



COMPONENTS OF A VALUES-CENTERED COMPANY

Meaningful Purpose: The plan for the company clearly communicates a worthy purpose. It explains the motivations, beyond making money and shows how the company will do good while doing well. It describes how the company will make a difference, improve the quality of life of others, right a wrong or otherwise contribute to a better and more sustainable world.

Personal Convictions and Values in Practice: The plan authentically reflects the core virtues that guide the behavior of the entrepreneurs and shape the culture of the enterprise. These values should be evident in the mission, vision and/or mantra of the company and should reflect the important beliefs of the entrepreneurs. These values thus become the guidelines that shape how the company will deal with its employees, customers and stakeholders.

Giving Is a Priority: The plan includes forms of "giving back" consistent with the values of the entrepreneurs and their venture. It shows how giving back is an important function of the business and how giving back can involve employees, customers and partners. It demonstrates how the company can identify needs that match its meaningful purpose and explains how giving can be used as an element of competitive advantage.



THREE COMMON APPROACHES

Bolted-On: One approach to demonstrating a values-centered company is to tack on to the end of the plan some percentage that the company will give to a cause. This may be a percentage of gross profits or some percentage of after-tax profits to a non-profit organization or environmental cause. While this is positive, it does not address most of the components of a values-centered company. It appears more as an afterthought rather than an integrated approach to creating a values-centered business.

Product-Driven: This approach reflects a revolutionary technology or innovation that has the potential in and of itself to make a major contribution to improving the lives and well-being of others. The plan for the company emphasizes the life-changing aspects of the technology and makes that the values dimension of the venture. It puts more attention on the nature of the technology rather than the managerial aspects of a values-centered enterprise.

Fully Integrated: This approach addresses all aspects of the four components of a values-centered company. It articulates a meaningful purpose, presents the entrepreneurs' personal convictions, demonstrates values in practice, and explains how giving is a priority.