

AI + Human Values > AI Alone



Artificial intelligence (AI) is here to stay, and we're only at the dot-matrix printer stage of its evolution. Very cool and surprising things are on the horizon! However, while we focus on technological leaps, who is thinking about the people expected to work with this technology?

The Human + Tech Alliance

To build resilient companies and foster explosive growth, we need to think about this as an alliance between humans and technology. We need both. Focusing too heavily on one at the expense of the other will leave leadership wondering what went wrong. Organizations must prepare for a future we don't fully understand by leaning into the one thing we CAN fully understand: what makes us uniquely human.

Embracing Human Complexity

AI will never replicate our illogical, irrational, and unpredictable human nature. It's our inherent messiness that leads to deep relationships, unexpected breakthroughs, creative connections, and discoveries we didn't even know we needed. The apocryphal story about the accidental invention of 3M sticky notes comes to mind. It was a failure to make a new kind of strong glue. In fact, it was such a terrible failure that it barely adhered one piece of paper to another. This cash cow of the 3M business products empire would have been immediately rejected as a mistake—if AI had been calling the shots. And where would we be without sticky notes? It's a fate too terrible to even think about! :)

So, like it or not, companies must embrace our human messiness, no matter how counterintuitive it may feel. It's the essence of being human and will become increasingly vital as we see where AI takes us next.

Unleashing Human Potential With a New Kind of Data

How do we harness the power of our human complexity? The answer lies in shared human values. Values drive everything people do and feel. Our brains are hardwired to seek out alignment with our values—a neurological truth. Recognizing this, [our research division](#) has measured and mapped the core human values of over a million people, in 152 languages across 180 countries, creating a statistically accurate inventory of what makes us human. (If you want to see the high-level results, [download the free Global Values Guide](#).)

Traditionally, values have been abstract fuzzy concepts open to a wide range of subjective interpretations, more or less “business poetry.” However, by measuring and mapping values like any other data-driven insights, we can precisely pinpoint [how to engage, inspire, and motivate any group](#). This approach shifts values from being “pretty words” to actionable insights.

Case Studies: Values in Action

[Our research team's](#) global values database identifies 56 core human values. It's a powerful tool for understanding and influencing human behavior. One of the 56 values is Creativity. Here are a couple of examples of how that single data point led to strategies and tactics that would have otherwise never been considered.

The Endorphin Pool of Creativity

A client building a rental tower in a desert metropolis found that their target audience over-indexed on the value of Creativity. So, instead of presenting their rooftop pool as a relaxing social spot, they emphasized it as a space for residents to refresh their minds—and get the endorphins flowing—to help solve creative issues they were facing in their work. This unique positioning led to a towering success.

The Hedge Fund's Creative Pitch

A Wall Street hedge fund identified that one segment of their target institutional investors valued Creativity more than other investors—or the general population for that matter. So, they hosted events featuring speakers from literature and the arts, connecting the mathematical creativity of finance with broader creative disciplines. This approach effectively resonated with the investors' core values, distinguishing the fund from competitors.

Moving Beyond Demographics

Another finding from those one million surveys from around the world? The traditional reliance on demographics to understand people is seriously flawed. Demographics only describe what people are, not who they are. In other words, they promote stereotypes and divisions that do more harm than good. In fact, it turns out that people within any demographic cohort are only 10.5% similar. Rounding off for simplicity, that means demographic profiling is 90% inaccurate. Gen Z do not all want one thing or another, and neither do baby boomers, or women, or people who earn 200K a year in a white-collar job.

A Values-Driven Future

It's abundantly clear and quite logical: AI will achieve its full potential only in partnership with humans. By honoring shared human values, companies can leverage the complexities of our messy and irreplaceable human nature to magnify what AI adds to the landscape. Together, humanity and technology can tackle the most pressing issues facing our companies—and our world—today.

For more insights on integrating values into your business strategy, you can explore "[The Death of Demographics](#)" by David Allison, available on Amazon.

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