

Are your values *lived* or only declared?

Fifteen statements in five areas to test whether your company values change real decisions.

1 • Score

0 not true, 1 partly, 2 clearly true.
Score what happens, not what is intended.

2 • Prove

Write one real example for every 2.
No example, no 2.

3 • Compare

Ask a leader, a manager and a new joiner to score separately.

1 The declaration

Three to five values, each with a behavioural definition. It says what people do when they live the value. 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

The values are specific to this company. Could a competitor publish the same list? Then they are slogans. 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

At least one value names a trade-off. "Speed over polish", "the client before the quarter". 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

2 Leadership

Leaders use the values to explain hard decisions. Restructures, pricing, promotions. 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

In the last year, a value made us say no to something attractive. Revenue, a hire, a partner, a deadline. 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

A senior person has faced consequences for acting against a value. People notice who is exempt. 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

3 People processes

Hiring tests each value with behavioural questions. Not "culture fit" by gut feeling. 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

Reviews rate how results were achieved, not only what. 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

Nobody is promoted on results alone with poor values behaviour. Check the last ten promotions. 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

4 Symbolic practices

The stories people retell match the declared values. Ask: "What story explains this place?" 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

Rituals and recognition reward the behaviours the values describe. 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

Posters, walls and swag are tied to something people actually do. 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

5 What employees experience

New joiners at 90 days describe the culture in words close to the values. 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

People feel safe to challenge a decision by citing a value. 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

Values are not used as a weapon to criticise or silence people. 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Example:

Your score

24–30

Lived values

Values guide decisions. Recheck after any major change.

15–23

Partly lived

Start with your lowest-scoring area.

0–14

Declared values

Start with leadership and promotions.

Read the pattern, not just the total. A strong declaration with weak people processes is the most common profile: well-written values that never reached hiring, reviews or promotion.

Turn the score into action

Pick no more than three changes. One owner each.

AREA TO IMPROVE	WHAT WE WILL CHANGE	OWNER	BY WHEN

Want a full values audit for your company? [Book a free 20-minute call at kate-martin.co.uk](https://kate-martin.co.uk) →