

How to Build a Powerful Organization Through Principles and Values



Unlock the Power of Your Team

by Mark Lefko

Please feel free to post this on your blog or e-mail it to whomever you believe would benefit from reading it.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Mark Lefko". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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## Introduction: Doing Things for the Right Reasons



**Mark Lefko**  
CEO & Founder, The Lefko Group

**If you and your team can uncover your organization's highest, most honest values, and you can get your people living by them, you'll have an organization that executives, employees, stockholders, customers, and you can be proud of — one that takes on meaty projects, does great work, and earns a fair profit.**

Does this promise sound grand, even naïvely so?

I've seen up close what companies gain when they live by chosen values. In this e-book, I'll introduce you to companies I've worked with who use values as their north star, and have created astonishing cultures because of it.

More importantly, I'll teach you what I've learned about making a forthright values-driven culture, so you can apply the learning yourself.

*By the end of this book, you'll be able to enlist your team to help identify your organization's chief values and, more importantly, inspire your organization to act on those values — continually making the kinds of decisions geared to propel your organization forward.*

The same values that guide us as individuals also exist within great companies. The critical difference, however, is that leaders of great companies are fully aware of the values that drive the organization as a whole and act on those values as a means to succeed. To those leaders, there is no other way to do business — no other way to live.

Once you understand, and engage those values that are truly unique to your organization, the path to greatness virtually unfolds before you. What's even better: the path is mostly straight, relatively flat, and very well-lit.

**Let's begin.**

## FIRST THINGS FIRST:

# What's a Value?

If our core values are to act as guides in helping us create a more successful organization, we must first understand the meaning of the word. Simply put:

**A value is a principle that guides behavior.**

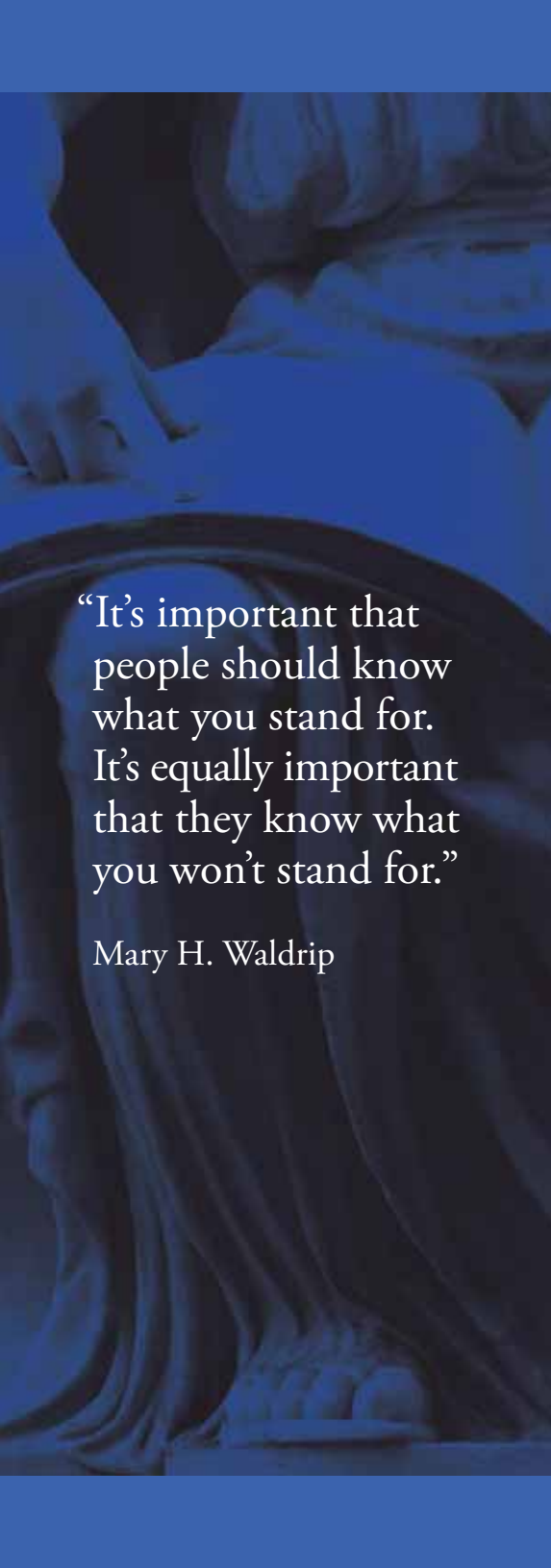
Although values are intangible, their presence and influence have dramatic, real-world effects on our focus, our actions, and ultimately, on the results we create. Entrepreneur Roy Posner considers values “psychological objects,” that have an impact on the world.

**Writes Posner:**

“Although we cannot see or touch [values], they are every bit as real as any physical object. People may dedicate their entire lives or even give up their lives to pursue their values, as so many loyal patriots have done fighting for values of freedom, equality and human rights during the past two centuries.”

If you're the type of person who breaks his or her back to be honest in most any situation, **TRUTH** is one of your cherished values. If the principle of **LEGACY** resides at the core of your being, you'll take on projects that elevate the concepts of tomorrow and help the human race forge ahead. If it's **CREATIVITY** you treasure, you'll explore ways of innovating and expressing yourself where others would have been content to race down the same, worn out path.

These are only three of a myriad values an organization can live and thrive off. However, any set of core organizational values must be chosen carefully and used consistently for any effect to take hold. When an organization's approach to using values is casual, unconscious, and unstructured, the organization and the people in it, tend to lose their way.



“It's important that people should know what you stand for. It's equally important that they know what you won't stand for.”

Mary H. Waldrip

## Hold Your Values Close. No Matter What.

To ensure your organization is operating at full capacity, everyone in it must be aligned around similar values. Like we (I) said before: your employees must be in sync. Those values must then act as decision-making touchstones — no matter what the situation.

An organization aligned around similar values is efficient and focused. An organization aligned around similar values understands the criteria for success, so its employees are keenly aware of boundaries and guidelines.

When a business opportunity presents itself, an organizations' leaders and employees need only ask themselves one question: 'Does this opportunity align with our values?' If the answer is a resounding no, there is no need for the organization to waste its time, energy, or resources pursuing it. If the answer is an honest yes, the decision to chase it down wholeheartedly is almost always made without deliberation or hesitation.

Values alignment is also integral in producing positive internal effects. When a company's employees understand what the organization truly stands for, they are more confident and less likely to be stressed. Why? Their hours at work now have meaning and purpose. They understand and believe in their marching orders. They become more passionate, creative, and productive.

When your employees' values are in alignment, the time you spend managing them decreases drastically. After all, when employees know and understand the organization's values, they don't have to waste time asking management for direction. You've given them the answer by choosing and articulating the values the organization holds at its core.

**Now — it's time to choose.**

“What's going on in  
the inside shows on  
the outside.”

Earl Nightingale

## A Structured Approach to Values

### **If Employees have values that don't sync up—**

For values to manifest themselves and become the kind of growth you seek, they must align with people across the organization. Without that alignment, employees' efforts and attentions will push in different directions rather than focus on the goals born from the chosen core values.

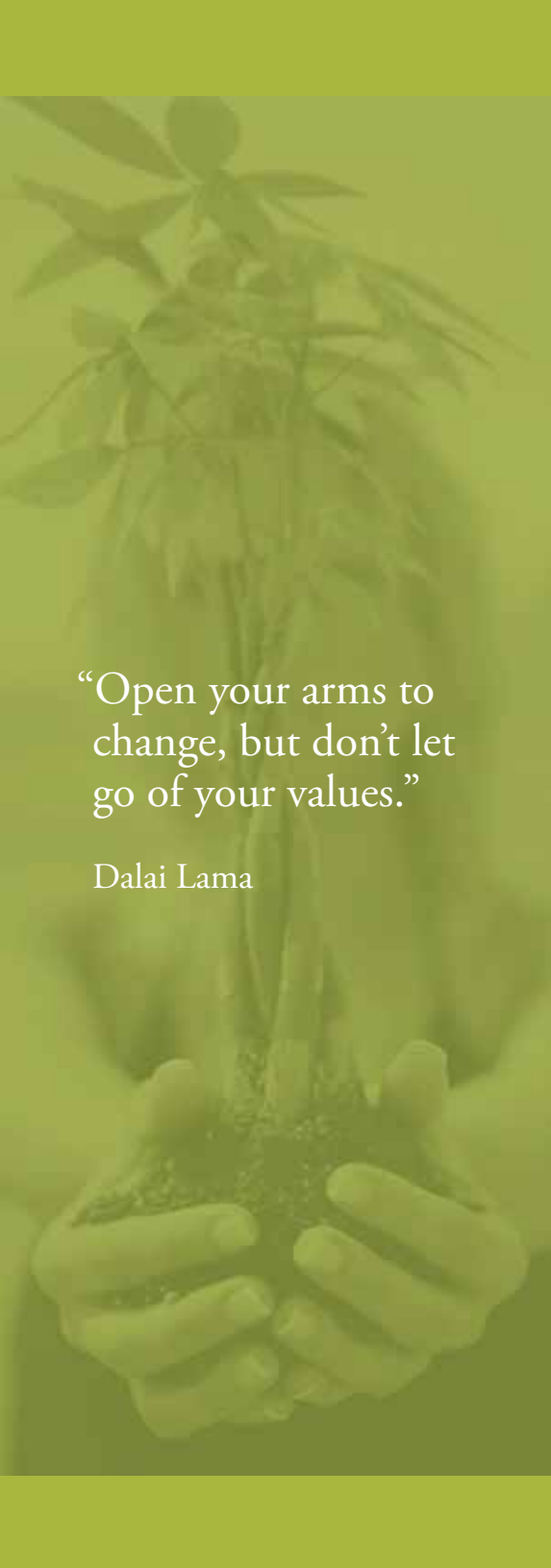
Just think about every project working its way through your organization at this very moment. How many employees are working on each one? How many managers are pushing those projects to fruition? More importantly, how many of the results will be in line with the values you hold dear?

If your organization has no chosen values, the manager directing the project will be the person choosing those values for the organization. You don't need a calculator to tell you the likelihood an organization will lose its way is staggering.

### **There is No One Size Fits All**

If you're sold on the importance of values, you might be waiting to hear about which ones make for a dynamic, productive organization. Unfortunately, I can't tell you that. I have no "one size fits all" formula. That's the bad news.

The good news is that you needn't conform to other organizations' values. You don't have to force a fit between some objectively important value into your core values, if that objectively important value doesn't seem right.



“Open your arms to  
change, but don’t let  
go of your values.”

Dalai Lama

In “Good to Great,” authors Jim Collins and Jerry Porras take the issue head on:

“... there is no universally right set of core values. A company need not have as its core value customer service (Sony doesn’t) or respect for the individual (Disney doesn’t) or quality (Wal-Mart Stores doesn’t) or market focus (HP doesn’t) or teamwork (Nordstrom doesn’t). A company might have operating practices and business strategies around those qualities without having them at the essence of its being... The key is not what core values an organization has but that it has core values at all.”

In order to pinpoint the values your organization holds most dear, we must look within the organization — at what the organization already deems important. They’re right there, right under your nose.

**You just have to look.**

**CASE STUDY #1:**

## Double-Digit Revenue Growth Through Values



Paul Spiegelman

**The Beryl Companies** provides outsourced call center services for hospitals and other healthcare facilities. If that sounds like a commoditized service, it is — for most companies. Beryl, though, has used its call center to achieve growth and distinction.

For eight years, the firm has enjoyed double-digit revenue increases, a profitability five to six times that of most competitors, a customer retention rate of 98%, and an employee attrition rate that's a fraction of the industry norm. It made Inc. magazine's 2007 list of the world's 5000 fastest-growing private companies, and were ranked #2 on the 2007 list of "Best Small & Medium Companies to Work for in America."

### HOW DID BERYL ACHIEVE SUCH SUCCESS?

Co-founder and CEO Paul Spiegelman credits the firm's culture, which is powered by four, carefully chosen, core values:

- **Passion for customer service**
- **Always doing the right thing**
- **Never sacrificing quality**
- **Spirit of camaraderie**

"We do a number of things to keep those values alive," says Spiegelman. "We make them part of everyone's daily life."



Using the values as a functional guide begins in the hiring process. Says Lara Morrow, Beryl’s “Queen of Fun and Laughter”: “You can’t teach people those values. You have to hire for them. We ask potential hires questions like, ‘Tell me a time you showed compassion for someone even when they didn’t deserve it.’ We look for people who give and give and give.”

Once a new hire joins Beryl, they see evidence of the values throughout the company’s headquarters. The four phrases are painted on walls, inscribed on plaques, and written about in the organization’s “Daily Pride” e-newsletter. Even Beryl’s annual performance evaluation process includes rating employees for living up to the core values.

Where the values come up most often, though, is when tactical decisions must be made. “When an issue comes up,” says Spiegelman, “we say, ‘With respect to our values, how should this issue be resolved?’ We’re always bringing the values up in conversation, quizzing and challenging people on applying and living them. It’s almost a religious thing.”

The company has started several programs to help its values spread. One of those programs, Beryl Cares, is a program for employees in crisis. Those in need receive money, resources, and, as often as not, friendship.

Morrow, for instance, tells the story of an employee who had been in a car crash. Management, of course, was ready to provide financial support, but the entire Beryl community instinctively sprang into action to help. Employees from all departments did things like care for the injured man’s cats, mow his lawn, manage his bills, and buy eyeglasses to replace those that had broken in the crash.



The most interesting thing about the situation: The injured man wasn't some popular, longtime employee. He was, in fact, fairly new to the organization, and was something of a loner. Still, the Beryl community spontaneously mobilized to help him, because the culture lives the core value of camaraderie.

It's easy to assume that running the firm on values has always come naturally at Beryl. That, however, isn't the case.

"I used to be cynical about values, mission statements, and plaques on the wall," says Spiegelman. "I've changed. Eight or nine years ago, we went through a visioning exercise. I'm a believer in what this kind of practice can do for a company."

### **What advice does Spiegelman have for organizations looking to use core values as a cultural tool?**

"First, the basics must be in place. You need to compensate workers properly. You need to treat them with respect. If you don't have the basics and you throw a party, it will look disingenuous.

"Once you have those, you need to make the value identification process inclusive. Don't let it be driven by you as the leader. We had an open discussion with a senior group of 20 to 25 management people.



“The process should be driven externally. Bring in someone from the outside who’s trained in guiding people through this sort of thing. Doing so makes it run smoothly, and shows that leadership’s committed to making things work.

“Once you’ve selected your values and done your wordsmithing, everything must be institutionalized. You’ve got to start talking about your principles, and sharing stories about times that people used them.

“Remember, if this turns out to be ‘flavor of the month,’ your employees will lose trust immediately. You can’t force it on people, though. It must build momentum on its own.

“A final point: When you have your list and start using it, listen to what people say about it. Our original list didn’t have ‘camaraderie’ on it. But employees came forward and said, ‘Something is missing. We laugh together. We care for each other. That’s what’s we’re about.’ It didn’t take much prodding to get us to add camaraderie to the list. Once we did, we started using it as a guide for making decisions.”

**CASE STUDY #2:**

## Using Values To Protect The Planet

**patagonia**<sup>®</sup>



Casey Sheahan

**Patagonia Outdoor Clothing** manufactures technical apparel and gear for climbing, hiking, skiing, and other outdoor sports. Studying a list of the awards it has won in the past dozen years is daunting. I count 77. I could be wrong. There may be more.

Patagonia has won awards for its apparel, gear, catalogs, and website. It's been named to lists for the *Most Ethical Company*, the *Most Parent-friendly Company*, the *Best Adoption-friendly Company*, and the *100 Best Companies to Work For*.

In 2007, *Fortune* magazine did a cover story on Patagonia. The story was titled, "*The Coolest Company on the Planet*."

Such accolades do more than make the company profitable. It makes them a magnet for those with similar values. Says Patagonia CEO, Casey Sheahan: "For every job opening we have, we get 900 to 1,000 applicants."

Unlike Beryl Companies, Patagonia didn't create its core values by holding meetings with senior managers and staff. Instead, its values were handed down from company founder, Yvon Chouinard.

The Patagonia logo, featuring the word "patagonia" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol (®) to the upper right.

In the mid-1950s, a teenaged Chouinard would go rock-climbing with friends. The technology of the day, though, was primitive. Climbers would hammer soft-iron pitons into the rock, and leave them there. Within a few years, the heavily climbed areas were disfigured by abandoned pitons.

Chouinard started using steel to make pitons that he could reuse. Other climbers noticed. They asked the youngster if he'd make reusable pitons for them. At \$1.50 a piece, he obliged. An entrepreneur was born.

His steel pitons grew in popularity. Still, they were far from a perfect solution. Chouinard realized that the reusable pitons scarred the rock as badly as had the soft-iron pitons. Chouinard, along with his partner, Tom Frost, decided that they couldn't continue manufacturing something that was so environmentally harmful.

Although pitons were their main business, the men searched for other climbing methods. They eventually came across the aluminum chock. It serves the same function as the piton, but can be wedged between and pulled free from rocks.

Chouinard wasn't certain climbers would take to this somewhat obscure piece of equipment. His values, though, made the choice clear. Chocks did less harm to nature, so the business would focus on chocks.

**The choice was the right one. Climbers loved the chocks. The company grew.**

In the early 1970s, Chouinard's company became Patagonia. The same nature-loving aesthetic stayed. It did, in fact, become Patagonia's mission statement: "Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis."



**Says Sheahan:**

“Our Company is almost masquerading as an apparel manufacturer. We’re really more concerned with protecting the planet.

“Fortunately, the goals of the apparel side and the nature-stewardship side of our business are conjoint. We’ve learned that when we do things for the right reasons, we genuinely make money that way.”

Throughout the years, the company’s adherence to its values has continued to test it. One instance occurred in the early 1990s. The company conducted a lifestyle analysis of its fabrics, and discovered that the most environmental damage was done by cotton. Cotton production required the use of chemicals that polluted the ecosystem.

The company decided to migrate from standard cotton to organic cotton. Easier said than done. To make the change, vendors who would grow and gin organic cotton would have to be found. Patagonia’s entire supply chain would have to change.

The switch took a year and a half to complete. The gamble paid off. Not only had Patagonia lessened its impact on the environment but, according to Sheahan, sales have increased by 10% every year since.

The Patagonia logo, featuring the word "patagonia" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol (®) to the upper right.

**Sheahan's recommendations on how to use values in your organization:**

“The company needs to sit down in teams, look in their hearts, and ask themselves, ‘What do we want to live and work for? What are the values?’

‘Then, once you have those values, know that they have to be reinforced over time, through concrete actions. After all, every organization has turnover. It’s important that you and the other leaders continually refresh people and anoint them in the values.’”

**CASE STUDY #3:**

## Making Something Important



Kim Jordan

Like Apple and Harley-Davidson, the Colorado-based **New Belgium Brewery's** following is cult-like. Customers adore the company, not only for its beer, but for the way it conducts business.

**New Belgium:**

- **is environmentally friendly.** It has an onsite water treatment facility, runs part of its plant with methane gas, and is working to make its power wholly through on-site generation. Currently, the balance of New Belgium's electrical power comes from wind.
- **gives back to the communities it serves.** By the end of 2007, they had given over \$2.5 million dollars. In 2008, they plan on donating an additional \$475,000.
- **is one-third employee owned.** All the employee-owners have access to the company's financials and goals, and are active members in the strategic planning process. The company, in fact, was nominated as one of the world's most democratic workplaces.

Co-founder and CEO, **Kim Jordan**, says that New Belgium's operational style dates back to its 1991 founding. "When Jeff [Lebesch] and I decided to start the brewery, we took a pad and a pen, hiked into Rocky Mountain National Park, and asked ourselves, 'What do we want this company – that hadn't yet sold a single beer – to stand for?' We were working from the assumption that if you make something important to yourself, you can make that thing happen."



**During their hike, the two founders arrived at their initial core values and beliefs (or, Vision):  
To make world class beer; to be environmental stewards; to promote beer culture and to have fun.**

“Notice,” says Jordan, “that there wasn’t any verbiage about our relationship with customers and coworkers.”

Right from the start, New Belgium grew. They added customers, management, and staff. By 1995, they realized that if they aspired to continue to flourish, they’d have to flesh out the company’s Vision to include more viewpoints.

Fifty to sixty employees convened for their annual day-long retreat. They talked about what was important to them, their families, their coworkers, and the company. They discussed how they’d need to behave to manifest their vision.



From that intensive retreat, the employees wrote **10** core values:

- 1. Remembering that we are incredibly lucky to create something fine that enhances people's lives while surpassing our consumers' expectations.**
- 2. Producing world-class beers**
- 3. Promoting beer culture and the responsible enjoyment of beer**
- 4. Kindling social, environmental and cultural change as a business role model**
- 5. Environmental stewardship: Honoring nature at every turn of the business.**
- 6. Cultivating potential through learning, high involvement culture, and the pursuit of opportunities**
- 7. Balancing the myriad needs of the company, our coworkers and their families**
- 8. Trusting each other and committing to authentic relationships and communications.**
- 9. Continuous, innovative quality and efficiency improvements.**
- 10. Having Fun.**



While these values have helped New Belgium plan grand initiatives, the list's importance goes deeper than that. Says Jordan: "Without codifying and using our values, we could let little things slip. And, if enough little things slip, the organization slowly changes. One day you don't recognize it.

"A key to the values is that they keep us from compromising on mundane decisions. For instance, a mundane decision would be if we decided to throw our food waste in the trash. But doing that wouldn't be in keeping with our value of honoring nature. So to be congruent with that value, we compost."

To insure that New Belgium continues to walk its values-driven walk, every eighteen months management hires an outside survey company to measure how things are doing culturally. In the most recent survey, New Belgium staff added a near-record 86 pages of write-in comments. "That makes sense," says Jordan. "We have a very high employee retention rate. You walk in the door and go, 'Wow! These people really care about what's happening here.'"

**For companies considering the values-based approach, Jordan has a couple of tips:**

"The more people you can get involved in the creation of the values, the better your results will be. Everyone will be held accountable.

"That said, the organization's top layer or two may need to get clear, beforehand, about what's important to them, and what they can and cannot live with. Maybe they need to say, 'Look, we'll only consider a certain specific group of values as possible core values. Anything else, we can't discuss

"That sounds harsh, but you can't create an inspirational way of being and not do it."

## A Journey of Discovery: How to Identify Your Values

How, then, do you set off to identify your organizational values? You embark on a journey. Fortunately, this journey needn't be one of epic proportions. It needn't last for months or years. It can happen in as little as a few hours.

Their discovery however, can't very well take place in isolation. Involvement by key people is not only important, but necessary.

Hold an off-site meeting with your senior executive team. No Blackberry®s or cell phones allowed, at least while the meeting is going on. They should understand. After all, this is about the future of the organization and everyone in it. Open the meeting by asking everyone about what values they live by. Immediately, you'll likely get a barrage of blank stares, wandering eyes, and people reaching for Blackberry®s that aren't even there.

Become the catalyst. Get the conversation going. Talk about some people, famous or otherwise, who have used well-defined values as a driving force in their own lives. Then, segue into organizations who've done the same.

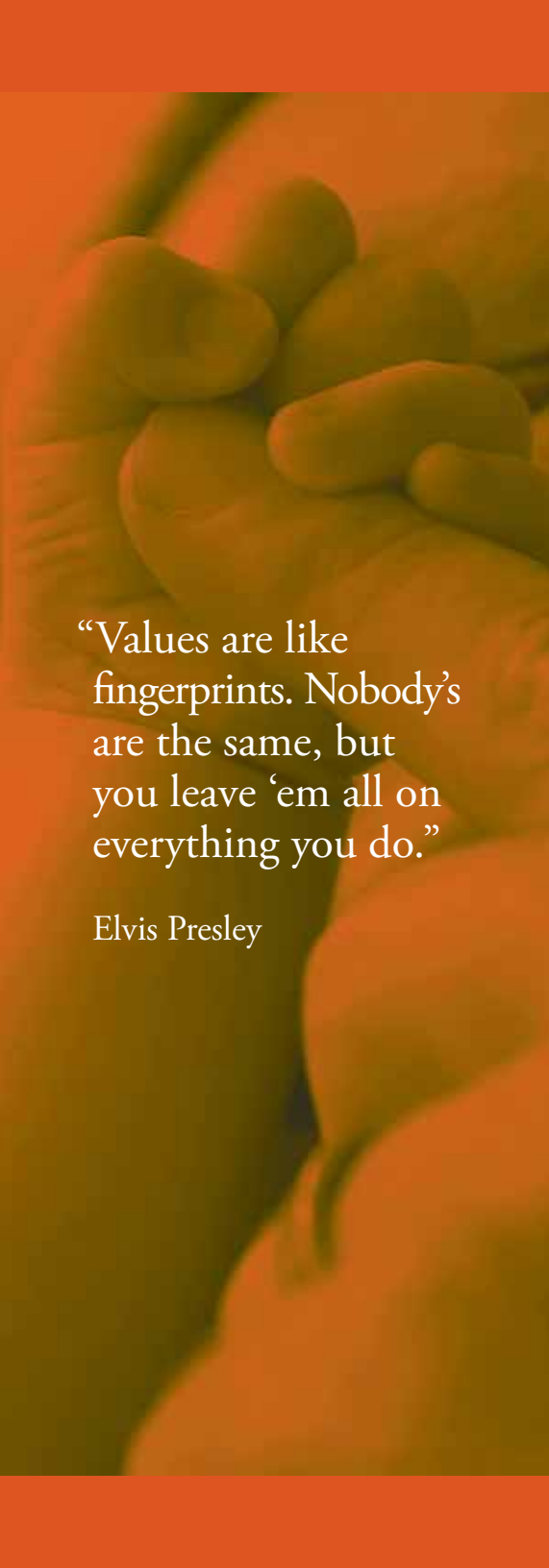
“When your values  
are clear to you,  
making decisions  
becomes easier.”

Roy Disney

**After your talk, handout a sheet that lists examples of possible values to start the creative thought process. Feel free to use any, all, or none of the following (create your own if you'd feel more comfortable):**

trustworthy	flexibility	justice	innovative
persistence	service	honor	cooperative
resourceful	courageous	originality	cleverness
efficient	perspective	prosperous	peace
sincere	profitability	innovation	humorous
dependable	faithful	candid	collaborative
initiative	commitment	hard working	loyal
visionary	freedom	respectful	kindness
responsive	high energy	integrity	stewardship
community	recognition	purposefulness	clarity
relationships	friendship	efficient	cooperative
excellence	honest	supportive	caring
leadership	learning	fulfillment	competitive
wisdom	quality	successful	ethical
teamwork	happiness	fair	cost conscious
creative	reliable	strength	

**This list is only a tool to stimulate thinking, and not intended to direct the attendees in a particular direction. Make sure they understand that.**



“Values are like fingerprints. Nobody’s are the same, but you leave ‘em all on everything you do.”

Elvis Presley

## Using the Cheat Sheet

- **Ask each person to take their sheet and privately circle what they believe to be the organization’s Top Five values. These are values and tenets that you’ll want to operate from, live by, and share with the world.**
- **If, after reading the sheet, they think of key values that don’t appear there, have them down write those values.**
- **Some of the words they chose can be ones that best describe the way your organization operates. Others might be about how it should operate.**
- **To push their thinking further, ask them to think about what’s really important in the organization. Ask them, too, to think about what behaviors get rewarded.**
- **Once they’re finished doing this private work, ask them to turn to a partner and compare lists. Each team should discuss its lists, and condense them into a single list of five values.**

## Spark The Conversation

- **Marker in hand, go to a flipchart in the front of the room and instruct each two-person team to call out one of their agreed-upon values. Write it on the board, and ask them why they chose it.**
- **You want discussion – that’s what’s important. Why this value? Why not a different one? What have they seen happen in the company that demonstrates this as a core value?**
- **That last point is key: What have they seen? What’s actually happened? What’s been demonstrated? What are some examples? What are some stories**
- **You must help the conversation out of the abstract and into the tangible. Real-world examples involving leaders, employees, and customers make the principles dance. They get people excited.**
- **After you’ve written down one value from each group, start round two. Continue writing down values and having discussions until each group has exhausted its list. When duplicate words and overlaps emerge, ask people to explain their version of the word.**
- **Once all the values are on the board, open up the floor and ask people to lobby for the values they think are most important. Let things get spirited if they must.**
- **Now, start eliminating words. Ask people if there’s an even better word to convey a particularly cherished value.**

One time I led a roomful of executives through this process, and they couldn’t get behind any single word, so we started combining words into two-word combinations, like “Uncompromised Integrity” and “Service-driven.” That did the trick.

Do what you must to find the essence.

## The Vote

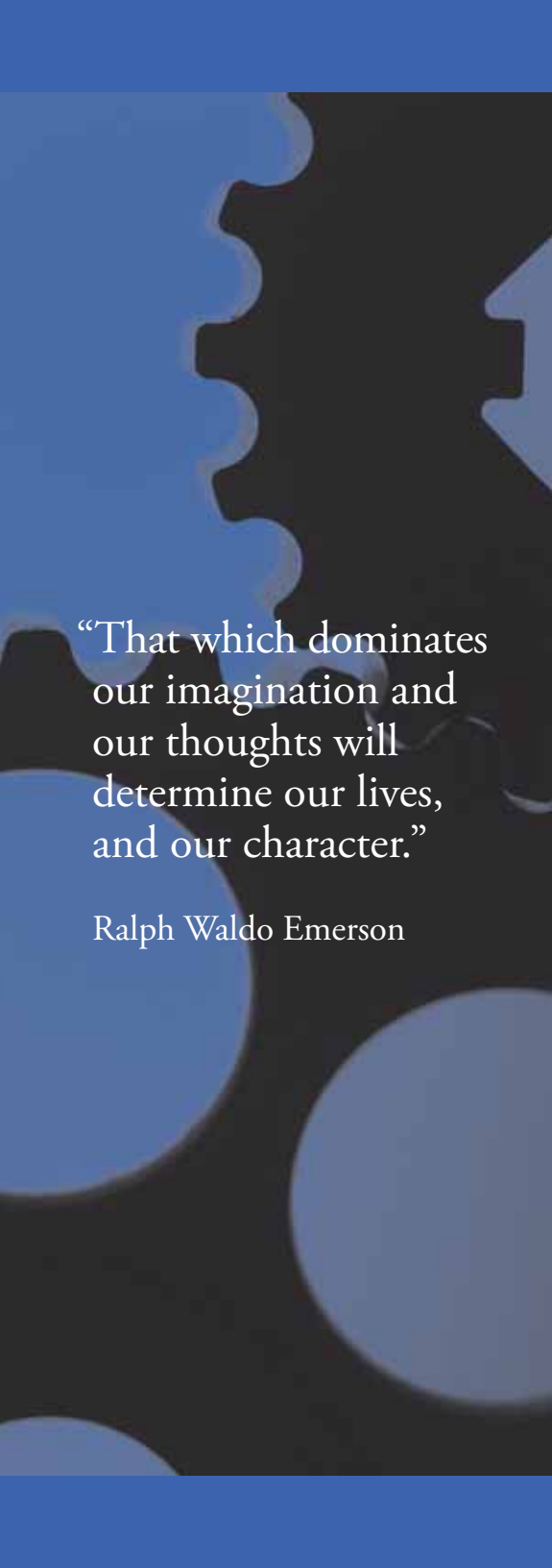
- **At this point, you'll have a flipchart covered, no doubt, with words, arrows, diagrams, and cross outs. Time to clean up. Rewrite all the value-word candidates on a fresh page. Now's the time to hold a vote. Not a secret vote. A public one.**
- **Hand each attendee a piece of paper affixed with five red sticky dots. Ask each person to stick a dot next to each of the five values they feel most exemplifies the organization. Ask that they do this in silence.**
- **When everyone has voted, check out the dot clusters, talk through the results, and open the floor up for more discussion. What are the clear winners? Which values are neck and neck? Let people debate, and see if you reach consensus.**
- **Understand, of course, that there isn't any absolute right number of values to finish with. The key is that the winners must be choices that are truly part of your organization's DNA. These aren't "nice to have" principles, but principles that are part of how your company truly approaches business.**
- **If you finish with five winners, fantastic. If you end up with a one or two values higher or lower, that's great, too. What I'd caution you about, though, is coming up with too many; say, ten or more.**
- **Having too many guiding values is as bad as having none. Having to juggle that many ideas in your head as you make a decision makes all the virtues, essentially, meaningless.**
- **Remember, just because a value doesn't make your final list doesn't mean it isn't important or that you should ignore it. It just means that it's not as crucial as one of the selected core values.**

“Happiness is that state of consciousness which proceeds from the achievement of one's values.”

Ayn Rand

## Getting Your Organization to Embrace the Values.

- Many organizations complete the values exercise, print up value cards and booklets, distribute them, and leave it at that. They're bewildered when nothing changes.
- In order to affect change, **management must openly talk about the chosen values and use them as often as possible** – even when it seems like overkill.
- If you're wondering whether you should reposition your product to reach a younger audience, **ask how the decision will align with your chief values.**
- If you're wondering whether you should add a new service to your offerings, **ask if that service aligns with your chief values.**
- When you're conducting performance reviews, **have management ask the employee how their actions stemmed from the organization's values.**
- During a meeting, the person chairing it could **start the meeting by asking everyone in the room: "What are our five key values?"**



“That which dominates  
our imagination and  
our thoughts will  
determine our lives,  
and our character.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

- **When the CEO speaks to the press, she should talk about the company’s direction, along with the values that make moving in that direction possible.**
- When creating a website, brochure, sales letter, or press release, **your values must come through.** Cite examples of how your organization uses them.
- Get employees involved by creating meaningful contests around the values, too. For example, you can ask employees to submit an example of how a teammate lived a value. During a town hall meeting, the CEO can share the stories and **award winners a prize of some value.** Cash. A gift certificate. A day off.
- Get the sense I’m being repetitious? I’m doing it because it’s important to continue making those chosen values part of everyone’s life as often as possible. **They must hear example after example. They must apply them in situation after situation. They must solve problems by using those values.**

“After all, memorization is only 10% of the game.  
Application & recognition make up the other 90%.”

## The Bottomline

### What will Values add to My Business?

1. Greater **FOCUS** and **CLARITY**
2. Improved **RECRUITING & HIRING**
3. **REDUCED STRESS** and increased **CONFIDENCE**
4. Higher **PROFITS**

## Making It Happen

### Next Steps

1. **Decide to identify your company values**
2. **Identify who you want to participate in the process**
3. **Create a date, time, place, and venue to meet (preferably off-site)**
4. **Hire a facilitator**
5. **Set a positive intention for clarity of the outcome.**
6. **Attend, participate, collaborate and enjoy**

## About Mark Lefko and The Lefko Group



**Mark Lefko**  
CEO & Founder, The Lefko Group

**Mark Lefko is the founder and CEO of the Lefko Group — a corporate retreat and facilitation company in Agoura Hills, California.**

Mark's extensive business background is extensive. He spent seven years as a CPA with Arthur Andersen, four years as CFO of a \$6 billion mortgage company, nine years as an investment banker, and two years as a Chairman at TEC Worldwide (now Vistage, the international CEO membership organization).

### **The Lefko Group**

In 2001, Mark's company, The Tegra Capital Associates became The Lefko Group and changed the company focus from Mergers & Acquisitions to creating and facilitating off-site business focused retreats on such topics as strategic planning, new product ideation, team conflict resolution, and team building. In addition, Mark provides CEO coaching and mentoring.

### **Why Corporate Retreats and Coaching?**

Says Mark: "From my work, I saw that the corporations with the highest market value always had senior teams that collaborated, and spent a lot of time on their future direction."

Lower market value corporations acted more as individuals, less as a team, and were too busy putting out today's fires to worry about tomorrow's direction.

"I saw retreats as a way to unlock the power of a team by determining what are the corporate values and principles so they are empowered to move forward."

**Thought leader – Speaker - Teacher**

Mark is the author of “Unlock the Power of Your Team”, and has organized over 100 corporate retreats and summits. Mark has coached over a 100 CEOs and Presidents on how to get the most out of their executive teams, creating high impact strategy as well as gaining clarity of values and implementing them through a variety of approaches.

In addition to facilitating retreats, coaching and mentoring, Mark is a sought-out speaker. He has spoken at the National Association of Women Business Owners’ University about creating business alliances, as well as to numerous CEO groups (including YPO, Vistage and The Leadership Group) about building advisory boards, strategic planning, teambuilding, internal company communications and creating a values driven culture. In addition, Mark spoke at the 101 Business Leadership Forum about creating powerful off-site leader retreats.

Mark also serves as a visiting faculty member at the Business School for Entrepreneurs in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he taught business owners how to increase their company’s market value.

**Mark’s personal values are:**

- **To RESPECT everyone and everything**
- **To live and communicate with INTEGRITY**
- **To be committed to personal and spiritual GROWTH**
- **To be TRUSTWORTHY**
- **To be of SERVICE and make a difference**

When he’s not working, Mark spends time with his family, meditates, spends time out in nature, hikes, cycles, spins, works out at the gym and practices yoga and Qi Gong.

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## For More Information

We would welcome the opportunity to provide you with more information regarding Mark Lefko and The Lefko Group. Please feel free to either call, write or email us, using the following contact information:

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**Thank you!** We look forward to hearing from you.



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