

## Executive Summary

# Leading Through Values

# Values at City & Guilds

City & Guilds is an organisation founded on strong principles and with a clear mission to inspire and help people and businesses to continually improve their skills, performance, and productivity through training and development. As such leading in accordance with our values has always been hugely important to us, which is why we decided to produce this report.



**Our values have to be more than simple statements or ideals**

Kirstie Donnelly MBE  
Group CEO



While our mission and purpose have always remained the same, over the last 140 years City & Guilds has evolved and developed to meet the changing needs of learners and the changing world.

Our values have to be more than simple statements or ideals – being able to measure, track and evidence the implementation of our values is essential, helping us to ensure that we are driving behaviours among ourselves and delivering on our commitments to our customers and colleagues.

Our Social Impact Report is one of the ways we ensure that our behaviours are aligning with our values, tracking the number of learners we have reached and the impact the programmes operated by our charitable foundation have had.

As the nature of work, training and skills development evolves in line with social and technological change, the way in which we engage with our employees and our customers, and what that means for us, will also evolve. Throughout these changes however, our commitment to living our values in the way we work and lead remains consistent.

To build on this, through 2021, we worked on refreshing our values to better reflect our mission. We lead through these values to have measurable impact on employment outcomes, organisational performance and productivity, as well as social and economic benefits to society:

- **Inspire** - We inspire people to raise and achieve their aspirations
- **Improve** - We improve performance and productivity
- **Achieve** - We assess and recognise achievement, making it visible
- **Trust** - We hold ourselves accountable and act with integrity

As we begin to move into a post-Covid world, with the increase in remote working changing the way we interact with our customers and each other, these values that underpin our working culture will be more important than ever before. I am delighted that ILM is stimulating this discussion and enabling business leaders to share experiences and best practice on building the leaders of the future and driving business growth.

## Our Brands



# Executive Summary

Company values and ethics are becoming increasingly important to success.

Even prior to Covid-19, businesses were undergoing a period of rapid change, and this has only been hastened by the pandemic. Rapidly evolving workplaces require new leadership skills that accommodate agile and shifting working practices and build consistent ways to ensure that people are maintain a feeling of connection to their workplace. This can be answered, in part, through values.

Employees are increasingly concerned not only with the values companies espouse, but with whether they live and breathe them in practice – not just in terms of how they behave externally, but how they treat their staff.

A 2019 report from Glassdoor found that over 77% of adults across the USA, UK, France and Germany would consider a company’s culture before applying for a job there, and 79% would consider a company’s mission and purpose. More than half of those polled said that company culture is more important than salary when it comes to job satisfaction.

This report explores how an organisation can develop a set of values effectively, maintain its relevance, encourage staff at all levels to embody these values, and the benefits this has for an organisation.

We engaged with brands that have effectively developed a positive working culture – embracing a style of leadership that is always couched firmly in their principles and which is practised throughout the organisation.

It highlights the business rationale for using values as a lens to view strategy, and as an organising principle. Contextualised within the changing requirements of the modern workplace, it considers the requirement for more flexible and multi-skilled employees that are still able to feel connected, particularly through change programmes.



Our findings have made pertinent four key themes about the future of the workplace.

- 1 People choose values over remuneration
- 2 Consultative processes are powerful
- 3 Movement away from hierarchy
- 4 Leadership must invest in values

<sup>1</sup><https://www.glassdoor.co.uk/blog/mission-culture-survey/>

## 1 People choose values over remuneration

When a company has strong core values, research shows that it attracts a particular kind of employee. This employee is someone who holds values in high esteem and who wants to be part of a culture that has strong core values. The result of this is a relationship of mutual benefit.

Very often a person will choose to work for a company based on the company's values, rather than the remuneration offered. The converse of this, is that a company may offer an attractive remuneration package, but if the potential employee doesn't resonate with the value system, the remuneration package might not be enough for the employee to take on the job.

Recruitment processes are changing drastically in the world of work, and are reflecting this pattern more and more. Recruitment processes also show that people want to do work that is going to have a positive impact on the broader community and the world. Company values are intrinsic to establishing whether or not this will happen.

## 2 Consultative processes are powerful

In our research, case studies and other, a consultative process in value creation renders a higher investment in these values from all stakeholders.

When staff are part of the value creation experience, the values are developed organically, and authentically.

This is because people will look to their own inherent value system when creating a value system for the workplace. Often, this means they are already living the values. The presence of the values is already strong and this leads to collaboration, empowerment, and a successful organisation.

## 3 Movement away from hierarchy

In the consultative nature of value-creation and the fact that leadership are investing in the values in the same way as staff members, companies are far less hierarchical than in previous years. In a less hierarchical organisation it seems that people are far more likely to adopt, live and resonate with the core values.

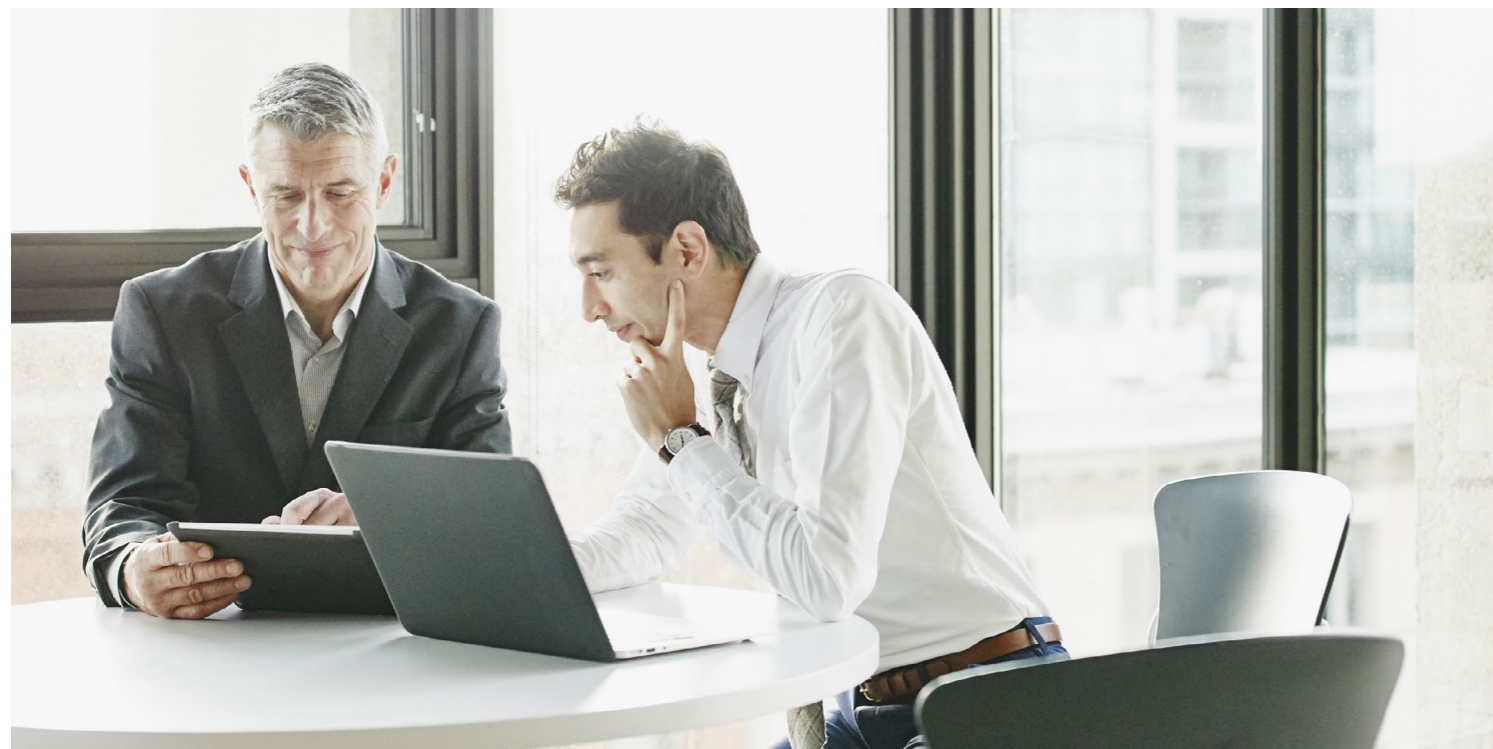
Ambitions, emotions and goals can be more easily shared between all levels in a company, and this can foster a sense of empathy and trust. It also means that there is an increased sense of family within the business – something that many businesses aspire towards in today's corporate space.

## 4 Leadership must invest in values

This idea came up in all research and case studies. It's vital that everyone invests in the living of the company values, including executives and management. If this doesn't happen, it creates dissension amongst employees and a sense of value 'hollowness.' This can lead to the demise of a company because people feel dispirited, disgruntled, and the values are severely undermined.

It's important to make sure that:

- The leaders are living the values
- Values span across departments and leadership levels
- Leaders don't dictate values to staff
- Leaders are seen to be human and vulnerable



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