

Team Values and Vibes: The Character Goals of Your Business

We all carry with us a personal set of values. These are certain ideas and preferences that we feel are more important than others.

For example, some of us are “neat freaks” and value a clean and neat house. Others of us value spiritual pursuits, and others place more importance on sports and athletic activities.

For a business to be successful, the people working together should all share similar values. People that value pets and animals would do best working at animal shelters or as veterinarians. People who love art and organization might work well with others in interior design businesses. Those who love the outdoors might work well for a ski lodge or a river rafting business.

A smart business will define what it values most, as well as its mission, and use these values as a standard for hiring, training, and coaching its employees. Clarifying the mission and core value of the group helps everyone to understand what is expected. It helps to create a unified and positive culture – it fosters synergy.

This is famously exemplified in a company called Zappos, originally an online shoe retailer that has since expanded to selling clothes and accessories. Tony Hsieh took the company over in 2000 when it was selling a million dollars’ worth of product. It had its first billion-dollar year in 2010. Mr. Hsieh attributes the growth and success of the Zappos in large part to creating a specific work culture. He did this by defining the core values of the business and using those values in developing a positive and productive work culture.

Here are their Core Values, from their website:

At Zappos our 10 Core Values are more than just words, they're a way of life. We know that companies with a strong culture and a higher purpose perform better in the long run. As we continue to grow, we strive to ensure that our culture remains alive and well.

- *Deliver WOW Through Service*
- *Embrace and Drive Change*
- *Create Fun and A Little Weirdness*
- *Be Adventurous, Creative, and Open-Minded*
- *Pursue Growth and Learning*

The Goal Driven Business

- *Build Open and Honest Relationships with Communication*
- *Build a Positive Team and Family Spirit*
- *Do More with Less*
- *Be Passionate and Determined*
- *Be Humble*

One office we work with came up with their own core values, adopting a few from Zappos. Since doing so, they have been seeing their numbers attain their highest levels after over twenty years in business. As an example, here are theirs:

Our Core Values

1. **Service.** Deliver WOW through our service and care.
2. **Attitude.** Have a genuine upbeat attitude towards our patients and each other.
3. **Mission.** Work cheerfully to achieve the mission of the office each day -- and help each of your teammates to do the same.
4. **Responsibility.** Be proactive in our work and life.
5. **Personal Health.** Be active and committed in our personal health and fitness goals.
6. **Communication.** Create and nurture open and honest relationships with communication.
7. **Personal Development.** Pursue personal growth and learning.
8. **Becoming an Expert.** Study, practice, train: Constantly work to improve your professional skills and know and understand our procedures and why they are so valuable to patient care. Work to become expert in applying them.
9. **You Be You.** Create fun and a little wildness.
10. **Trust.** Be worthy of the trust of our patients and to each other.

Define what your business values most and post these for your team. These are the character goals everyone should strive to achieve. Refer to these weekly, and every six months, review and refine them as needed to help keep each other working as a synergistic and fun team.

Define the Core Values of Your Business

- 1. Team Review of Values.** Meet with your team and discuss the idea of team values. Give examples (from Zappos or others.) Ask them to make suggestions in writing and turn them into you in a week.
- 2. Get Away.** Take time away from the office, retire to your Lab, wherever you find it.
- 3. Consider What You Value Most.** Consider the types of behavior you value from your employees and yourself.
- 4. Review Employee Values.** Review any suggested core values from your employees.
- 5. Make Your List.** From your values and from those of your team, select 5- 10 values.
- 6. Make Descriptions.** Make a short description of each value.
- 7. Review at Team Meeting.** Go over each core value at a team meeting. Ask each staff member to give examples of how applying the value, and then give an example of not applying it.
- 8. Post Your Core Values for Your Team and Refer to Them Often.**
- 9. Use them.** Use these values as standards in hiring and in coaching and training your team.