OLIVIA TINCANI

STRATEGIC PLANNING
Core Values Exercise

GOALS

Define the core values of your business to help refine brand identity, to power and inform all business decisions and activities. Create a set of values that the objectives of your annual strategic plan will echo and exemplify.

DEFINITION

Core values are the unchanging qualities that an organization deems most essential. They should manifest in every aspect of the organization's routine. Following the core values is what provides a consistent perception of brand for the target audience through every medium of communication. They are the "creed" that becomes the cornerstone for developing the brand's positioning. They are also the personal guide and beacon for your identity as a Principal and your business decisions.

PURPOSE

This is a challenging exercise to be done alone, and if done in the right spirit and with the best of intentions it can serve as a compass as you navigate the critical decisions your business presents. In this process you will highlight the values most important to you within the context of your business. To do that, you'll remove some from the list. This does not mean that you are throwing values away: the ones you identify as important will always be important. The narrowing process helps you determine your CORE Values.

Pay attention to your inner dialogue as you make choices, revealing interesting truths about yourself, and provide fodder for conversations with those who are important to you – your partner, spouse, co-workers, business partners, colleagues, friends and family. Consider the conversations as another exercise, one based on appreciative inquiry – curious questions that illuminate and reveal, often by creating more questions. Questions help clarify, and clarity leads to power.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Review the values below, using them as inspiration to get your thoughts moving. Use the blank lines at the bottom add any values that are important to you and your business that are not listed. Be careful not to choose words that you think you "should" choose. If none of the listed words resonate, add all your own, and choose from those.
- Circle all the values that resonate with you, that represent the way you live your personal life; go with your gut.
- Put a star next to all of the value words that are very important to you in your business identity, including any you may have added. This will become your business' set of values. Reflect on the personal values you have already circled and critically think about whether values are more exemplary of you as an individual, of the business entity, or both.
- Narrow the list of starred values to eight by crossing off less important ones and/or circling more important ones.
- Now narrow the list to five, using the same process.

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EXPLANATION

Ethical leadership is knowing your core values and having the courage to integrate them with your actions, being mindful of the common good.

Your values words are packed with meaning. You likely went through a process of "bundling": embedding one value in another and counting two or more values as one. This is not cheating - it's clarifying.

Your core values can help you make difficult business decisions, lifestyle choices, employee/product/services/direction decisions, future next steps, etc. They can even help you find common ground with your colleagues/competitors, or someone you disagree with. The important thing is to integrate them as fully as possible into your life-work.

Achievement	**Freedom**	**Physical challenge**
Advancement/promotion	**Friendships**	**Pleasure**
Adventure	**Growth (professional dev.)**	**Power & authority**
Affection (love & caring)	**Helping other people**	**Privacy**
Artistic	**Honesty**	**Public service**
Beauty	**Humor**	**Purity**
Challenging problems	**Independence**	**Quality of my work**
Change & variety	**Influencing others**	**Quality relationships**
Close relationships	**Inner harmony**	**Recognition**
Community	**Integrity**	**Respect**
Competence	**Intellectual stimulation**	**Responsibility & accountability**
Competition	**Involvement**	**Security (job, life)**
Connection	**Job tranquility**	**Self-respect**
Cooperation	**Knowledge**	**Serenity**
Creativity	**Leadership**	**Sophistication**
Decisiveness	**Location (geographic)**	**Spirituality**
Democracy	**Market position**	**Stability**
Ecological awareness	**Meaningful work**	**Status**
Economic security	**Merit**	**Supervising others**

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Effectiveness	**Money**	**Time/freedom**
Efficiency	**Nature**	**Truth**
Ethical practice	**Openness**	**Vulnerability**
Excellence	**Order *(tranquility, stability)***	**Wealth**
Excitement	**Passion**	**Wholeness**
Expertise	**Peace**	**Wisdom**
Fame	**Perfection**	**Work under pressure**
Family	**Perspective**	**Work with others**
Fast-paced work	**Personal development**	**Working alone**
Financial gain		
(Insert your own)		

Some of this material was adapted from information developed by The Center for Ethical Leadership and refined by Cole Consulting.

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