

Vision Defined

Taken from "Building Your Company's Vision" by Collins and Porras, *Harvard Business Review* Sept-Oct 1996.

For a company to be great it must be able to distinguish between what to change and what not to change. Essential to this process is determining an organization's Vision.

Vision	Core Ideology	<i>Core Values</i>
		<i>Core Purpose</i>
	Envisioned Future	

Vision is comprised of two parts: Core Ideology and Envisioned Future. Core Ideology is in turn broken down into two parts: Core Values and a Core Purpose.

Core Values are the guiding principles of an organization. These are held so deeply that an organization would uphold them even if they were penalized for them. It is best to have only 3-5 and the key is not what core values you have, as much as the fact that you have them at all. Consider utilizing a *Mars Group* to develop your Core Values. A *Mars Group* is the group of people you would select to recreate the best qualities of your organization on Mars – these are people who have a gut-level understanding of what the company is all about.

The **Core Purpose** never changes, but it inspires change. The primary function of the Core Purpose is to guide and inspire. In order to find it you will ask of an organization's project, "Why is this important?" Then ask the same thing of the answer and continue this process until you arrive at the deepest lever purpose. Another aid in determining an organization's Core Purpose is to play the "Corporate Serial Killer Game". For this game you imagine that the organization is completely destroyed overnight and then you ask yourself what was lost. Yet another means of determining the Core Purpose is to ask what it would take to keep you working at the organization even after your retirement.

Core Values and Core Purpose combined form the **Core Ideology**. The Core Ideology is discovered, not created. It is not meant to differentiate an organization from other organizations nor does it need to be articulated in a formal statement.

As we transition now from the Core Ideology to the Envisioned Future, it is essential to understand that although the core does not change, everything else is open to change.

The **Envisioned Future** consists of Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals (BHAGs). These should be things you believe you can achieve, but that aren't a sure bet. It is helpful to have vivid description to make the goals tangible. They should be something that can be reached in 10-30 years. Essentially, they should spark the creative process and stir forward momentum. Once the BHAG is achieved, it should be replaced. Ultimately a visionary company is 1% vision and 99% alignment. Be aware that building the organization is the primary way of building the future.

