

What's At The Core?

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Values, that's what. So far, I've written about culture and how defined vision and mission statements can provide the guiding light for your staff to connect with. The next step in this identity phase is figuring out what values ladder up to those statements. Crafting a list of Core Values help you and your staff to understand the behaviors everyone needs to align with to make the dream come true, to put your brand into action. In other words, to knock it out of the park!

"Show me the money!" Think of Cuba Gooding Jr. in his infamous role in *Jerry Maguire* bouncing around his kitchen. ***"Show me the money!" "Show me the money!"*** This can't be fluff work. It's not a *nice to have HR thang* to post on your web site or hang on your office wall. If you look at this as one and done, you're missing the point. Companies who take this stuff seriously are well-better positioned to grow and to handle bumps along the way (can anyone say pandemic?). But your core values need life.

Visualize how your stated values are reflected in your work space. If you value collaboration, does your work space encourage it or block it? If you value community service, do your policies make that easy or difficult? If you value transparency and open communication, do your leaders welcome constructive conflict, or do employees fear retribution? ***"Show me the money!"***

If you look on some web sites, you'll find lists of values the companies say are important. Many are so generic they are hollow. Integrity, respect, open communication to name a few. In order to craft your list, you really need to know what behaviors you believe in, what you won't tolerate, and what you want to exploit. Then, define it in a concise way that speaks to your organization's personality and can be detected in every day leadership behaviors, the technology you use and your physical workspace.

I had the pleasure of touring Zappos corporate office in Las Vegas a few years ago. You see their culture everywhere! Case and point – work stations are decorated outlandishly – no wonder one core value is "create fun and a little weirdness". Another is "be humble". Would it surprise you to know that CEO Tony Hsieh's cubicle is in the midst of everyone else? And it's the same size. Zappos famously exploited their values years ago, and their culture is so solid that their business has thrived and so many wish they could work there! In fact, if you're hired by Zappos and decide during initial training that the culture and values are not for you, they'll pay you thousands of dollars to quit. That's how nuts they are over the integrity of who they are.

Values are the glue that binds us. When we believe in a collective set of behaviors, we are a tribe. Tribes are protective. They take care of each other. They support each other. They have a shared identity. Think of your values, your tribe, your brand and ***"Show me the money!"***

Not sure if your identity is solidified in your values? I'm here to help. www.BetterTogetherHR.com