



Move Over Company Core Values

Gerald R. Wagner, PhD.

Company Core Values are something that most organizations proudly display. They're posted on the lobby walls, written on websites, and talked about openly.

Yet, employees and recruits often read the Core Values and wonder how the company actually brings them to life. Only twenty-seven percent of employee strongly agree with their companies' values and the same percent don't remember what they are. Still, company Values are important as principles to guide life actions. A classic example is "trust".

It's my hope that someday, companies will display their Wellbeing Pledges in much the same way as they display their Values. Achievement of the pledges give indication of "how well life is going".

An important assumption of what I present in this paper is that what's important in employee lives is important in the lives of companies and vice versa. Seventy three percent of employees say they would not apply to a company unless its Values align with their own personal Values.

As an example, the COVID situation has resulted in a mix of changed employee feelings regarding what's most important in their lives. Management is wrestling

with this and trying to figure out what companies can do to accommodate these new states-of-mind.

The situation is complex and can benefit from tools that help to answer “what to do?” and “how to do it?” These tools involve employees working together in a group, including executives. Tools like this are often called Group Decision Support Systems and the Academy of Culture Ambassadors has such a tool.

TERMINOLOGY

Wellbeing Pledges have clear meaning’s that can be implemented and measured. That is in contrast to typical Company Core Values.

A Value typically included in a company’s list is “Integrity.” Finding a way to explain, implement, and measure integrity would be difficult. Given that difficulty, it is unlikely to be a Wellbeing Pledge.

EXAMPLE

What Wellbeing Pledges and Pillars mean is best understood with examples.

Example One: These are typical Values for a company (these are on the website for an actual big US company):

- Trust
- Customer Success
- Growth
- Innovation
- Giving Back
- Equality for All
- Wellbeing
- Transparency
- Fun

Do those look familiar? They are a lot like the company Values seen everywhere. They may sound good, but there is no hint of how they will be made tangible, implemented or measured.

Example Two: These might be examples of Wellbeing Pledges and Wellbeing Pillars.

Wellbeing Pillar	Wellbeing Pledges
Community Wellbeing	Three days PTO to work with local charitable organizations.
Career Wellbeing	All employees attend a professional conference each year.
Financial Wellbeing	On-site child care for children of parents that work at the company.
Communications Wellbeing	Documents with input data and results of management decisions are placed in a database that is available for all employees to review.
Mental Health Wellbeing	The company has a registered mental health therapist available 24/7 for all employees and their families.

Which of these two examples would employees prefer? I think example two wins hands down.

To “convert” the Values in Example One to be Wellbeing Pledges would be time consuming and difficult. It will usually be best to leave Values for what they were intended and have Wellbeing Pillars that might be similar to those in the next section.

A SOURCE OF WELLBEING PILLARS

A solid suggestion for Wellbeing Pillars is in Gallup’s 2010 book entitled “Wellbeing: The Five Essential Elements.” Their elements of Career, Social, Community, Financial, and Physical could be Wellbeing Pillars. If a company wants to use them as Wellbeing Pillars, I suggest adding Emotional Wellbeing.

Gallup’s Wellbeing elements have been proven indicators of Wellbeing for individuals and it makes sense that they would be indicators of company Wellbeing as well. I have felt that way for years. Now Gallup’s new book (Wellbeing at Work, May 4, 2021) agrees with the crossover from individual Wellbeing elements to company Wellbeing elements.

GETTING STARTED

Most company have gone through some kind of exercise to arrive at their Values. Starting a project to get Wellbeing Pledges needs the support of the CEO. The CEO will probably need nudging by the HR Director.

Coming up with Wellbeing Pillars and Wellbeing Pledges and that's especially the case for Wellbeing Pledges. *These are not blasé words or terms like most company Values. They will be visible to employees as promises which are to be implemented, measured, and reported upon for levels of achievement.*

A project to arrive at Wellbeing Pillars and Wellbeing Pledges needs a diverse team including executives. There is no magic number for team size, but 10 – 15 is a good ballpark number. It is suggested to have 5-7 Wellbeing Pillars with a balance in the number of Wellbeing Pledges between them.

The project needs to be managed and the process needs tools to guide data collection and document the data for sharing among employees. A part of the tool kit would be computer software that is easily accessible for even those most resistant to technology.

An internal project manager can do this well with a little guidance. Some of their management duties would include training team participants, keeping the project moving, calling team meetings if and when needed, communicating progress with all employees, and presenting final recommendations to the executive group.

AFTER YOU HAVE WELLBEING PILLARS AND PLEDGES

During a company's decision and planning discussions the choices being considered should be checked for fit with the Wellbeing Pillars. This becomes a standard default practice.

AN OFFER

We want five companies to lead the way with Wellbeing Pillars and Pledges. To assist with making that a reality the Academy provides its proprietary software and consulting to those five for no fee. The five will then have continued use of the Group Decision Support software for no fee.

We would love to visit with you about being one of the five. Any correspondence is private and there is no obligation of any kind.

AUTHOR

Gerald R. Wagner, PhD., is the Founder and President of the Academy of Culture Ambassadors. He was a co-founder of the fields Decision Support Systems (DSS) and Group Decision Support Systems (GDSS). He started four entrepreneurial ventures in these areas. Jerry has been on the faculty at the University of Texas, Austin, Texas A&M, the University of Nebraska, Omaha, and Bellevue University. During a period of his time at the University of Nebraska he was a Gallup Senior Scientist. During that time, he was also a Nebraska Technology Professor of the year. While at the Peter Kiewit Institute, College of Information Science and Technology, University of Nebraska, Omaha he started the BSc. Degree in IT Innovation.

Jerry Wagner

402.578.4057 If no answer, leave a message.

cultureambassadorsinc@gmail.com

<http://teamsgetit.com>

<http://cultureambassadorsretreat.com>