

## Organizational Identity

By Sarah Loehndorf

*CREATING AN ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY can be difficult. But creating one for an organization that works with more than 100 colleges and churches, all with different missions, values and core principles, can be especially challenging. That's what Dan Dupee, president of the Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO) Pittsburgh, Pa., determined to do. CCO was recently honored for the third year in a row as a finalist in *The Best Christian Places to Work*.*

*The need to clarify its mission became apparent when it was discovered that employees were unable to clearly articulate their mission. At this point, Dupee knew they had to develop a concrete mission statement and define their core values. The results have been phenomenal, says Dan Dupee, who was interviewed for this article.*

### What things did you keep in mind as you worked on restating your purpose and values?

We realized we needed to take what was thought to be implicit about our purpose and make it explicit, taking the mystery out of it. We also needed to articulate our mission in such a way that it meant something to our staff and broader constituency. We knew some things would have to change, but at the same time it was critical for us to determine what things must not change, because losing them could mean losing our identity altogether.

### How did you go about changing your mission statement?

We started the process by listening. We brought our entire staff together in small groups, getting their input through a series of questions and interaction. We then assembled what we called a "Mars Team" (taken from James Collins' book, *Built to Last*) to do the work of articulating the core purpose and core values. It was a select group of seven people who had a significant understanding of the ministry and where it needed to go.

### As you worked on this, what obstacles did you face?

Even though it's important to get everyone's ideas on the

table, the hard work was getting the task focused on the most critical elements from the discussion. For one thing, we knew it was important to capture what our staff cared deeply about, because that was why they were committed to our ministry.

### Were the results of your work worth the effort?

Yes, definitely. Everyone in our organization now has a clear understanding of our ministry's purpose of working to transform college students in Christ so they can transform

## The Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO)

### CCO's Core Purpose

Transforming college students to transform the world.

### CCO's Core Values

All things belong to God. Jesus changes people's lives. We love college students. Faithfulness is pursued together. We celebrate life.

(For more information about CCO, go to its website at [ccojubilee.org](http://ccojubilee.org).)

the world for Christ. The purpose is big enough to bring us to our knees and to inspire us to do our very best. It has put us all on the same page.

Our next step was to develop a series of goals related to our biblical roots, diversity issues, evangelism training, ministry growth and recruitment.

In the past year we've seen tremendous growth. Diversity has more than doubled and our ministry has expanded by more than 25 percent. It has been a year of growth in many ways, but most importantly, it has enabled us to make a greater impact for the Kingdom.

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