Shared Purpose Worksheet

A shared purpose statement is a tool that will help you translate the abstract concepts expressed in your core values into practical application that impact daily operations. The shared purpose is also a succinct way of providing basic long-term direction by expressing the more timeless elements of an organization’s reason for being.

Specifics of the “what” and “how” of an organization’s efforts to fulfill its purpose can—and often do—change at a rapid pace. But the shared purpose—the “why” of an organization’s basic existence—is intended to endure over an indefinite period that could span decades or more.

Compared to traditional mission and vision statements, a shared purpose is a higher-level expression of how an organization connects with customers, of the impact a brand has on its customers’ lives. As Mark Bonchek puts it in the Harvard Business Review, a shared purpose expresses not what an organization does to or for its customers, but what it does WITH its customers.

The shared purpose statement of Starbucks serves as a powerful, positive example:

Examples:

**Starbucks:** Our mission: to inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time.

**Vs.**

**Dunkin Donuts:** Make and serve the freshest, most delicious coffee and donuts quickly and courteously in modern, well-merchandised stores.

The difference comes down to a simple preposition. Most leaders think of purpose as a purpose for. But what is needed is a purpose with. Customers are no longer just consumers; they’re co-creators. They aren’t just passive members of an audience; they are active members of a community. They don’t want to be at the other end of your for. They want to be right there with you. Purpose needs to be shared.

**With your newly adopted core values in mind, draft a shared purpose statement that incorporates the following elements.**

1. What can we and our customers work on together?

2. Should be a natural expression of who we are and what we stand for.

3. Connects how we make money with how we contribute to the world.