

Brief submission

Human services entail more than the provision of tangible goods and objective services in return for payment. At the point of delivery, human interactions are coloured by the values of the people on each side of a transaction, which rest on the values of the organisation providing the service. These values and organisational culture are not as malleable or robust as financial and commercial arrangements and are in danger of being lost in the wash when what appears to be a good financial deal is engineered. I have been told that Meals on Wheels NSW has explored this matter and identified a loss of alignment between the values of its volunteers and the values of the organisation, say under a management team that was not steeped in its history and culture, could arise unless it is handled with great care. This appears to be a general lesson that could be applied to other service providers where public money, volunteer effort, good will and paid management are involved.

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