

# The Values Deck: Corporate Edition

Card Sorting Techniques

The instruction card within The Values Deck: Corporate Edition box you received provides one possible way to sort the cards, however there are several card sorting techniques you might find useful.

## Best Practices

Here are some best practices you may find helpful as you sort the cards.

- The card sorting techniques provided here are suggestions—customize as you see fit
- Don't get too literal on the value terms and definitions in this deck—they are fluid
- You bring meaning to each value term by whatever it means to you
- If you don't see a value listed in the deck you want, create your own on a Post-It note
- The same value shared between two or more people may be interpreted and defined differently; always seek to understand how people define their values
- Always have copies of the desk reference document in case you wind up short on decks
- Use removable tape if you want to post the cards on whiteboards

## Card Sorting Techniques

### Must-have vs. Meaningful

#### Background

With this technique, participants are asked to distinguish between “must-have” and “meaningful” values. This approach is important, because more often than not, when people are presented with a series of values, they will often select or score a large number of items with a high degree of importance, making it difficult to actually distinguish what their real motivations are vs. the concepts they find to be agreeable.

- Must-have = a value you acted on or thought about in the last 24 hours or is non-negotiable for you
- Meaningful = a value that is of high importance, but not always a “must-have” value

For example, “inspiration” might be a value that someone initially identifies as a must-have value. However, if this motivation does not manifest itself regularly in one's behavior, it may be more of a meaningful value than a must-have value.

Participants are asked to think about what values they have acted on or thought about in the last 24 hours or values they know to be non-negotiable juxtaposed to the values that they agree with or find to be important, but are not must-have values. The assumption in this technique is that the filter of time may be a good approximation of true motivations unless the participant has enough self-awareness to know the values that he or she considers non-negotiable.

## How It Works

1. Select all the value cards that represent your top values
2. Refine your results further by distinguishing between “must-have” and “meaningful” values
  - Must-have = a value you acted on or thought about in the last 24 hours or is non-negotiable for you
  - Meaningful = a value that is of high importance, but not always a “must have” value
1. Sort your “must-have” values in order priority
2. Write down your top 10 values on a sheet of paper
3. Put the cards back in numerical order, flip the deck over, and answer the questions about your values

## The Simple Sort

### Background

The simple sort is one of the easiest sorting techniques that uses two levels of prioritization. Participants just pick all the values they like from the deck, and then are asked to select the top 10 values they identify most from that list.

If you are really pressed for time in a group activity, this is probably the best exercise to do, and you may find the use of a timer to be helpful in keeping you on schedule.

### How It Works

1. Select all the value cards that represent your values
2. Identify your highest value priorities by picking your top 10 values from that selection
3. Review and answer the questions on the back of the cards

## Success & Struggle (Peaks & Valleys)

### Background

People often witness their values in action as they experience success and struggle (peaks and valleys). Success and struggle are good indicators of when your motivations are being fulfilled or not.

- Success = my needs are being met; I am achieving my goals
- Struggle = my needs are not being met; I am not achieving my goals

## How It Works

1. Select all the value cards that represent your successes in life (peaks)
2. Select all the value cards that represent your struggles in life (valleys)
3. Discuss and synthesize the insights you gathered about your successes and struggles
4. Identify your top 10 values from this list
5. Review and answer the questions on the back of the cards

## Currencies of Work

### Background

As the saying goes, “follow the money and see where it goes.”

Time, money, and energy are considered the currencies of life. And, how you spend these currencies can tell you a lot about your company’s values because we often tend to spend time on things that we value.

- Time = the amount of time you spend on something
- Money = the amount of money you spend on something
- Energy = the amount of physical energy you spend on something

However, consider adding a fourth currency to this framework—thoughts. Time, money, and energy are observable behavior, whereas thoughts are not, and there’s often quite a bit of information tucked away in the recesses of our minds about our goals and motivations.

- Thoughts = the amount of thinking energy you spend on something

### How It Works

1. On a sheet of paper, create three columns: time, energy, money (+ thoughts)
2. Select from the deck the values that represent how you spend your time, then write them down in the time column
3. Then, reassemble the cards again and select from the deck the values that represent how you spend your money, then write them down in the money column
4. Then, reassemble the cards again and select from the deck the values that represent how you spend your energy, then write them down in the energy column
5. Lastly, reassemble the cards again and select from the deck the values that represent how you spend your thoughts, then write them down in the thoughts column
6. Circle all the values that appear across time, money, energy, and thoughts
7. Select your top 10 values from all the circled values
8. Review and answer the questions on the back of the cards

# Values Pyramid

## Background

Pyramids are used extensively in all sorts of diagramming and are especially popular in management theory and in the field of personal and professional development thanks to the introduction of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the 1940s.

This technique uses a simple pyramid structure that is agnostic to any management or psychology theory to organize values from higher to lower order.

## How It Works

1. Select all the value cards that represent your top values from the deck
2. Organize your values into three categories:
  - Top of the pyramid: pick two or three values (highest importance)
  - Middle of the pyramid: pick up to eight values (high importance)
  - Bottom of the pyramid: All other value cards you selected (important)
3. Identify your top 10 values from the top and middle of your pyramid
4. Review and answer the questions on the back of the cards

# Past-Present-Future

## Background

As your organization matures, some of your values can and do shift (dynamic values), while others remain relatively consistent for the life of your business (static values). An example of dynamic values in action might be a significant business event that creates an opportunity for the organization to pivot its priorities long-term; this may cause some other values to surface closer to the top of your value priorities. Conversely, an example of a static value might be creativity; an organization might feel this need is driven by a consistent creative impulse that is likely to be present for the life of the business.

With this technique, participants examine the organization's values from the past, present, and perceived future to bring self-awareness to their own personal evolution and to also bring awareness to any value patterns that stay the same over time.

## How It Works

1. On a sheet of paper, create three columns: past, present, and future

2. Select from the deck the top 10 values of your past (and many of these may still be the same for you today), then write them down in the past column
3. Then, assemble the cards back together again and select from the deck the top 10 values of your present and write them down in the present column
4. Lastly, assemble the cards back together again and select from the deck the top 10 values you believe you will have in the future and write them down in the future column
5. Circle all the values that appear in your past, present, and future. What stayed the same? What changed? Why?
6. Select your top 10 values from all the circled values.
7. Review and answer the questions on the back of the cards

## What You Are Not

### Background

Sometimes to define what we are, we must first define what we are not. This activity does a reverse sort of the values deck. You sort the cards by the values that do not reflect your motivations or goals.

### How It Works

1. Select all the value cards that do not represent your values
2. Describe why you selected those values
3. One question: how does defining what you are not, help define what you are?

## Say vs. Do

### Background

Sometimes organizations will espouse a set of values on their website, but do something totally different in real-life (and often called out by your employees on forums such as Glassdoor). This activity is designed to give you a moment to see if you are “practicing what you preach” by looking at what you say you are and what you actually do at work.

### How It Works

4. Select all the value cards that represent what you say you do
5. Select all the value cards that represent what you actually do
6. Describe why you selected those values
7. One question: have any of your values changed? More clarification needed?

# Free Form

## Background

With this technique participants pick their own categories and methods to sort their values.

## How It Works

1. Pick your own categories
2. Sort the cards in the way that is most meaningful to you
3. Synthesize in relevant priorities and insights from your framework