

I consider the most important values of an organization to be those that define how we treat each other. Here's an example of such values that I developed with one of my clients. Perhaps there are some useful points here that you can adopt (or adapt), but be careful: Never claim a value as your own unless you're willing to live every word of it. Don't destroy your credibility by saying something's important that you're not willing to be held accountable to:

We Value Our Shared Purpose

Everything we do should move us toward our vision and the fulfillment of our mission. We welcome anyone to question us on why we're doing any activity if it's not clear how it moves us in our intended direction or if it appears to violate our stated values.



We Value Healthy Interactions

We care about how people are treated. That goes for employees, customers, vendors, and everyone we interact with. Specifically:

- You should expect to be treated with respect, dignity, justice, and trust (unless trust is broken, in which case our goal will be to restore it, whether it's our trust in you or your trust in us). That doesn't mean we won't challenge, hold accountable, ask for explanations, or even discipline where appropriate, but it does impact *how* we do these things. They will always be done with the two-fold goal of developing you to be your best and moving our organization toward our goals.
- Because our goal is to succeed together as a team, we will look for opportunities to affirm you and encourage you. But for the same reason, we will let you know when your behavior is holding us back, and we expect you to do the same with us.
- You should feel heard. Not that you'll always agree with our choices. But we'll do our best to explain the "why" behind our decisions and admit when we learn we're wrong. We'll expect the same from you.
- You should sense that we are for you, not against you. We want you to succeed, whether that's working with us or in some other context.
- You have a right to have our expectations of you made clear. We won't hold you accountable to anything we've not been clear on. However, if you're unclear, ask – you will be held accountable for not seeking clarity.
- We will sometimes blow it, and we ask for your grace as well as your graceful accountability.
- We will expect you to demonstrate these same values in how you deal with everyone else.

If we're not living these values, we will either change our behavior or redefine the value. We don't want to have anything listed as a value that we are not able to live out in practice.

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