Geese

core values

"DO YOU KNOW YOURS?"

QUESTIONNAIRE AND WORKBOOK

core values... do you know yours?

Core values are one important aspect of creating a strong culture. A culture that influences business success. Core values are who you are, who you want to become, and they are why new hires and customers choose you.

So how do you create the right conditions for a great culture, as defined through core values...? Have you asked yourself the tough questions to ensure your core values align with your future vision?

This guide provides steps, checklists, and tough questions that will help identify what your core values are if you're just getting started, or, identify areas that need to be reworked if your values already exist.

Learn more about defining core values, visions, and mission statements in our 101 guide:

http://bit.ly/CoreValues101

contents

core values intro and getting started examples

first things first: the importance of core values 5
example core value keyword examples 6
answering: why go through a core value refresher exercise 7

workbook: identifying your core values

step one: define your identity 9
creating unique, focused core values: brainstorming what's important 10
creating unique, focused core values: the importance explained 11
focusing your values: drilling down on what's most important 12
focusing your values: descriptions and example values..... 13
team member reflection: action-based behaviours 14
team member reflection: what and who you connect with 15
next steps: analysis and preparing for all circumstances 17

living your core values: the tough questions

ways to incorporate your core values into the day-to-day 19
the tough questions for team members and team leads 20
last bits of advice and four key takeaways 21

core values intro and getting started examples

Values that represent your team aren't searched on the internet—however, a great place to start for inspiration is examples of other teams' core values.This section provides example core value key words and key questions to reflect on before getting started on crafting uniquely-you values.

Keep in mind, core values are not a "set them once and forget them" exercise. Core values should be re-evaluated every so often to ensure your team is still headed on the original path invisioned when you first set your values.

Strong values will continuously speak to where you want your organization to go in the future.

core values are your team's identity—they empower teams under a unified foundation of what it means to excel

Team members don't spend hours clicking through company about sections on the internet to get tips on what's expected of them day-to-day. They look to their peers. This is why clear core values matter. When joining a team, or looking to excel in their current team, most people aren't just looking for perks such as free lunch. They want to know that they'll continuously be able to grow and be challenged to improve even the best version of themselves.

Core values should be set to make the best qualities in team members even better. This guide should help you determine if your values inspire your team, or, are words just written on the wall and if so, how to fix that!

Let's get started: If you were to ask your team, "Do you believe our organization makes you a better person?" what would the results be?

Why start here? It's important for team members to exhibit day-to-day how they're living what the team values. It's also important for the organization to show what it means to belong to their team.

Values are the heart of your culture.

Values become the fabric of the organization's culture —regardless of who is in charge. Hire someone who lies about their progress to "look good?" Soon your entire culture will start to mimic this behaviour. Culture becomes the behaviours you embed in your team.

Values are everything. "Drinking the Kool-Aid" is just meaningless jargon.

So let's get started creating unique-to-you, empowering values.

NEXT: keyword core value examples to jog your memory

EXAMPLE CORE VALUE KEYWORDS EXAMPLES

use these keyword memory joggers to reflect on what areas you'd like your core values to be connected to

Accountability	Compassion	Energy	Independence	Perseverance
Accuracy	Concetration	Enthusiasm	Influence	Practicality
Adaptability	Consciousness	Excellence	Innovation	Proactivity
Adventure	Consistency	Exploration	Insightfulness	Punctuality
Agility	Cooperation	Fairness	Inspiration	Rationality
Ambition	Courage	Flexibility	Integrity	Reliability
Appreciation	Creativity	Focus	Intuitiveness	Resourcefulness
Assertiveness	Curiosity	Fun	Joy	Risk-taking
Awareness	Daring	Generosity	Kindness	Selflessness
Balance	Decisiveness	Growth	Leadership	Simplicity
Boldness	Delight	Guidance	Mindfulness	Speed
Bravery	Dependability	Happiness	Modesty	Teamwork
Candor	Determination	Hard work	Motivation	Timeliness
Caring	Diligence	Helpfulness	Openness	Trust
Cheerfulness	Discovery	Heroism	Optimism	Wisdom
Collaboration	Drive	Honesty	Originality	
Commitment	Empathy	Hospitality	Passion	
Communication	Endurance	Imagination	Perceptiveness	

NEXT: visualizing these thoughts

core values are your team's identity—they empower teams under a unified foundation of what it means to excel

The purpose of this questionnaire workbook is to help you gain insight into your teams priorities and business vision. Core values that don't just inspire great behaviours, but push everyone to achieve even more, even when they think they've reached the top, are the values you want to live by.

After taking a look through the list of memory jogging key words, did any stand out? Circle them. Were there any missing that better reflect the attributes that define your culture? Add them! Core values are your most authentic expression of your team—they are condensed representations of the principles, virtues, and vision that go beyond the day-to-day tasks that you complete.

How do you know if you've selected concrete values? They are memorable, easy to understand, specific to what you do, and explain how you operate—Every team member can confidently explain how they strive to enact them.

The next section of this guide will put your original reactions and thoughts about your core values to the test.

Let's get started!

Even when no one is noticing, your core values should be ones where everyone is naturally committed to taking the time to things the right way. The way where values shine through actions done.

Well defined values place tremendous trust at all levels, in all team members to instantly know what the "right thing" to do is regardless the scenario.

NEXT: identifying your core values

workbook: identifying your core values

Core values align your team and future hires around specific, idealized behaviours. Since core values are unique to you, they also help differentiate your brand from others for your customers.

Identifying your core values starts with discovering who you are and what actions empower your team.

OVERVIEW

It's time to dig deep, make a few compromises, and uniquely define you. This workbook will focus your values, provide next steps, and help you move forward empowered by strong values.

OBJECTIVES

Create 3 unique values that empower your vision.

Document next steps to incorporate your values day-to-day throughout existing workflows.

Reflect on what else should be done to embed your values in your culture.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

printer: best to print out pages x-x to work through the exercise

writing utensil! Pen recommended—write down and iterate, don't erase!

an open mind: stay collaborative, fresh, and open to new ideas

core values aren't just about lists for recognition—they're your brand, your guiding light, and your purpose

What is the purpose behind wanting to invest in core value evaluation exercises? How can you feel confident that your desired culture and action-based behaviours, known as values, are being upheld if you have never successfully named them?

No one wakes up and says "Oh, I have to create new core values for the business today." Instead, core values fuel your organization's identity. As a result, culture regardless if you're a team of 2, or 200, is directly influenced by values.

This all begins with who you are/where you want your business to go: your identity. That is, team identity. While personal identities are important in the larger scheme of hiring decisions and team culture, it's important to separate personal identity from team identity.

They can intermingle, and be one in the same, but just be sure the decision to overlap is made from a vantage point of informing your business vision, not just what you personally believe in.

Reflect on these questions to figure out what identity defines your team:

What makes your team unique compared to other teams both in your industry, as well as outside your industry?

What kind of people empower you to aim even higher? What is it about these people that empower you?

How do you define work ethic as a team?

What problems are we collectively working together to solve? Empower in each other or our customers?

When people think about your organization or product, what are the feelings and associations you want them to have?

Next, this workbook goes through multiple steps to identify what core values are unique to you and your identity. Already have core values? Use this same workbook to put them through a refresher and ensure you're empowering your team with the right values.

NEXT: brainstorming / refreshing your core values

creating unique, focused core values:
brainstorming what's important

1. What are top 6 most important qualities that make up an amazing team member and high-performer in your organization?

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

2. What are top 6 least important qualities / that which you consider to be detrimental to high-performance in your organization?

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

3. What are 6 things your organization prides itself on doing when it comes to shaping a career path for team members in your organization?

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

4. What are 6 accomplishments that you'd like everyone in your team to achieve within their first year with your organization?

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

NEXT: why these questions are important to live core values

questions explained: why these questions will engage your team in what matters most

1. What are top 6 most important qualities that make up an amazing team member and high-performer in your organization?

It's important to identify what attributes, qualities, skills, or action-based behaviors that make up an all-star performer. Action-based behaviours drive what aspects of performance your team holds as non-compromisable. Regardless of how tough a decision is, you must be willing to make decisions based on whether people are living up to these same qualities.

2. What are top 6 least important qualities / that which you consider to be detrimental to high-performance in your organization?

Identifying what qualities, attributes, or behaviours you believe are going to hurt your success as a team is important to stay away from values that conflict with where you don't want to be. Your values are your GPS navigation system for your business. Getting them defined and properly executed also includes defining the path that you never want to take, regardless of strategic changes.

3. What are 6 things your organization prides itself on doing when it comes to shaping a career path for team members in your organization?

Core values help you and your team become better versions of themselves than they are today. Just like your team members have plans to grow in their careers, your core values should empower growth and elevate everyone's opportunities to aim higher. Reflecting on how to make this happen using the values you hold dear means that career paths will align with the trajectory of values and vision of the organization.

4. What are 6 accomplishments that you'd like everyone in your team to achieve within their first year with your organization that are aligned to your values?

It's important that your team is sync with your values and vision. Thinking to long-term accomplishments will help you establish action-based milestones that focus on growth of your team in alignment with your values.

NEXT: focusing your values list

focusing your values: from lots to a few—drill down your list to what's most important

1. What are top 12 most important/resonating words that define your values?

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

2. Create 6 pairs, listing two values on each line. Most important pair being 1st. Then, ask yourself the touch question: Which word out of each pair would you fight for and never compromise—this one is more important. Circle the most important value in each pair.

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

5. _____ 6. _____

3. Best practice is to have 3-5 core values. There's always going to be a dominate value that gets exhibited more than the others. If you are focused on doing too many things you won't do anything really well. By putting an emphasis onthree core values you are able to create an environment where people are focused on key contributions.

Narrow your list of 6 to the top 3 values you'll never compromise.

_____ _____

_____

NEXT: bringing your team members into the process

focusing your values: defining the values that you've identified as most valuable

1. Now that you've narrowed down your core values, it's time to create definitions. Describe in less than 200 characters what it means to enact these values.

VALUE	DESCRIPTION
_____	_____
	_____
	_____
_____	_____
	_____
	_____
_____	_____
	_____
	_____

Here's a few examples to get you started thinking about what great descriptions look like

ENERGIZING CREATIVITY

Expressing creativity and wonder, creating an environment that supports expression of opportunities and outside-the-box thinking.

PASSION

Demonstrated genuine empathy and a desire to make life easy and better for our team or our customers.

GROWTH

Constantly learning and driving creative ideas to embrace personal development and bring best practices to the organization.

More value badges and descriptions can be found in our library: http://bit.ly/ValuesLibrary

NEXT: bringing your team members into the process

core values exercise, complete! Now it's time to loop in your team members for feedback

You have now just discovered, or rediscovered, your core values—but what happens now?

Now that you've solidified an identity, reflected on the attributes and qualities that embody your core values, and concretely defined your values, it's time to ensure everyone in your team is onboard and engaged with these values. Being a strong values leader is knowing your core values and having the courage to integrate them in all actions, across all team members.

If you already have values and you'd like to put them to the test, this part of the workbook will come in handy! Best practice is to check your cultural pulse at least once a year to keep everyone engaged in the right direction.

Seeking feedback and ensuring there's no discrepencies between what's stated and what's lived

The next part of this workbook places emphasis on getting your team to think about what it means day-to-day to live your core values. From thinking to how your team sees their future grow in the context of core values all the way to 1-on-1s, and weekly to-do's, this next section will ground your values in behaviours and actions taken.

It's also important to seek feedback on the personal connection and values that your team believes are most important to the growth of your team. If no one views exellence as being a top core value, but instead values integrity, dig deeper and ask questions to figure out why this discrepency is happening.

Let's get started by having each team member brainstorm actions they see as upholding your core values.

team member workbook
NEXT: bringing the process to your entire team

team member reflection: brainstorm actions that exemplify your core values

1. Ask your team! "Tell me some examples of when you have experienced or witnessed these values being upheld. In what scenarios would they be not upheld?"

BEING UPHELD (what made this experience stand out?)	NOT BEING UPHELD (Why? What could have been done differently)

WHY? It's important to reflect on actions that exemplify your values so that you can easily visualize what it means to live your vision. This is in lieu of a basic question like, "What do you think of these?" Brainstorming actual anecdotes or previous actions taken of how those values have been reflected day-to-day will help move them from "culture fluff" to fully-formed values. This connects your team to your values with a sense of belonging and shared purpose.

It also helps empower coaches and mentors to know when others in their team are high-performing. This also is helpful in the context of growth and development since mentors, managers, and coaches, can have concrete examples of when their team members are exemplifying high-performing attributes.

NEXT: reflecting on your career in relation to core values

team member reflection: identifying values you connect with / who can be a great coach

1. Who is your mentor? What do you respect the most about them? How do they help you succeed and move forward in the context of your growth?

2. What are some key areas in your career that you want to continue to develop? What key qualities will help you grow in these areas?

3. If you were explaining the most important soft-skills (such as empathy) that are required to be part of your team, what would you explain? Why did you select the choices that you made?

NEXT: reflecting on how you're living your core values

team member reflection, continued...

4. How am I practicing, promoting, and living these values?

5. What is challenging about practicing, promoting, and living these values?

6. Value words are packed with meaning. What do your values mean to you in your own words?

NEXT: why these questions are important for growth

core values exercise, complete! Now it's time to loop in your team members for feedback

1. Who is your mentor? What do you respect the most about them? How do they help you succeed and move forward in the context of your growth?

There's a bank of knowledge, interesting career growth paths others have taken, and lots of storytelling that can come out of mentoring/having a mentor outside your department or reporting structure. A great coach is someone you aspire to be. These questions reflect on who in your team can bring out the best of these values in you.

2. What are some key areas in your career that you want to continue to develop? What key qualities will help you grow in these areas?

It's important to think about how to aim higher to grow—but if you do so in the context of your team's core values, you're highlighting how you are contributing to team growth as well. Aligning your growth to core values means you're aligning your work to what the team already values. Focusing on qualities that help you move forward identify what the team can do to help you get where you want to go.

3. If you were explaining the most important soft-skills that are required to be part of your team, what would you explain?

It's important for personal values to shine through when creating great teams. Everyone brings unique attributes to the table, so it's all about combining those attributes to make outstanding teams.

4. How am I practicing, promoting, and living these values? and 5. What is challenging about practicing, promoting, and living these values?

This will help provide guidance on next steps. How are you helping others around, and what can others do to help you move beyond roadblocks you may encounter.

6. Value words are packed with meaning. What do your values mean to you in your own words?

Being personally invested and engaged with core values is important to keep your own growth on track. Nothing is more personally connective than defining these values i your own terms.

next steps: common thread analysis and preparing for all circumstances

After completing both the focusing values exercise, as well as having each team member complete the reflection exerise, look for common themes. Themes inform next steps. See a trend in the "what does it mean to enact these values" section that doesn't align with what you actually meant when you created value descriptions? Go back to that step and redefine a description. Perhaps you also need to have a team building exercise to get back in sync with your stated values.

Important next steps should always include a goal or outcome. By doing X, I'm hoping to achieve Y. By having our team go through this exercise, the objective is to refresh our core values and provide coaching for those that are engaged. You will also need to be prepared to support your coaches as they work with team members that may be misaligned. Be prepared for results that you otherwise weren't anticipating to ensure you're prepared for all outcomes before starting.

1-on-1 templates to have in your back pocket are a great place to start. Here's a recommended values/culture template:

1. What are the things in your job, your team, and our company culture which you appreciate and happy about?

2. How do you feel things going generally?

3. What suggestions or feedback do you have for me, your team members, and the organization?

4. Are there any personal issues that you would like to talk about or have addressed, because they are impeding you from giving your best?

5. Do you have any feedback for management?

6. Do you have any ideas or concerns you'd like to discuss face-to-face with your manager, or another team member?

7. How are you limited? (How could we (as a team or as a department) help you overcome those limitations? What are we preventing you from doing?)

8. Given your strengths and talents, how do you think you could use those to serve, or to help, others or our organization?

More templates can be found in the 7Geese 1-on-1 template library: http://bit.ly/TemplateLibrary

NEXT: asking yourself the tough questions to stay on track

living your core values: the tough questions

Having stellar core values is only step 1. Just paying lip service to your core values means you're not actually upholding the foundation you've worked hard to set. Tough decisions, things like hiring and firing, or the way you conduct performance reviews should all be empowered by your core values.

This next section asks some tough questions and provides solutions and checklists to ensure you're embedding your core values into everything you do, your internal processes, your brand, and customer relationships.

WAYS TO INCORPORATE YOUR CORE VALUES INTO THE DAY-TO-DAY

talk about your core values at every opportunity you can—incorporate them throughout existing processes

To make core values stick, weave them into everyday moments where ever possible. Here's a few ways to get started incorporating your core values throughout existing workflows:

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

Have everyone on your team reflect and share what they've learned and what they're proud of in relation to a core value. This will directly tie weekly actions back to what your team values most.

RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

Real-time recognition encourages team members to continuously remember core values, as well as look out for when their team mates are exhibiting what it means to be a high-performer in the team. It also highlights and empowers others by visually showcasing exactly what it means to uphold your core values.

CULTURE CHECKS AND 1-ON-1S

Have monthly or quarterly 1-on-1s to discuss how engaged your team is with your core values. Discuss culture, what potential things have occurred since you last spoke that has disengaged them from team core values, and what can be done to help excel them moving forward. Your team is your best source for ideas on engagement—utilize their knowledge!

TEAM SPECIFIC VALUES

Every team is unique, so create team specific values that are additive to organization core values. This adds personality to the team, personally connecting each member to something unique to them.

ALL HANDS MEETINGS APPRECIATION

Start off every all-hands meeting with a slide of your core values. This is a continuous visual refresher of what your team holds dear. Make core values stick by creating "learning opportunities" and celebrate instances of your team living up to your core values. Celebrate core value wins together.

NEXT: asking tough questions as a manager and team member

you're living your core values when you're ready to make some tough decisions

These questions provide grounding. Grounding in what qualities you see as empowering in those around you, and those that you'd like to continue to empower others with. Those that you want to build a great team next to.

These values should be in line with your organizations core values. If their not, it's time to ask the tough questions...

You're a team lead and notice someone not exhibiting these values:

1. Has the organization/team done enough to coach, mentor, and grow this team member? Are we providing the right type of opportunities/challenges?

- Reflect, look back on their work, and most importantly have a conversation about what's going on. 1-on-1s empower all participants to talk in a safe space of trust to discuss exactly what's going on without making assumptions.

2. Do we need to start talking about an exit plan and what to do next?

- Be prepared to make a tough decision. If everything that can be done around coaching and development has been done, but there's still a disconnect in behaviours exhibited and team core values, it's time to talk about an exit plan. Living your core values means being ready to make tough decisions and acting when a situation is compromising those values.

You're a team member and you no longer feel you connect with your organization's core values:

1. Are you being given the right resources, coaching, and challenges to engage you with the team?

- If you're not, talk to your coach/mentor, manager, or senior leadership team to talk about what career planning can be done, growth and development opportunities, or next steps to get the right resources to stay connected with core values

2. What about the culture do you no longer like? Is it something that can be fixed in less than 3 months?

- Have a 1-on-1 with your manager/mentor/a peer to discuss if there's any next steps that can help re-engage you with your team.

NEXT: last bits of advice and four key takeaways

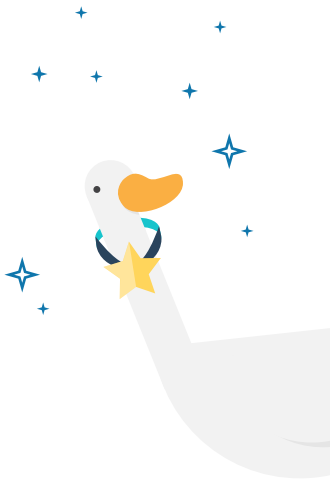
one last piece of advice... be sure to always work on growing your team and engaging them with your values

How do you know if your stated core values actually reflect what you strive them to be when acted on? Tough question: would you be willing to let go of a top-performer for exhibiting continuous negative behaviours that go against your core values? If the answer is no, then what you state as a core value is just lip service.

Learn more about defining core values, visions, and mission statements in our 101 guide:

http://bit.ly/CoreValues101

Coaching and development will only go so far. Sometimes, personal values don't align with your organization's core values. This discrepency will eventually erode the culture of your organization.



When your team knows what the organization stands for, and isn't willing to compromise regardless the tough decision at hand, they'll know how to act in any moment. When your team is living authentic, reinforced core values, culture never gets compromised.

Here's four key takeaways to ensure your core values are being lived up to, not just stated:

1. Ensure all team members can list your core values and provide an example of what it means to live them.

2. Empower your team by getting them involved in the process of refreshing your values. This will engage them not just in living your values, but will also provide ownership over what it means to have values you encourage in others.

3. Core values should be embedded in your day-to-day operations and processes. Find ways to include your values throughout reflections, 1-on-1s, or by using a recognition program to highlight values-driven behaviours.

4. Continuously refresh your values and make sure they are still true to what your vision and priorities are.

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