

# Appendix 1 - Values and Behaviors

**What is a value?**

**What is a behavior as it relates to values?**

Values form the foundation for everything that takes place in our workplace.

Organizational values establish priorities in daily work life, goals are grounded in identified values, guides decision making, etc. Behaviors are what makes culture do-able. They translate values into tangible, observable and measurable elements that can be implemented, assessed and improved. They define expected actions.

## Build Together

Working with others is a priority, even when it is not related to the goals that you are trying to achieve. You are expected to ask others for help and advice. Anyone can chime in on any subject, including people who don't work at AFS. The person who has to do the work decides how to do it but you should always take the suggestions seriously and try to respond and explain.

### Kindness

We don't want people to be jerks on our team. Some organizations say Evaluate People Accurately, Not 'Kindly'. We're all for accurate assessment but we think it must be done in a kind way. Give as much positive feedback as you can and do it in a public way.

### Co-creation with the Network

Always have the network in mind for everything you do and make sure you get Network involvement when designing for the Network. See the guidelines for Co-Creation.

### Say thanks

Recognize the people that helped you publicly, for example in our #thanks Slack Channel.

### Give feedback effectively

Giving feedback is challenging, it's important to deliver it effectively. When providing feedback always make it about the work itself, focus on the business impact and not the person. Make sure to provide at least one clear and recent example. For managers, it's important to realize that employees react to a negative incident with their managers six times more strongly than they do to a positive one.

### Get to know each other

We use a lot of virtual based communication and if you know the person behind the computer screen it will be easier to prevent conflicts. Encourage people to get to know

each other on a personal level through our team calls, virtual coffee breaks, and during our in-person gatherings.

### **Don't pull rank**

If you have to remind someone of the position you have in the organization you're doing something wrong, people already know we have a hierarchical decision making process. Explain why you're making the decision and respect everyone irrespective of their function.

### **Say sorry**

If you made a mistake apologize. Saying sorry is not a sign of weakness but one of strength. The people that do the most will likely make the most mistakes.

### **No ego**

Don't defend a point to win an argument or double-down on a mistake. You are not your work, you don't have to defend your point, you have to search for the right answer together.

### **See others succeed**

Recognize and observe the successes of others in our organization. Take time to celebrate success!

### **People are not their work**

Always make suggestions about examples of work, not the person ('you didn't respond to my feedback about the design' instead of 'you never listen'). When receiving feedback keep in mind that feedback is the best way to improve and others want to see you succeed.

## **Try things out**

Allied to innovation, creativity and experimentation are central to organizational performance. Don't write a large plan, only write the first step. Trust that you'll know better how to proceed after something is released. In the beginning it hurts to make decisions fast and to see that things are changed with less consultation. But frequently the simplest version turns out to be the best one. Iteration feels uncomfortable, people might ask why something was not perfect. In that case mention that it was an iteration, you spend only x amount of time on it, and that the next iteration will contain y and be ready on z.

### **Make a proposal**

If you need to decide something as a team make a proposal instead of calling a meeting to get everyone's input. Having a proposal will be a much more effective use of everyone's time. The people that receive the proposal should not feel left out, the person making it should not feel bad if a completely different proposal is implemented. Don't let your ego to

be involved early or to see your solution implemented stand in the way of getting to the best outcome.

### **Reduce cycle time**

Short iterations reduce the time we spent trying to make an idea perfect.

### **Work as part of the community**

Small iterations make it easier to work with the wider community. Their work looks more like our work and our work is quicker to give feedback too.

### **Everything is in beta and under construction**

We rarely put draft on any content or proposals. Everything is always in draft and subject to change.

### **Public by default**

Everything at AFS International is public by default.

### **Disagree and commit**

Everything can be questioned but as long as a decision is in place we expect people to commit to executing it, which is a common principle.

### **No Sacred Cows**

We address issues as they arise. You can raise contrarian points of view. You can raise contrarian points of view. Ideally these are based on data and less on assumptions.

## **Work Smart**

We care about working on the right things, not doing more than needed, and not duplicating work. This enables us to achieve more progress which makes our work more fulfilling. Always ask: Does it meet Mission?

### **Boring (simple) solutions**

When we work with 50,000 volunteers and 1,000 staff we need to use the most simple and boring solution for a problem. You can always make it more complex later if that is needed. The speed of innovation for our organization and services is constrained by the total complexity we have added so far, so every little reduction in complexity helps.

### **Be respectful of other's time**

Consider the time investment you are asking others to make with meetings and a permission process. Try to avoid meetings and if one is needed make attendance optional by making the invite optional, by having a clear agenda linked from the invite, and by documenting the outcome. Instead of having people ask permission trust their judgment and offer a consultation process if they have questions.

### **Autonomy**

You should have clear objectives and the freedom to work on them as you see fit.

### **Frugality**

Accomplish more with less. Constraints breed resourcefulness, self-sufficiency and invention. There are no extra points for growing headcount, budget size or fixed expense.

### **Effective verbal answers**

Give short answers to verbal questions so the other party has the opportunity to ask more or move on.

### **Keep broadcasts short and clear**

Keep written communication short, as mentioned in a HBR study: 'A majority say that what they read is frequently ineffective because it's too long, poorly organized, unclear, filled with jargon, and imprecise.'

### **Responsibility over rigidity**

When possible we give people the responsibility to make a decision and hold them accountable for that instead of imposing rules and approval processes.

### **Accept mistakes**

Not every problem should lead to a new process to prevent them. Additional process make all actions more inefficient, a mistake can only affect one. Fail fast, fail cheap.

## **Think Impact**

We focus on the most important issues that make the biggest difference.

### **Think external first**

Always take into account how we can position ourselves to be connecting with external audiences and like-minded (and on-like-minded) organizations/partnerships with everything we do.

### **Growth mindset**

You don't always get results and this will lead to criticism from yourself and/or others. We believe our talents can be developed through hard work, good strategies, and input from others.

### **Be customer oriented**

Always think about the customer as we develop products, programs, content etc.

## Be bold

Our task is to create a culture that takes more risks. The banner for this behavior is 'The riskiest thing is to take no risks'

## Permission to play

From our values we excluded some behaviors that are obvious, we call them our permission to play behavior:

- Be truthful and honest;
- Be dependable, reliable, fair, and respectful;
- Be committed, creative, inspiring, and passionate;
- Be deserving of the trust of our stakeholders;
- Act in the best interest of the organization, our team members, and our stakeholders;
- Act in accordance with the law.
- Respectfulness