

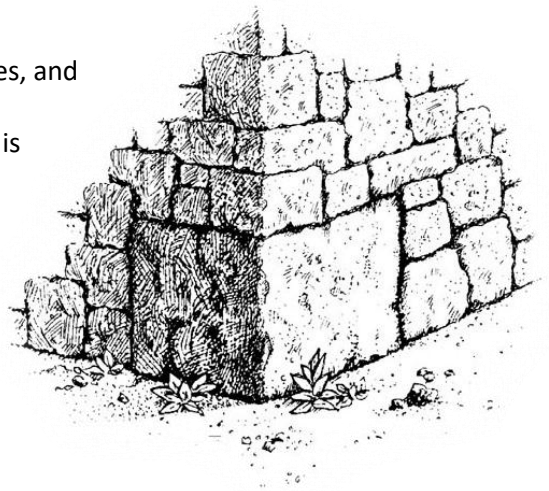
Sound Professional When Talking About Values

Every business needs to establish core values. These core values become the **cornerstone** of the company. A company might **pride themselves on** innovation, quality and customer-centricity. The company hopes that their core values will **resonate with** potential clients. If potential clients have similar values themselves, then they are more likely to buy the company's products or services.

A company with strong values will **strive to** maintain them as they grow. Customers and employees appreciate companies who **stay true to** their values and their roots. If a company starts to **lose sight of** its original values, then they might **alienate** some of their most loyal customers, who they have spent a long time **building strong ties with**. If customers feel like they no longer belong as part of your family then they will stop buying the company's products.

Employees also need to **buy into** the company's values, and what the company **stands for**. A **proponent of** Environmental sustainability and social responsibility is likely to want to work for a company which holds the same values.

One key challenge facing any company is how they can **convey** these values to their audience. How can they demonstrate those values through their actions and their representatives.



A) Match the phrases to the definitions

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

cornerstone	to resonate with	to strive to	to stay true to
to lose sight of	to alienate	to build strong ties	to buy into
to stand for something	a proponent of	to pride ourselves on	to convey

1. To build strong connections and relationships: _____

"They are such a big company and we want them to become a long-term client, so it is essential that we _____ with them."

2. To support and represent an idea: _____

"We need to express exactly what the company _____."

3. To make someone feel as if they are emotionally separated, or no longer part of a group:

"If we take this deal with this global store then we will risk _____ some of our most valued clients."

4. To be proud of a certain ability or quality: _____

"We _____ the high quality of our products."

5. To make a strong effort to achieve something: _____

"We _____ offer our clients the highest possible level of service."

6. A supporter of a theory, philosophy, strategy or course of action: _____

"I am a real _____ of hard work."

7. To have a particular meaning or importance to someone, in a way that they might think or feel the same as you: _____

"Our humble village roots _____ a lot of our customers. They chose us over bigger companies because they feel part of a family."

8. To communicate a message: _____

"We need to _____ our values to our audience more effectively."

9. To act in a way which is in agreement with your values: _____

"The company may be 100 years old, but it has always _____ to its roots."

10. A very important quality or feature upon which something is based:

"Ethical business practices are the _____ of our company's philosophy."

11. To forget about an important idea because you are concentrating too much on other things: _____

"It is a real shame, but it seems that the company has _____ its traditional values."

"If we want the company to go global, we have to make sure that we don't _____ our roots."

12. To believe in or support an idea or concept completely: _____

"The new staff have really _____ our company culture of togetherness and hard work."

B) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? You may need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence.

cornerstone	to resonate with	to strive	to stay true
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The Values of CC Clothing

As the owner of CC Clothing, I would like to express our commitment to the values of social responsibility and customer-centricity that have been the _____ of our company from the very beginning. We started as a small clothing company selling clothes in one store in Liverpool, and we have now grown to have stores in shopping centers around the UK. However, even as we have expanded, we have _____ to _____ to our core values.

At CC Clothing, we _____ on our unique personalised service and friendly advice whenever a customer comes into our store. We listen carefully to their feedback and incorporate it into our operations. This means that they want to come back to us time and time again because they know that we value their satisfaction and comfort.

As we have grown, it has become increasingly difficult to avoid falling into the trap of fast-fashion. The majority of mid-range retail stores produce unsustainable volumes of clothing in order to supply cheap outfits to the end consumer with cheap materials. Then, a new collection is released a few months later, resulting in excessive unnecessary waste from millions of unsold items. This also involves exploitation and production level, and it is certainly something that we refuse to _____ here at CC clothing. We believe that our customers deserve clothes that are high-quality, long-lasting, and ethically sourced. This is something that really _____ with customers not only on an ethical level, but also on a personal level, as consumers are tired of clothes made from cheap material which loses its shape after 1 or 2 washes.

Personally, I have always been a _____ of giving back to the community. I believe that this is a business' responsibility which is just as important as building profit. Whenever we open a new store, we _____ with local community leaders and charities. Our employees participate in volunteer work, such as charity walks and community building activities. This not only gives something back to the community, but also really fosters a sense of team spirit among our employees.

Of course, as we grow, there is always a risk of _____ our values. It can be tempting to prioritize convenience, profits and fast growth over social responsibility and customer centricity. But we refuse to let this happen. We believe that we are one of the few national clothing companies that really _____ something important, and we are committed to staying true to what makes us unique, no matter what.

We believe that we are still a clothing company that our customers can trust. We want to _____ the message that we are not just here to sell clothes – we are here to build long-lasting relationships with our customers based on trust, quality, and social responsibility.

C) Comprehension Questions

1. Based on the article, what is your understanding of the term 'fast-fashion'?

2. Why do customers at CC clothing dislike 'fast-fashion'?

3. The author mentions that CC clothing employees participate in voluntary work. What are the 2 main benefits of this?

4. (Paragraph 5) For CC Clothing, what is a potential business advantage to staying true to their values?

5. When you are choosing a company to buy products or services from, how important are the company's values to you?

D) More Uses of Selected Key Words

To strive

We can also use 'strive for + noun':

"We strive for perfection."

To pride ourselves on

We can use an 'ing' form after this phrase as well:

"We pride ourselves on giving clients a positive experience"

To convey

Here are some great phrases to use with 'convey':

To convey professionalism / to convey confidence

To convey a (professional/sustainable) image

To convey a sense of (family / pride in)

E) Glossary of words for sounding professional when talking about values

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