



BLAZING TRAILS
Business Coach for Contractors
Grow Profits. Build Teams. Work Lean.

CORE VALUES AT WORK



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WELCOME

HI - I'M PRISCILLA HANSEN MAHONEY,
GLAD YOU ARE HERE!

I'm excited you grabbed this ebook—it shows you're committed to becoming a stronger leader and building a better business. Together, we'll explore how to transform your leadership, your team, and ultimately, your company's success.

Core values are the foundation of every great organization, yet many businesses stumble when creating or implementing them. Generic, uninspired values, a lack of employee input, or poor communication often lead to a disconnect between words and actions.

This ebook will help you avoid those missteps by crafting meaningful, actionable core values that reflect your company's purpose, resonate with your team, and shape your culture. Done right, core values go beyond words on a wall—they drive engagement, satisfaction, and productivity. For contractors and trades-based companies, they can turn a group of workers into a team deeply invested in your success. Ready to build trust, accountability, and long-term success? The blueprint is in your hands—let's put it into action.

Your Partner In Success -
Priscilla Hansen Mahoney
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WHY CORE VALUES MATTER

*IN THE SKILLED TRADES INDUSTRY,
WHERE REPUTATION, TRUST, AND
CONSISTENCY MEAN EVERYTHING,
CORE VALUES AREN'T JUST NICE-
TO-HAVE—THEY'RE ESSENTIAL.*

Core Values are the foundation of your contracting business. They go beyond a simple list of ideals - they define your identity, shaping the way you approach your work, your customers, and your team. Core values articulate what you stand for, who you are, and how you show up. From the way you bid on projects, to how you handle setbacks or resolve conflicts, these values influence every decision you make.

Many companies focus on technical skills - training teams on tools, materials, and techniques - but often overlook the guiding principles that keep everything running smoothly. Core values are the glue that holds your company together. They set the standard for behavior, decision-making and teamwork shaping a culture that drives long-term success.





SIMPLIFYING TOUGH DECISIONS

In a business where you face complex challenges daily, core values make decision-making straightforward. If a choice doesn't align with your values, the answer is simple: don't do it. By establishing clear principles, you create a framework that guides your team, eliminates confusion, and ensures consistency across every project, client interaction, and business decision.

CREATING CONSISTENCY IN LONG-TERM GROWTH

Core Values set the standard and provide a stable foundation that helps you scale without losing sight of what makes your business unique. They serve as a guidepost when training new employees, opening new locations, or expanding your services, ensuring that your company's culture and quality remain intact.





CORE VALUES IN ACTION

While establishing, enacting, and leveraging core values will undoubtedly lead to higher revenues and profits, upholding those values can sometimes be challenging.

Imagine you're a carpenter running a business guided by the core value of "Craftsmanship Above All." This principle demands that every project reflects exceptional quality, precision, and durability—no shortcuts allowed.

According to this standard, every design, detail, and material must meet the highest expectations. If something falls short, you may face the costly decision to tear it out and start over. While this commitment can be painful in the short term, it ensures that your work aligns with your values.

By sticking to this core value, you'll not only deliver a product that meets your exceptional standards but also gain the respect of your team. Your crew will witness your dedication to quality, learning that shortcuts are not an option. This sets an inspiring example, encouraging them to uphold the same high standards in future projects. Ultimately, you'll ensure client satisfaction, take pride in your work, and maintain your reputation as a true professional.



*"IF WE EXPECT PEOPLE
TO LIVE THE CORE
VALUES OF AN
ORGANIZATION, WE
HAVE TO BE ABLE TO
TELL THEM WHAT THOSE
VALUES LOOK LIKE IN
ACTION"*

SIMON SINEK



*“WHEN YOUR
VALUES ARE
CLEAR TO
YOU, MAKING
DECISIONS
BECOMES
EASIER”*

ROY DISNEY



DEFINING YOUR CORE VALUES



Core values shape every aspect of your business, from how you operate to how your team and clients perceive you. They are more than words on a wall—they define your identity, guide your decisions, and drive your actions. Without core values, your business risks losing direction, becoming reactive instead of proactive, and operating inconsistently.

Think of core values as the “north star” for your organization. They give your team a shared sense of purpose and direction, aligning everyone—from leadership to your crew in the field. Core values clarify what your company stands for and set clear expectations for how everyone shows up, works, and interacts. They act as the ground rules that unify your team, especially during challenging times.

In contracting and skilled trades, where trust, reliability, and craftsmanship matter most, core values play a crucial role. They define the quality of your work and shape the way you interact with clients, employees, and the community. Every handshake, job bid, and completed project should reflect the high standards and principles your business upholds.

Defining core values takes careful thought and effort. As Alexander Hamilton famously said, “If you don’t stand for something, you’ll fall for anything.” Without clear principles, your company risks inconsistency, missed opportunities, and a lack of unity. Core values create a solid foundation that supports your culture, training, and decision-making, ensuring every action aligns with your mission.

When you define and consistently apply core values, they transform into the heartbeat of your organization. They give you a roadmap for success, simplify tough decisions, and help you build a strong, unified culture. Core values set you apart in a competitive industry, attract clients who value your integrity, and inspire your team to deliver their best work every day.

Now, let’s walk through the steps to define your core values and build a business that stands for something greater.

***“CORE VALUES AREN’T JUST WORDS -
THEY ARE THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES THAT ALIGN YOUR TEAM, DRIVE YOUR
DECISIONS, AND SET YOUR BUSINESS APART”***

5

STEPS TO DEFINING YOUR CORE VALUES

01

DEFINE YOUR MISSION AND PURPOSE

Define why your business exists and pinpoint the principles that matter most. Ask yourself: What do we stand for? What do we want to be known for? Use these answers to identify the values that align with your mission and goals.

02

GET INPUT FROM YOUR TEAM

Involve your team in the process. Sit down with your crew or hold a workshop to gather their input on what defines your company's identity. Ask them what values they see in action on the job and what principles they believe should guide the business. Encourage them to share examples of what success looks like when living the core values and how the company struggles when those values are not upheld.

03

IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE KEY VALUES

Look for common themes in the feedback. Focus on three to five core values that truly represent who you are and how you work. Keep them authentic and relevant to the daily realities of running a trades business. Refer to the "Core Values Map" on page 11.

04

WRITE ACTIONABLE DEFINITIONS

Make your values clear and practical. Define each value so your team knows exactly what it means and how to apply it. For example:

- Integrity: We take pride in doing what's right, even when it's not the easiest option.
- Craftsmanship: We deliver work that meets the highest standards of quality and precision.

05

LIVE YOUR CORE VALUES

Bring your core values to life on every job. Use them to guide hiring decisions, training programs, and team meetings. Reinforce them through your actions—whether it's sticking to quality standards, treating clients with respect, or solving problems with integrity. Show your team and clients that these values are more than just words

QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU DEFINE YOUR CORE VALUES

Use the following questions as a guide to reflect on what drives your business, how your team operates, and the principles that matter most to your company. Take the time to answer them honestly, involve your team where appropriate, and focus on identifying values that truly represent who you are and what you want your business to stand for.

DEFINE YOUR MISSION AND PURPOSE

- Why did I start this business?
- What do I want my company to be known for?
- Beyond making a profit, what impact do I want my business to have on clients, employees, and the community?

GET INPUT FROM YOUR TEAM

- What principles do my team and I already live by on the job?
- What do my employees think sets our company apart from others in the industry?
- How would my crew describe our company culture?
- What behaviors or attitudes do we want every team member to embrace?

IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE KEY VALUES

- What recurring themes or values do I see in our work and decisions?
- Which values are non-negotiable for how we operate?
- Are there values we aspire to but aren't consistently demonstrating yet?

WRITE ACTIONABLE DEFINITIONS

- What does this value mean specifically in the context of our work?
- How do we live out this value in our daily operations?
- What specific behaviors, actions, or decisions reflect this value?

LIVE YOUR CORE VALUES

- How can I incorporate these values into hiring and onboarding?
- How do we recognize or reward team members who live out our values?
- How can we ensure our values guide decision-making, especially in tough situations?
- What processes or habits will help reinforce our values consistently across the team?



VALUES IDEA MAP

A values idea map organizes your core principles into categories—personal values (what drives you), interaction values (how your team collaborates), business-oriented values (how you operate), customer values (how you serve clients), and external values (your impact on the community and industry)—to ensure a comprehensive and aligned approach to defining your company's identity.



PERSONAL VALUES

- Balance
- Bravery
- Creativity
- Craftsmanship
- Courage
- Curiosity
- Dedication
- Dependability
- Determination
- Enthusiasm
- Ethics
- Excellence
- Exploration
- Focus
- Follow-through
- Generous
- Growth
- Humility
- Integrity
- Kindness
- Leadership
- Open-mindedness
- Optimism
- Passion
- Perseverance
- Positivity
- Problem-Solving
- Reliability
- Respect
- Resourceful
- Risk-taking
- Safety
- Self-Reliance
- Vision
- Work Ethic



INTERACTION VALUES

- Accountability
- Attentiveness
- Caring
- Celebration
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Cooperation
- Empathetic
- Empowerment
- Fairness
- Fun
- Generosity
- Honesty
- Inclusivity
- Kindness
- Listening
- Mentorship
- Open to Ideas
- Patience
- Positivity
- Professionalism
- Respect
- Sharing
- Speak Your Mind
- Support
- Supportiveness
- Synergy
- Teamwork
- Thoughtfulness
- Transparency
- Trust
- Trustworthy
- Understanding
- Unity
- Welcoming



BUSINESS ORIENTED VALUES

- Adaptability
- Agility
- Alignment
- Black Owned
- Cost Conscious
- Continuous Improvement
- Efficiency
- Employee-Owned
- Entrepreneurship
- Excellence
- Execution
- Fact-based Decisions
- Family-Owned
- Financial Responsibility
- Goal Oriented
- Growth
- Growth-Mindedness
- Innovation
- Leadership
- Lean
- Minority-Owned
- Ownership
- Profitable
- Quality
- Relevance
- Scalability
- Speed
- Veteran-Owned
- Winning
- Woman-Owned



CUSTOMER VALUES

- Accessibility
- Compassion
- Consistency
- Custom
- Customer Focused
- Dedication
- Dedicated
- Dependability
- Empathy
- Ethical
- Expert
- Extra Mile Service
- Fair
- Fairness
- Flexibility
- High-Touch Service
- Hospitality
- Loyalty
- Personalized
- Proactivity
- Quality
- Reliability
- Responsive
- Responsiveness
- Results Driven
- Satisfaction
- Seamless Experience
- Service Excellence
- Solution-Focused
- Tailored Services
- Timely
- Transparent
- Trust
- Value for Money



EXTERNAL VALUES

- Advocacy
- Climate Action
- Community
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Economic Impact
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Ethical Labor Practices
- Ethical Sourcing
- Fair Trade Practices
- Giving Back
- Global Responsibility
- Make a Better World
- Philanthropy
- Recyclability
- Renewable Energy
- Safe Practices
- Social Consciousness
- Social Impact
- Social Responsibility
- Stewardship
- Sustainability
- Supporting Local Economies
- Volunteerism
- Waste Reduction
- Workforce Development Support

LIVE YOUR CORE VALUES

Now that you have done the work to define your organizations core values, it's time to put them to work. When employees are engaged, they are more motivated, productive, and committed to the organization's goals. One way to increase employee engagement is to use the organization's core values as a foundation. Here are some ways you can use core values to create employee engagement in your organization:

HIRE PEOPLE WHO FIT YOUR VALUES:

During interviews, ask questions that reveal if candidates share your core values. Clearly post your values on job sites, social media, and job postings so applicants know what your company stands for.

MAKE VALUES PART OF THE DAILY CONVERSATION:

Talk about your core values during team meetings, toolbox talks, and jobsite huddles. Share stories that show how living these values leads to success on the job.

CELEBRATE EMPLOYEES WHO WALK THE TALK:

Recognize team members who live your core values with shout-outs, bonuses, or small rewards. Celebrate milestones tied to the values you care about most.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE:

Leaders can inspire their teams by demonstrating how to use the organization's core values as a guide for making decisions.

ASK FOR HONEST FEEDBACK:

Regularly ask your crew how the company is living up to its values. Use quick surveys, suggestion boxes on-site, or casual one-on-one chats to gather input and make improvements.

GIVE THE TOOLS TO SUCCEED:

Equip your team with training, mentorship, and materials to help them live your core values. For example, if safety is a core value, provide up-to-date safety gear and regular training sessions.

LINK VALUES TO PERFORMANCE:

Make core values part of employee reviews. Use them to guide conversations about growth and accountability.

A SMALL NOTE

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Here's the legal stuff that makes my lawyer happy....

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Schedule a Core Values Workshop for your Team
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