

the
**PROUTY
PROJECT**

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Read'n Route To: _____

Return To: _____

"C" NOTE QUOTE:

*"We are storytellers,
because that's the
first step in getting
people to change
their behavior.
We're about
inspiring action."*



Jeanne knew that Tom Brady, Quarterback of the New England Patriots said the following: *"There are a lot of guys who say they want to work harder and be the best, but they never pay the price. I love paying the price."*

She plans to surprise a longtime friend with the gift card. Jeanne says, "this friend has experienced financial hardship most of her adult life, and has never 'treated' herself to anything. I can't wait to give it to her." Congratulations Jeanne!

● **If you know who said this quote,** please call 952.942.2922 or send an e-mail to kari.baltzer@proutyproject.com with your answer before Thursday, July 31 – one guess per individual. If we have more than one correct answer, we throw those names into a hat and draw the winner of a \$100 gift card.

**And Last Issue's Winner is...
Jeanne Kassim, Western Bank,
Moundsview, MN**

Bailey, Bikes, and Blashack Strahan

We're excited to welcome **Peter Bailey** to our team. Peter brings 26 years of global experience with Wilson Learning, Creative Action, and Outward Bound. Please e-mail him at peter.bailey@proutyproject.com or call him at 952.229.8969 to say "hello".

Our STRETCH Expedition 2009 will be **Bicycling** in South Africa, culminating in the world-famous 68 mile "Cape Argus Cycle Race" through scenic Capetown! We will have an informational Kick-off meeting **Thursday, August 7, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.** in the *Creative Think Tank* here at the Prouty Project. If you'd like to learn more, and/or RSVP for the informational meeting, please e-mail jayna.wallace@proutyproject.com.

On page 4 of this newsletter, you'll enjoy an engaging interview with **Jill Blashack Strahan**, the Founder and CEO of the \$139 million Alexandria-based company, Tastefully Simple. A bundle of energy and a real motivator, Jill has been a joy to work with and a joy to interview.

Create an exciting and stretching 3rd quarter!

Jeff Prouty

jeff.prouty@proutyproject.com



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● STRATEGIC PLANNING

COMPANY VALUES: ARE YOUR VALUES TRULY CORE?



mike.felmlee@proutyproject.com

Article by
Mike Felmlee

This is the third of a three-part series of articles about your organization's vision, mission, and value statements. In January, I shared our philosophy around vision statements and in April clarified the what, why, and how of mission statements. Today, I will share the timeless significance of value statements.

We continuously challenge our clients to share their values with us. Most muddle through their explanations; some are actually at a loss for words, while others deliver them with such passion and gusto it seems as if they created them an hour earlier. In this article, I will be referencing the *Harvard Business Review* article entitled, "Building Your Company's Vision," by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras to define what core values really mean, provide a framework for evaluating your core values, and put the Prouty Project core values to the test.

What do core values really mean?

- Core values are the essential and enduring tenets that guide and inspire your employees. And, they're created by those within the organization without regard to the whims of current leadership, or the current management fad.
- Core values require no external justification. They are intrinsic to those in the organization and are not impacted by the external environment in which the organization operates.
- Core values tend to be few in number. Organizations typically select 3-5 core values. Any more and you have to question if they are so fundamental and deeply held that they would change seldom, if ever.

Three questions to evaluate if your values are truly core:

- 1 Could you envision them being as valid for you 100 years from now as they are today?
- 2 Would you want to hold those core values, even if at some point one or more of them became a competitive disadvantage?
- 3 If you were to start a new organization tomorrow in a different line of work, what core values would you build into the new organization regardless of its industry?

It's amazing how some of our clients respond to these questions. If their values are truly core, they will defend them to the end. And, they will live them every day.

We at the Prouty Project are proud of our values. In fact, we recently worked with another consultant as part of our strategic planning process. I was inspired to hear my colleagues hold firm to our values. Despite attempts to reduce the number of our values and

to revise them, we stood our ground and kept them word for word.

You'll notice a couple of things:

- 1 We hold seven core values; two more than Collins and Porras recommend.
- 2 They create an acronym of "Great Co".

We love them first and foremost because they represent who we are and what we're about. Every one of us can recite them with energy and passion. And, we intentionally and actively use them in our hiring practices, our performance evaluations, and in how we interact with each other every day.

We are adamant about finding new colleagues who embrace these values because we know they will not last long in our culture if they don't. And, we want to attract those who do because we know they will succeed beyond their wildest dreams.

Let's take a look at how we live the Prouty value of openness:

- 1 Do you share your financial information with all your employees? We do.
- 2 Can you imagine knowing everyone's compensation? We do. How about their annual performance grade? We share all of this as we openly communicate it in an environment of transparency that we all hold near and dear to our hearts.

Is this value for everyone? No. But it is the way we have chosen to run our organization. And, that's what really counts.

Now, does the Prouty value of openness stand the test of being truly core? In fact, it does. I would envision openness to be as valid 100 years from now as it is today, we would definitely hold it as a value even if it became a competitive disadvantage, and we would take it with us if we started another organization in a different industry.

Please give us a call as we would love to hear about your organization's values and learn how you are living them. Don't be afraid to put them to the test.

HERE ARE THE PROUTY PROJECT VALUES

G	I IVING B ACK
R	R IGHT, R IGHT W AY
E	E NERGY
A	A DVENTUROUS S PIRIT
T	T EAM
C	C REATIVITY
O	O PENNESS

● ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

GLOBAL PERFORMANCE CONSULTANT PETER BAILEY JOINS THE PROUTY PROJECT



grayce.belvedere.young@proutyproject.com

Article by
Grayce Belvedere Young



The Prouty Project is climbing to new heights with the addition of Peter Bailey as Senior Vice President of Organizational Performance (OP). As more and more clients see the value of ongoing, creative OP efforts to ensure that their company's strategy is fully executed, we recognize the need to grow our OP practice area and are thrilled to have Peter join us!

Peter's background embodies the adventurous spirit that we at Prouty try to capture for all of our clients through our team effectiveness and leadership development work. As a person who has lived and worked in more than 40 countries, he is able to integrate global perspectives and cross-cultural communication skills with experiential activities for more innovative learning activities. In fact, he holds a Master's of Science degree in Experiential Education and is on the Board of Trustees for

Outward Bound. In his new role, he'll be working with clients to design activities that create new ways for people to work more effectively in both on-site groups and virtual teams.

"We believe Peter brings an 'edgy' approach to our clients' creativity that offers a new level of 'daring' as we encourage them to stretch their thinking," says Jeff Prouty, Chairman and Founder. "We want to be the trend-setters in new approaches to engage people in creative thinking through art, music, dance, the great outdoors, and other experiential endeavors."

Working as a global performance consultant over the past 26 years, Peter can help clients who work domestically and internationally to prepare for solid working relationships with people from diverse backgrounds by adjusting their behaviors in cross-cultural situations. His passion is all about cultivating new ways to engage people — and that's

the key to creating and executing business strategies for success.

Here are some questions to be sure to ask Peter when you get a chance to meet him:

- What cultural modifications should I make when working with clients in Asia?
- How can I build a more cohesive team when working "virtually" around the world?
- Where is the best place in the world for a "mountain top" experience?
- What was the business goal for taking 200 high-tech corporate executives up the San Jacinta mountain tram in Palm Springs?

To contact Peter, please e-mail him at peter.bailey@proutyproject.com or call him directly at 952.229.8969 (extension 109).

STRETCH EXPEDITION 2009 BICYCLING ADVENTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Explore the gorgeous and scenic countryside of South Africa through a bicycling adventure from Port Elizabeth to Capetown.

Our bicycling journey will take us through lovely winelands, challenging mountain passes, undulating countryside, picturesque towns, and dramatic coast lines of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. The Expedition will culminate with a world-famous 109 km (68 mile) Cape Argus bike race through the scenic Capetown landscape. Throughout the trip, we will engage in exploratory tours of South Africa's monumental history, deep culture, rich traditions, and unbelievable wildlife (there are no invisible fences here!).

Prior to departure, we will provide reading ideas to immerse yourself in the South African world as well as a bicycle training regimen to help get you prepared. What a way to S-T-R-E-T-C-H yourself physically, intellectually, emotionally, and culturally.

Come join us to learn about yourself and South Africa!

Informational Kick-off Meeting

Date: Thursday, August 7, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Prouty Project. We will provide more information about the trip itself as well as intellectual and physical preparation. If you would like to see the "high-level tentative itinerary" please contact jayna.wallace@proutyproject.com.

For a sobering experience of the history of South Africa prior to our Kick-off meeting, please explore the book entitled *Biko* by Donald Woods or the movie-inspired version of the book *Cry Freedom* by Sir Richard Attenborough. Or, explore the post-apartheid book by Nelson Mandela entitled *Long Walk to Freedom* to envision the new South Africa.

February 27
thru
March 10,
2009



SIMPLY SHINE: STORIES THAT STIRRED THE FIRE



Article by Jeff Prouty

In a recent “Dream Retreat,” we had the opportunity to work with Jill Blashack Strahan and Joani Nielson, the owners of Tastefully Simple. Tastefully Simple sells gourmet food

products via 27,000 independent consultants around the world.

I caught up with Jill at 6:30 a.m., Tuesday, May 6, as she was heading to Palm Springs, California for a business meeting.

Enjoy these “entrepreneurial excerpts” from our discussion:

Q: *You’ve built this business from start-up to a \$139 million business over the past 13 years. What do you envision over the next 20-30 years?*

A: I want to continue to impact people, and help them move forward. I’d like to speak professionally about 20 times a year. I want to stay attached to a community of people. I don’t have any “harvest strategy” plans. My grandfather lived to be 102, and his “exit strategy” was passing away.

Q: *Recently, you released your first book, **Simply Shine: Stories That Stirred the Fire**. Any particular stories that stirred the most fire for you?*

A: When my brother, Mike, passed away at age 28 (I was only 26 at the time). The gravity of life. When I truly started to think about my mortality, I started to live differently.

Q: *Is there another book in the works?*

A: I’m not sure, but if there is, it would focus on the many stories about goal setting. Miracles, cause and effect, the human spirit. A working title could be, “It’s not faith if you’re not scared.”

Q: *One of the quotes I liked from your book was, “you can’t chase two rabbits and get them both.” Have you been guilty of chasing two rabbits in business or life, and what did you learn?*

A: (Laughter.) Absolutely, I see something shiny and I get excited. The entrepreneurial curse is saying “yes” to everything. My strength as an entrepreneur is seeing opportunities, and remaining flexible. I’m aware of my tendencies.

Q: *Another thought from the book that jumped out at me: “We are the average of the five people we spend the most time with.” Who are the five people you spend the most time with?*

A: That’s a good question. I like to spend time with people who don’t pull me down. They’re “motors,” they move me forward.

Q: *You mentioned earlier that you’d like to speak professionally about 20 times a year. What’s the key message you try to leave your audience with?*

A: My purpose is the message that’s encompassed in the book. I encourage people not to “settle.” I encourage people to be brave enough to explore. The book and my speaking are about moving past your fears, and the Tastefully Simple journey gives me some good stories and good credibility.

Q: *Tastefully Simple has been recognized as one of the **Inc. 500** fastest growing companies. You’ve been recognized as an **Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year**. What if **FORTUNE** magazine came to you and said we’d like to feature you on the cover? What would the picture be? What would the title be?*

A: Wow. Well, I’d be “slender, tender, and tall.” (More laughter.) Seriously, I think I’d be uncomfortable being on the cover. The title of the article, however, would have to be around making an impact on others, helping others.

Q: *You’ve had great success as an entrepreneur. When did you start to recognize your entrepreneurial talents?*

A: I was involved with a DECA project in high school, when I started to see my entrepreneurial talents. Very early on, I think I understood the power of creating positive energy through excellence.

Q: *I know you’ve spoken to a group of 2,000 entrepreneurs at a recent Ernst & Young conference. Any words of wisdom for the entrepreneurs and future entrepreneurs among our readers?*

A: The rate of change is staggering. Business and life is about relationships. There will continue to be a deep need for relationships. How can you help people bring more simplicity to their lives? Filling that need for people is a big part of Tastefully Simple.

Q: *Final question. I know you’re always on the lookout for inspiring movies and inspiring music lyrics. What resonates with you today?*

A: I have three movie recommendations: *Pay It Forward*, *Dreamer*, and *8 Seconds*. And for music, I’m intrigued by the lyrics in Taylor Hicks’ song, “Do I Make You Proud?”

Thanks, Jill, for taking the time to share your thoughts. You keep stretching, and I’ll keep shining.

Editor’s Note: Check out www.tastefullysimple.com. I highly recommend Jill’s book, *Simply Shine*. Jill and her team have also created a very inspiring 24-minute video—*Turn ‘Em On*, *Turn ‘Em Loose*—about the culture of Tastefully Simple. Enjoy.

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THANKS!