



CORE VALUES

FOR BUSINESSES

YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CORE VALUES

INSTRUCTIONS:

You will use your organization's core values to make critical decisions about:

- How and when you do your work
- How you carry out your organization's mission with excellence
- How you make sustainable changes
- How you grow in ways that serve the owners, employees and customers/clients

It is essential to know the six to eight core (central, defining) characteristics/traits that must be embedded in every part of your organization—every geographic area, every person hired, every project, every policy, every choice.

Use the list of values below as a resource when answering the following questions. The list is not comprehensive so feel free to add additional terms/concepts at the bottom of the list if you discover a value that is missing and relevant. You will answer the first six questions individually. As a group, you will complete Exercise 7.

Accountability	Family	Originality
Adventure	Flexibility	Passion
Caring	Freedom	Persistence
Casual	Fun	Profitability
Collaboration	Generosity	Quality
Commitment	Growth	Receptivity
Courage	Happiness	Reliability
Creativity	Honesty	Responsibility
Customer Service	Humility	Responsiveness
Dedication	Informal	Security
Dependability	Innovation	Service
Diversity	Integrity	Stability
Effectiveness	Joy	Stewardship
Efficiency	Justice	Success
Empathy	Learning	Teachable
Entrepreneurial	Listening	Teamwork
Environmental Concern	Loyalty	Tolerance
Ethics	Mutual Respect	Transparency
Excellence	Open Communication	Trust
Excitement	Openness	Trustworthy
Fairness	Opportunity	Wisdom

EXERCISE 1:

What is most important to the organization's employees? Feeling trusted? Being treated fairly? Having a significant say in the company's direction? Depending on your company culture, employees may value having fun, competing for contracts or feeling like their work has a positive impact on the world.

Answer: _____

EXERCISE 2:

What is most important to the organization's owners and managers? Exceeding customer expectations? Being transparent about financial and management decisions? Helping employees achieve their potential? Profit at any cost?

Answer: _____

EXERCISE 3:

What is most important to the organization's customers/clients? Responsiveness and customer service? Value for their money? Working with companies that have a positive social or environmental impact?

Answer: _____

EXERCISE 4:

Next, identify the core values that enable your organization to address these key issues for stakeholders. For example, if employees care about trust, fairness and having a say in the direction of the business, one of your core values might look similar to computer maker Dell's:

"Leading with openness and optimism: We value different perspectives and experiences because we believe everyone has a contribution to make. We focus on honest and practical communications, listening carefully and taking action to deliver solutions for real-world challenges."

If exceptional customer service is a key concern for management and customers, your core values might include a mandate like Disney's: "Never a customer, always a guest."

Answer: _____

EXERCISE 5:

What is our company's broader purpose or reason for existence (beyond making money)?

What contributions does our company make to the world?

What do we want to be known for?

How do we want to treat people, whether they're employees, customers, partners, or the public at large?

Why do we act the way we act and do the things we do?

Answer: _____

Google is famous for its “Don’t be Evil” mandate, but the company’s core values also include statements that describe how it wants to do business, such as “Focus on the user and all else will follow.”

EXERCISE 6:

What have been the company’s defining characteristics and values up to now, that have helped it become what it is? What are the most important characteristics to have in the people hired?

Answer: _____

EXERCISE 7:

Now take all your answers above and bring them to the group. Compile a list of all values identified by yourself and your colleagues and then distill them down into a list of six to eight values that you as a group agree on.

This list will inform the choices you make going forward. Whenever you struggle with a decision, you can return to these values and see how your answers can inform your decision-making process.

Our Organization’s Top Six Values:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____