



Minimal Values Elimination

what it is

Too many companies settle for values that make them sound just like everyone else.

Minimal Values Elimination is an exercise from *Get Your Head Out of Your Bottom Line and Build Your Brand on Purpose* by Savage Brands' Bethany Andell and Jackie Dryden. It will help you develop three to seven unique values for your company to set it apart from competitors.

If you end up with Integrity, Teamwork, Safety, and Innovation, ditch your list and start over – you are not pushing hard enough. Each of these words is too broad to differentiate one company from another.

If you find yourself clinging to one of these “values,” dig deeper to express what the word actually means within your culture. Try to identify words that are more specific and memorable.

how to do it ▾

This exercise is best done in a group setting with an organization's leadership, but can also be completed independently.

Simply list the words on a blank sheet of paper or digitally on your device in Google Docs, Microsoft Word, or a note-taking app. If you have access to a whiteboard you can use that to capture the activity.

TIP: Google Docs will allow you to work live and collaboratively with your team while working remotely.



Step 1

Write as many single words as you can to describe your company. Write until no new words are added. Wait until everyone has exhausted his or her list and all words are captured.

*Unified
Inspired
Brilliant*

Step 2

➤ Once the paper, digital sheet or board is covered, **group** similar words and **remove** duplicates.



➤ Next, **eliminate** those words that are too common to differentiate your company.

To help with your elimination, here is a list created by Robert Ferguson at Forging Values, of the 17 most common "minimal values" shared by Fortune 500 companies. We suggest striking these words if any end up on your list:

- Integrity
- Respect
- Excellence
- Responsibility
- Teamwork
- Innovation
- Achievement
- Fairness
- Care
- Passion
- Leadership
- Learning
- Customers
- People
- Safety
- Community
- Environment

➤ And finally, remove any words that are not strongly defended by you or someone in the room.

Step 3

Record your company's values

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

**care to chat
further?**

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