



Paper

Making Values a Reality

Embedding Organisational Values

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1 Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a review of the existing literature on techniques for embedding organisational values, alongside practical examples from organisations who have effectively embedded their values. The research was conducted by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) to understand how values are developed, what the most successful approaches are for communicating and embedding values, and how success can be measured. Considering the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the research also sought to explore how the pandemic and large-scale remote-working may affect the embedding of the values. The research approach included a rapid evidence review of approximately 30 reports, publications and presentations, and case study interviews with five organisations: Plan International, Wellcome Trust, British Council, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, and West Sussex County Council.

The findings showed there was variety in the processes and techniques organisations had used to embed their values. However, some commonalities can be observed in the approaches used, the elements which were most effective, and the challenges faced.

The evidence supported a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches. Collaboration with employees was key for organisations in developing and embedding their values as it encouraged employee ownership of the values, supported an inclusive approach, and helped gather on-the-ground feedback about the values. For example, Plan International formed working groups to develop their values which involved a diverse group of employees. Likewise, collaboration with internal employee groups was important for Wellcome Trust when they embedded their values, as these groups helped to hold the organisation to account and gather feedback from staff about the process.

The research also emphasised that leaders were a central driver of successful embedding. While HR may coordinate the activities, the values need to be driven by leaders. It is important that leaders do this through communicating the values to employees in their day-to-day conversations and linking them to messages about the business objectives. Leaders also need to act as role models in living the values, as employees will look to leaders to set an example of the behaviours that are expected. For top-down approaches to be effective leaders need to take ownership of the values. One method for increasing ownership is providing leaders and managers with freedom to be creative in developing their own ways of socialising the values in their offices and teams. For example, Plan International produced some tools and activities which they shared with leaders but gave them freedom to be creative in developing their own ways of socialising the values in their offices and teams. Guy's and St Thomas' suggest it may also be beneficial to prioritise working with the leaders in the organisation who are interested in implementing the values, and allowing those are not as engaged to be exposed to the values through the management processes they are embedded in.

To effectively communicate values to employees, the research showed the values need to be displayed or used in places that staff interact and engage with often, such as on screensavers or email signatures. Organisations also used modes such as posters, mugs, or displaying them on their intranet but reported varied or short-lived effectiveness of these methods. Values were often also communicated on internal publications, such as at West Sussex County Council where the values are presented on the People Framework which sits alongside their business strategy. It was advised that where values are aspirational, supportive communications are needed to reassure and encourage employees about what is expected of them and prevent employees highlighting where other people are not living them.

Behavioural frameworks were commonly used to bring values to life and demonstrate to employees what living each of the values looks like in reality. Methods for defining the behaviours typically involved working with employees to consider what 'good' looked like. In some organisations such as Plan International, and Guys and St Thomas', additional behaviours were set out for employees at different levels or with increasing responsibilities.

After communicating the organisations values, it is important to socialise them through discussions, group work, activities, and story-telling. Evaluation activities were typically used to encourage employees to consider how well they, or the organisation, are demonstrating the values and then discussing their thoughts. Other effective activities involved sharing stories or using a values award to recognise when employees had demonstrated the values such as at Wellcome Trust and West Sussex County Council. These activities provide an opportunity for employees to see how the values relate to their work. Links should also be made between the values and the organisations work, programmes and objectives so that employees get used to thinking about the values and making reference to them in their day-to-day work.

Organisational values can also be embedded in people management processes. This is done in two ways by considering: how the values can be embedded in the structure of the process, and how the values are demonstrated in how people are treated within that process. For example, within recruitment, the values may underly the criteria used to select candidates but are also demonstrated through how candidates are treated as they go through the recruitment process. Key people management processes to embed organisational values in are: attraction and recruitment, induction, performance management, promotion and reward, and training and development.

The Covid-19 pandemic provides an unexpected context for embedding values. While this context may create some additional barriers, the research suggests that there is no reason the embedding process cannot be successful. The British Council launched their values during the pandemic and recognise that having values-led decision-making was particularly important during this period of crisis as the organisation's response was under greater scrutiny. Supportive communications are necessary to ensure employees are clear about the values, their purpose, and what is expected of them and creative thinking may be necessary to find remote methods for socialising the values. Importantly, organisations should draw on positive examples of employee behaviour during the pandemic that is in line with the values and celebrate it.

The research found little evidence of how organisations measure if their values have been successfully embedded. The process of embedding values within an organisation is ongoing, so evaluation is a critical component to ensuring they are continuously reviewed and refreshed. The approach for evaluating embeddedness depends on what is being measured, what the most appropriate method is, and what resources are available, all of which guided by the what the values are, and the organisational context. Guy's and St Thomas' and Plan International assessed embeddedness through staff feedback in surveys, preferably using quantitative measures that can be tracked over time. Indirect measures, such as training choices and retention, were also used by Wellcome Trust as determinants of success.

2 Research on Embedding Organisational Values

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) undertook a review of the existing literature on approaches to embedding organisational values and provided practical examples from other organisations that have embedded values effectively.

The research aimed to answer the following primary research questions:

- How are values developed?
- What are the most successful approaches to expressing, communicating, and socialising organisational values?
- How can values be successfully embedded in business and HR processes?
 - What methods can be used to ensure values are embedded inclusively?
 - How may Covid-19, and the remote working context, affect the embedding process?
- How can success be measured?

2.1 Research approach

The research approach consisted of a rapid evidence review, and case study interviews. The purpose of the literature review was to build on IES' existing understanding of embedding values by capturing recent studies, specifically focusing on the effectiveness of embedding methods and techniques. Given the time and resource available, a full systematic search was not conducted. Sources included known resources for relevant evidence (eg independent research organisations), and sources flagged by contacts with expertise in these areas. In all, just over 30 reports, publications and presentations were reviewed.

To gather practical examples of methods and learnings from other organisations, IES consulted with experts in our networks to identify organisations who had experience in successfully embedding values, and invited them to take part in a case study interview. The case studies included five organisations:

- Plan International: a large international development and humanitarian organisation who aim to advance children's rights and equality for girls.
- Wellcome Trust: a large charitable foundation, whose work focuses on solving the world's health challenges.
- British Council: a public body who work internationally to provide opportunities through culture and education.

- Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust: who runs multiple hospitals and community services.
- West Sussex County Council: the authority that governs the county of West Sussex.

2.2 Report structure

The following report presents the findings of the literature review and case studies of each of the participating organisations. The main findings of the literature review are presented as follows:

- A brief background on the values, and why they are important.
- Evidence of practical approaches for embedding organisational values, and ways to embed them in people management practices.
- How to manage the embedding process.

Throughout the review, supporting extracts from the case studies are included where relevant, and summary boxes are provided with key learnings.

The five case studies are presented in full following the main findings of the review, and report on how the organisational values were developed, how they were communicated and socialised, the practical methods used to embed their values, how success was measured, and advice offered to others. The case studies are written based on the information provided by interviewees, and therefore contain a variety of approaches, not all of which are reflected as best practice in the literature. The report concludes with a summary of the main findings of the research, and recommendations based on the evidence.

3 Summary of main findings

3.1 Developing values

3.1.1 What are organisational values?

Values exist on several levels: individual, organisational, and societal. While these are interlinked, they may not always be aligned. Organisational values describe the core principles that a company wishes its employees to follow in all aspects of their behaviour, work, and decision-making. However, organisational values can be difficult to identify, articulate and influence. They are thought to be deep-seated, lying beneath some of the more visible aspects of an organisation, such as the behaviours and decisions demonstrated by employees (Hirsh, 2016). As such, the articulated organisational values may not always reflect the actual values held by members of an organisation (Schein and Schein, 2017). People's beliefs are personal, and organisations cannot change those by simply articulating new organisational values, and expecting employees to change their own values to align with new messages from organisational leaders.

3.1.2 Why do organisations develop values?

The challenge for many organisations, is to identify and foster values that support future ambitions. Many create a set of official organisational values in the anticipation that these will permeate the organisation and provide a 'moral compass' for the behaviour of their workers (Vantrappen and de Jong, 2018). Organisational change can also be a driver for developing values (see Box 1).

Box 1. Organisational change drives values development

Evidence from organisation case studies

The case studies demonstrated that the process of developing and embedding values was commonly driven by planned programmes of organisational change. For example, Plan International developed their values as part of a wider transformation programme, following the appointment of a new Chief Officer, and West Sussex County Council decided to re-invent their values after some poor inspection results and a change of senior personnel. Similarly, Wellcome Trust and the British Council began working on their values due to strategic changes within the organisation. The work of developing values encouraged organisations to reflect upon the culture they wanted to build. The values also guided organisations through that period of change, by setting a standard for decision-making and implementation.

Full details of the development processes are reported in the case studies (see chapter 4).

Some research shows that having the right values in place can help an organisation to succeed (Armstrong and Brown 2019). This could be because creating a shared identity

can foster a sense of belonging among staff, which may improve well-being, retention and productivity (Dermol and Širca, 2017). However, the development of, or review of values is often reactive to a problem (Hirsh, 2016), such as when the existing organisational culture is under strain or has been called into question.

Some commentators suggest that galvanising workers behind a common set of values is particularly important for large organisations, and those with multiple sites, to harmonise behaviour and decision-making (Robinson 2013). In the case of the Health & Safety Executive's 'Better together' initiative for example, a review of the organisation's values was prompted by a move from a split headquarters to a new, joint site. This review led to the realisation that despite a pre-existing common values statement, the culture and values permeating the two sites were very different (Garrow, 2010).

3.1.3 Approaches to developing values

There are conflicting views on whether the development and choice of organisational values should be driven from the bottom-up or top-down (Culliney and Robertson-Smith, 2013). Top-down approaches rely on an organisation's leaders to define values, which are then communicated to employees. Whereas a bottom-up approach typically asks employees to reflect on what they think the values are, or should be. Some literature suggests that, as values always already exist in an organisation and its people, change requires a community effort. Others suggest that the senior management team has the responsibility to identify the values that can permeate the organisation (Vantrappen and de Jong 2018). It is generally agreed however, that organisational values are primarily inspired by the company founders, and are further influenced by subsequent personalities and activities (Hyde and Williamson, 2000).

Summary

Organisational values are present in the underlying behaviours and approaches to decision-making taken within an organisation. However, articulating those values can be challenging, and so there is a risk that the values defined by an organisation will not reflect the true values that exist.

The development of values is commonly driven by wider organisational change. In these cases, values often represent the culture an organisation aspires to achieve and should be used as a navigational tool for organisational transformation.

Although there are differences of opinion about how organisational values are generated, it is accepted that they are established by founders and then influenced by subsequent personalities and activities. However, top-down and bottom-up methods both are required to successfully identify an organisation's values.

An effective embedding approach is critical to avoid simply stating new values and expecting individuals to change their beliefs about the organisation, and modifying their behaviour.

3.2 Embedding organisational values

3.2.1 Considering the wider context

The implementation of organisational values is reliant on the wider societal context or 'macro' culture (Schein and Schein 2017). If a desired value conflicts with what is expected of an individual in wider society, it is less likely that they will exhibit it while at work. Individual and societal values may not always be reflected in organisational values, which can create conflict in the embedding process that needs to be considered (see Box 2). Organisational maturity and stability will also impact upon how successfully a shift in values can be achieved. The longer an organisation has existed in a steady state, the less likely it is that its culture will be malleable (Schein 2017).

Box 2. Personal versus organisational values

Evidence from organisation case studies

When embedding values, organisations need to consider how employees' personal values could conflict with the organisation's values. For example, Plan International recognised that because of the type of work that they do, it was important that their employees needed to continue to represent the organisation's values outside, as well as inside work. However, this was a challenge, particularly in a large, international organisation, where personal and societal values may conflict with the standards Plan International wanted their employees to demonstrate (see chapter 4.1).

How values are embedded in HR processes can also be a contentious point for the balance of personal and organisation values. At Wellcome Trust, organisational values were embedded in the development process. However, it was critical that employee objectives were not values-based (ie delivering against a particular objective) because doing so could create a conflict with the individual's personal values. Instead, values were embedded into development through reflecting on how employees delivered their objectives rather than what they had achieved (see chapter 4.2).

3.2.2 Creating and sustaining organisational values

Schein identified a set of actions, systems and processes that establish and maintain organisational values. He called these 'creators' and 'sustainers' respectively (Schein and Schein, 2017). The 'creator' actions the initial methods that the organisation should use to embed their values, whereas the 'sustainers' are secondary mechanisms, which can be used to keep values alive within the organisation. In the initial stages of embedding values, you should reflect upon how values and associated behaviours are demonstrated in:

- What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control?
- How leaders react to critical incidents and organisational crises?
- How resources are allocated?
- Role modelling and coaching?

- Reward and status?
- Recruitment, promotion, and dismissal?

Then consider how your values can be sustained through:

- The organisation's design, systems, and procedures.
- Organisational traditions.
- Building design.
- Formal statements and charters.

3.2.3 Expressing values

Making values meaningful

Constant communication of values is not always effective (Dermol and Širca 2017). Many value statements feature aspirational characteristics that cannot be questioned because they appeal to universally-held beliefs or values, leading to workers becoming cynical about their relevance (Hirsh 2016). It is hard for employees to believe that organisational values are meaningful if they are seen to be the same as those stated by many other organisations. Organisations must seek to explain what 'living the values' means, in a way that employees can understand and relate to.

To make your values more meaningful, you should avoid using over-used, generic terms and ensure that values differentiate by relating them to the specific context of your organisation (Dermol and Širca 2017). Exemplifying values through a set of practical behaviours is one method you could use to help staff better understand values, and facilitate self-reflection (see Box 3). It is important to articulate the behaviours before communication of the values is undertaken, so that they are not initially perceived as abstract. It is also critical that the behaviours are positioned as examples, not an exhaustive list, to prevent them being a checklist. Employees must feel free to show the values in other ways.

Another approach is to identify values on a scale and use an indicator to show the extent to which a particular characteristic should be adopted. This involves taking a trait, describing it at two extreme positions, and then identifying the desired position for your organisation (Vantrappen and de Jong 2018). For example, the value 'be responsive' could be positioned as a balance of adhering to rules and procedures at one end, and taking into account an individual's circumstances at the other end. However, this technique leaves the actual behaviour that employees should demonstrate open to interpretation, in line with where the indicator is on the scale. This method could be better adopted alongside a behaviour framework, to demonstrate where a desired behaviour sits within the extremes of a value.

Box 3. Using behaviours to express values

Evidence from organisation case studies

It was common amongst case study organisations to outline a set of behaviours to accompany their values. Using behaviours helped employees understand what demonstrating each of the values would look like. Different methods were used to identify the behaviours. For example, Plan International used a staff survey to generate descriptions of values in employees' own words. This text was used in drafting the behavioural descriptions of the values (see chapter 4.1). Whereas the hospital Trust worked with individuals who had been recognised for living the values well, to determine the behaviours they carried out (see chapter 4.4).

Some behavioural frameworks included separate frameworks for employees at different levels or with different responsibilities. For example, Plan International and the British Council incorporated the values into a framework of behaviours for those in leadership roles (see chapter 4.3). Doing this articulated to leaders what is expected of them in how they work, over and above the core set of behaviours. Plan International took this one step further and devised a values-based leadership progression framework which outlined the behaviours to achieve and drop as employees progressed. The hospital Trust also applied multiple frameworks, however their approach used additional frameworks for supervisors, managers, and those at executive level. These frameworks emphasise how the values are the same across the organisation but are manifest in behaviours which may be task or level specific.

3.2.4 Communicating values

Once you are clear about what you want to communicate, there are several key platforms where you should consider sharing your values before you begin embedding them within HR processes (discussed in chapter 3.3). These include:

- Your organisation's website.
- Employee handbooks.
- Job descriptions.
- Contracts of employment.
- Annual reports.
- Prospectus documents.

Some organisations go further and use workplace décor, art, signage, posters newsletters, videos and digital communications to share their values (Ludema and Johnson 2015; see Box 4). The HSE 'Better together' initiative utilised a space called 'the street', which was a large area in a central space of one of HSE's offices, to create a mural of images of employees work around values. The use of this space helped to celebrate the organisation's achievements and foster a greater understanding of its values (Garrow, 2010).



The Street mural in Redgrave Court, Better ... together, Dr Valerie Garrow, IES, July 2010

Box 4. Using collateral to communicate values

Evidence from organisational case studies

The case studies provided mixed views on the benefits of communicating organisational values via merchandise such as mugs, notebooks, and posters. These tools can be costly to produce and may only create short-lived excitement. The cost of producing these tools may be particularly concerning for public-body and charity organisations, such as Plan International (see chapter 4.1).

However, it was recognised that displaying values in these ways can help to remind employees what the values are, re-enforce their importance, and not all methods need to cost money. It is also important to choose merchandise that employees cannot get away from (ie a T shirt may never be worn, or a mug never used). Values can be easily displayed on the organisation's intranet, in email signatures, or as a desktop background, which employees see daily. These methods were implemented by both Wellcome Trust and the hospital Trust (see chapters 4.2 and 4.4).

The British Council also utilised their recruitment collateral to share their values with prospective candidates, such as embedding them on their careers website and promotional materials, as well as in the recruitment process (see chapter 4.3). This helped communicate the organisational values to candidates prior to applying, thereby setting the standard for what they could expect from the British Council as an employer and how they would be expected to behave.

West Sussex County Council also used many of these approaches to communicate their values, and recognised email signatures as one of the most effective methods. However, it was emphasised that organisation's must keep refreshing these visuals to ensure they remain engaging (see chapter 4.5).

3.2.5 Socialisation

Socialisation is the behaviour of leaders and workers that demonstrates an organisation's values. Socialisation of staff, by creating experiences where they can learn from others is therefore critical to fostering values (see Box 5). This appears to be at its most powerful

when it involves interaction between staff from all levels, and across different parts of an organisation (Dermol and Sirca 2017). Group activities help staff to explore what the organisational statements about values may really mean for them. Leaders and HR professionals who have been involved in creating value statements can forget that when they are communicated with employees, they may not immediately understand how those values, or behavioural descriptions, may apply to them.

For example, the HSE's 'Better together' initiative involved a series of workshops and 'coffee and cake' sessions to enable staff from across the organisation to explore values and behaviours within the organisation. This 'making connections' phase was then followed by a 'collaborate and innovate' phase, where creative solutions were developed and integrated into existing systems and processes (Garrow, July 2010). Workshops such as these have two purposes: the first is simply to re-enforce the importance of the values. The second is to allow employees to explore the values in fun and interesting ways, which enable them to digest what the values are and understand what they mean, before they are asked to demonstrate them.

Box 5. Activities to socialise values

Evidence from organisation case studies

Organisations used various activities to socialise their values, which typically focused on discussing, evaluating, and celebrating when employees had lived them. Workshops were often used to encourage employees to talk about the values, what they looked like in practice, and how they linked to their work. Following development of their behaviour framework, West Sussex County Council ran cross-organisational workshops which encouraged employees to think about what the behaviours mean in the ways they work with each other, and also what they mean for service delivery (see chapter 4.5).

Tools were also developed to enable staff to evaluate how well they, their team, or the organisation, were at living the values. For example, at the hospital Trust, employees used stickers to visually show where they were succeeding on each of the values. This helped people to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and formed the basis for further group discussion (see chapter 4.4). Other examples of activities included hosting values days, quizzes, and points systems (see Plan International case study in chapter 4.1).

It is also important to share examples of how employees have demonstrated the values. This could be done through storytelling exercises, or by sharing photos or videos within the organisation. Reward systems can also be used to celebrate how people have lived the values (see Box 6).

Another socialisation technique could include an award made to staff who demonstrate organisational values (see Box 6). For example, Virgin Media's awards scheme involved staff reporting the achievements of peers in relation to the values. Use of original and creative ways to re-enforce and reward employees who demonstrate the values can be an effective way of keeping the values at the forefront of employees' minds, and show them the benefits of living them (Culliney and Robertson-Smith, 2013).

Box 6. Values awards

Evidence from organisation case studies

Rewarding employees for demonstrating the organisation's values is an effective way of re-enforcing their importance, and sharing examples of how living of the values can be done well. In some organisations such as Wellcome Trust, values are aligned with bonuses, or other financial reward systems (see chapter 4.2). However, using financial rewards can shift the motivation for employees to demonstrate the values from internal to external, which can have negative long-term implications.

Financial incentives are not necessarily required for awards to be effective. Multiple case study organisations believed values awards can be successful when they simply provide recognition from the organisation for an employee's behaviour. Winners could be announced via the company's intranet or in meetings. For example, West Sussex County Council held a peer-nominated values and recognition awards event which involved a ceremony with senior leaders. They also had a 'Heroes wall' on their intranet which acted as a space for employees to thank individuals or teams for their work. These activities helped to socialise the values through storytelling (see chapter 4.5). It can also be valuable to have awards which are peer-nominated as this enables colleagues to recognise each other's behaviour and influence rewards.

Story-telling

Story-telling is a powerful way of socialising values. Leaders can use stories about their own experiences to support the embedding of values, or highlight where other people have done so. KPMG, a global organisation providing financial services, is a national managing partner for diversity, inclusion and responsibility, and suggests using storytelling to support diversity and inclusion through values (Ludema and Johnson 2015). To do this successfully you should follow these top tips:

- Tell a genuine story about how you have personally been impacted by diversity in your own voice. Do not read from a script.
- Be sure you are deeply involved in the story and not recalling observations from a distance.
- Reveal some of the personal challenges encountered during your diversity journey.
- Ask for reactions or questions.
- Share your story often, and with various levels and audiences, including external constituents.

Be engaged beyond the moment. These principles can be adopted when engaging in general storytelling as a method of socialising your organisation's values, to ensure the activity is engaging and effective.

3.2.6 Leadership

Role models are particularly important in the socialisation process (Vargas and Negro 2019). Employee's perceptions that the organisational values are being applied in practice

by leaders, can create a stronger commitment to the company (Vantrappen and de Jong 2018). While leaders at all levels influence the behaviour of workers, it is the senior management that employees will expect to set an example.

Values can be made meaningful by using them to underpin day-to-day senior decision making. For example, asking the question 'How does this decision fit with our core values?' (Ludema and Johnson 2015) When UK Immigration Enforcement developed a set of values in the mid-2010s, the early work focused on creating consistent messages from all leaders and agreeing that those leaders would model the behaviour they expect from others (Garrow, 2019).

The best senior leaders ensure that Schein's culture 'creators' and 'sustainers' actively promote the organisational values that they wish to develop. HR professionals should ask themselves if their organisations' senior leaders do the following things (Ludema and Johnson 2015):

- Do they actively participate in onboarding, mentoring, training, and coaching?
- Do they apply resources, hire, dismiss, and promote, to support and reinforce the values?
- Do they constantly tell stories and recognise people who put the values into practice?
- Do they promote dialogue about the values in senior team meetings, company-wide events, and through all communication channels?
- Do they use the values to evaluate company decisions, both big and small?
- Do they proudly post the values in your offices, on company merchandise, and in visible public places?
- Do they use the values to set strategy and build customer relationships?
- Do they relentlessly make sure that the values are integrated into every system and process of the organisation?

Using values in a crisis

The behaviour of leaders becomes particularly important at times of crisis, such as during the Covid-19 pandemic (see Box 7). The way that leaders deal with crisis can show the level to which they personally hold the organisational values. Leaders' response to crises can also reveal important underlying assumptions that may create new norms, values and working procedures for an organisation (Schein 2017).

Box 7. Embedding values within the Covid-19 context

Evidence from organisation case studies

In general, the case study organisations believed that embedding values within the Covid-19 remote-working context was achievable, although may require greater creativity. Many of the activities and socialisation methods that organisations undertook could be transferred online using video conferencing, online platforms and virtual tools. For example, the interviewee from Plan International noted that online tools are available, which would enable organisations to use virtual post-it notes (see chapter 4.1).

Greater work may be required to encourage employees to engage with the values, without having any face-to-face interaction. Moreover, the interviewee from Wellcome Trust felt the messaging that was presented alongside the values may need to be more supportive because of the context and offer different ways for employees to engage with the values (see chapter 4.2). The Covid-19 context may also have increased organisation briefings, as the company responds to the crisis and tries to keep in touch with employees working remotely. The hospital Trust suggested these additional briefings may be an opportunity to talk about the values (see chapter 4.4).

The case study interviewees also recommended that when embedding values in the Covid-19 context, organisations should reflect on how they have responded, and how employees have behaved during the crisis. There may be many positive examples of employees demonstrating the organisation's values during this period, which should be celebrated and learnt from. For example, West Sussex County Council had continued to use their awards and recognition methods to celebrate how individuals and teams had responded to the crisis (see chapter 4.5).

Summary

Organisational context is an important consideration, and it should be recognised that embedding values may be harder to achieve in a well-established and large organisation. When talking about the values organisations need to be clear how they relate and align to other existing standards and frameworks.

A high volume of communication on values is no guarantee of success. One of the difficulties with values is that they often seem bland or similar to other organisations and so do not resonate with staff. Suggestions for making values more meaningful include avoiding generic terms, setting desired characteristics on a scale, and providing practical examples for their implementation. If values have already been set then developing a set of behaviours should be a priority to ensure the values are meaningful.

Tools for communicating values include the company website and documentation. However, more innovative opportunities exist within the organisational space, including workplace décor, and less formal communications with staff and external stakeholders eg social media and newsletters. It is important to use methods that employees cannot avoid seeing, to prevent expense on costly merchandise that only leads to short-term excitement around the values.

Ultimately, however, staff learn organisational values through the actions and behaviour of colleagues. Both understanding and embedding can be facilitated through workshops, coffee mornings and the creation of staff recognition schemes. Storytelling by influencers can play an important role in supporting the socialisation of values. Leaders also play a part in keeping the messaging of the values alive by incorporating them into day-to-day meetings and presentations.

Leaders are important role models, supporting the communication and socialisation of values. This is particularly important in times of crisis, where their actions will be watched closely by workers. Periods of crisis can lead to new ways of working and the Covid-19 pandemic has created a backdrop that may be an active influencer on how staff, partners, and the public perceive an organisation and its values. However, the pandemic may also provide positive examples of employees living the values, which should be celebrated.

3.3 Integrating values into people management and HR processes

To be successful, organisational values need to be fully integrated into systems and processes that drive decisions and behaviour. Crucially, this is not just about referencing the values, but considering whether people management processes and practices engender the values in their implementation or act as a barrier. For example, it may not be enough to mention the importance of diversity in an internal staff promotion process, if that very process frequently excludes the employment of more diverse external recruits.

To increase alignment of organisational actions with organisational values, HR professionals should ask the following questions (Hyde and Williamson 2000):

- Do the systems and processes achieve your business objectives?
- Do systems and processes promote behaviours associated with your core values?
- Have processes that conflict with your core values been removed?

One of the most effective mechanisms for integrating an organisation's values is through what founders, leaders, and managers systematically pay attention to. The behaviours and processes that they notice and comment on, and systematically measure, control, and reward, show employees what they believe in and care about (Schein 2017).

The literature suggests that the processes that should be reviewed when embedding your values include:

- The recruitment process to ensure that it presents the right message to attract applicants whose personal values are likely to align with your organisations values.
- Selection processes that embody the values, not just in their criteria, but in the way candidates are treated.
- Induction and other training programmes; to ensure that new recruits especially are given a clear initial steer about the values, why they matter, and how they are translated into behaviour.
- The criteria used to guide recruitment; appointment; advancement; succession; retention and release decisions.
- Incentives and rewards.
- Penalties and sanctions.
- Standards and behaviour of management, especially senior management.
- Environmental and other 'hygiene' factors (eg status, job security, salary, work conditions, pay, annual leave, benefits).

An example from Immigration Enforcement outlines more specifically the processes that the organisation identified needed to be in place to support their values (Garrow, 2019). Firstly, they required continued top-level and middle management support; both financial support and the approval for time and space for staff involved to carry out the work. Some suggested embedding the values may require dedicated staff resources. They also

needed effective succession planning to ensure there was a pipeline of people who would ensure the movement continued to grow, nurture Immigration Enforcement's cultural values and respond to its changing needs. They sought opportunities for staff to be involved in change projects throughout the organisation, with further opportunities to build skills and be recognised for their contribution. Lastly, they desired conscious embedding of cultural values into every organisational process such as recruitment, reward, performance management and communication.

3.3.1 Recruitment, selection, and induction

Recruitment is considered a powerful tool, as it is the one point that you may be able to select people who have individual values that are compatible with the organisation (see Box 8). Recruiting the right people, with the right values, can lead to higher job satisfaction and lower staff turnover and, where values do not align, the opposite can be true (Dermol and Širca 2017). To attract candidates who are compatible with the organisational values, you should consider how the values are communicated in external recruitment materials, and where you advertise opportunities. Practical tips for recruiting individuals with compatible values include thinking of questions that ask candidates to recount experiences that show them living your values (Ludema and Johnson 2015). One research report that explores successful senior leaders, found that outstanding leaders will go so far as identifying the right people and creating roles for them (Tamkin, Pearson, Hirsh, and Constable, 2010).

Recruiting based on values is not, however, without issue and there is some conflict in the literature on this approach. One report suggested that an individual's values do not have to align with an organisation's culture and maintained that diversity and 'misfits' can promote the long term health of an organisation (Chandrakumara, 2011). Arguably the most impressionable period in a worker's tenure at an organisation is when they first join. This period provides a unique window of opportunity for your values to be shared with new recruits. Formative experiences will shape their perception of your organisation's values and the extent to which they adopt these (Schein, 2017).

Box 8. Values within the recruitment and induction process

Evidence from organisation case studies

It was common that case study organisations had embedded their values in their recruitment and induction process. This was important because it meant candidates were exposed to the values early on and knew what to expect when they joined the organisation. Values were often included on the organisation's website, and were built into job descriptions and applications. Candidates were also commonly assessed against values during the interview phase, typically using standard questions provided by the organisation.

The values were often also included in the organisation's induction programme. This process typically presented employees with the values and explained how they were developed and what the associated behaviours were.

Full details of how values were embedded in the recruitment process are reported in the case studies (see chapter 4).

3.3.2 Training, performance and promotion

Mentoring, training, and performance feedback have all been identified as important opportunities for you to reinforce organisational values (see Box 9). An Organisation's need to align their performance management tools with their values in order to assess employees on *how* they deliver in their role, as well as *what* they deliver. Practical tools include the development of a 'values competency framework' that outlines the behaviours that support the organisational values and can be used for rating performance.

Box 9. Values in the performance management process

Evidence from organisation case studies

Values were commonly embedded in the performance management process amongst case study organisations. Doing so helped staff to understand what it meant to live the values, and recognised their importance. It was important though, that the values were measured within employee's objectives, rather than as a separate standard. For example, the hospital Trust used a grid tool which assessed *how* employees had delivered each of the values against each of their objectives (see chapter 4.4). Likewise, Wellcome Trust had embedded the values in their feedback mechanisms, by asking colleagues to provide feedback about *how* an employee had demonstrated a particular value (see chapter 4.2).

West Sussex County Council had also embedded their values in their performance management process. However, to avoid the values being perceived as a tick-box or form filling exercise, greater emphasis was put on managers having regular, open, values-based conversations with employees (see chapter 4.5).

Frameworks can also be created to define behaviours at different levels of seniority. For example, one organisation identified separate behaviours from the single value of 'creativity' for all employees, directors and above, and vice-presidents and above (Ludema and Johnson 2015):

Employee at any level:	Director and above:	Vice president and above:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understands what we mean by creativity. ■ Actively participates in idea generation. ■ Encourages colleagues to share creative ideas. ■ Shows a willingness to learn new approaches and integrate new ideas. ■ When faced with a challenge, looks for a satisfactory solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Shows ability to integrate ideas across departments and industries. ■ Regularly coaches others to look for creative approaches. ■ Brings new ideas to existing processes and products. ■ Quickly identifies stagnating concepts and finds new paths to success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fosters an environment where team members can pursue creative approaches. ■ Carefully balances creativity and risk in decision-making processes. ■ Able to generate or galvanise support for new ideas that benefit the organisation at a macro level. ■ Portrays the company's

-
- Shows resilience in the face of challenges.
 - Brings outside ideas into the organisation.
- creative capacity in external markets and media.

Promotion, reward, and recognition

Reward and recognition, including staff progression, can also play an important part in ‘feeding’ desired behaviours (Ludema and Johnson 2015). These mechanisms can positively reinforce workers behaviour, creating personal success for workers who embrace organisational values. Like performance, it is important within the promotion process that equal attention is paid to *how* employees carry out their work, as is to *what* people have achieved. This is particularly true for senior roles, as employees need to see examples of individuals being promoted, based on them living the values. This extends, of course, to punishment, and therefore disciplinaries and dismissals too (Schein 2017). One report found that the more that workers see their work as directly contributing towards organisational success, the more they are likely to identify with the organisation and its values (Dermol and Širca 2017).

3.3.3 Aligning values with other organisations

In certain circumstances, organisations may need to consider how their values align with other organisations, such as when working with partners, or following a merger of businesses (see Box 10). It has been suggested that, not only should partners and suppliers be treated in line with an organisation’s values, but that they should also be encouraged to share those values. One research report found that organisations can support the integration of organisational culture, by creating a smaller number of suppliers whom they can work more closely with (Brown, Hirsh, and Reilly, 2019).

Box 10. Integrating the values of different organisations

Evidence from organisation case studies

The case studies provided some evidence of how organisations have integrated their values with those of different organisations. For example, the hospital Trust had previously merged with other organisations and identified the need to ensure a common set of values was created, which incorporated the best parts of each organisation’s culture. Doing this involved conducting workshops to explore the culture and behaviours of the joining organisations, and then reviewing the Trust’s values framework to ensure they were incorporated (see chapter 4.4).

It may be beneficial for organisations to communicate their values with the organisations they work with. Plan International did this through their procurement process, by sharing their values and behaviours with their suppliers (see chapter 4.1). It was not necessary for Plan International to integrate or impose their values on their suppliers in the same way that the hospital Trust did, but sharing the values sets a standard for how the organisations worked together and Plan International’s expectations of the supplier.

Summary

It is important that people management systems and processes are reviewed to ensure that they support the organisational values through the structure or content of the process, and the experience the individual has as they go through the process. Processes to review include recruitment and selection, induction, training, performance management, reward, promotion, annual leave, incentives, and disciplinary processes.

Recruitment is often considered a unique opportunity to attract and select people with personal values that align with the organisational values. Values-based recruitment involves identifying where personal values align with those within the organisation and building this into the selection process. However, issues of diversity, inclusion and resilience need to be considered too. While some behaviours associated with the values are required by organisations, candidates must be allowed space to demonstrate the values in different ways. Induction is also an important time, as 'first impressions' can be influence how new staff view organisational values.

Training, performance reviews, rewards and recognition are also important mechanisms that can encourage or hinder the adoption of organisational values. The development of a 'values competency framework' can be used to support performance reviews, with the resulting reward and recognition used to reinforce desired behaviours. Conversely, creating a more explicit link between individual performance and organisational performance may have a positive impact on the adoption of organisational values.

The selection and treatment, as well as the behaviour, of partners and suppliers will also reflect on an organisation's values. Organisations should consider what this means for the different organisations and agencies they work with, and whether it is possible to embed their values in their procurement processes.

3.4 Managing the process of embedding values

Research suggests that the management of embedding values is best led from within the organisation (see Box 11). However, the approach typically taken by consultants could be adopted by an internal team within an organisation to guide the embedding process. A consultant-led approach can be summarised as in the following steps (Culliney and Robertson-Smith 2013):

1. Identify values that define the organisation.
2. Review current practices and identify areas for attention.
3. Identify concrete objectives.
4. Plan and implement desired changes.
5. Monitor and evaluate progress.
6. Recognise and reward effort and achievement.

The HSE 'Better together' initiative was managed by a small, carefully selected coordinating team of four employees who brought an in-depth understanding of both the organisational context and the potential barriers to cultural change. The team were chosen from various organisational levels and had experience in HR, culture change, and change management, as well as extensive networks of contacts across the organisation. This was particularly important as HSE had undergone several change initiatives and

there was a generally-held cynicism relating to the organisation's ability to embed such programmes (Garrow, 2010).

Box 11. Accountability and feedback from staff

Evidence from organisation case studies

Case study organisations demonstrated that involving staff and gathering feedback helped to facilitate the successful embedding of the organisation's values. This collaborative approach helped hold the organisation accountable in their decisions, and embedded the values in a way that employees were receptive to. In some organisations, such as the hospital Trust, staff were involved in developing the behaviours framework (see chapter 4.4). Likewise, employees were involved in the development of West Sussex County Council's People Framework which set out how the organisation would deliver against five core pillars in line with their values, and formed the basis for multiple activities such as policy reviews (see chapter 4.5).

Greater representation also improved the quality of the embedding process and ensured other staff did not perceive it as hierarchical. For example, Plan International utilised working groups of a diverse mix of staff to embed the values (see chapter 4.1). Similarly, at Wellcome Trust and West Sussex County Council, their strong employee networks in particular interest groups, helped hold the organisation to account on how the values were embedded in their area of interest, and gathered on-the-ground feedback from staff (see chapter 4.2 and 4.5). This could also be accomplished using values champions who are nominated to gather feedback from employees throughout the embedding process.

3.4.1 The role of HR

The HR team is often seen as having an important role in articulating and promoting values through people and organisational development. However, although HR may act as guardians of the values, and ensure they are maintained, they should not be the creators of the values (Ludema and Johnson 2015). The case studies suggested leaders should be the face of embedding the values (see Box 12).

The HR role has been summarised as follows (Culliney and Robertson-Smith 2013):

- Communicating values.
- Weaving values into HR policies and procedures:
 - Value-based competency frameworks (integrated desired behaviours).
 - Value-based performance management.
 - Value-based training at all levels.
- Showing deep belief in and commitment to values.
- Acting as a role model.

Box 12. Leadership-led embedding process

Evidence from organisation case studies

Some case study organisations emphasised that the embedding process should be led by those in leadership roles. For example, Plan International strongly felt that for the embedding of

values to be successful it needed to be delivered by leaders, and HR's role should be in the background (see chapter 4.1). Wellcome Trust agreed that the methodology for embedding values needed to be created and executed by leaders, although they recognised that the transition of the work from HR to leadership can be difficult in practice (see chapter 4.2).

It is also key that leaders act as role models of the values, as their actions influence and re-enforce how other employees should behave. The importance of leaders living the values was recognised in all case studies. West Sussex County Council emphasised the need for leaders to act as 'real models' rather than role models: this meant leaders needed to genuinely embody the values and ensure that employees felt they were experiencing 'the real you' (see chapter 4.5). In overtly living the values, leaders need to reference the values in their day-to-day conversations. For example, at Wellcome Trust, leaders were encouraged to attach the values to conversations about the business and its objectives (see chapter 4.2).

3.4.2 Measuring success

There was a dearth of research on how to know when you are achieving success in embedding organisational values, although there are few examples of how organisations have approached this. Success is typically defined as when workers are behaving in line with organisational values, however this can be a risky method of evaluation if an objective and concrete measure is not used. Subjective measures of whether employees are demonstrating values can have negative implications for bias and diversity within an organisation. Moreover, how organisations measure the success of their values, depends on what those values are.

Common tools used to measure the success of values include organisation-wide staff and client surveys. These can provide a 'snapshot' of an organisation's culture and help to identify improvements (Culliney and Robertson-Smith 2013). Below is a series of examples of how some organisations have measured success.

Immigration Enforcement

Immigration Enforcement's Culture Call measured success as follows (Garrow, 2019):

- Shifts in the People Survey in the coming years.
- The ease in which the new performance management system is embedded.
- The numbers of people signing up to become culture callers.
- Evidence of a more human way of approaching problems through front line conversations across the organisation about how things could work better.
- Less reliance on central transformation teams and more projects and programmes that deliver transformation across organisational boundaries.

Stericycle

Within a commercial business example, a new senior leader at Stericycle (a US specialist waste disposal organisation) asked their executive colleagues to set the metrics that would be used to measure the value of company culture, underpinned by the values of 'continuous

improvement,' 'customer first,' 'accountability,' 'integrity,' and 'enjoying our work'. Measures of success included (Ludema and Johnson 2015):

- An annual engagement survey of staff.
- The amount, and cost of team member attrition (if culture-changes can reduce attrition by 10 percent, it will save Stericycle \$4 to \$5 million annually).
- Customer loyalty.
- Engagement and profitability by site.
- Participation in wellness and other benefit programs.

Ministry of Justice

At the Ministry of Justice, workshop participants were asked to consider a series of questions relating to how effectively the organisation had been in embedding values. This more qualitative approach could be used as a measure within staff workshops to gauge success, using the following questions:

- Is the link between values and behaviours clear and aspirational, but not 'airy fairy'?
- Are our values reflected in our systems, procedures, and rituals? What keeps them front of mind?
- How well have the values been embedded in our HR and management processes?
- How are leaders held to account? Do they evaluate their own contribution to embedding the values?
- Is your communication effective in keeping values front of mind for all and clear to new joiners?
- Are there any 'misalignments' in how values are reflected in leadership and people management?
- How well does HR community role model values?
- Are there any culture 'creators' and 'sustainers' that could reinforce values more effectively?
- What data sources inform you about 'lived' values?

3.4.3 Misalignment of defined values and reality

Where evaluations of initiatives to embed values have taken place, they do not always make for comfortable reading. Research found that just 23 per cent of US employees strongly agreed that they could apply their organisation's values to their work every day, and only 27 per cent strongly agreed that they believe in their organisation's values. Furthermore, a study of the relation between corporate culture and performance found that there was no significant correlation between the frequency and prominence of commonly advertised values and company performance (Vantrappen and de Jong 2018).

This may, however, simply reinforce Schein's position that values exist within an organisation and are not necessarily linked to those that are articulated. It is notable, for example, that the Immigration Enforcement's work on Culture Call was implemented just

before the Windrush Scandal became headline news. A Select Committee publication suggested that behaviours had been driven by performance bonuses linked to targets to enforce removals (Parliament publications, 2018). This underlines the point that systems and processes are key to supporting the successful embedding of values.

Summary

An internal management team, with good institutional knowledge, can be an advantage for implementing values within a large, long-standing organisation. The HR team will play a role in upholding organisational values; however leadership needs to be on the frontline of the embedding process, and internal working groups should be utilised to gather feedback from staff.

While there is little research available on how to effectively measure success, examples include the use of staff surveys, alongside a range of other organisational specific success measures.

It should be noted, however, that values are not always successfully embedded, despite clear efforts to do so. This is particularly notable in the context of Immigration Enforcement, where it appears that a target and bonus culture may have undermined efforts to create positive cultural change.

A paradox of organisational values is that, ultimately, it may be most important to *avoid* 'group think,' rather than encourage it. Generating informal, and formal, opportunities to challenge behaviours may be just as important as creating mechanisms to encourage them.

4 Organisation case studies

4.1 Case Study: Plan International

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that aims to advance children's rights and equality for girls. They work across the world and have approximately 10,000 employees in 75 countries. Their work includes:

- Promoting access to quality education for all children.
- Working with communities and governments to protect children from violence .
- Supporting children to understand and defend their rights through youth activism.
- Increasing access to sexual health services and supporting children's health rights.
- Improving young people's skills and work opportunities, through access to financial services, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship and employment skills training.
- Providing support for children before, during and after disasters and conflicts.

The interviewee for this case study was the Head of Learning and Development at Plan International.

4.1.1 Developing their values

In 2015, following the appointment of a new chief officer, Plan International began a new transformation programme. Part of this transformation involved developing a new set of values. Development of values was a key component of the work Plan International were doing to develop their strategy and wanted to ensure their values were linked to their new strategy. Plan International did previously have a set of values; however, they were poorly and inconsistently embedded across the organisation and were not part of the organisation's strategy.

The inclusion of both bottom-up and top-down processes in the development of Plan International's values was key to ensure employees felt they had a voice, and that it was not a HR-only project. A similar exercise had been conducted a few years previously but with only a few people, and so it was felt that the resulting values were not meaningful to employees. Plan International utilised their global engagement survey, which they ran every two years, to gain feedback from employees about the organisation's values. They then used working groups to develop the values based on the survey findings. It was important that these groups of employees represented the diversity of the workforce in age, grade, and tenure at Plan International. There were also various other groups within the organisation who they consulted with to gain further feedback.

The four core values that Plan International identified were:

- We are open and accountable.
- We are inclusive and empowering.
- We work well together.
- We strive for lasting impact.

4.1.2 Embedding their values

Communication and socialisation

Expressing values

At the launch, the values were expressed as a simple circle with the four values in and a short definition of each. Following feedback from staff that they wanted a framework which articulated ‘what good looks like,’ Plan International added example behaviours to accompany each of the values. To keep the expression of the values simple, there were no more than six behaviours per value, with messaging that said it was not an exhaustive list. Plan International were able to use their engagement survey to identify areas where they were not scoring highly and included those in the behaviours.

The board specified that there needed to be separate behaviours for those in leadership roles. These additional behaviours applied to anyone who leads, such as a project manager who leads a team, or a technical expert who advises others, not necessarily just line managers.

Communicating values

Clear messaging that the values represented what the organisation aspired to achieve was also important. It was easy for employees to engage in ‘values bashing,’ whereby staff called out colleagues who were not living the values, which was not the behaviour that Plan International wanted to encourage. It was important to emphasise to employees that they were not expected to live perfectly up to the values all the time, and that they may focus on one or two of them:

‘The messaging needs to be that nobody is perfect, and the values represent what you are aspiring to, not all leaders are going to be perfect and you can work on one or two of the values.’

Feedback from staff expressed that they wanted something they could access quickly and that had everything about the values integrated in one place. Plan International developed some interactive tools that staff could use to click through each of the values, find their definition and associated behaviours, and how they are each aligned to their feminist principles. Plan International have also made some videos and posters to explain the values-based leadership framework.

Communicating values can have costs which Plan International were mindful of. As they operate in three languages, they did not want to produce lots of costly marketing materials for staff. They also avoided using ‘gimmicks’ such as printing the values on mugs or t-

shirts because they believed it portrayed the wrong message from a funding perspective. Instead, Plan International focused on providing ways for staff to access the values, engage with them, and link them to their work.

Socialising values

To allow people to get familiar with the values, Plan International firstly focused on socialising them through group work with leaders. The values were initially launched at a leadership conference with the top 150 leaders from across the organisation through a presentation and associated exercises. For example, they encouraged discussions of instances when people had lived the values and when they had not, storytelling, and exercises linking the values to Plan International's core programmes.

Plan International then developed a set of tools and guidance that were shared with regional Learning and Development teams, to implement the values in their offices and teams. The guidance was simple and included how to embed the values with managers and staff. The tools included examples of different things they could do, but the messaging was that they did not *have* to do it that way and could use local contextual knowledge to aid implementation instead. This provided some teams with the help they needed, but enabled others to be creative in the ways they chose to embed the values.

The organisation shared photos of the different activities each of the offices had undertaken, which helped to promote the values further. Some examples of activities included holding a values day which involved various presentations, group work and activities related to the values, values quizzes, creating house teams for each of the values and awarding points, or using the values in gamification.

One of the most simple but effective tools was presenting the values on big sheets and asking employees to stick stickers on where they thought Plan International lived the values the most, and where there were gaps. This enabled people to identify where the strengths and weaknesses were within their teams.

It was also particularly important for those in leadership roles to be seen to be living the values, because role-modelling was believed to be key for influencing other people's behaviours.

'People will watch you as a leader, if you are saying the values are important then the spotlight will be on you.'

Embedding values in people management and HR processes

Recruitment and Induction

The values were also embedded in Plan International's recruitment process where they were included on all job descriptions, and candidates were interviewed against them using standard behavioural questions. As part of the digital global induction programme, employees also take part in a session on the values where they talk about the values and the history of how they were developed.

Leadership

At Plan International, leadership is a quality they view of all staff, rather than something associated with hierarchy. With this in mind, they developed a values-based leadership framework that set out how leadership skills were related to their values. The framework begins with self-leadership skills, and then specifies the technical and professional skills. Like the values, the leadership framework was kept simple.

Following from the framework, Plan International developed a leadership progression tool that also linked to the values. The tool outlined the changes in behaviours expected at different levels, and the behaviours that individuals needed to let go of as they progressed. The organisation was also beginning to discuss feminist leadership as feminism is core to Plan International's mission.

Performance Management

The values had also been embedded as part of Plan International's performance management process. Instead of using competencies as they had done before, Plan International used objectives and values, so people had to feedback against each of the values. This worked well initially because it re-enforced to staff the importance of the values, however they were planning to move away from having the values as a separate standard. They intended to bring the two together to make the performance management process easier; when delivering objectives employees will be asked to provide examples of behaviours aligned with the values.

Procurement

Within Plan International's procurement process, the values and behaviours were shared with suppliers, so that people were aware of the standards that they work to.

4.1.3 Measuring success

Plan International primarily measured the success of their values through their engagement surveys. A 'pulse' survey was issued every year which included questions asking what the values and behaviours were to measure how successful they had been on implementing them. The surveys also included three or four statements about the values that employees responded to on a scale of how much they agreed or disagreed. This data enabled Plan International to see how successful they had been and if they had improved over time.

4.1.4 Advice to others

One of the key enablers and most effective things for Plan International in successfully embedding their values, was that the development and embedding process was bottom-up so that everyone felt that they had contributed. For Plan International, due to the size of the organisation, this meant being led by the leadership teams within each of the country offices. Sharing the values at senior meetings helped gain buy in from leadership, rather than it being just a HR piece of work. These teams were then given the tools to

communicate and embed the values and told 'it's up to you'. Giving managers examples of activities to facilitate the embedding was very effective, as it supported the different levels of competence in delivering the work within the organisation.

Having diverse teams who represented the entire organisation helped improve the quality of the embedding work, and also made sure it was not perceived as hierarchical by others in the organisation. The groups working on the embedding work included new staff and those who have been in the organisation a long time, those of different ages, people from across globe, and representation from all key stakeholders.

Using surveys was another key enabler for the success of Plan International's values work as it ensured the process was evidence-based throughout. Starting with the development of the values, which were based on survey feedback, and then during the embedding process, the data enabled Plan International to analyse where they were making progress, and where more attention needed to be paid.

One of the challenges Plan International faced in embedding their values was that because of the type of work they do, staff could not stop living the values at the end of the workday. It was important that employee's behaviour in their personal lives continued to reflect the values of the organisation. For example, many staff employed people engaged in providing domestic services such as cleaning and catering at home, and their treatment of those people needed to align with Plan International's values. This was especially difficult as the organisation began to include feminist principles in their framework, and some of those principles conflicted with laws in several countries they worked in. To overcome challenges such as these it was important for Plan International to recognise and discuss them.

The way that Plan International chose to embed their values enabled each office to work freely and creatively. However, this freedom also presented a challenge in ensuring the messages were reaching everyone in the organisation. It was critical that they continuously captured what people were doing so they could share and celebrate them. Plan International used Facebook Workplace to instantly share stories, communicate, and connect with the wider organisation.

Embedding in the Covid-19 context

Embedding values in the Covid-19 context, with a workforce who is largely working remotely may be more challenging. It was suggested that without any face-to-face interaction, more work might need to be done to get employees to pay attention to the values. However, although the context could limit the group sessions and activities that can be done, much can be done online using webinars and applications, such as Facebook Workplace to share and communicate with the organisation.

When developing materials, it will be important to consider that they will not necessarily be used face-to-face, and some creative thinking will be required to find different ways of doing things. For example, rather than using stickers on a poster, online tools are available to do a similar thing with virtual post-it notes.

However, the Covid-19 context could provide many positive examples of employees living the values. Thinking about how the organisation and employees have lived the values

through the crisis and sharing those good news stories, could provide useful learning to take from this context.

Top Tips from Plan International

- Engagement is key: HR might lead and facilitate the embedding process, but the wider organisation needs to be involved.
- Create simple tools to help leaders and teams embed the values, but then let them do it themselves and be creative.
- It is critical that processes such as recruitment and performance management are aligned to the values.

4.2 Case Study: Wellcome Trust

Wellcome Trust is a politically and financially independent charitable foundation, whose work focuses on solving the world's health challenges. Their work supports research into life, health, and wellbeing, but the three main challenges they focus on are: mental health, global heating, and infectious diseases.

The interviewee is the Head of Talent and Development at Wellcome. They also had experience embedding values in multiple previous roles at other organisations; the knowledge gained from those experiences is included in this case study.

4.2.1 Developing their values

Wellcome began developing their four values, which they refer to as principles, in 2018. The principles were adapted from a previous set that Wellcome had and were launched as a pre-cursor for the further changes that were planned for the organisation. The four principles are:

- Make it count.
- Act boldly.
- Stretch ourselves.
- Pull together.

Having a clear set of principles was important for Wellcome as they would be used as a guide as the organisation embarked on a period of change. Part of this change was in October 2020, when Wellcome set out a new strategy, which they are now in the process of re-aligning themselves to work within.

It was recognised that as the organisation underwent these changes, it was important to include their wider workforce. Wellcome had an engaged and curious workforce, which could be a very positive thing. However, it could also be a challenge in offering the right level of consultation so that the workforce felt included, but avoided there being too many people involved. This was particularly challenging for the values work because employees had their own personal values, which may be different to the organisation's values:

'It is important not to underestimate how the employee base feels about this change...we have a very engaged, very active, very curious population.'

Therefore, a collaborative approach was taken to develop Wellcome's values. The work was led by the executive leadership team (ELT), but included wider conversations with people in the organisation. A large survey was utilised to ask employees to identify what they felt the values should be. This was followed by a process of grouping values together and organising them into key themes.

4.2.2 Embedding their values

Communication and socialisation

Expressing values

Wellcome's values were expressed as four principles. It was recognised that it was important that the principles were demonstrable, so each principle was accompanied by three bullet points that clearly defined the principle and described what 'living' it looked like. For example, the principle 'We act boldly' was accompanied by the point 'We speak up and we speak honestly, being free with our praise, open about our concerns, and willing to listen.' This avoided different interpretations of the principles within the organisation. It also enabled managers to look at their team and point to where they were demonstrating the principles and speak to staff about development.

This way of expressing the principles clearly conveyed to employees what the principles were. A small number of bullet points were chosen over having a longer piece of supporting content because it made the principles easier to recall:

'One of the things that was very deliberate is that there are just three bullets for each, rather than massive long supporting content...it's very quick from a recall perspective...so if you're thinking about 'We pull together' we can actually define that.'

Each of the principles also had an image which was an abstract depiction of that principle. The images were commonly presented alongside the principles in places such as on the staff intranet, and on job descriptions. Using images helped create a strong identity for the principles.

'Part of really making values land is a very strong identity and a very strong cultural relation. Whether as an organisation you tend to use graphics or you tend to use lifestyle photos or you tend to reference symbols, whatever it is the organisation does, I think they have to be absolutely mirrored in the images and associated collateral with the values.'

To ensure the principles were embedded inclusively, there was a representative from their diversity and inclusion team as part of the steering group. This helped to make sure the values and language were inclusive. It was important that this was not a 'cheque and balance' exercise at the end of the embedding project, but something that was thought about throughout.

Communicating values

The principles were initially introduced verbally by the ELT in meetings and presentations. They were then launched on the intranet. Using the intranet to communicate the principles was one of the biggest enablers for Wellcome because employees commonly used the intranet. The principles were also displayed on posters in offices.

From previous experience, it was reported that one of the most effective ways of communicating values was through collateral exposure: a visual exposure that employees cannot get away from. Presenting values on something that employees see every day re-enforces the importance of them. For example, displaying the principles on employee's screensavers. However, it was important to choose which exposure points to invest in, as things such as mugs or t-shirts can be costly to an organisation and may only offer short-lived excitement.

Socialising values

To socialise the principles within Wellcome, they were referenced in all their internal project work. Teams were encouraged to reflect on what they were doing and why, and how the project was aligned with their principles.

It was also important that the values were constantly referenced in conversation, especially by leaders. Based on previous experience, it was believed to be effective for values to be attached to business results and business performance. When leaders spoke, they needed to attach their message to the values; discuss what, why, and how the message they were conveying linked to the values. This constantly re-enforced what the values were and how important they were:

'Whenever leaders are talking and giving messages, even if they are not referencing business KPIs they should be being attached to principles, we should be talking about what we're doing and how we're doing it...that's how it re-enforces it.'

It was also critical that leaders overtly lived the values themselves, because otherwise they can be perceived by employees as a box-ticking exercise.

Based on previous experience in a different organisation, creating a peer recognition scheme was seen as a quick win in embedding values. The organisation introduced a values award, which was a peer-nominated cash reward given quarterly to those who had demonstrated the values well. A peer-nominated award enabled staff to influence reward within the organisation, which was something that staff feedback showed was important. Peer award schemes also created a culture of positive assessment between employees.

A financial reward may not be viable for all organisations, but a peer award can be equally as effective as a show of recognition. For example, the winner could be announced on the intranet, or using social platforms to create values badging.

Embedding values in people management and HR processes

Recruitment and Induction

Wellcome's principles were consistently embedded in their recruitment processes. They were built into internal and external job descriptions so that candidates were exposed to them early in the process and understood what was expected. The questions used in the interview were designed around the principles so that candidates were assessed and selected against them. The principles were also used within the on-boarding process, including a session that explained what the principles were and the accompanying behaviours.

Performance management

Wellcome prioritised embedding their principles in their performance management process because it was recognised that doing so helped staff to understand what it meant to live the values. Including the values in performance discussions also emphasised their importance within the organisation:

'When you're very clearly aligning performance and development conversations around principles that's really how people think well this is important, how I show up, how I behave, how I interact, is really critical.'

However, the setting value-based objectives was seen as a mistake as the organisation's values may conflict with an employees' personal values. This conflict can make it challenging for an individual to develop against the organisation's values. Instead, the values should be demonstrated in *how* an individual achieved their objective, rather than determining *what* their objective is:

'To try and set values or behaviour objectives, I have seen that fail spectacularly...there is a new resurgence of thinking that that should be all you set your objectives around, but that doesn't work...we all have different value sets at home than at work, and we decide to attach ourselves to an organisation if we decide we can relate to and have an affinity to their values even if they're not the same set. But then asking me to perform against those and develop against those is different and it's very hard to do that...I think it ends up being very contentious and very challenging'

The principles were included in Wellcome's self-assessment and 360-assessment processes. This made the whole performance management process consistent, but it was also seen as important to choose an assessment tool which tracked back to the organisation's values and avoided having multiple different sets of standards that people were held accountable to. Feedback mechanisms based around the organisation's values were easier to work with, such that rather than asking for general feedback for an employee, they asked how that employee had demonstrated a particular value.

Training and development

Wellcome built their core learning offer around their principles, and the behaviours that drive them. This helped employees understand the behaviours the organisation expected of their staff through the training that was on offer:

'I think it's really important that when as an employee I go to look at what learning I might want to do, the learning I think about doing starts with: what are the technical and functional requirements of my role, got it; what are the behavioural expectations that the organisation has of me, and how do I develop myself against them.'

Clear signposting of how the training and development on offer aligned with each of the principles was key. It was also important to avoid having too many frameworks. For example, if you had a skills framework and a competencies framework, then people would not think about the values because they would see the skills and competencies as the 'path to success'.

Reward

Wellcome's principles also played a role in their process for awarding bonuses. When considering bonuses, Wellcome equally weighted their assessments of how an individual worked, against what they had delivered. Wellcome also had an interim reward system (typically a voucher) which was given quarterly and was often specifically awarded for employees' behaviours related to the principles.

4.2.3 Measuring success

Success of embedding the principles was primarily gauged from Wellcome's employee surveys. However, it was also suggested that employee development plans, retention and performance ratings could be used to assess how effectively the principles had been embedded in the organisation.

The surveys Wellcome used to measure the success of their principles typically used open response questions to understand how employees felt about the values and how employees thought they could be improved. Although the findings were insightful, using a rating scale would produce more actionable results and data that could be tracked. However, Wellcome were mindful that scales can suggest assessment which is not the message they wanted to send to employees when issuing the feedback surveys.

The type of development employees asked for can also reveal how well the values have been embedded. Looking at the development choices people made can show where the focus is for employees, and which of the values they felt they needed to develop against:

'When we look at what people are looking at, we do a kind of alignment to say are people looking for development around team-working and collaboration, are they looking at development around innovation or creativity, and that gives us a sense of where the appetite is and how people are self-assessing themselves against our values'

Retention was another area where the success of the values could be assessed. The degree to which the organisation was living its value could be asked during exit interviews.

In a previous role, performance ratings had been used to evaluate employees against the values within the performance management process. This supplied the organisation with data about where employees were living the values that could be compared and tracked over time.

4.2.4 Advice to others

One of the greatest enablers for Wellcome in embedding their principles was the principles themselves as they resonated well with Wellcome's mission and the culture. It was also important that the values were relevant to everyone in the organisation:

'It's one of those things where you could pick any number of values or behaviours and people would go 'oh yes', but I really do think these are very good principles, they resonate very well with Wellcome, they're very relevant...if you take 'we think outside the box', well that might not be in my role...because I'm risk or compliance.'

Another of the key enablers for embedding Wellcome's principles was the strong employee networks within the organisation. These working groups helped to hold the organisation to account on the principles within their area of interest. They also observed how the principles were landing within the organisation and fed that back to leadership. Likewise, in a previous role, values champions had been nominated, who were people from all levels of the organisation, who played the same role as the networks played in Wellcome.

In terms of barriers, HR's involvement in the delivery and embedding process was a challenge. Instead, leaders should take the visible role in driving the values, and HR should act behind the scenes supporting the work. However, Wellcome had not yet fully embedded their principles into their leadership processes. One of the main challenges was getting a good understanding within leadership of the benefit of doing the work. Moreover, the transfer of responsibility for driving the values from HR to leaders was not always done well. The plan for embedding the values within the organisation, and specifically within leadership processes, needed to be created by the leaders themselves, and they needed to take responsibility for the execution of it:

'If it's sitting as an HR project it's probably not going to work massively well...the leadership at whatever level, whether it's the top level or the level sitting underneath, which often is the most impactful and the most useful level to use, the plan has to be created or co-created by that team.'

Keeping the values alive day-to-day was also a challenge. Employees may understand the importance of the values because they were well-embedded in an organisation's processes, but it was also important to keep them in day-to-day conversation so they were at the front of people's minds. Mechanisms like printing the values in notebooks, having posters in meeting rooms, displaying them on screensavers, and peer awards can help do this, but it was also important to talk about the values regularly and how they related to the work. For example, in a previous organisation, at the beginning of team

meetings a leader would informally talk about one of the values that the team had done well on, or that they felt was particularly relevant to that work.

Embedding in the Covid-19 context

The way Wellcome embedded their principles would not be different in the Covid-19 context in terms of the practice or method used. However, an additional layer of support in the language around the values would be necessary. It would be important that the messaging was more supportive and offered more ways for people to engage with the values and think about how they could adapt to them in the Covid-19 context. A metaphor of family values and described how to support each other through difficult times:

'Whatever family grouping you are in, there are accepted behaviours, and there are always times when those behaviours aren't as they should be and there are reasons for that...sometimes there are other factors that mean it's difficult for you to live by those values. And in those circumstances in a family you sit down and have a conversation and make things easier for each other, give yourselves a bit of space...so you continue to operate with those family values'

Top tips from Wellcome Trust

- Leaders need to take ownership of the values and how they are embedded.
- The embedding process needs to be a long-term, sustainable piece of work, not just one big launch so that they are kept alive in the day-to-day.
- You need to position the values clearly, that *'this is what makes us who we are'* despite our personal differences, or circumstances; the values are the glue that hold the organisation together.

4.3 Case Study: British Council

The British Council is a public corporation, an executive non-departmental public body, and a registered charity. They work on the ground in more than 100 countries to build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education, and the English language. They work in two ways: directly with individuals to transform their lives, and with governments and partners to make a bigger difference for the longer term, creating benefit for millions of people all over the world.

The interviewee for this case study was the Employee Engagement and Experience Lead, part of the British Council's Global HR team.

4.3.1 Developing their values

In 2019, the British Council underwent a strategic review and decided to reassess its values. The changes the organisation was making offered an opportunity for them to think about things differently and consider the values they needed going forward:

'The key focus for the values and behaviours, and the embedding work, is going to be through the prism of change.'

The criteria for assessing values were very important. They wanted values that:

- Embody what's unique about the British Council, not generic words that could describe any organisation.
- Focused on the future while recognising the present to enable the delivery of its strategy and business objectives.
- Are clear and simple, not jargon or clichéd; and make sense in multiple cultures and languages, as most staff speak English as an additional language.
- Inspire and motivate to 'stretch' the ambitions of both the organisation and staff ('what we aim to be as well as what we already are').

After conducting a culture diagnostic, the British Council set up a steering group to think through what kind of organisation they wanted to be in the future. Input was sought from across the organisation and a 'challenge group' established, involving a diverse range of staff, to help distil the information gathered.

The outcome of this engagement with staff resulted in the following values:

- We are open and committed.
- We are expert and inclusive.
- We are optimistic and bold.

The values were due to be launched in Spring 2020, as part of their new strategy, but this was put on hold when the Covid-19 pandemic hit and were eventually launched in November 2020.

4.3.2 Embedding their values

Communication and socialisation

Expressing values

Each of the three values are accompanied by a short definition, and imagery and graphics have been used to bring the values to life. For example, the value 'We are open and committed,' is defined as 'Our belief in what we do translates into a deep and long-term commitment to the people we work with and the places where we work. We tackle challenges and take responsibility with openness and honesty to bring about positive change.'

The detail of how the values were expressed was very important to the British Council. They consciously chose to preface each value with 'We are' to encourage an emotional connection and engagement with the values.

The values were nothing without the behaviours that described what the values looked and felt like in day-to-day activities and interactions. The British Council used the same

inclusive approach to develop the new behaviours. They were co-created through a series of regional workshops and focus groups.

The set of behaviours were fundamental for enabling people to embed the values into how they approach their work in the future.

'Making sure that they felt unique to us as an organisation, that they weren't just these typical words that anyone might associate with. We wanted to make it feel like this is the British Council.'

Communicating values

To launch the values within the organisation, the Chief Executive Officer sent an 'inspiring' email message to employees with a link to a page on the intranet. The email and intranet page included a video from a colleague who was involved in the challenge group. She spoke about what the values meant to her and how she saw them elevating the work of the British Council.

Staff were invited to respond to the email with their own films on one of the values. As a result, HR circulated another video to staff, reflecting the diversity and complexity of the organisation. The values were also added to the external British Council website, and internally there is a dedicated section on their intranet about the values and behaviours.

In addition, HR colleagues were given permission to use a banner on their email signature, for internal use only, to help socialise and reinforce the values in general HR communications with colleagues.

Socialising values

Socialising values during a pandemic meant that everything had to be done virtually. However, the British Council was used to working remotely. For example, some employees have their line managers based in different countries. Ideally there would be a blend of face to face and online engagement opportunities, however remote working was successful for many:

'Actually, I think that it isn't that difficult to create a sense of community digitally. You know, companies have responded very quickly to the pandemic and improved the technology offerings that there are. There's all sorts of things we can do, you bring a little bit of humour or little bit of something else into it, just to try and connect people better.'

A short animation of the new values is being created and will be primarily for internal use.

Embedding values in people management and HR processes

As the British Council began embedding their values recently, the following section outlines some of the work they have already achieved, as well as their future intentions. The British Council identified six areas of focus for embedding its values:

- Employee experience: positioning the British Council as the employer of choice.

- Communications: using values-based storytelling that inspires and motivates.
- Customer experience: positioning us as the 'go to' organisation of choice.
- Partnerships: engendering trust and confidence globally.
- Training: setting clear expectations of behaviour and standards.
- Environments: creating spaces that reflect the British Council's values.

The British Council are also embedding their values throughout all its people policies and processes. This includes:

- Change management and transformation.
- Employee engagement.
- Learning and development.
- Onboarding and induction.
- People analytics and reporting.
- Performance enablement.
- Reward and recognition.
- Talent attraction and recruitment.

Recruitment and retention

The British Council is revising its recruitment collateral to reflect the values. Their careers site is being updated to promote their values and culture, and they will make changes to job profiles. They also want to ensure that they retain relationships with colleagues who leave the organisation, creating an ambassadorial alumni network that continues to support British Council goals.

Leadership

Following the development of new values and behaviours, the British Council is now developing a values-based leadership framework. This new framework will incorporate the values into the behaviours and expectations that are set for leaders.

Reward

The British Council wants to create a healthy culture of recognition to motivate and enable colleagues to be the best they can. They plan to develop a new recognition programme with award criteria linked to the values. This will encourage employees to demonstrate the values in their work.

'It's not just about what we do, so it's not just about success in delivery, it's about success in how you behave, how you conduct yourself, how you treat people, and it's really making both equal.'

4.3.3 Advice to others

Embedding in the Covid-19 context

Having launched their values within the Covid-19 context, the British Council provide a unique view of the organisational process. The leadership team recognised that values are always important and should help to guide decision making. However, having values-led decisions are even more important during a period of crisis, when an organisation's response is under greater scrutiny, as decisions can have a significant impact on people.

Making sure the values are part of communications is an immediate and effective way to highlight how values make a difference. It should be done in a genuine and authentic way and not feel forced or disingenuous. For example, the Internal Communications team sends a weekly news bulletin to all staff. This includes stories of the work being done by different teams around the world, often in very challenging environments. The values have been explicitly linked to, and referenced, in these impact stories, helping to demonstrate what it looks like to be 'open and committed,' 'expert and inclusive,' and 'optimistic and bold'.

Embedding new values and behaviours is about changing culture, and that does not happen overnight. It requires everyone to understand that they have a responsibility to live up to the values and make sure they act in accordance with the behaviours. The British Council is developing supporting materials which will help colleagues (individuals, managers, and teams) relate the values and behaviours to their own contexts. These materials will encourage and maintain regular conversations about values, behaviours and creating a culture that allows the organisation to successfully deliver its strategic objectives.

Top tips from British Council

- Give everyone the opportunity to be involved, and provide different routes to do so. Do not just assume you know the answers. Ask the people who you want to buy-in to give you their thoughts.
- Make sure that you have key stakeholders from across the organisation working together on a steering group. Different parts of the organisation working together for the same goal.
- Someone must be accountable and take responsibility for final decision-making.

4.4 Case study: Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust is responsible for the running of multiple London hospitals and community services. Following a recent merger in February 2021, the Trust now has approximately 22,000 employees.

The interviewee for this case study was an Organisational Development consultant at Guy's and St Thomas' Trust.

4.4.1 Developing their values

The process for developing values at Guy's and St Thomas' began in 2006, after it was recognised that although the Trust had a good reputation, the patient and staff satisfaction surveys were no longer reflecting this. In response to this realisation, a piece of research was commissioned to an external consultancy to identify and define what the organisation's values were.

'We knew we had some [values], but nobody had defined them before. Guy's has a motto, St Thomas' has a crest, all the colleges and professional bodies have their statements and codes of conduct and so on.'

The research asked people what they thought the values were and the following five values were decided on:

- Put patients first
- Take pride in what we do
- Respect others
- Strive to be the best
- Act with integrity

Since the values were defined, Guy's and St Thomas' has gone through two mergers, in 2011 and more recently in 2021. Merging with another organisation poses a challenge because the other organisation may have had their own values or standards that needed to be recognised. However, changing Guy's and St Thomas' values would go against principle and reduce their integrity. How Guy's and St Thomas met this challenge is discussed below.

4.4.2 Embedding their values

Communication and socialisation

Expressing values

Initially Guy's and St Thomas' values were expressed simply with a few supporting bullet points that defined what each value meant. However, it became clear that employees were not sure what the values meant. They were also quick to notice when colleagues were not living the values:

'There wasn't really a shared understanding of what they [the values] were...and with 'Respect others' people were quite quick to notice when they weren't being respected or feeling respected, and we'd put it on the posters that we were supposed to be respecting each other, it kind of made it worse.'

In 2007, a piece of research was conducted to define behaviours that would underpin each of the values. Managers identified 200 'stars': employees who they felt demonstrated the values well. Interviews and focus groups were undertaken to ask those

employees to define the behaviours they carried out when they lived each of the values. For example, asking: 'when you are 'putting patients first' in your role as a porter, what is it that you are doing?' The examples and vignettes that emerged were used to create a behavioural framework. The first section of the framework outlined behaviours that were expected of all employees at all levels. For example, 'introduce yourself properly,' or 'take responsibility for your impact on other people'. It was important that those behaviours were relevant to people in all roles. Three additional sections of the framework were created for other organisational levels:

- One for supervisors and team leaders.
- One for managers or people who have resources which focused on how they allocate those resources, make decisions when there are competing demands, and how to adapt their service to ensure it is accessible for all.
- One for those at executive and head of service level which focused on external relationships and delivering organisational objectives.

The frameworks represented a collection of behaviours that staff, at their best, were already demonstrating. Therefore, the challenge to the organisation was to demonstrate all of these behaviours all of the time. This was seen as a more positive and realistic goal than a collection of behaviours created by a leadership group.

Following the 2011 merger, a piece of research involving workshops was conducted to explore the culture, and underlying behaviours within the joining organisation. The existing values and behaviours framework was reviewed to ensure the behaviours they found were present within it. Although no new values were added, the new framework used first person language, which made it more personal, put more emphasis on partnership working, and was more focused on improvements as opposed to solving problems.

They ensured that the process of embedding the values was inclusive by including people from different professional groups in activities such as workshops. By selecting different teams and professional groups, they typically represented a diverse group based on protected characteristics. An inclusive approach was also achieved by using a research base for developing and embedding of the values, so captured many people's perspectives.

Communicating values

In 2009, the organisational values, and accompanying behaviour framework was rolled out via directorate management meetings, where managers were introduced to the values and shown how to use them with their staff. This received a variable response, and was not very successful.

The values were also communicated via scrolling screens around the Guy's and St Thomas' building, and were on computer desktop backgrounds. They were also on employee lanyards, posters, and in email signatures. These points of communication were important for re-enforcing the values and reminding staff what they are.

The values are referenced in the Trust's strategies. For example, the organisation developed a quality strategy which outlines their aims regarding patient safety and satisfaction, and the strategy was structured around the five values. The values are also referred to through different projects and programmes, which helps communicate to employees how the values feed into their work and why they are important. For example, following publication of a report into a scandal in a separate Trust, workshops were delivered by leaders to have conversations with their teams about what had happened, and the Trust's values were built into the design of those workshops. Likewise, the values commonly form the basis of other organisation-wide conversations such as about diversity and inclusion.

Socialising values

A 3-day culture change programme was offered to teams of frontline staff, named 'Delivering an excellent service'. The programme was like a customer-service programme and encouraged employees to focus on not just doing their job, but *how* they did it. A similar programme was also delivered for managers called 'Managing an excellent service,' and one for senior leaders called 'Leading an excellent service'. The programmes were never explicitly associated with the values, but they were built around the values and behaviours.

Managers were also invited to join a values 'surgery' if they felt they wanted help embedding the values in their teams. The workshop involved discussions of how the values and behaviours were developed and provided managers with a workbook describing how they could embed the values. The workshop also included a self-evaluation tool where employees read each of the behaviours and put a green, orange, or red sticker next to it depending how well they felt they demonstrated that behaviour. This activity then formed the basis for further discussion. A workshop was deliberately not provided for frontline staff because the Organisational Development team felt it was more important for managers to be trained in how to talk about the values with their teams, rather than sending individual employees to a workshop who they felt may need to improve the way they lived the values.

A similar workshop was also run for the board of directors with the aim of giving them a similar experience and opportunity to understand and discuss the values. The workshops involved talking about the reasons for having values, and completing the self-evaluation tool. A short film was created as a result, which included the chief executive officer talking about the values.

Good leadership was important for successfully delivering the values, in part because leadership approval was needed to incorporate the values within organisational processes. However, after the medical director first initiated the values work and subsequently left the Trust, there was a period without very visible leadership. When the director of nursing agreed to champion the values, the first thing they did was put them into the Trust's quality strategy. There was generally good understanding from leaders of the need for their words to be consistent with their actions, which was important for them to be perceived as role-models in living the values. The current chair and chief executive both played an active role in supporting and talking about the values:

'Our leadership is quite concerned about the consistency between what they say and what they do and exemplifying the things that you say you stand for.'

Embedding values in people management and HR processes

The primary processes that Guy's and St Thomas' had embedded their values in were their recruitment and induction, and appraisal processes.

Recruitment and Induction

The values of Guy's and St Thomas' are included on job descriptions and there are standardised questions, which ask candidates about the values in the application form and at interview. There is also a session about the values and behaviours as part of the induction process. The importance of alerting candidates to the values early on in the recruitment process was emphasised as it meant candidates were clear about the organisation they are applying to, and can come to an interview prepared to give examples of them living those values.

Performance management

Employees were encouraged to use the self-evaluation tool, described above, to prepare for their appraisal as a method of reflecting on their behaviours. In 2012, as the organisation moved towards performance-related pay, a greater emphasis was placed on the values. The appraisal process uses a 5 x 5 grid measuring, on one axis the employee's performance against their objectives and, on the other, their demonstration of the Trust's values, and the employees overall score is the lower of the two scores. This process was chosen because it applied equal weighting to what the employee has delivered against their objectives, and how they have demonstrated the values within their delivery.

4.4.3 Measuring success

The success of the Trust's embedding of their values is primarily measured through the annual NHS staff survey. As the survey is national, Guy's and St Thomas' do not have control over most of the questions. The survey already included a question that directly related to their value 'Put the patient first' as standard, so Guy's and St Thomas' can use the Likert-scale responses to measure success. In the early days of the embedding process, the Trust did also use one of their additional questions to ask about the values, and the national survey questions now include some questions on the extent to which values are recognised and embedded in organisations. Beyond the values, the staff survey also provided evidence of improvements of other aspects of the organisation since the values were introduced, which could be associated with the values work.

Another measure of success is through the Care Quality Commission report, which stated that the organisation's values were spontaneously mentioned by employees.

4.4.4 Advice to others

A key lesson learnt was that using a push approach was not effective. If they were to go through the process again, they explained that they would not try and roll the values out to all teams, because it was more effective to work with the people who were interested and wanted to talk about values. For example, running the workshops for managers was effective because the people who attended were engaged:

'It's [the values] a bit like medicine, you can bring it to people but you can't make them take it, so that's why it was much more effective to work with the people who were interested in talking about it and how they could implement it.'

For the people who were not actively engaged with the values work, the values were brought to them through embedding them in processes such as appraisal. Embedding the values in the appraisal process was recognised as one of the most effective mechanisms because it is a process that all employees engaged with.

One of the most effective processes for embedding the values was by including it in the recruitment and induction process. This was important to ensure that candidates and new starters understood the behaviours that were expected of them and greater alignment with the values increases employee engagement.

Embedding in the Covid-19 context

Since moving to remote-working, it was important to ensure that the values had not been lost in the transition of processes to online. For example, the Trust's induction programme was moved online, so it was important to review the online process to ensure the values were still included.

Many of the activities that the Trust has used to embed their values could be done in a virtual working context. For example, one of their teams had a value of the week, which is discussed in meetings, which could be done in a virtual meeting. Likewise, the workshops the Trust used could be done online, and a digital version of activities such as the self-evaluation tool can be made.

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Trust's usual monthly briefings with the chief executive have become weekly. These briefings create an opportunity to have conversations about the values, or reference them in other messages that senior leaders are giving.

Top tips from Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

- Be opportunistic about when you review processes – get a foot in the door when something is being reviewed and incorporate the values into it.
- Spend time ensuring the values are well incorporated into the induction process.
- Work with the people who want to work with you on the values.

4.5 Case Study: West Sussex County Council

West Sussex County Council is the authority responsible for the county of West Sussex, and contains seven district and borough councils, and 159 town, parish and neighbourhood councils. Their work includes social care and health, education, emergencies and crime, roads and travel, business and consumers, leisure, and libraries.

The interviewee is the Director of HR and Organisational Development at West Sussex County Council, but also had experience embedding values in four other local authorities.

4.5.1 Developing their values

West Sussex County Council were driven to work on their values following a change of senior personnel and a couple of poor inspections. However, as values already existed it was important not to change the values, just to re-invigorate them and make them more prominent.

The values needed to be developed in a collaborative way, but direction needed to come from the top. If leaders had thoughts about what they thought the values were, then they needed to set that out in the guidelines at the start.

The values at the Council are:

- Proud to be customer-centred
- Listen and act upon
- Honest and realistic
- Trust and support
- Genuinely valued

4.5.2 Embedding their values

Communication and socialisation

Expressing values

Each of the values was accompanied by a short explanation of what it means. For example, the value 'Honest and realistic' is described as 'we are honest and realistic about what we can achieve.'

The council also created an image for each of the values, to make them more visually engaging and create a stronger identity. The images were different brightly coloured boxes in the same colours as the corporate scheme, within which the values were written accompanied by an icon that demonstrated the value.

Communicating values

To communicate their values, the council incorporated them on all of their documents and presentations. The values were primarily communicated to employees through the West Sussex 'vibe' which set out the behaviours and expectations of staff.

The values were also included on the Council's People Framework which sat alongside their business strategy and is based around five pillars:

- Leadership and management – how leaders behave in line with the values, how employees feel about how they are managed, and if they see them as role models.
- Wellbeing, values, and ways of working – focuses on recognising and using the values, and how they impact on the wellbeing of staff.
- Performance and development – how employees treat each other and customers through the behaviours and expectations outlined in the 'vibe'.
- Resourcing and talent – using the values in identifying, building, recognising, and progressing talent.
- Diversity and Inclusion – building a supportive and inclusive culture, where people feel valued and are able to do their best. This pillar wraps around the previous four.

The People Framework was the basis for many follow up activities such as reviewing their performance management process and launching a new dignity and respect at work policy. In doing these things, the Council aimed to create shorter and more accessible policies which focused on highlighting their values.

'Reviewing a lot of the guidance we give to staff, stripping it out and saying actually we employ adults we don't need to have great long-winded policies - we assume everybody comes here to do a good job, to behave in line with our expectations. You don't need a load of padding around that, you can simply hone in on those things that are really important.'

However, one of the best methods to communicate the values was to use them in their image form on employees email signatures, because this is something they are exposed to daily. Other visual methods of communicating values such as posters, screensavers, or merchandise can be effective in the early stages of the values, but they need to be refreshed to remain engaging.

'They're [the values] large across everything we do, they're very present in the organisation, they're on all our documents, they're at the heart of everything we do'

For executive leaders, the values are included in a document called 'Our Job' which was presented alongside the agenda for all leadership meetings. Doing this reminded senior leaders of the principles for doing their job as they go into the meeting, and encouraged them to periodically take stock of how their work is meeting the values.

Socialising values

Instead of encouraging role-models, the Council emphasised the need to have ‘real models’: leaders who employees see as genuinely embodying the organisations values. This inspired other leaders to emulate that behaviour and filters the values down through the organisation.

‘Being a role model, anyone can talk about that, but being a real model means that people really see and experience the real you and they also experience the values that we live. She [Chief Executive] listens and she acts on what she hears, she is genuinely interested in people and genuinely recognises and values people.’

To help employees to recognise what they needed to do to bring the values alive, the Council ran cross-organisational workshops with staff. These workshops focused on talking to employees about what they mean both internally, in how they worked with each other, and in terms of the delivery of their service to the customer.

‘It’s about helping people to recognise what they need to do in order to bring the values alive...talking to people about what they mean, talking about the translation of those in terms of service delivery to the community, how we engage with each other across the organisation.’

Teams were encouraged to do this locally too, to help employees understand the values within their role. For example, Fire and Rescue ran their own workshops and listening groups to explore the values and make them real and understood for every member of the service.

The council also had a quarterly values and recognition awards event, where they invited anybody to nominate someone who had lived the values especially well. There was usually an awards ceremony which was attended by the Chief Executive, the Director of HR, the Director of the department of each of the employees receiving an award, the nominators, and the nominees. Within the Covid-19 context, the Council now ran an afternoon session using a video call instead. These events allowed the organisation to celebrate when the values were lived and enabled employees to share stories. They previously gave vouchers as prizes, but feedback showed that employees preferred the recognition from their employer.

Similarly, the council also had a ‘Heroes wall’ on their intranet, which they used to nominate a team or an individual to say thank you to. Activities such as these helped to socialise the values through storytelling of the things employees did every day to live the values. These recognition activities also showed the organisation living the value ‘Genuinely valued’ through the process.

Embedding values in business and HR processes

Recruitment and Induction

The values were presented to candidates in the external recruitment materials and job descriptions, and were asked about the values in the interview using a bank of values-

based questions. It was also important that candidates were treated in a way that was aligned to the organisation's values through the recruitment process. For example, in line with the values 'Genuinely valued' and 'Listen and act upon', they ensured that candidates are looked after during the process and that they provide and ask for feedback.

'If you look at West Sussex's recruitment process they really look after their candidates, so from the first point of contact people feel genuinely valued – so we thank them for their application, we tell them what we're doing, we keep them involved in the process, and we give feedback to every candidate no matter what stage of the process they fall out.'

Following appointment, employees were provided a pre-induction welcome pack which sets out the values. Then at induction, the values were discussed, and there was a card game activity to help employees understand what they mean.

Performance management

It was important that the performance management process reflected the organisations values. The Council used the 'vibe' as the basis for their performance management process. However, they wanted to move away from filling in forms, and put more emphasis on having conversations. A 12-4-2 model was introduced for performance conversations which sees managers have monthly values-centred conversations with employees: four of which are about development and two are team-focused. These open conversations helped foster a culture of good relationships between employees and their managers.

Training and development

The learning and development team were instrumental in developing and implementing the Councils values, so they were naturally evident throughout the training and development that was offered. Leaders and managers part-took in a values-based leadership programme, which was a training to encourage them to use a leadership style that was based in the values. Equipping leaders in this way was a big enabler for the Council in embedding their values, as it trained leaders in skills such as listening and understanding people, being empathetic, using emotional intelligence, and being patient, and created the 'real models' the organisation desired.

4.5.3 Measuring success

The council run pulse surveys which can be used to measure the success of the values. The surveys are usually around a specific topic, for example, wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic, but they have done one in the past on the values. The results provide the council with qualitative feedback from staff and quantitative data that they can analyse.

4.5.4 Advice to others

To ensure the values were being embedded effectively and inclusively, the Council made sure they firstly gathered feedback from employees about the values and if they agreed with them.

'People have to own those values, people have to recognise them and see themselves in them.'

They used a cross-organisational working group to develop the values and then that group continued to facilitate the embedding process after they had been developed. It was important that it was not just a HR exercise, and had people from across the organisation contributing to the process. On top of this, the HR Director meets with staff network groups monthly to listen to them and give them a platform. These conversations were used to allow staff groups to reflect on the values. The networks were also heavily involved in the development of the Council's People Framework.

One of the most useful enablers for the Council in embedding their values was to equip their managers with the confidence and skills to live the values and help them to recognise their responsibility to act as a role model.

The biggest barrier was to avoid the values becoming jaded or forgotten about. Embedding values is a big and constant process, not a project that can be ticked off as complete. Organisation's need to continuously reflect and review if the values are being demonstrated and how they could be embedded more effectively. They also need to be communicated to staff *'little and often'*.

'One of the barriers is that they become like wallpaper, and people think oh there they are on posters on the wall...they're on the walls but you don't feel them in the organisation.'

Embedding in the Covid-19 context

It was critical for the Council that they demonstrated their values in their response to the Covid-19 crisis, and the way employees were treated throughout this period. For example, in living the value 'Listen and act upon', employees were asked about their home-working setup, and issues they had were addressed, such as providing equipment, or making some offices safe for employees to attend. They have also found many positive examples of the values in employees or teams responses to the pandemic, which they have celebrated through their award scheme.

The Council have also worked hard at ensuring their communication and engagement with staff during the pandemic is effective. Part of this has involved the HR Director setting up a weekly reflections email where they talk about what has happened in the Directorate, and recognise people's work, as well as including some personal stories. Other Directors have a similar approach, for example the Director of Childrens' Services sends out a "Feel Good Friday" message to highlight and celebrate achievements.

Top tips from West Sussex County Council

- Make sure the senior team recognise and sign up to the values and ensure they can and are willing to sell them.
- Ensure the values are woven through everything you publish.
- Find ways to highlight how the values play out in reality and celebrate that.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This research has explored the current understanding of how organisations can effectively embed their values and has provided practical examples from five organisations. Although the process that each organisation went through to embed their values was unique, some commonalities can be observed in approach, what was most effective, and the challenges faced.

5.1 A collaborative approach is key

The importance of collaboration was a key theme that emerged from the literature and case studies. Involving the wider organisation promotes the message that the values are not just about HR, but apply to everyone. In the process of both developing and embedding values, it was clear that a combination of top-down and bottom-up methods was most effective. Using collaborative approaches allows employees to feel they have a voice in deciding what the organisation values are, hold the organisation to account, and gather feedback from staff about the process.

5.1.1 Supporting diversity and inclusion

The evidence demonstrated that the primary method for ensuring organisational values are embedded in an inclusive way, is to use a collaborative approach. By consulting with the wider organisation, and utilising diverse groups of employee's, organisations could continuously check that the approach they were using was inclusive. It was particularly important that the language and communications around the values was inclusive. While the values are not optional, organisations must think about and be clear which behaviours are necessary and allow space for other values to be demonstrated in different ways.

5.2 Leadership-led embedding

The research emphasised that the embedding of the values needs to be driven by leaders. HR can coordinate and facilitate but it is dangerous for values to be seen as 'an HR thing'. Leaders play a critical role in communicating the values to employees and it was important that they did this in their day-to-day conversations, linking them to messages about the business objectives. Leaders also needed to act as role models for employees in living the values. For this to be successful, leaders needed to have a sense of ownership of the values. Getting good and consistent values-based leadership is difficult, so it is important when a leader is exhibiting these behaviours to hold them up as a champion of the values.

The evidence suggested that the process of embedding values was more successful when organisations complemented top-down actions with less directive bottom-up

approaches. Tools and activities can be produced and shared but provide leaders and managers with freedom to be creative in developing their own ways of socialising the values in their offices and teams. This also helps to increase ownership of the values amongst leaders. Likewise, it may be beneficial to only work with the people in the organisation who are interested in implementing the values. Those who were not proactively engaged with the values are 'forced' to do so through the HR processes that the values are embedded in.

5.3 Use supportive messaging

The messaging that organisations use alongside the launch and embedding of their values needs to also be considered. As the development of values is commonly driven by wider organisational change, the values defined are often aspirational and used as a moral compass for the organisation to navigate the changes it is going through. Supportive messaging that emphasises the aspirational nature of the values is key to prevent employees highlighting where other people are not living them.

The research also highlighted that some organisational values cannot be ring-fenced for only being lived whilst at work. In some organisations it is especially important that employees reflect the organisation's values in their personal lives. This can be a challenge in some contexts and can be overcome through recognising it and discussing it with staff.

5.4 Communicating values

The research showed commonalities in the methods used by organisations to communicate their values such as posters, mugs, and their intranet, although it was recognised some of these were expensive and short-lived. The most effective of these tools were the ones that employees could not get away from. Having the values on employees' desktop screensavers was a successful approach and free to implement.

5.5 Make values demonstrable

In communicating an organisational values, it was important that they were demonstrable. Organisations commonly used a set of behaviours to exemplify to employees what living that value looked like. Methods for defining the behaviours typically involved working with employees to consider what 'good' looked like. Additional behaviours can be set out for employees at different levels or with increasing responsibilities.

5.6 Socialise values through discussion and story-telling

Activities to embed values in an organisation, commonly used socialisation techniques, which involved evaluating how well employees or the organisation demonstrated the values, and then discussing the results in groups. These activities provide an opportunity for employees to see how their colleagues relate the values to their work. Likewise, other

effective activities included sharing stories or using a values award to recognise when employees had lived the values.

5.7 Weave the values through everything you do

Making links between the values and the organisation's work, programmes, and objectives was essential for successfully embedding them within the organisation. For employees to get accustomed to thinking about the values, references need to be made to them in their day-to-day work, such as linking them to programmes and projects, or having conversations about them in meetings.

5.8 Embed values in people management and HR processes

To embed the values in people management and HR processes, two activities need to be undertaken for each process:

1. Consider how the values can be embedded in the structure of the process. For example, within recruitment, the values underly the criteria used to select candidates.
2. Consider how the values are demonstrated in how people are treated within that process. For example, are candidates shown the value 'Respect' in the recruitment process, if so how?

5.8.1 Recruitment and selection

It was common that organisations had included their values in their recruitment and onboarding process such as including them on their careers website, job descriptions, interview questions, or induction programmes. This was essential to ensure that organisations attracted talent aligned with their values. However, it is important to consider how recruiting on the basis of candidates' alignment with the organisation's values could negatively impact diversity.

5.8.2 Performance management

Employers had commonly aligned their performance management process with their values. This is key for making values a reality because evidence suggests that employees will see something as important when their employer pays attention to it, measures it, and rewards it. When performance is related to pay or progression, aligning these processes with the values also highlights the benefits of living them to employees. To embed values within performance management, organisations typically combined employee objectives with the values; asking employees to reflect on *how* they had delivered, as well as *what* they had delivered. Values should also be incorporated into more common informal performance conversations, such as monthly 121s, so that they are not perceived as an annual tick-box exercise, but something employees need to be demonstrating continuously.

5.8.3 Training and development

There was also evidence that organisations had successfully embedded their values in their training and development processes. Tools can be created to link behavioural frameworks with the progression process, by defining the behaviours that employees need to demonstrate as they advance. Similarly, the training and development offer can be aligned to the values to emphasise how developing against the values is the 'path to success'.

5.9 Advice for the Covid-19 context

Embedding values within the Covid-19, remote-working context may pose some challenges, however most of the methods and activities used could be transferred online. For example, using online tools to share stories, create digital tools, and have conversations about the values. Emphasis was put on the remote-working context as those leading on the embedding of the values were working from home because of the pandemic. However it is also important to consider the workforce who are continue to attend the workplace, particularly frontline workers who are engaging with the public.

An additional layer of support may be necessary to help employees engage with the values, but by reflecting on how the organisation and its employees have responded to the Covid-19 crisis, there may be lots of positive examples of people living the values.

5.10 Measuring success

To understand if values have been embedded, it is important for organisations to measure their success. However, there was a lack of evidence demonstrating how organisations should measure success of their values. Assessment was most commonly completed using staff feedback in surveys, preferably using quantitative measures that can be tracked over time. Surveys were also useful to highlight where values-related issues occurred within organisations, and where more work needed to be done to embed organisational values. However, these measures are self-reported by employees and are subjective. Indirect measures, such as training choices and retention can also be used as determinants of success.

When considering evaluation methods, organisations need to consider what they want to measure, what the most appropriate method is, and what resources they have to carry out the evaluation. These factors are guided by the what the values are, and the organisational context.

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