

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/mission-matters-later/>

Qasar Younis, CEO of Applied Intuition, explains the difference between a mission and values, how his company developed their values (or operating principles), and how they help the company attract the right employees. He encourages founders to make sure their product is accepted by the market first before establishing values or a mission.



## Transcript

Questioner We've been working on mission, 00:00:04,920 values and all those things, and all of a sudden we came across, okay, what's next? And I wanted to know if you've come across that point, how do you get people behind? I've read a great book by Simon Sinek.. He talks about a just cause.. Do you have one for your company? How do you go about that? - Yeah, typically, companies, again, gross generalizations, 00:00:27,930 are mission-oriented or values-oriented, and our company historically has been a very values oriented company.. Values is another way of saying operating principles.. This is how we run the company on a day-to-day basis.. When the company was about 10 people, we had \$10 million of business, which was kind of unbelievable to us.. It's still unbelievable to me now.. And we decided, "Hey, let's codify what's working." So as the company, again, building an organization against human behaviors, we'll have a framework to work against.. We codified those 10 value, if you would know anybody who works at Applied, like those are the operating principles that we run the company by.. And those have created a type of person that is attracted..

There's a self-selection.. It's even in our recruiting process, which is like, this is the type of person that we want, who wants these types of values in their day-to-day work.. For example, this is not a value, but it's an output of a value, is we are a five day in-office company, which by the way used to be normal pre-COVID, but now it's like an exotic reality.. We are a truly international company.. We have eight offices globally.. We work truly globally.. And so you find people who self-select in and out of that.. Obviously we're a Bay Area AI company, so there's people who are attracted to that technical problem.. And so the values help with that.. I think when companies get really larger and you look at like Elon Musk and his companies, there's this broader mission thing..

What I would say to you as a small company, none of that (beep) matters.. You know what matters? Making sure your product is accepted by the market.. All this other stuff, this is like, it's like decorations on a car.. Your goal is to get the engine to turn on and to start moving the body.. And so I would say spend zero minutes on your values and missions and try to get a operating business going.. And when it does, then reflect on why it is and then codify those.. 'Cause the values are different for each type of business.. The consumer business values are different than enterprise business...