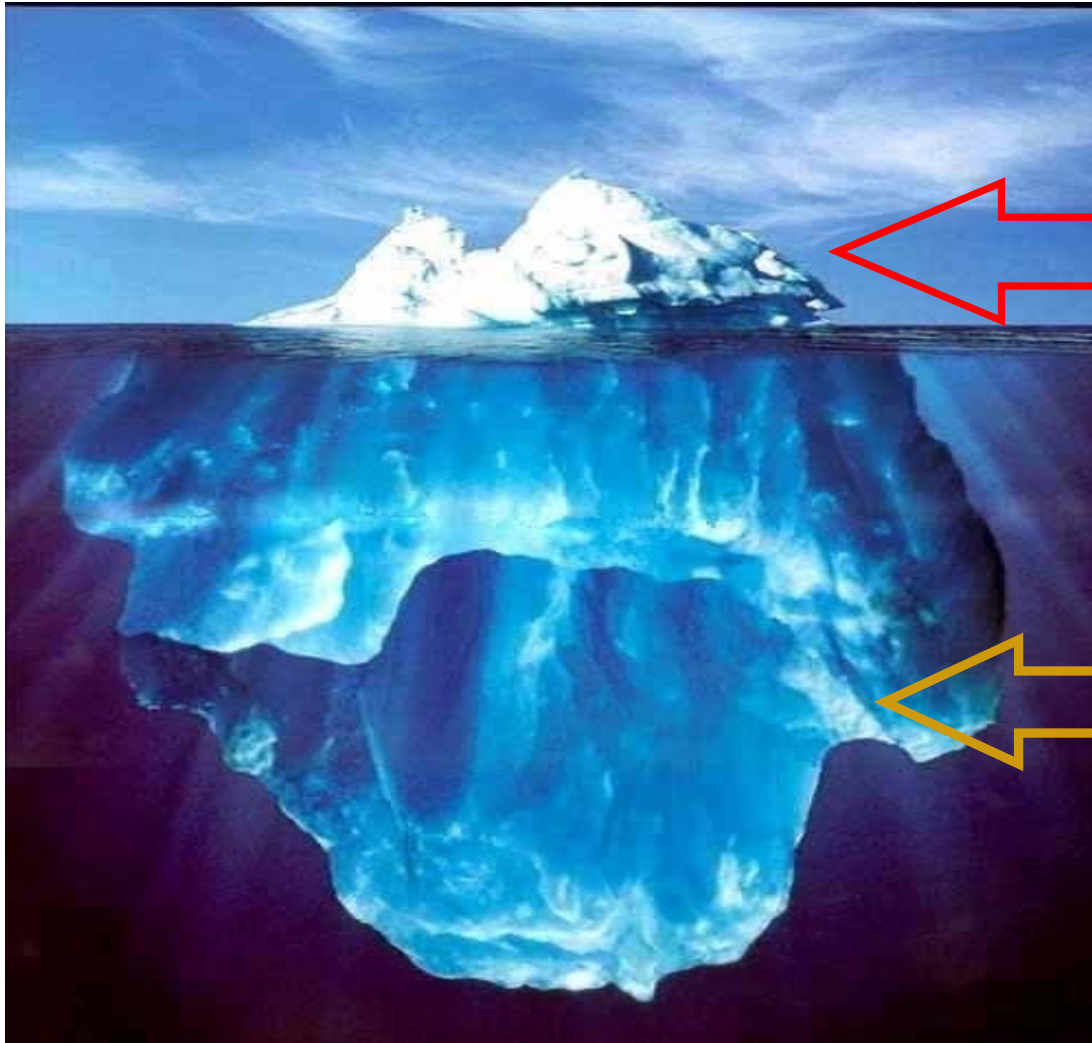
“...one whose culture, climate and practices create an environment that promotes both employee health and safety as well as organizational effectiveness.”

Source: S. Y. Lim and L. R. Murphy. The relationship of organizational factors to employee health and overall effectiveness. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* Supplement, May, 1999: 64.

Comparing 2 perspectives

| <i>DIMENSION:</i> | Workplace Health Promotion | Healthy Organization |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Target</i> | Individual | Organizational |
| <i>Change model</i> | Health promotion | Organization development |
| <i>Scope and focus</i> | Program-based | Systemic and holistic |
| <i>Timeframe</i> | Short and medium term | Long term |
| <i>Individual benefits</i> | Reduced health risks | Quality of life and capabilities |
| <i>Organizational benefits</i> | Lower employee costs | Higher performance |
| <i>Links to strategy</i> | Part of HR plan | How the business operates |
| <i>Responsibility</i> | Formal roles | Shared responsibility |

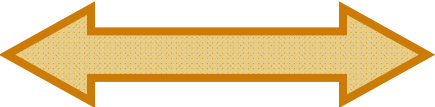
Getting at root causes



- Turnover, absenteeism, injury, disability, benefit costs
- Low employee commitment and satisfaction

**WORK
ENVIRONMENT**

Example: reducing work stress

Employee control  **Job demands**



Organizational solution: Management standards for work stress

The UK Health and Safety Executive takes a preventative approach to reducing stress risks in 6 areas:

- ✓ Demands
- ✓ Control
- ✓ Support
- ✓ Relationships
- ✓ Roles
- ✓ Change

Source: Health and Safety Executive, UK (www.hse.gov.uk/stress/research.htm)

The logic of a healthy organization



Ingredients of a vibrant workplace

Key drivers of wellbeing and performance:

- ✓ Trust, respect and fairness
- ✓ 2-way communication
- ✓ Autonomy
- ✓ Adequate resources
- ✓ Supportive supervisors
- ✓ Growth and development
- ✓ Challenging, interesting work
- ✓ Recognition and rewards

3. Why culture matters

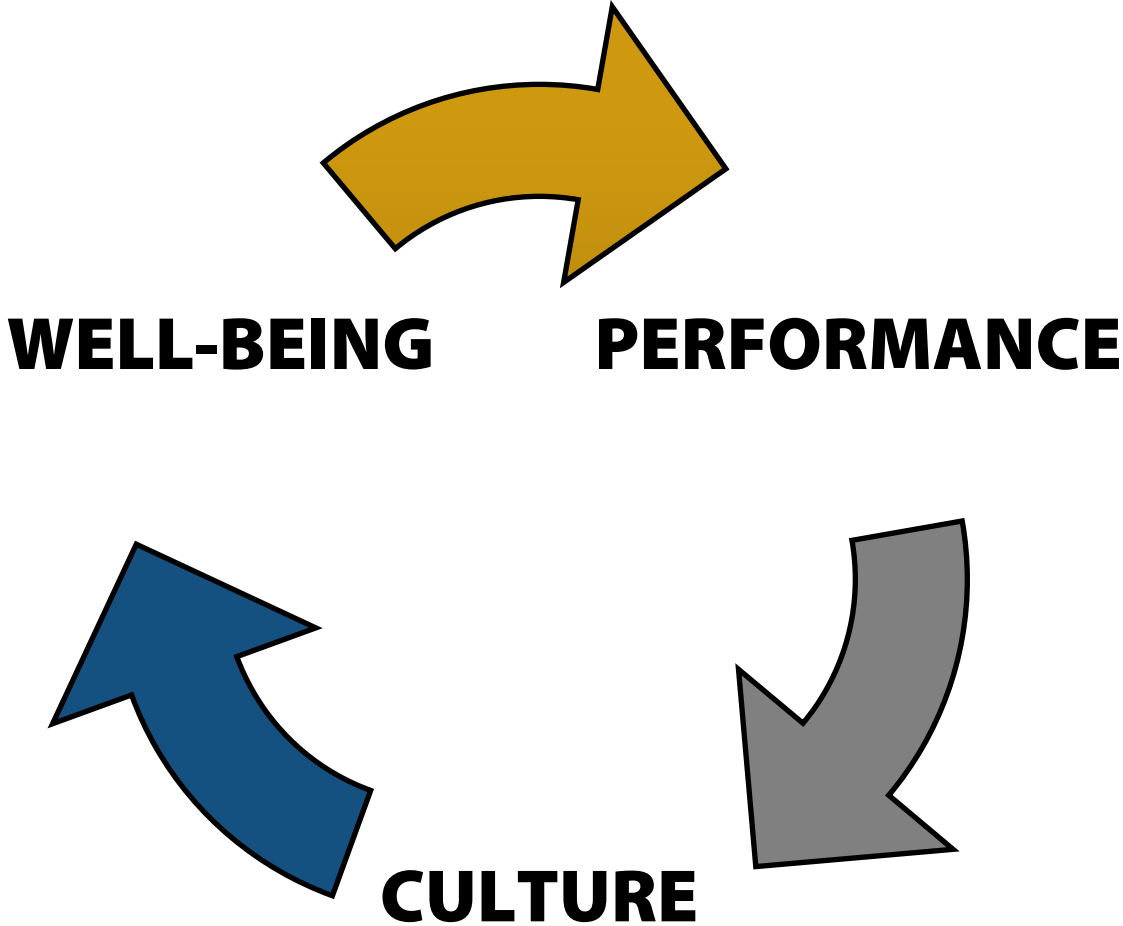
Culture will drive strategy.

OR

Culture will drag strategy.

Source: Al Stubblefield, CEO of Baptist Health, on the importance of creating and maintaining a people-centred culture. *The Baptist Health Care Journey to Excellence*. Wiley, 2005.

21st-century HR strategy



Benefits of healthy cultures

Cultures based on integrity, fairness and respect support employee well-being:

- ✓ Look forward to coming to work
- ✓ Feel they make a difference
- ✓ Work-life balance
- ✓ Psychologically healthy work environment
- ✓ Friendly coworkers
- ✓ Fun at work

Source: Based on employee survey results for Great Place to Work® Institute Canada's 2007 list of Best Workplaces in Canada, comparing winners and other participants. See: www.greatplacetowork.ca



Some examples

- Ernst & Young
- Environics Communication
- Trico Homes
- Trillium Health Centre
- Teck Cominco - Trail

4. Moving down this path

Another look at health promotion

World Health Organization defines health promotion as:

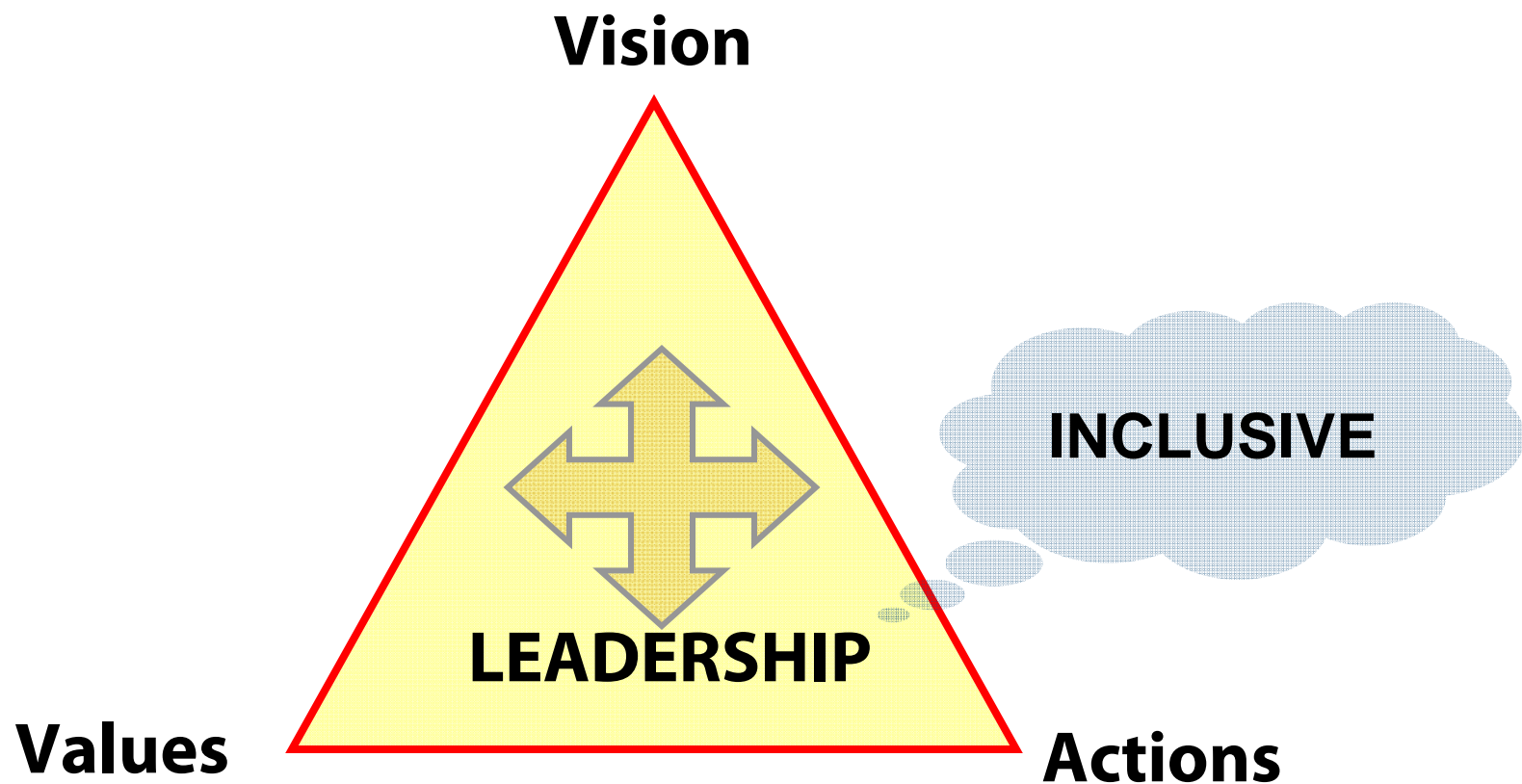
“...the process of enabling individuals and communities to increase control over the determinants of health and thereby improve their health.”

WHP is OD (organizational development)

Workplace health promotion provides opportunities for employees to...

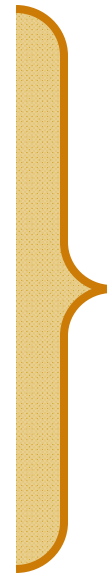
- Be actively involved in creating a better work environment
- Take ownership for improvements
- Link personal and organizational goals
- Show mutual caring and support

Progress is a shared responsibility



Use a healthy change process

- Models the goals
- Values-based
- Participatory
- On-going learning



**Link to
strategy**

Final points

1. Build on successes.
2. Focus on drivers.
3. Communicate and educate.
4. Create shared responsibility.
5. Small steps bring progress.

For more information and resources:

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