



Awakening Spirit in Organizations

**Applying 5 Core Principles to SED
Projects and Enterprises**



Awakening Spirit: The Inspiration

Understanding and living by our innate spiritual natures and our higher purpose in life is the next stage in the maturation of humanity.

Our effectiveness is predicated upon certain *inviolable principles* – natural laws in the human dimension that are just as real, just as unchanging, as laws such as gravity are in the physical dimension.

These principles are woven into the fabric of every civilized society and constitute the roots of every family and institution that have endured and prospered. (Stephen Covey (*Principle-Centered Leadership*, p. 18).

A Vision of Bahá'í-inspired Enterprises

Your criterion should be to pursue your commercial activities with such fairness and equity as to be a cause of guidance to others. The friends of God should, through the instrumentality of their business, lead the people to God's path, and make them so astonished as to exclaim: "How great is their truthfulness, how high their trustworthiness, and how true is their good will!"

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Trustworthiness, Page: 14 - TBA pp. 108-109)

A Vision of Bahá'í-inspired Enterprises

Commerce, agriculture and industry should not, in truth, be a bar to service of the one true God. Indeed, such occupations are most potent instruments and clear proofs for the manifestation of the evidences of one's piety, of one's trustworthiness and of the virtues of the All-Merciful Lord." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, Trustworthiness, Page: 14 - TBA p. 5)

What is a Self-sustaining Bahá'í-inspired Enterprise?

- An ongoing private company, SED project, society, co-operative, etc.
- Provides products and/or services to people or other organizations
- Owned and directed by Bahá'ís and/or others
- Applies spiritual principles throughout its services, operations and administration
- Serves to upraise the quality of human life
- Creates prosperity through service and virtue
- Nurtures the human spirit
- Funds operations & development from revenues

Awakening Spirit: Terminology

Principles are “fundamental truths used as a basis for reasoning -- general laws that are guides to action”
Dictionary

Values are “one’s principles or standards, one’s judgement of what is valuable or worthwhile in life” Dictionary

Values reflect the particular beliefs and culture of the group and may or may not be aligned to principles.

Spiritual Principles are fundamental truths that govern our individual spiritual natures and our relationships to our Creator, to people and to ourselves.

Awakening Spirit: Terminology

Virtues are inner powers, capacities, human potentialities, qualities of the human spirit.

Human Spirit can be understood, in practical terms, as the source of qualities that transcend narrow self-interest.

Such qualities include love, compassion, forbearance, trustworthiness, courage, humility, co-operation and willingness to sacrifice for the common good...

(Bahá'í International Community, 1993 April 01, Sustainable Development and the Human Spirit - TBA p. 61)

Core Enterprise Principles

Purpose:

Work for the betterment of the world

Relationship:

Set the common good above private interest

Conduct:

Consciously practice human virtues

Sustainability:

Do what will profit you and others

Decision Support:

Consult as the means of decision-making

Applying the Principles

It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action.... (Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 250 - TBA p. 7, 85)

There is great difference between sounding a great general principle and finding its application to actual prevailing conditions. (Shoghi Effendi *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 21 - TBA p. 51)

Applying the Principles

High aims and pure motives, however laudable in themselves, will surely not suffice if unsupported by measures that are practicable and methods that are sound.

Wealth of sentiment, abundance of good-will and effort, will prove of little avail if we should fail to exercise discrimination and restraint and neglect to direct their flow along the most profitable channels.

(Shoghi Effendi: *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 87 - TBA p. 110)

Core Enterprise Principles

Purpose:

Work for the betterment of the world

Enduring great companies have a purpose - a reason for being beyond just making money. GTG p. 184

Motive Continuum

- “enlightened” self-interest
 - social consciousness
 - spiritual awareness

The unique purpose of Bahá'í-inspired enterprises is to serve a **worthwhile** purpose (for the betterment of the world) and to be an instrument for leading people to God's path.

Core Enterprise Principles

Purpose:

Work for the betterment of the world

- Excellence in goods and services that improve the quality of human life - individually, socially and environmentally.
- Excellence in operations: development, production, marketing and delivery of products and services in ethical ways that benefit society socially, environmentally and economically.
- Excellence in people administration including fair and equitable treatment of all stakeholders, fair pricing, pay, profit sharing and staff promotions.

Core Enterprise Principles

Purpose:

Work for the betterment of the world

- Excellence administrative strategies, systems and structures that promote consultative decision making and unity in spirit and in action.
- Excellence in financial administration ensuring absolute integrity in the financial affairs of the enterprise.
- Excellence in corporate social responsibility contributing to the upliftment, development, peace and wellbeing of all stakeholders and the communities in which the enterprise operates.

Core Enterprise Principles

Relationship:

Set the common good above private interest

“Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company... they are incredibly ambitious - *but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves*” GTG p. 21

Enterprises evaluate first and foremost the benefits of their services to their customers and to society above economic returns

Core Enterprise Principles

Conduct: Consciously practice human virtues

“people are not your most important asset. The *right* people are...

... the good-to-great companies placed greater weight on character attributes than on specific educational background, practical skills, specialized knowledge, or work experience (which could be learned)

... dimensions like character, work ethic, basic intelligence, dedication to fulfilling commitments, and values are more ingrained.” GTG p. 51

“there are no “right” core values for becoming an enduring great company” GTG p. 195

Core Enterprise Principles

Conduct:

Consciously practice human virtues

- Truthfulness: the foundation of all human virtues.
- Trustworthiness: the supreme instrument for the prosperity of the world.
- Justice & equity: the most fundamental among human virtues. The basis for the evaluation of all things.
- Integrity & Uprightness: the distinguishing virtues of our actions.
- Courtesy: the prince of virtues.

Core Enterprise Principles

Sustainability:

Do what will profit you and others.

5 Dimensions:

- Economic
- Environmental
- Service
- Personal
- Social

Drop “for-profit”, “not-for-profit” and become “sustainable”

Core Enterprise Principles

Economic Sustainability:

1. Operational
2. Developmental
3. Equity

Profit is a measure of value added contribution, a means of self-financed growth, but not an end in itself BTL p. 57

“... in a truly great company, profits and cash flow become like blood and water to a healthy body: They are absolutely essential for life, but they are not the very *point* of life.”

GTG p. 194

Core Enterprise Principles

Economic Sustainability:

Operational

direct, indirect, asset replacement and environmental costs

Developmental

funds for continuous improvement of products, processes, systems and people

funds to contribute to social sustainability

Equity

Equity Shareholders receive a reasonable, living return on their investment

The people working in the enterprise receive a fourth or fifth share of the profits or in some other way share equitably in the profits and advantages of the enterprise

Core Enterprise Principles

Environmental Sustainability:

Live in balance with the natural world

Service Sustainability:

Continually upraise the quality of human life

Personal Sustainability:

Enable individual economic, physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual sustainability

Social Sustainability:

Contribute to the upliftment, peace, well-being and sustainable development of the community

Core Enterprise Principles

Personal Sustainability:

- Individuals are sustainable, materially, physically emotionally, intellectually and spiritually
- An enterprise operates as an independent entity, without relying on individuals or personalities for its success
 - Requires scale for specialization of labour & redundancy of resources
 - Requires systemization of processes to enable training and consistent delivery of services

First: Work **on the Enterprise**

Second: Work **in the Enterprise**

Core Enterprise Principles

Decision Support:

Consult as the means of decision-making

Range:

- informal discussions
 - ad hoc advisory teams
 - permanent advisory committees
 - self-managing teams

Legal Structures:

- sole proprietorships - partnerships
- limited liability companies
- public companies, public sector, societies, charities
- cooperatives - plurality governance cooperatives

Core Enterprise Principles

Decision Support:

Consult as the means of decision-making

“The Council consists of a group of the right people who participate in dialogue and debate ... about vital issues and decisions facing the organization.” GTG p. 115

“The responsibility for the final decision remains with the leading executive [person] GTG p. 116

Once a decision is made everyone fully supports it.
GTG p. 116

Conduct of Consultative Sessions

Principles of Consultation

Freedom of Expression: Express your thoughts freely, without belittling the thoughts of others.

Objectivity: Carefully consider the views of others; do not willfully hold to your own opinion.

Contribution: Express your views as a contribution to the consensus of opinion; do not voice them as correct or right.

Detachment: A view once expressed belongs to the group; do not be offended if a conflicting view is expressed.

Decision Support: Support fully all decisions; do not criticize previous decisions.

A Vision of the Future

A world wide network of Bahá'í-inspired enterprises

- Working in cooperation
- Providing worthwhile employment to Bahá'ís and others
- On a Spiritual Quest - building instruments to:
 - Demonstrate and exemplify the Faith in action
 - Become a model for other societies
 - Morally improve and enlighten people by example
 - Be a cause of guidance to others
 - Attract people to God's path
- Are a social force for the progress and prosperity of all of humanity

A Vision of the Future

Since the orderly running of your association dependeth upon the devotion, integrity, fair-mindedness and sanctity of purpose manifested by the friends of God, they should show forth in their management of its affairs such purity, nobility and far-sighted wisdom that they will become a model for other societies, and all people may be edified and enlightened by their example.

In this way the Baha'is will become known to all as people who are dependable and honest, virtuous and enlightened, pure and refined; who are industrious and high-principled, liberal-minded and promoters of freedom; whose concern is to serve the common good, not to advance their own interests, and whose aim is to further the welfare and prosperity of the people, not to foster their own well-being.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Trustworthiness, Page: 14 - TBA pp. 108-109)

A Vision of the Future

Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*

- ... The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development,
- to the increase of the productivity of mankind,
 - to the extermination of disease,
 - to the extension of scientific research,
 - to the raising of the standard of physical health,

A Vision of the Future

- to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain,
- to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet,
- to the prolongation of human life,
- and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race.

(Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 204 - TBA p. 202)

Awakening Spirit in Organizations

“Let it now be seen what your endeavors in the path of detachment will reveal.”

Bahá'u'lláh

End of formal presentation

Conclusion

And yet, is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind, a transformation that shall manifest itself both outwardly and inwardly, that shall affect both its inner life and external conditions? For if the character of mankind be not changed, the futility of God's universal Manifestations would be apparent. Bahá'u'lláh