

The Power of Shared Values for a Unified Workforce



Recently, [David Allison](#) spoke to a thousands of employees of a national grocery chain. He revealed the results of a [valuegraphic study](#) that identified their shared values—from front-line workers to senior executives—who are committed to deepening their connection with each other and driving the success of their shared culture across the organization. He wrote this article based on those research findings.

It can be difficult to make everyone in a diverse and geographically dispersed company feel like they belong. But if you know what people value, across all roles and locations, you can create a powerful set of strategies to bring everyone together. Here's an example of how this works for a national grocery chain with offices and locations spread all across the country.

An organization of this size and scale is made up of an incredibly diverse group of people, from those stocking shelves to those making key business decisions. So here's the real challenge—how do we make sure that no matter where people work within the company, they feel connected? How do we ensure everyone feels like they belong?

The answer is shared human values. In this article, we'll discuss how identifying and using a certain set of values—what I call the Power Values—can unlock unstoppable teamwork, help people feel safe and valued, and make a unified culture the heart of everything this company does.

How We Found the Power Values

At Valuegraphics, we've built a global database with a million surveys conducted in 152 languages, and we used this powerful tool to learn more about what really drives people. For this company, for this keynote, three values stood out. We call these the Power Values: Personal Responsibility, Friendships, and Experiences.

Why do values matter? Because they drive everything we do. Values determine where we choose to live, what kind of work we want to do, and how we approach our lives. When people at a company are connected by these Power Values, a shared language emerges, one that strengthens their culture and builds a deep sense of belonging.

So, let's break it down and explore how these Power Values can make a difference.

1. Personal Responsibility: Creating Stability Through Action

One of the strongest values we identified was Personal Responsibility. This isn't just about following through on your tasks; it's about feeling a sense of stability when you get things done. For the people at this grocery chain, that feeling of responsibility is a key motivator.

Think of it like this: You finish your shift knowing you've completed everything you set out to do. You feel good. You feel like you did your part. Everything is right with the world, and you are ready to call it a day. That sense of accomplishment isn't just about the job—it's about creating stability for yourself and your team.



How can we leverage this? Here's one idea: Monthly Responsibility Swaps. Imagine swapping roles with someone in a different department for a day each month or each quarter. Maybe you work in the grocery department, but for one day, you trade places (or shadow) someone from the pharmacy. This "Responsibility Swap" helps build empathy because you're seeing the world from someone else's perspective. You gain a new understanding of the work they do, and it fosters a sense of shared responsibility across the company.

This is just one way to use the value of Personal Responsibility. How else can you apply this insight to your team?

2. Friendships: Building Connections That Matter

We all know the value of friendships, but for this specific organization, this value runs deep. People who work there over-index on the value of Friendship—it is one of the most important values driving all their decisions and behaviors.

For these folks, Friendships don't just make work more enjoyable; they create a support system. Picture this: You're having a tough day, but then you run into a coworker who always lifts your spirits. You have a laugh about a joke or a funny situation, you decide to grab a coffee in the cafeteria together. You talk about your dog, and your family. And everything suddenly feels just a little bit better. Small moments of connection like this turn "coworker groups" into "friendship families."



Here's a thought-starter for you that I call the Camaraderie Champions. Think of it as a friendship-based recognition platform. What if this company had an award—or some other way—to celebrate coworkers who've made a difference through friendship? It could be someone who always includes others, shows camaraderie, or helps new hires feel at home. By highlighting these moments, we reinforce the importance and power of connection and help everyone feel valued.

Of course, this is just one example. How can you use this idea of friendship to build stronger teams where you work?

3. Experiences: Creating Belonging Through Shared Experiences

The third Power Value is Experiences. And in this instance, the specific meaning of that value is about more than just doing a job—it's about creating meaningful moments that make people feel like they belong. Shared experiences are what turn coworkers into teammates and acquaintances into trusted friends.

Imagine being part of an amazing project or team activity that brings everyone closer. Maybe you've all gone on a hike while working through your weekly team check-in agenda. Maybe you've all spent some time volunteering together at a local food bank. Some companies have budgets for team trips and adventures...but you don't need to be as elaborate as that. Just find ways to make shared experiences part of how you work. Those experiences stick with you and create a deeper sense of belonging.



One idea we've explored is Experiential Micro Retreats. Instead of traditional company retreats, picture a series of smaller, immersive experiences that are purpose-driven and aligned with the work you do. For example, why not have a place and the supplies necessary for impromptu tea breaks? We all drink too much coffee, and tea preparation and consumption is more of a ritual. That's just one idea for a micro-retreat that could be a powerful way to build team spirit and make everyone feel more connected.

Making Business Human

This organization will strengthen the company by using these Power Values—Personal Responsibility, Friendships, and Experiences. These values build bridges between departments, levels of leadership, and even geographic locations. They create the psychological safety everyone craves, ensuring that you feel connected, respected, and empowered no matter where you are in the company.

So, here's your challenge: Think about these three Power Values for your organization. How can you put shared values to work in your day-to-day life where you work? The real magic happens when you take shared values and apply them in a way that works for you.

Values are the answer. Let's put them to work.

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