

## WORKSHOP

### OBJECTIVES

1. Determining the core values of your organisation
2. Clarifying the people who best fit the organisations charism
3. Integrating these values in the way of proceeding of your organisation to become a long-lasting sustainable organisation

### BACKGROUND

The idea behind the Mars Group Exercise is very straight-forward. Imagine you had to create a duplicate of your organisation in Mars (the planet). Your goal is to set up this “mirror” organisation with the group of 5-7 people that will do the best job in replicating your organisation there without you being present. This group will be in charge of helping you come up with the core values that guide your institutions way of proceeding. This exercise was developed by Management Expert Jim Collins.

### EXERCISE

- Choose the **Mars Group - from 5-7 people**: This group can have a very different set of skills, characteristics, positions in your organisation, etc. The important thing is that they embody the spirit and the attitude you want in your organisation.
- Get them to **brainstorm on the core values** that represent your organisation. Let them do this exercise alone (without you being present) but give them some indications about what core values are, for example:
  - They remain through time
  - Support the vision and mission statements
  - Help out in the decision making processes of the institution
  - Are the essence of the identity of the organisation
  - Represent principles, beliefs, a philosophy
  - Become inherent and sacrosanct
  - Should never be compromised
- Tell them to **agree on a list of 3-5 values**, there can be 7 but they should be unique and true to your organisation.
- **Put these values to test** by asking them to individually answer these questions with a YES / NO answer:
  - If you were to start a new organization, would you build it around this core value regardless of the industry?
  - Would you want your organization to continue to stand for this core value 100 years into the future, no matter what changes occur in the outside world?
  - Would you want your organization to hold this core value, even if at some point in time it became a competitive disadvantage—even if in some instances the environment penalized the organization for living this core value?
  - Do you believe that those who do not share this core value—those who breach it consistently—simply do not belong in your organization?
  - Would you personally continue to hold this core value even if you were not rewarded for holding it?
  - Would you change jobs before giving up this core value?

- If you awoke tomorrow with more than enough money to retire comfortably for the rest of your life, would you continue to apply this core value to your productive activities?
- Those values that received highest results will be the core values of your organisation.

## MAIN IDEAS

There are several **advantages** to doing this exercise, first of all it can be a way to unite members of your organisation. They can also provide guiding principles in times of doubt and complexity (see VUCA environments). They can help people feel part of a bigger thing. But as we have seen in "[mission, vision, and values](#)", Patrick Lencioni also suggests that there are **downsides** to them if not managed appropriately "Empty values statements create cynical and dispirited employees, alienate customers, and undermine managerial credibility."

Once you have this list of values you can do an extra effort to **integrate them in the structure of your organisation** rather than only putting them up on your website. For example, you can do this by not only measuring the performance of the members through KPI's but also analysing how they embody these values. This will help you see who is growing in line with them and who still has room for improvement (can you help them grow?). Of course evaluating this is not as easy as measuring hard data (e.g financial statements) but in many decisions and actions you can see the values of individuals represented and therefore they can be contrasted with your organisational values, for example, how is this person treating those below them? How do they related and answer the beneficiaries of your services, even when they are not the best version of themselves? How do they act in moments of stress?

A side benefit to this exercise is that by trusting this group to help out in drafting the core values of your organisation, you are at the same time **capacitating them to become promoters and true believers of these values**. In addition, once you have to continue your journey and leave your position/institution, the values and the charism of your organisation will have more probability of continuing through the organisation's structure once you are gone.

## GENERAL RESOURCES

Title	Author	Publisher	Year	Link
Your Mars Group is your company's secret weapon for long-term greatness.	Matthew Reeves	Medium	2016	<a href="#">Link</a>
Company Core Values: Why to Have Them and How to Define Them	Wendy Pat Fong	7Geese	2013	<a href="#">Link</a>
Aligning Actions and Values	Jim Collins	JimCollins.com	2000	<a href="#">Link</a>
Vision Framework	Jim Collins	JimCollins.com	2001	<a href="#">Link</a>