

Brush up on your corporate values



By [Niteske Marshall](#)

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Company values. If the mere mention of those two words has you yawning and about to tune out...listen up.

You'd be forgiven for thinking corporate values were among the most boring things in the world because in so many companies, they are. All too often a company's values are just a list of empty promises relegated to the boardroom wall or a website page where nobody but the occasional visitor gets to see them.

In such cases they have little relevance, if any, in the lives of the staff, and are totally disconnected to the essence of how things are done every day in the company. The true meaning of the values and their potentially positive impact are lost.

Well, it's time to get corporate values off the boardroom wall and onto the office floor, because not only do they help employees know how they're expected to behave but perhaps more importantly, how they're expected to not behave.

In the book *Built to Last* (Collins & Porras), research showed successful, sustainable companies followed a fundamental set of principles that guided all behaviours and all decisions.

Despite this, many executives consider the process of values articulation a fluffy, internal marketing or HR exercise and sometimes even feel it's beneath them. This couldn't be further from the truth. Values are a priority for the entire company's leadership - or at least they should be if they're going to be relevant and useful to staff. Clarifying a company's core values and reinforcing them at every level is essential for the health and sustainability of any organisation.

Aside from the immediate benefit to existing employees, a clearly articulated set of core values also helps attract the right type of future employees. Values aid the recruitment process by enabling interviewers to quiz candidates about their personal values and then compare these to those of the business.

Often what seems like a good hiring decision on paper turns out to be the biggest hiring mistake in reality. The truth is, only a small percentage of placements fail as a result of competence issues. Most new appointments don't work out because of a values mismatch.

For instance, if a company has a core value that requires managers be involved, accessible and hands-on with their teams and then hires a new manager who believes in having one monthly meeting with team members and working from behind a closed office door, there's going to be an instant discrepancy in values and subsequent behavioural misalignment.

Concrete corporate values and their clear articulation is a critical tool in attracting the right people to your organisation and

repelling the wrong ones, leading to better personnel placements and lower staff turnover.

ABOUT NITESKE MARSHALL

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