



Appreciative Inquiry and Our Purpose and Principles

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a large group planning and change methodology that focuses on what is working well (<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>). The UN Global Compact used the AI methodology for a Leaders' Summit in June 2004. We have used the AI methodology in individual career development programs, our New Employee Orientation program, and departmental change initiatives. In addition, we have held four large company planning meetings over the last 2 1/2 years, (we call them Summits) using the AI methodology. The value of AI for us is most powerfully illustrated in the process by which we created our Company Purpose and Principles.

The Creation of Our Purpose and Principles

From our very beginning, in 1981, we have held five core beliefs, that subsequently have been published throughout the company and in several of our annual reports: (1) A Passion for Coffee; (2) Financial Performance; (3) A Destination Workplace; (4) Ethics; and (5) Commitment to Social Responsibility. As we have grown and evolved as a company, we also have been on a journey to expand on these beliefs and to provide further clarity for decision-making. Hundreds of employees from throughout the organization have had input into this ongoing work.

In June 2003, 161 employees and 40 business partners came together in our first AI Summit to plan for our future growth. For 3-1/2 days, participants shared ideas about what works well at our company and why, so that we can do even better.



G/MCR INC. EMPLOYEES
AT AI SUMMITS

From these discussions, 21 projects were proposed and each cross-functional project team developed a purpose statement for their project.

As those teams began their work, we realized that we needed a common reference, in addition to our five core beliefs, to guide our decisions and actions so that everyone remains true to our corporate values and inherent purpose as we continue our profitable, conscientious growth.

Thus, a cross-functional project team was formed with more than 20 employees representing all segments of the organization. The draft Purpose and Principles they created then evolved as increasingly larger groups (over 40% of the whole organization) continued to think about and write about our Purpose and guiding Principles. The culmination of that effort was presented to the whole company in February 2004, further refined and, in April 2004, embraced by the organization.

Our purpose and principles provide a framework for decision-making in our organization to ensure our actions coincide with our vision and our desire to change the way the world views business.