

DEFINING YOUR ORGANISATIONS CORE PURPOSE

AND POLAR BEARS AND PENGUINS

Now take a few minutes to think of your organisation’s reason for being. As Harry Beckwith once said “People don’t lead, purposes do”.

Consider these questions: What is you organisation’s core purpose (mission statement)?—In other words, when your employees are on their way to work every day, what do you want them to be saying is their purpose? For example, we know Disney employees come to work to make people happy. Google’s employees come to work every day to organise the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful and Walmart employees help people save money so they can live better.

The commonality between these three is what makes up a good purpose statement. Every employee can see their role and responsibilities within it. As a leadership team, start answering the following questions to identify what your organisational purpose is:

1. What do we do?

2. What makes us different?

3. For whom do we do it?

4. Why does our organisation’s existence matter?

5. What is our most important reason for being here? Why?

DEFINING YOUR ORGANISATIONS CORE PURPOSE

AND POLAR BEARS AND PENGUINS

6. What would be lost if this organisation ceased to exist?

7. Why are we important to the people we serve?

8. Why would anyone dedicate their precious time, energy, and passion to our company?

(Note: the answer is not money.)

Defining your core purpose is all about clarity, authenticity, and alignment. This means that you do not have to sound “sexy.” This is not something that has to sound impressive on a billboard. It does, however, have to feel meaningful. You’ll know when you finally identify your core purpose because it will be accompanied by a strong sense of conviction. The team will feel a deep “yes!” when it is uncovered.

Other features of an effective core purpose are:

- ✓ Short and sweet (like powerful questions, are 7 words or less)
- ✓ Concentrates on the present
- ✓ It evokes passion
- ✓ Everyone can see themselves playing a part
- ✓ Its beyond just making money
- ✓ Anchors employees daily activities
- ✓ It identifies the responsibilities the organisation has towards its clients.

The work culture, as embraced and lived out by each leader and employee, is organic. It will be both reaffirmed and refined over time. As the needs of the organisation change, there may be corresponding changes in the culture. This means that we don’t need to feel pressured to get it perfect right away.