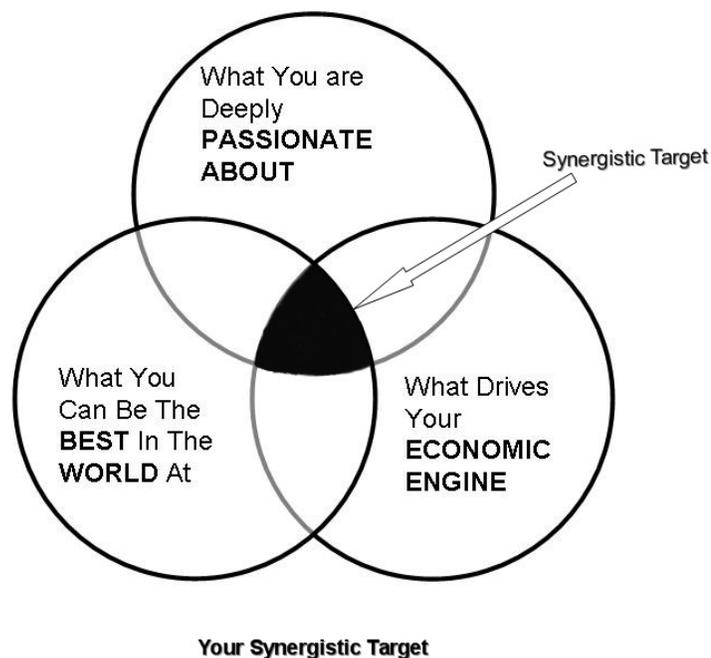


Building a Firm Foundation

Every business has a unique culture which is derived from the experience, ethics and values of its various stakeholders. This culture is often ill defined, ambiguous and inconsistent, because it is informal and unmanaged. In this case, the business lacks a firm foundation and a guiding compass that can be invaluable when the storms of life strike threatening its continued existence.

What every business needs is a firm foundation based on a set of **VALUES** that define its **PASSION**, what its **BEST IN THE WORLD** at and what drives its **ECONOMIC ENGINE**.



Once defined, these three criteria can be viewed as three intersecting circles, where the area common to all three becomes the **SYNERGISTIC TARGET** that guides the firm's decisions guaranteeing a synergistic result when activities that satisfy all three are the only ones undertaken. All other activities should be avoided or outsourced to someone who specializes in those particular functions. Some operational areas where having well defined foundational values plays a particularly important role are:

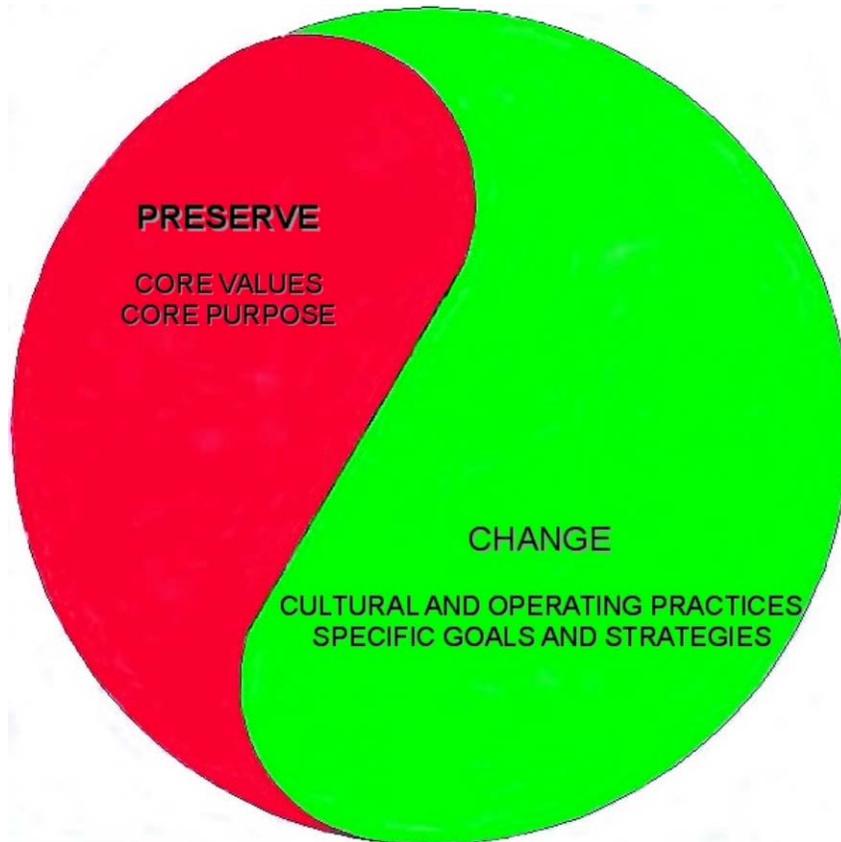
Start Up – Here, these values can provide direction for marketing and product development.

Staffing – By hiring only individuals who share your values, you achieve a consistency of purpose and harmonious interpersonal relationships that would otherwise be lacking. This provides direction for hiring the “**RIGHT PEOPLE**” and for assigning them to the “**RIGHT JOBS**”.

Communications – You are your public image, your **BRAND**, and your public relations activity must project an image that is consistent with your Foundational Values. Any miss match will be highly detrimental when discovered by prospective customers. Negative word of mouth travels far and fast!

Success – When resources are committed only to those activities that address all three Foundational Values, accomplishment is synergistic and the results far exceed what would otherwise be expected.

Change – As the business environment changes, every business must adjust by making changes in itself otherwise it will eventually become irrelevant to its market. However, these changes must always fall outside of its Foundational Values to avoid creating great confusion in the market place. Changing Foundational Values in effect creates a whole **NEW** company.



The first question then is when should a company establish its Foundational Values? Here, no one answer fits every situation. For the first time entrepreneur, necessary market place and operating experience may be lacking. In general, it is best to begin working on the company's Foundational Values, early, before the business begins adding employees. The initial thoughts on Foundational Values can be considered preliminary, but when you begin building the components of each value statement, you will have some formalized ideas to guide the business as these values are being developed and finalized. Actively using this information to guide growth and development of the company will focus your efforts and increase the probability of a successful enterprise.