

CORE VALUES

What does your organization value?

How your team can work together to define what you stand for—and put it in practice.

Core values are a crucial piece of any organization's brand. They guide your way forward, particularly during challenging times. While your mission and vision define your objectives and aspirations, values reflect your organization's beliefs and principles — the ideas that guide your words, thoughts and actions.

A typical Bigmouth branding project doesn't include identifying your core values. Why not? Your core values reflect the people who work for you and your company's culture, so they're something only you can define.

We want to give you the tools to explore and define your core values as a team. The as a team portion of that sentence is crucial; while your organization may attract like-minded people, their values differ. Your core values need to reflect everyone, so everyone believes in and uses them.

How to find your core values

What's important to you in your personal and professional relationships?
How do you want to be treated, and how do you want to make others feel?
What traits inspire you in others?

The answers to these questions are the start of your core values. Expand this exercise to your entire organization by sharing the checklist below. Ask each person to choose the five words that resonate most (or fill in the blank).

A safe space for sharing

Digging deep and uncovering what really matters requires vulnerability. Create space for your people to feel safe sharing what's really important to them, not the answers they think leadership wants to hear. Consider an anonymous survey where individuals submit their values ahead of a group discussion.

HOW TO

Define your core values

Next, it's time to make some tough decisions. Work together to whittle your list down to five answers to make your values easier to remember. Guide your decisionmaking by asking questions like:

Which values most resonate with the majority of people who work here?

Which values are most in line with our mission and vision?

Which values reflect our target audience(s)?

Which values can we clearly bring to life?

Once your list is narrowed down, write a sentence about each one describing how it makes you feel and what it means in practice.

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accountability | <input type="checkbox"/> Contribution | <input type="checkbox"/> Grace | <input type="checkbox"/> Kindness | <input type="checkbox"/> Respect |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability | <input type="checkbox"/> Courage | <input type="checkbox"/> Gratitude | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsibility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Altruism | <input type="checkbox"/> Curiosity | <input type="checkbox"/> Home | <input type="checkbox"/> Legacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Authenticity | <input type="checkbox"/> Dignity | <input type="checkbox"/> Honesty | <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-expression |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balance | <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity | <input type="checkbox"/> Hope | <input type="checkbox"/> Nature | <input type="checkbox"/> Spirituality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Belonging | <input type="checkbox"/> Equality | <input type="checkbox"/> Humor | <input type="checkbox"/> Optimism | <input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caring | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellence | <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> Parenting | <input type="checkbox"/> Success |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration | <input type="checkbox"/> Faith | <input type="checkbox"/> Independence | <input type="checkbox"/> Patience | <input type="checkbox"/> Teamwork |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commitment | <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Initiative | <input type="checkbox"/> Patriotism | <input type="checkbox"/> Tradition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community | <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> Integrity | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compassion | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendship | <input type="checkbox"/> Joy | <input type="checkbox"/> Pride | <input type="checkbox"/> Uniqueness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connection | <input type="checkbox"/> Generosity | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition | <input type="checkbox"/> Wisdom |

The Seven Bigmouth Values

Admittedly Bigmouth broke our own rule; we have seven core values. *Here's how we define them.*

COMMUNICATION

Serve as an example of thoughtful communication by listening first, talking second, and then listening again. Be proactively transparent and honest.

RESPECT

Prioritize marginalized voices. Listen hardest when people tell you what they need. Show people their worth by giving them more than their value.

BALANCE

Productivity isn't a homogenous concept of time spent working; give people the space to be adventurous and happy in their lives. Question the "way we do things" and find a more efficient way.

AUTHORSHIP

Giving credit when and where it's due builds trusting teams. Encourage others to create—ideas can come from the unlikeliest of places. And never steal.

COLLABORATION

Only work with clients who are willing to participate in shared successes. Build teams based on diversity of thought and a desire to support each other.

EFFORT

If you don't believe in the idea strongly enough to create your best work, find another idea. Strive for creative excellence. Take pride. Recharge. Rinse and repeat.

STEWARDSHIP

Follow sustainable practices. Leave things better than you find them. Be a fighter to create positive change—being a force for good means doing more than the baseline.

HOW TO

Live your core values

Collaborating on your core values is a great team building activity; everyone comes away feeling seen and inspired. Keep that energy rolling by taking your core values from words to a living, breathing part of your culture.

In some ways, activating your core values is easy; since they're based on individual values, your team members are often already living them. The tough part is long-term consistency once the excitement wears off.

Create and maintain space for people to own your values

Your organization's culture is shaped by employees acting out their values, which can look different for every person. As the most visible people in an organization, leaders serve as a model for everyone else to follow. If you're not living your core values, why should anyone else? Here are a few places to start:

Model vulnerability to encourage vulnerability

Foster a safe environment for experimentation and personal expression

Center marginalized voices

Live your personal values in tandem with your organization's values

Celebrate milestones and victories

REFLECT ON YOUR ACTIONS

Follow these prompts as you take a moment to think about finding and activating your organization's core values:

How did it go?

What did you find surprising?

How did you show up for your team, and how will you continue to do so?

What are your goals for continuing to live your core values?

About Bigmouth

We founded Bigmouth as an agency focused on people — our team, our clients and our communities. Our small size allows us to protect our culture of respect and inclusion while doing our very best work together. We only work with organizations that share our mission and values. And we use our (big) mouth to make a difference to communities that could use our support.

Bigmouth works with a vast network of other small and midsize agencies. These relationships allow us to engage diverse, inclusive teams with the specialized skills to execute and manage authentic work. Our efficiency also allows us to put money back into communities most in need.

INSTAGRAM

@bigmouthcreative

LINKEDIN

company/bigmouth-creative