Core Values for Business

What are Core Values?

Values represent the core of who we are, what we do, and how we define success and failure for our business. Within a company, values help define and strengthen culture. They articulate the shared expectations of not only how we do business- but also how we engage with each, and foundationally what is most important.

There is no shortage of decisions to make for your business. Aligning with values can bring clarity and direction to even the most challenging situations.

Core Values in the work environment answer the questions:

- Why do we exist?
- How do we do business?
- What is our promise to our team and our customers?
- What are the anchors for our decision making?
- How do we define success and failure?

Step 1: Identify

Discovering the right Core Values for your business is a process. It involves more than just choosing words from a list. Core Values come from understanding **WHY** your company exists and WHAT you will commit to for yourself, your team, and your customers.

What's next? Sit down with key team members. The initial small group that you select should represent various departments and include leadership as well as entry level positions. Send out a survey or have someone facilitate the following discussion.

If you or other team members have never done a personal Core Values exercise – this worksheet is a great starting place to be in the work.

- Why does our company exist? What do we stand for?
- What is our promise to our clients and team members?
- Complete the following statement: "We are/believe/strive for…"
- Reflect back on a moment when you were most proud of the work you or your team did. Share the story. Why exactly did you feel that way? What values do you feel were present during this moment?
- Reflect back on a moments of tension or conflict, what values do you feel were at risk? What values did you lean in to move forward?

Step 2: Define

Once you have selected your company values, the next step is to get clear and direct on what they truly mean to your company. Share your definition of the value and what it looks like in action as a behavior that the team can be held accountable for. Utilize the questions below to gather more information to understand the unique meaning of the value for your company.

- What does this value mean within the organization? Why does it matter?
- Share a story of this value in action in your work.
- Give an example of a time when it was missing and the impact it had.
- Create clear statements/sentences that speak your values + give them deeper meaning

Example/ Curiosity / We approach the world and each other with an open mind.

We ask questions, actively listen, and think critically.

Step 3: Test

As you consider your company Values, utilize the following questions to understand if they are truly core to who you are.

- Is this a guiding principles for the organization?
- Is this value a non-negotiable? Is it critical to the culture and success of the organization?
- Am I willing to hold my team accountable for this?
- Am I willing to make significant sacrifices (e.g., time, money, relationships) to uphold this value?

Step 4: Values in Action

Once you feel complete on this process, it is time to bring them to life.
For values to truly have meaning and strengthen company culture, they need to be felt within the business. What difference do these values make in the day-to-day actions of your company? Consider how each value can be operationalized within the following areas of your business.

- Hiring practices
- Onboarding
- Internal communication
- Client communication
- Team Member Recognition
- Performance Feedback
- Marketing + more

Core Values, whether for the individual or company, are not created – they are uncovered. Trust that the answers are there if you take the time to get curious.

There is no timeline to complete this work. For an established organization, this process may take months as you dialogue with your team, reflect on what you hear, and try them on as you move through day to day operations with your team and clients.

This is also an ongoing process. As the company grows and changes, it will be supportive to relook at your Core Values to understand if they still align with the business as well as how you can strengthen them in action.

Would you like additional support on discovering your company values?
Schedule a complimentary discovery call today.

Sheri is a respected leader and trusted confidante for small businesses. She works with individuals to create achievable business strategies that inspire action and offers accountability coaching for their own growth as leaders.

Her impact spans multiple industries including wellness, hospitality, and the customer experience in the roles of operations, content creator, event curator, and retreat lead.

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