



YMCA Mission- Why it is Important for a Great Organization

One of the challenges in a society that has become increasingly secular is for organizations that have a sense of Christian purpose or mission to keep their focus. In the books ***Built to Last*** and ***Good to Great***, authors Jim Collins and Jerry Porras emphasize two important concepts that should encourage YMCAs to stay true to their mission.

These books explore the deep reasons behind the long-term success of corporations and organizations. They ask the question, “*What makes the truly exceptional companies different from other companies- ones that have impact long term impact for the long haul?*” A key dynamic that they discovered is that: “**Great organizations know how to Preserve the Core and Stimulate Progress.**” They describe these two attributes in the following ways

Preserve the Core– (The Mission, Purpose and Values)

- Provides continuity and stability
- Is a relatively fixed stake in the ground
- Guides (even limits) the possibilities and directions the company should consider

When an organization is clear on its core, it is taking care of its **unique essence** that makes it distinct from all other similar organizations. When an organization is clear on its **unique product or unique contribution** it is primed to make a big impact.

Stimulate Progress – (The goals, innovations, strategies)

- Generates new directions, new methods, new strategies consistent with the core
- Generates movement toward goals, improvement, long term vision
- Generates new ideas and possibilities for the organization to impact

Having the core in focus in turn, allows goals, innovations, and strategies to be evaluated to see if they are in line with the core. Those things are chosen that strengthen and amplify the core essence. Other things are not chosen that dilute or weaken the core essence.

The YMCA Core

The YMCA mission of: “**Putting Christian principles into practice through programs that build spirit, mind, and body for all**”, is a strong and clear mission statement. However there are actually 3 aspects to the mission statement- the core-

The Core - “To put Christian principles into practice ...”
 The Action - “through programs that build spirit, mind and body...”
 The Audience - “for all...”

The YMCA maintains its ability to become a great organization when it understands the core it is trying to nurture. The YMCA gets out of focus and begins to minimize its impact when action and audience become its primary focus and the core becomes secondary.