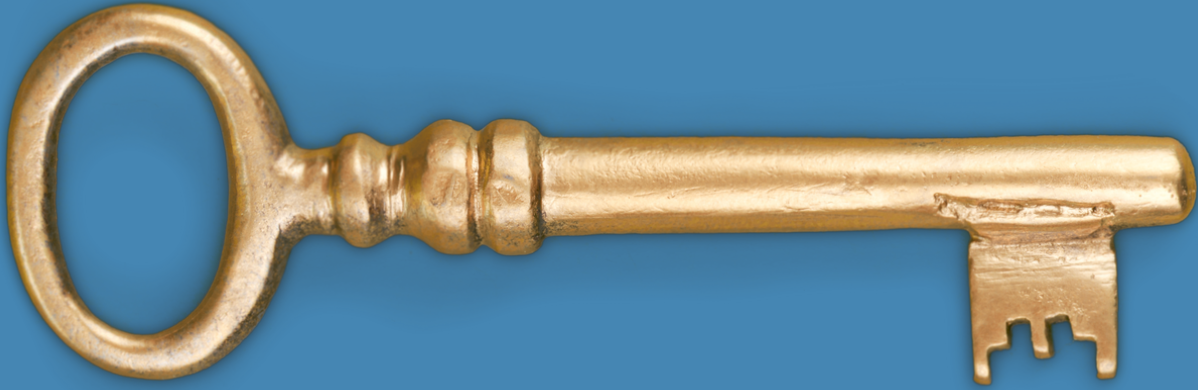


# 5 FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS



## TO UNLOCK YOUR ORGANIZATION'S FUTURE VALUE



What are you doing to invest in your organization's **future value**? Not just your worth in dollars, but the deeper value of what you will provide to your customers and community in the future--and in that future's marketplace. Unlock your company's future value by considering these **five fundamental questions**.

**By asking, answering, and focusing on these questions, you can position your organization to live into a fulfilling and vibrant future.**

## QUESTION

1

### WHY DOES OUR ORGANIZATION EXIST?

**Every organization was created for a reason. What mission was your organization formed to pursue?**

**Asking why we exist keeps us connected to our true purpose.**

Every organization develops routines--processes by which it achieves its stated objectives. Over time, these routines can become disconnected from the mission. When that happens, organizations tend to focus on keeping the system going rather than on moving the mission forward. Continually reflecting on *why* we exist better positions us to understand *how* we should function in pursuit of our mission.

**Asking why we exist keeps us connected to those we serve.**

Our customers live in a world that is constantly changing and expanding, and their needs keep evolving to meet that changing reality. Continually evaluating your organization's ability to meet those needs honors your customers or constituents and builds relationships that are stronger and deeper.

# QUESTION

2

## WHAT ARE OUR ORGANIZATION'S CORE VALUES?

### Core values are:

- foundational cornerstones that guide all your organization's actions
- the parts of your organization's DNA that you can't help but live out
- the ways you show up and differentiate yourself in the marketplace

Identifying and living your core values is essential. It helps others understand your unique place and perspective within the marketplace, business sector, and industry.

### Your organization's future economic value is created *through* these core values.

Once you are clear on what your core values are, you can build your organization on them, leverage them, communicate them to customers, hire employees based on them, train others on them. Only when you fully live into your core value can your organization's future value be fully realized.

## Core values —→ Economic value

# QUESTION

3

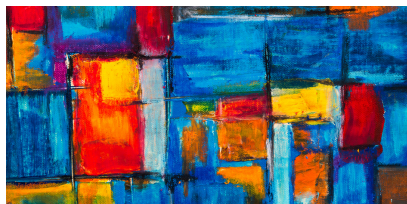
## WHAT IS OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE?

### Your vision for the future

It's hard to take a step back from the day-to-day of working *in* your organization in order to begin working *on* your organization. If we don't take a step back, we may find that our vision for the future has narrowed over time.

### A vision for the future is like a painting--multifaceted, complex, even elusive. To help your organization envision its future more clearly, try asking questions like these:

- Whose perspective do we need to hear in order to paint an even more inspiring future?
- What do our customers want us to focus on?
- What do we need to let go of in order to welcome something new?
- What new dimensions of our programs and services do we need to develop sooner rather than later?
- What can we multiply through our intention rather than divide through our neglect?



# QUESTION

## 4

### WHAT WILL PROPEL US FORWARD? WHAT WILL IMPEDE US?

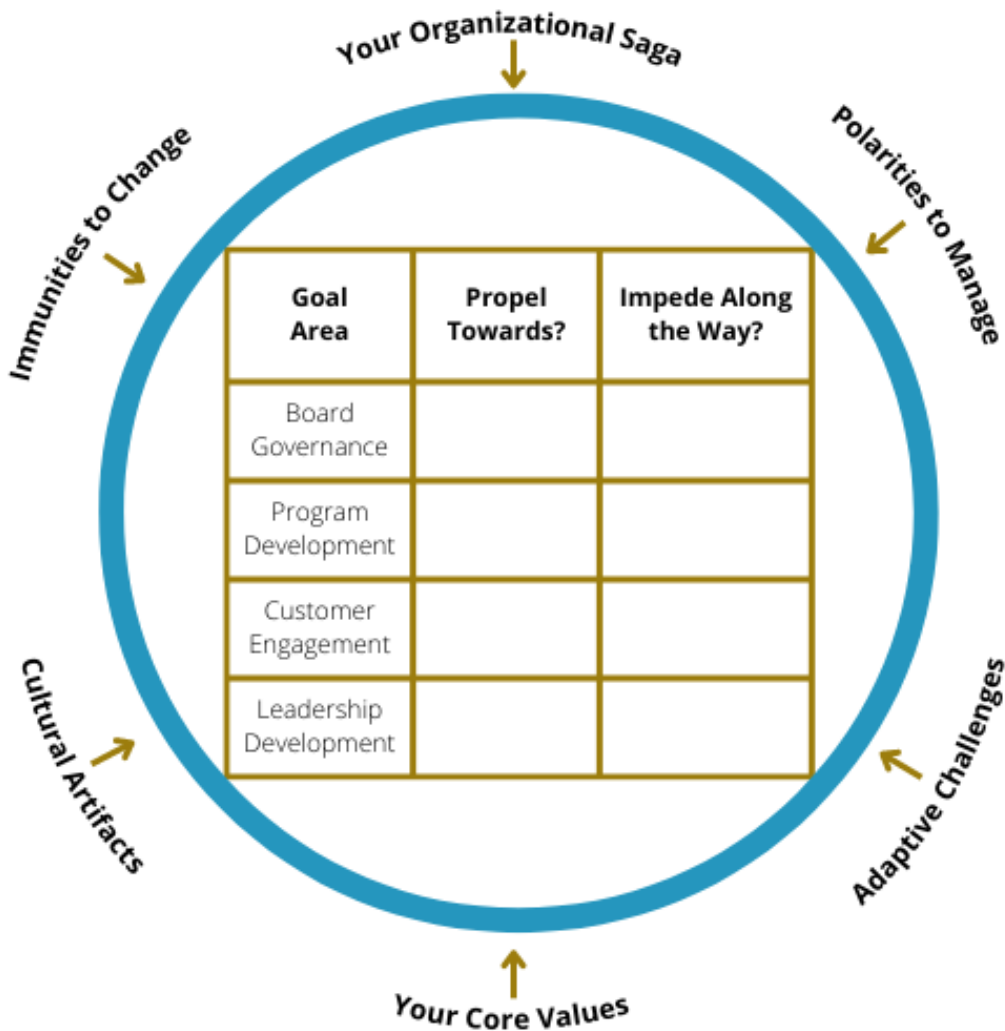
**As you examine the path toward your vision, begin to go deeper and break it down into more detail:**

- What are the major goal areas that if addressed will help us achieve this vision?
- What will propel us to meet the mandate of each of these goals?
- As we progress toward these goals, what will impede us along the way?
- Given our unique organizational history, what cultural artifacts need to be addressed or perhaps even discarded?
- How might redesigning longstanding systems help us achieve our new vision?

Your organizational story, culture, and unique situation acts as a kind of third dimension, visualized below as the atmosphere surrounding everything else you do.

**This organizational atmosphere has a huge impact on your ability to bring about the future you seek.**

Reflecting on the themes that emerge from examining your organization's story will point your way forward.



# QUESTION

5

## WHAT IS OUR PLAN, AND HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

Your answers to this question will create a strategic plan that connects your past, present, and future, creating value for years to come.

### How to approach your strategic planning process:

- **Tailor the process to your organization.** This is your plan and your process. It should reflect the heart and soul of your organization and your leadership style. A thoughtful and individualized process is needed to unearth the path forward.
- **Know yourself and your team.** You are the ones who hold the answers to your questions. Now more than ever, knowing yourself and those on your team matters. Create a brave space to have the necessary conversations that allow you to address what emerges. Transformation only happens through vulnerability.
- **Craft your unique plan.** When your plan reflects your DNA and is combined with a deep understanding of what will propel you forward and impede you along the way, your strategic plan will become the visible manifestation of **who will do what by when.**

Let the great work begin!

## Design Group International

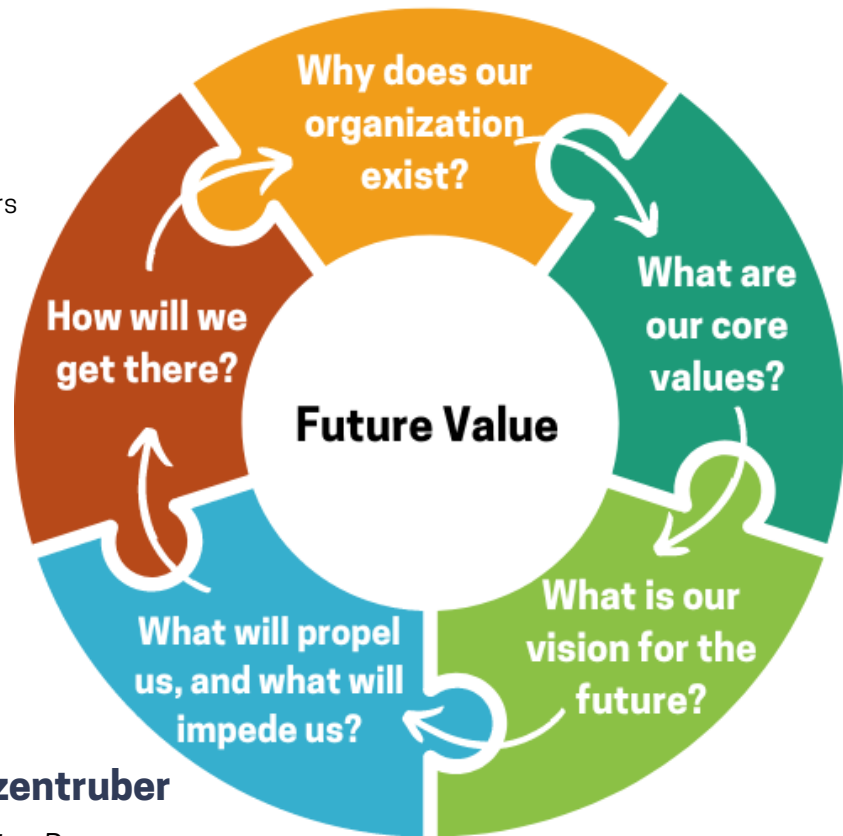
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Design Group International helps organizations and their leaders transform for a vibrant future. We are a community of expert practitioners, scattered across the United States, devoted to lifelong learning, skill-building, and the craft of process consulting.

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