

How to Define Your Company Values in a Way That Will Engage and Inspire For Years to Come

Step One

Create a Values Team from a diagonal slice of your organization. This means you will have people who represent all levels and all functional areas. These should be individuals who are respected and have their finger on the pulse of their co-workers and the business of the company.

*If you are a small company, you can choose to involve the entire team.

Materials you will need:

- Flip chart or white board
- Stickies
- Sharpie markers
- A pad or paper and pen for each participant

Step One

Ask each member of your Values Team to think of two co-workers or employees whose values and way of engaging at work they admire.

Step Two

Keeping their selected individuals in mind, each team member writes on sticky notes specific admirable behaviors of their model co-workers.

IMPORTANT: They must write only one attribute or behavior per sticky

Step Three

When everyone has finished writing place all the sticky notes on the white board or flip chart.

Step Four

Select a team member to facilitate the team as they group the behaviors into no more than 5 categories.

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Step Five

Consolidate the attributes on the stickies so that you have distilled your selection to no more than 5 core values. It's ok to end up with no values from a given category and more than one value from other categories.

While it's true that many companies have more than five core values, here's why you should limit yours to 5. You want your entire workforce to be able to remember and live these behaviors. More than five means you are choosing perfect over useful. Don't do it. Just because "Integrity" didn't make the cut doesn't mean it's not valued and expected by your business.

Step Six

Test your chosen values set by asking the following questions:

- Do they represent what you truly believe?
- Will they serve to unite the company?
- Are they inspiring, energizing, and motivating?
- Will they be attractive to your ideal customer?
- Will they be attractive to your ideal employee?
- Can you identify ways to put these values into practice? For example, how will your values help you make hard decisions, select the right hires, make the right products and services, and serve the right customers?
- What will you do differently because of your core values?

Step Seven

Share and test-drive your values with the whole organization. Make a video, discuss the values in meetings, and use them to make key decisions. Reward behaviors that best exemplify the core values.

Step Eight - THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP! Nothing else matters if you don't do this one.

Demonstrate and amplify that you are Top Down Values Heavy. The CEO and the senior team must live your core values openly, immediately, vocally, frequently and relentlessly. Forever.

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