

## The value of values

Values can play three roles in an organisation: as a foundation for performance, as binding across separate parts and lastly as a statement of ambition.

In the best cases, values can lift performance by providing a shared language of expectation and differentiation. There are five critical success factors for this to happen.

Whatever the role, critical to the use of values are:

1. Connection to strategy, e.g. competitive differentiation
2. The values having 'meaning' to people in terms of why they come to work
3. Very clear signals about the shifts in behaviours required by the values at a day-to-day level.
4. Explicit dialogue in the organisation which requires staff at all levels to understand what they mean for teams and individuals
5. Behaviour of leaders, who embody the values and invest heavily in demonstration of those values through their own example and what they measure and recognise.

Another, more powerful, use of values is to capture ambition and aspiration. They can be used as a force to drive the organisation forward, linking internal and external expectations.

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