



Determining and Developing Core Values

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Strong dynamic core values, mutually defined and held, lead to enduring, effective partnerships.

VALUES FORMATION

The continued operation of network or partnership relies on the *values* that are held by the group. In essence, these values are the boundaries that determine the size of the playing field on which the team members are willing to participate. Values are not static and can be adjusted to meet specific challenges. Yet core values along with the shared vision should be firm and strong. Some people even choose to list some values as “nonnegotiable.” Be aware that the more restrictive these values become, the more exclusive your effort will be.



Each partnership needs to determine its own set of values. The facilitation team needs to develop these values as the network or partnership begins to form and build structure. This "values formation" is one of the essential building blocks as it helps to define an identity among the participants. These value statements can be put under four general headings:

- General
- Structure
- Relationships
- Responsibilities

The example below is offered as a guide. Each partnership needs to take the time to work through the development of its own value statements. As the effort gains traction and more groups enter the partnership, these values may develop and shift over time.

NETWORK (OR PARTNERSHIP) VALUES

General

1. We will give all glory to God as a result of work done by any individual, ministry, or Network of ministries working together.
2. We have a Kingdom of God mindset. We do not seek to build our own ministries at the expense of others.
3. Our highest priority is taking the Good News of Jesus' love and redemption to those who have never heard. (You may want to be specific about the sector around which this effort is forming, e.g., the unreached, a people group, a region, or a functional aspect such as medicine, sports, or media.)
4. We subscribe to the Lausanne Covenant as our biblical framework for both our ministry and our relationships. (This affirmation is open as various groups may choose different expressions. The key here is to reflect the heart of all—present and future—who will be in the network or partnership.)
5. Our intent is to avoid competitiveness, avoid duplication, and steward the resources God has given to His Body.

Structure

1. We are committed to working together in partnership: accepting the responsibility of those relationships and looking for the benefits that flow from working together.
2. We seek the minimum structure needed to facilitate the Network—seeking to operate by consensus or simple memorandum of understanding wherever possible.
3. We encourage Task Forces and Working Groups among Network members to take up specific needs and opportunities that arise to implement our mutual vision.
4. We are committed to a policy of inclusiveness. We welcome any ministry that will wholeheartedly subscribe to these values and share in the vision of this effort.
5. We seek to develop a flat structure where all at the table are on an equal footing, a level playing field, or (as some would picture) seated at a round table.

Relationships

1. We seek to develop a culture of service with open hands, not clutching what is “ours.”
2. We are committed to each other’s best interests, both the individuals and the ministries in the Network. Whether we weep or rejoice, we weep or rejoice together.
3. We give away anonymously whatever we bring to the table, not worrying about ministry labels and brand identity. (In some situations this anonymity is not possible as intellectual property, etc. must be addressed.)
4. We will respect the nature, ministry, resources, and constituencies of each other’s ministry.
5. We are committed to a policy of open, mutually-trusting relationships built on our common faith in Christ, our experience of faithful performance by fellow members of the Network, and our commitment to speaking the truth in love.
6. Where there are differences in policy or methodology that threaten our effectiveness or unity, we are committed to involving other members of the Network to resolve these differences.

Responsibilities

1. As individual members, we are committed to the Network’s effectiveness and will actively take up any role in the Network for which we have the capacity.
2. We are committed to sharing information on needs, opportunities, and resources openly with other members of the Network. We will actively work to develop and sustain systems that will facilitate open communication amongst us.
3. We will faithfully pray for the needs of those in the Network.
4. In projects that are undertaken as a joint effort by members of the Network, we are committed to sharing the success. Each member can tell the story, as long as the member states that the project was undertaken in cooperation with other ministries in the Network.
5. To paraphrase the famous statement, it is not what the Network can do for my ministry, but what my ministry can do for like-minded brothers and sisters. Each participant comes to the table to give and to receive.

A CLOSING NOTE

A group’s values become the culture of the group. Every partnership and network can develop a unique culture where the participants know each other well enough that unwritten rules of behavior become the norm. It is best to be proactive and intentional in developing the group’s values and culture rather than just letting it happen over time. Value creation will give the group a sense of direction and cohesion, helping to define how they perceive themselves and, to some extent, how outsiders perceive the network.