

# How to create **KICK ARSE** Core Values!

What you need...

- A couple of large whiteboards or large flipper pads (A1).
- A space without interruption
- Your whole team present
- 2 hours to complete

## How to Frame this Session:

It's important that your talent understand that the creation of Core Values is a team sport - this is not about the owners of the business sitting in an office designing what they want their culture to look like - It's about the team committing to an agreed set of Values that they are not only willing to be held accountable to but will also hold others responsible to the upkeep of the Values for the greater good of the whole team!

This is not about Performance Management, efficient working processes, profit or loss... it is a commitment to each other on how you want your work life to play out.

We all spend an enormous amount of time at work, often more than we spend with our loved ones so this is an opportunity to create the atmosphere (culture) that we want. How we feel about our work plays a major role in how we feel as a person, a husband, a wife, a parent, a friend, our mindset and how we apply ourselves to all other parts of our life - so this is an extremely important session to get right.

The good news is it's extremely easy!

Core Values are the foundation of Culture and Culture is the backbone of any business, get this right and your ability to scale will be **SIMPLE**, the execution of strategy will be **EASY** and most of all you will have **FUN!**

Core Values will aid you in Recruitment as the right fit is paramount, help you with performance reviews both in praise and critique but the biggest benefit is that the team will hold each other accountable to how they are showing up for each other.



Alignment of your **PURPOSE, MISSION** and **VALUES** will be a fast track to success.

## **PART 1: Getting Started**

If possible get your team to sit in a semi-circle facing the whiteboard.

Start at the left hand side and one-by-one get each person to answer the following question...

**“What is an attribute or skill that you admire most in one of the other people sitting around this table”**

Simply scribe down the answers on the whiteboard and continue going through the group until nobody has any ideas left - this could be anywhere between 5-10 times each.

The answers can come in a variety of ways from single words to whole phrases, just write everything down as there are no wrong answers or judgement placed on any ideas expressed (very important to mention this in the framing of the session!).

The answers can be completely anonymous (ie: they do not need to name the person they are describing).

It's important to exhaust all of the ideas as usually fairly generic things come out of the first few rounds (ie: Trustworthy, Honest, Fun, Loyal, Helpful etc) but as you start to run out of the generic ideas you start to then get some real gems that are more orientated towards the current team, atmosphere, industry etc. So keep pushing for more answers.

## **PART 2: The Next Step**

Once you have all of the ideas/answers out on the whiteboard the next stage is to group similar ideas together... Ideally you're looking to group them into 5-8 categories as these will form your actual Core Values. If you have too many Values they will not be memorable and therefore not used.

This is where a 2nd whiteboard or flipchat can be handy.

Pick the first idea/answer you have on the 1st whiteboard, let's say for the sake of an example it's TRUSTWORTHY, write that on the 2nd whiteboard and then find all the other words and phrases that are of a similar type... (ie: honesty, integrity, reliability, “always shows up”, etc) as you transfer these names across to the 2nd board cross them off the 1st one. Once you've grouped together all of the words you feel suit this category then move on to the next (uncrossed) word on your first whiteboard.

Remember - try really hard to restrict this to 5-8 lists of words only.

## **PART 3: Forming the Values**

You should now be looking at 5-8 lists of words filled with attributes that your team have decided are the most admirable in each other. Each one of these lists will become one of your Core Values. Now as a team you must decide a word, sentence or phrase that best describes each list... It's really important that when you do this you use YOUR language and put it into words that resonate with your team... Don't get sucked into writing it in a wanky way because you think that's what Core Values are supposed to be!

This is YOUR TEAMS Core Values, nobody else's... They're not meant to be written for marketing purposes but merely to form an in-house Code of Conduct. If the words don't resonate with your team then the whole exercise will be a waste of time.

There's no way a Manufacturing Plant should have the same Core Values as an Accounting Practise and vice versa, however they may have very similar meanings or sentiments.

## **PART 4: Pro Tips**

Make the statements positive. The last thing you want is a negative statement tarnishing the feeling of your Values. When I completed this exercise with our team one of the statements we came up with was “Leave your Shit at the Door” this was all about not bringing negative energy from outside of work in with you.

On review and after much discussion this Core Value was changed to “Bring your A-Game, Excellence is an Attitude, not a Skill” - this conversation amongst the whole team was so valuable at the time as we discussed how hard it is to not let outside influences effect how you are at work and that we should be here to support each other when needed.

Committing to “Bringing your A-Game” was about not dragging others down with you regardless of the circumstances but still understanding that we can be there for each other and that support was readily available and important to everyone.

Before committing to your Values, leave them on the whiteboard in a public area (staff room if you have one) for a week or two and then grab the whole team together quickly for a review... check that they still resonate with everyone and make changes if necessary.

Once everyone is on board lock them in and start Living Them!

## **PART 5: Living the Values**

Now that you’ve done all of the hard work creating the Core Values don’t just shove them in a draw in your office!

Here’s some ideas to help keep them front of mind and ensure they are being lived!

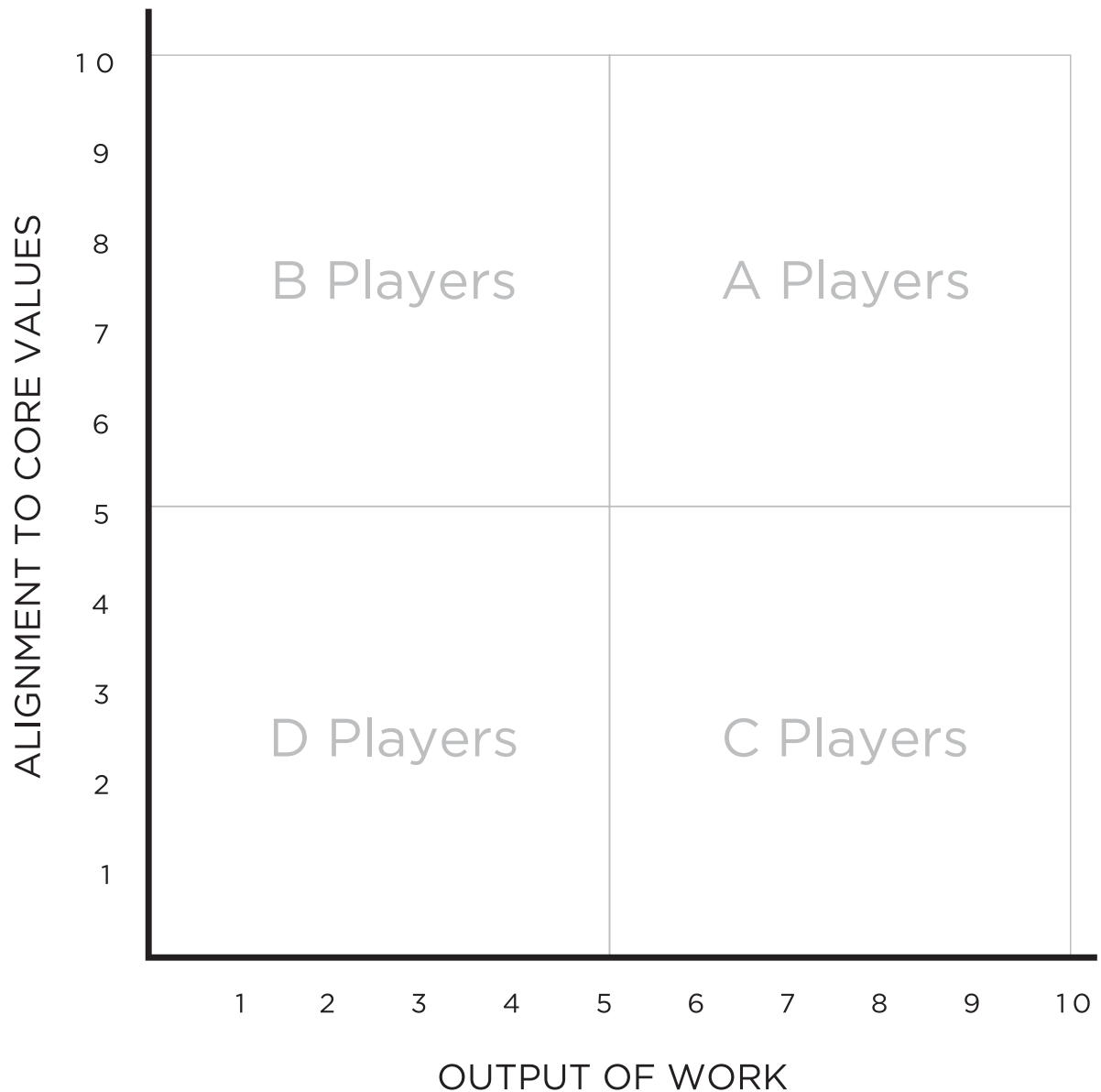
- Display them in multiple areas (and ways) throughout the business.
- Praise and critique using Core Values.
- Have an Employee of the Month award that goes to the person living the Values the most, this could also be nominated or voted on by the team.
- Change your Recruitment questions to ensure you are hiring talent that will align to the Values.
- Change the structure of your performance reviews to include alignment to Values.
- Have a Core Value focus for the week (I’ve added this in to my TOPs post on Facebook and in our Weekly Huddle meeting agenda).

**BONUS CONTENT:** Employee Ranking Sheet

This simple chart below is the quickest way to rank your Employees to understand if they are Talent or Staff.

Simply rank each person out of 10 on how well they align to the Core Values and (out of 10) what their through put is in relation to your industry (ie: their output).

Then plot a dot on the below chart with their initials next to it.



**Results:** You'll find it's easy for people to move from the left hand side to the right hand side if they have a high alignment to your Values. However it's extremely hard to move above the line if you are below it.

Your biggest issues will sit in the C-Players category, these people know their stuff and are valuable to the business based on their skill level and output however they can be toxic to the culture - they can move but it takes a lot of effort!

Look after your A-Players, focus on getting your B-Players across the line and do yourself (and everyone else) a favour by removing any D-Players!

