

CORE VALUES HOW TO GUIDE

MODULE 2

There are many ways to discover your company's core values. However, my go-to method is the Mars Group exercise described by Jim Collins, business author of **Good to Great**. This exercise should be done as a group by the leadership team. Here are the key steps:

1. Each leader on the team picks five employees to be included in a fictitious trip to Mars. The Martians don't speak English, so the mission is to show them through action what's best, right, and noble about your organization. The people you pick should be those who best exemplify what's great about your company.
2. For the five people each leader has selected, the leader must write down one or two characteristics that convinced them to pick this person for the mission. You picked Jim because of Jim's attention to detail. You picked Jill because she's so warm and caring. You picked Ezra because he works his butt off to find answers.
3. The leaders then transfer each characteristic to a Post-it Note. These Post-it Notes are put on a flip chart so all characteristics are visible to the group.
4. A facilitator (typically a coach or the CEO), with the help of the group, organizes the Post-its into groups of similar ideas. For example, "trustworthy" and "honest" might be grouped together. "Productive" and "efficient" might go together.
5. Once the characteristics are arranged in groups of similar ideas, the group takes each set of characteristics through the three tests. Most of the characteristics cited are going to fail one of the tests. Other characteristics are going to float to the top and be identified as potential core values.
6. The team then needs to discuss and debate it down to the most important three to six. One person then takes ownership for wordsmithing the values and crafting descriptions and some example stories that bring the core values to life so they can be communicated to the entire organization.