The background of the entire page is decorated with a pattern of colorful circles and semi-circles in shades of blue, purple, orange, and red. Interspersed among these shapes are stylized illustrations of white surgical face masks, some of which are partially cut off by the edges of the circles.

# Bringing Your Values Out to Play

A Playbook on Company Values

**Special eBook featuring  
COVID-19 plays**

**Debra Corey**



## About the author

Debra Corey is a highly experienced and award-winning HR professional, three-time author, world-class speaker, and was named one of the top 101 global employee engagement influencers. She's had a varied and exciting career over the last 20+ years, working for global companies such as Gap Inc., Merlin Entertainments, and Reward Gateway to name a few, where she's developed and delivered HR strategies in a rebellious way, pushing the boundaries and challenging the status quo to truly drive employee engagement.

Debra's moved into what she calls the "pay it forward" part of her career. Acting as Chief Pay it Forward Solutions Officer at DebCo HR, where she's using her experience and rebel attitude to assist and influence others around the world through her writing, speaking, and consulting.

## Prologue

When I wrote my latest book, "***Bringing Your Values Out to Play***" in December 2019, my aim was to help companies discover, embed and bring their values "out to play," a term I use throughout the book. In it, I talk about how to do this throughout the employee experience touchpoints, for example with hiring, onboarding, recognition, and performance management. However, I never talk about how to do this during a pandemic...who knew, right?!

And it's for this reason that I'm adding a new chapter to the book, focusing specifically on how companies have used their values throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. I'm pleased to share this advance copy of the chapter with you in this special free eBook so that you can be as inspired as I was with the stories, helping you as you continue to bring your values "out to play" at your company. And speaking of help, please do not hesitate to contact me at [debra.corey@debcohr ltd.com](mailto:debra.corey@debcohr ltd.com) if you have any questions or if I can help you in any way.

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## Introduction

There are moments in time that need to be documented, where you need to capture the thoughts, experiences, and actions that really mattered, and that made a significant difference and a lasting impact. And the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly been one of those moments, throwing the world and businesses into a state of chaos and confusion, leaving everyone to sort out solutions in a time jam-packed with unknowns, and with more questions than answers.

But in the face of these challenges and uncertainty, companies around the world have risen up and have not only brought their values out to play, but have used them time and time again in new, innovative, and impactful ways. Regardless of country, industry, or demographics, we have seen what I call “**Values Warriors**” emerge, armed with their values, and ready to be a part of the solution as they protect, support, and care for their communities and for their people.

**“Warriors aren’t born, and they are not made. They create themselves through trial and error and by their ability to conquer their own frailties and faults.”**

Philip J. Messina

And that is why I’ve added this new chapter to this book. Although it was just published in December 2019, just a few months before the pandemic began, I thought it was critical to capture the moment and capture the actions. This chapter is dedicated to all of the Values Warriors, whose stories I have the pleasure of sharing in this book, and those that I haven’t yet met. Borrowing from my company’s values, these warriors have “*opened the door to possibilities*” and “*created magic*,” creating something spectacular in the face of something tragic. And for that, your people and the world are sincerely grateful!

So get out your highlighter pens and Post-its, and get ready to be inspired by these stories of how companies have brought their values out to play, even during a pandemic.



## The Plays

I'm excited to share 24 wonderful plays with you of how “**Values Warriors**” from companies around the world have truly lived their values during the pandemic.

When reading the plays, please keep these things in mind:

- **There's so much more** - each company did so much more than what's included in their play. But as with previous plays appearing in this book, I've spread out the topics and actions between companies so that you get a mix of different ways and approaches.
- **The pandemic isn't/wasn't over** - at the time these plays were written, the pandemic was still very much going on. However, since this book will hopefully be around (and read) far after the pandemic has finished, it was written in the past tense.
- **These stories happened at different times** - the stories told in the plays took place at different times throughout the pandemic. For example, some took place at the lockdown phase, when except for essential workers, all others needed to work from home or be put on furlough, where depending on the government they could receive all or a portion of their salary. Others took place when offices and operations were opening up, and companies were dealing with bringing their employees back into the workplace.



## The company

Aioi Nissay Dowa Insurance Europe (AND-E) is the European arm of one of the world's largest insurers, providing motor insurance to Toyota and Lexus customers across Europe. They're also the parent company of the largest telematics (black-box) insurance brand in the UK, Insure the Box. Their vision is "To lead the way in connected mobility protection."



## Their values

AND-E's six values, or what they call behaviors, are:

1. Achieving	2. Collaborating	3. Engaging
4. Innovating	5. Leading	6. Learning

## Bringing their values out to play

### For their people

AND-E used their values in a variety of ways that added up to support employees, families, and ultimately their customers throughout the pandemic, such as:



**Setting employees up for success** - it started by setting their employees up for success as they transitioned from offices and call centers to working from home. This was done by creating detailed manager and employee guides within 48 hours of lockdown to help employees understand how to work in the new world and in the new ways, ranging from tips on how to set up workspaces to how to stay happy and healthy working from home.

And not to leave out the children, they also created "homeschooling kits" that were sent to parents containing supplies such as adhesive white board paper, pens, and craft supplies to help them with their new teaching responsibilities and to keep their children engaged at home.



**Financial support** - it continued by providing financial support to their employees, living their value of "**innovating**" to create a flexible approach to work so that employees would receive full pay throughout lockdown regardless of their personal circumstances. They did this by creating "gateways" that employees could pass through to allow them the time to balance work and personal commitments. The gateways included three options: to work different work patterns, to take holiday entitlement, or to take emergency leave, which they increased from 2 to ten days.



This approach worked for all but a few employees, but as Andy Preacher, People and Culture Director UK said, “If they ran out of options and we saw that they were trying their best to support the business, we still paid them their full salary.”



**Connected communities** - they also created “connected communities,” something that aligns with their vision as well as their value of “**collaborating.**” They did this by setting up a variety of virtual spaces that were run by volunteers and covered a broad range of subjects for colleagues and families to maintain and create new contacts, learn something new or simply have fun. “We wanted to include the whole colleague, not just the at work colleague, so we invited all family members,” said Preacher.

These activities ranged from beginner chess or java programming classes, to sushi making classes to reflect their Japanese ownership, to mindfulness sessions, to family quiz night. They even ran a creative kids corner that included activities such as creating a new company logo or designing a car of the future. “This has been great for increasing connections between colleagues as they spoke to people they had never spoken to before and built new relationships,” said Preacher.



**Welcome back to the office packs** - the final example involves packs that AND-E created as a way to thank and welcome employees back to the office at the end of lockdown. They included a welcome message from their CEO thanking everyone for the flexibility and commitment they had given to the company, hand sanitizer, washable face masks, and, because they were sent on International Chocolate Day, a bar of chocolate.

“We put in place all of the safety precautions so that colleagues would be safe in the office, but we wanted to do more. The packs were a nod to say that we get what you’re going through coming back into the office, that we’re thinking of you, and that we’re here to help you feel safe” said Preacher.





## The company

Atos, a global leader in digital transformation, has a history that spans a century. From Fredrik Rosing Bull first creating the tabulating machine, the predecessor to the supercomputer, to today being Europe's number one digital services provider. Every day their 110,000 people in 73 countries are developing and implementing innovative digital solutions that support the business transformation of clients and address the environmental and social challenges we all face.



## Their values

Atos's seven values are:

1. Accountability	2. Trust	3. Service
4. Innovation	5. Excellence	6. Social Well Being
7. Operational Competitiveness		

## Bringing their values out to play

### To the community

At Atos, their values were seen time and time again in how they helped the global fight against COVID-19. Here are a few ways they did this:



**Helped local authorities contain the spread of the virus** - they designed EpiSYS, an Epidemic Management System (EMS) that gave healthcare professionals a precise overview of an epidemiological situation by storing and managing all patient data and data related to the virus, including tracking and tracing patient incident reports, in real-time.



**Mobilized supercomputers and machine learning to speed up research** - around the world, Atos' high-performance computers, which count thousands of times faster than standard computers, were used by research teams involved in the fight against COVID-19.



**Shared data science skills with the research community** - they took part in the "COVID-19 Dataset Challenge," an international competition launched by the White House, asking AI researchers to apply machine learning tools and techniques to help provide answers to key questions about the disease. Atos dedicated a team of ten experts to work on the project.



## For their people

Atos also lived their values in their approach to supporting their people. Aligning with “We are Atos” that focuses on the full life cycle of their employee experience through five key areas – Diversity & Inclusion, Social Value, Wellbeing, Life@Work, and Customer Experience, they made sure to have something for everyone.

Here are a few of the many examples:



**Manager helpline** - as more and more questions were coming in from managers, they decided to set up a manager helpline. “We wanted to take some of the pain away from our managers, letting them know that we were there for them,” said Cheryl Allen, HR Director. “It’s also improved the overall credibility of HR, with managers seeing our value, which will improve our relationships going forward.”



**“How to have a holiday at home” webinar** - they ran a variety of events for their workforce, including webinars and videos on how to make the most of a holiday at home, something many were doing during lockdown. Ideas were presented from different perspectives so that colleagues could relate and learn from them. A dedicated virtual event webinar brought ideas together: they ranged from a parent sharing how to have a camping holiday in your backyard, to a graduate living at home with his parents who talked about a cooking holiday of meals from around the world, to an employee living on their own who did everything virtually, from riding roller coasters to going on safari tours.



**Kids summer camp** - with school over and holiday clubs reduced, Atos decided to run a two-week virtual summer camp open to all employee’s children to support working parents and carers. It was run as a community, with parents having to conduct a one hour session based on any talent or skill they selected. Sessions ranged from French and sign language lessons, to karate, to how to make playdough, to a dinosaur party. They even brought in business-related topics such as how to code and information on climate change and diversity. “What was great about it, and something I didn’t expect, is that so many people have reached out who don’t have children to say how brilliant it is because it shows the caring side of Atos outside of the normal employment relationship,” said Allen.



## The company

Banco Santander (Santander) is a Spanish multinational commercial bank and financial services company that was founded in 1857 when Queen Isabella II of Spain signed a Royal Decree authorizing the incorporation of Banco Santander. Initially intended to facilitate trade between the Port of Santander, in northern Spain, and Latin America, it now operates in ten main markets, servicing over 145 million customers.



## Their values

Santander's three values are:

1. Simple	2. Personal	3. Fair
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## Bringing their values out to play

### For the community

Santander was committed to their customers and the wider community throughout the pandemic, showing it in a variety of ways. A great example involves a story about a customer in a remote area of Scotland. The customer came in with bags of coins that he wanted put into his bank account. The employee could have turned him away, but instead the team treated him with empathy, agreeing to help. As it turns out, the customer explained that his only local shop was closed due to the pandemic and so his only option to get food and drinks was via online shopping. Had the employee not helped, he would not have been able to shop throughout the pandemic. “This is how you live your mission and values, serving your customers as individuals, as people,” said Daniel Strode, Group Director of Culture & Strategy.

Here are a few other examples:



**Virtual volunteering** - the pandemic did not stop the volunteering efforts of Santander employees, as they continued to devote their time in the move from face-to-face to virtual. These efforts included the regular programs on financial training, legal advice, and mentoring for women who have been victims of gender-based violence, as well as launching several new social initiatives covering new needs such as making face masks for healthcare workers and customers, and a telephone “befriending” service for the elderly living alone or in care homes or hospitals.



**“Together Solidarity” Fund** - in order to support the global effort to combat coronavirus, Santander created a fund that contributed to initiatives to combat

COVID-19. The fund of €100 million was financed initially by executives donating a portion of their salaries, with additional contributions coming from voluntary employee donations, third parties, and the Group subsidiaries. Contributions were used throughout Santander's home markets to buy medical equipment and support research into the virus through collaboration with universities and other bodies, as well as protecting vulnerable groups most affected by the disease in several countries.

### For their people

Santander also made it a priority to protect the health of their 200,000 employees worldwide. Whether it was putting in place the technology and tools to enable more than 100,000 employees to work remotely, or establishing special opening hours, selective closures, shifts, and additional protective measures to protect the health of employees who dealt directly with their customers, they balanced the needs of their workforce and their customers.

One way they did this was to give employees the freedom to work in a way that met their individual circumstances, bringing to life their value of “**personal**,” which talks about personalizing the needs of each and every employee (and customer) to feel valued and treated as an individual. They did this with branch employees, creating three categories:

- 1 Those that could work their full hours at the branch serving customers.
- 2 Those that could work the majority of their hours but couldn't go into the branch due to health or personal commitments.
- 3 Those that could only work a few hours and could not come into the branch.

“We redeployed our employees to work their hours in ways where it would matter most, whether it was answering emails, learning new skills, or checking in with colleagues to make sure they were OK. We asked ourselves, ‘if you could only work two hours, what would it be?’” said Strobe. And, regardless of hours worked, all employees received full pay from the company.

Another way was with wellbeing, where they not only changed their branding to “be healthy at home,” but they moved to a more holistic approach, expanding the focus in areas such as mental wellbeing. Through a variety of policies and procedures that supported and encouraged wellbeing, in addition to apps and other tools to make wellbeing content more readily available, they gave employees permission and the opportunity to take care of their own personal wellbeing.



## The company

BrewDog is an independent Scottish brewery and pub chain founded in 2007 by two men and a dog who were on a mission to make other people as passionate about great craft beer as they were. They now employ over 1,000 employees in 24 countries, run 101 pubs, and manufacture over 200 different craft beers.



## Their values

BrewDog's five values are called their "charter," because, as Fiona Hunter, Head of Employee Engagement says, "They feel like a collective commitment to act because they were created in such a collaborative way."

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1

**Our mission is to make other people as passionate about great craft beer as we are.**

*World class craft beer is our true north.*

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2

**We make things that we love. Ourselves. From scratch.**

*If we don't love it. We don't do it. Ever.*

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3

**We are community owned and fiercely independent.**

*In an industry dominated by multinational conglomerates, we are making a stand for independence, a stand for authenticity, and a stand for craft.*

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4

**We are committed to being a great employer.**

*Our long-term destiny will be completely dependent on how well we look after our amazing people.*

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5

**We want to show that business can be a force for good.**

*We believe in radical transparency, in looking after the environment, in doing things differently and we believe in giving back.*

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## Bringing their values out to play

One of BrewDog's values is that they "**want to show that business can be a force for good,**" doing so by looking for opportunities to do things differently and by giving back. They've lived this across the business in many ways throughout COVID-19, but here are a sampling of them:

## For the community:



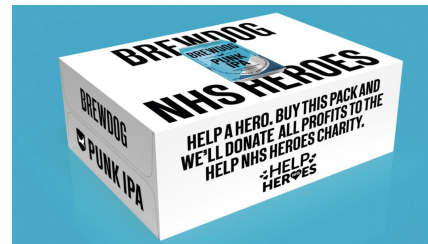
In the UK, they made and donated over £1 million worth of BrewDog sanitizer to health care charities, key frontline workers and National Health Care (NHS) hospitals.



In the U.S., they made and donated BrewDog sanitizer to health care charities as well as police officers and firefighters.



They made and sold thousands of their BrewDog NHS Heroes packs, with the profits from every single case donated to the Help NHS Heroes charity.



To help their Columbus, Ohio community, they supplied their water at cost price to retailers who needed it, and also donated water to Gladden Community House Food Pantry and the YMCA Homeless Shelter.



They volunteered their trucks and drivers to do home delivery of meals to those in isolation in their local communities.



They shared the recipes for every single beer they've ever made for free on their website so that people could brew beer at their homes.

## For their people:



To help protect as many jobs as possible, many of their senior team volunteered to take pay cuts, and the two co-founders are forgoing all of their salary for 2020.



They improved their Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) so that employees would have the right level of support and tools throughout the pandemic.



They introduced programs such as their virtual “online bar,” giving employees the opportunity to share their passions and provide support to one another. They sent a case of beer to each of their team members on furlough.

And as if all of this wasn't enough, the company has said that “When all of this is over, we are going to buy everyone a beer.”



### The company

Delivery Hero is the world's leading local delivery platform, and is on a mission to deliver amazing experiences – fast, easy and to your door. With their global headquarters in Berlin, Germany, they operate in over 40 markets with more than 25,000 employees.



### Their values

Delivery Hero's three values are:

1. We always aim higher	2. We deliver solutions	3. We are Heroes because we care
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## Bringing their values out to play

### For the community

Driven by their value “***we are Heroes because we care,***” Delivery Hero broadened their social responsibility to support local communities in their battle against the spread of COVID-19. By partnering with local governments, public institutions, and charity organisations, their brands across more than 40 countries played a key role in ensuring people receive the support and goods they need, including:



**Helping high risk groups** - aware of the challenges older generations faced due to the pandemic, their Turkish brand Yemeksepeti collaborated with the governing body of Istanbul to provide a hotline for residents aged over 65. Residents could call to order groceries without extra service charges or delivery fees.



**Providing essential goods and services** - to support the government's quarantine efforts while fulfilling a basic need for groceries, meal kits, and cooked meals, their Middle East brand Talabat joined forces with the Kuwaiti government, providing grocery delivery services from their Co-Op supermarkets free of charge.



**Delivering medicine** - with many communities facing limitations to leave their homes, Delivery Hero brands supported governments in delivering medical supplies. Their Panama brand Appetito24 partnered with the local government to deliver medicine to more than 30,000 people aged over 65.





**Meal donations** - Delivery Hero's teams around the world went above and beyond to provide meals where they were most needed. As of August 2020, they had already donated more than 300,000 meals to frontline workers and communities in need.

"Caring for each other and our ecosystem is a core part of our values at Delivery Hero. We have a duty to help and provide solutions for people trying to cope with this health crisis. The best way we can support is by providing as many people as possible with the supplies needed to stay at home. By using our existing infrastructure and collaborating with partners on the ground, we can ensure that our local communities get the supplies and care they need," said Niklas Östberg, CEO & Co-Founder.

### **For their people**

Delivery Hero's value "***we are Heroes because we care***" was also woven into how they supported their people throughout the pandemic. An example is their focus and commitment to the wellbeing of their workforce, which was shown through:



**Global Employee Assistance Plan (EAP)** - although an EAP is not a common benefit in many of their 43 countries, Delivery Hero felt it was important to put in place an EAP hotline in each and every one. Pushing it out globally in only four weeks, it provided the necessary free and confidential advice and support to their workforce to cope with the complex combination of personal and work-related issues.



**Wellbeing events** - they ran a variety of wellbeing events to focus on both community and connection. This included virtual Friday night DJ sessions and live concerts where they pooled the collective and often unknown talents of their workforce. As Jeri Doris, Chief People Officer said, "It was amazing seeing people from all parts of the company come together online. From DJ sets to flute concerts, there was a real sense of shared experience and community."

These initiatives, as well as everything else they did to show their employees they cared, were grounded and based on feedback from their employees. "My mantra throughout was to never make assumptions. I was surprised at how open and honest the feedback and comments were, but it really helped us to tailor our communications and also know that we needed to double down on mental health support," said Doris.



## The company

Epidemic Sound is a music company that licenses its tracks to content creators all over the world. Founded in 2009 by award-winning Swedish music, TV, and Internet entrepreneurs, Epidemic Sound doesn't represent music, it owns it, buying directly from composers when tracks are created to give today's generation of musicians a new way to make a living making music.



## Their values

Epidemic Sound's five values are:

1. Let's celebrate	2. Be a force for good
3. Rebel without a pause	4. Do the hustle
5. Come together	

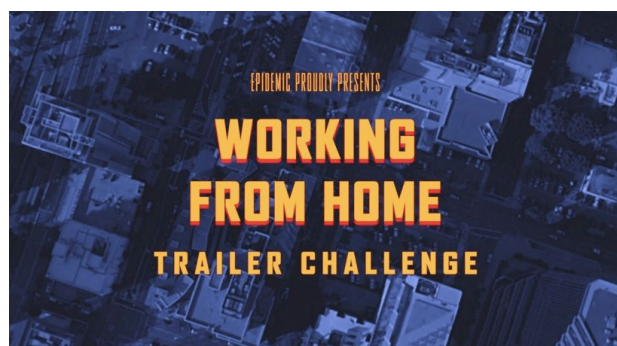
## Bringing their values out to play

### For the community

During the pandemic, Epidemic Sound missioned themselves through their value of "come together" to activate and engage their creator community through various challenges in a campaign called "Come2gether." Some challenges they included were:



**"Work from Home" movie trailer challenge** - with half the world being stuck in quarantine, the need for fun and engaging content had never been more present. So Epidemic Sound created this challenge to make the "dopest trailer for a movie about your experience working from home" as they announced on their website. They received 260 entries, with three winners receiving \$500 and a yearly Epidemic subscription. Competition was fierce, but they were able to settle on three clear winners who led the way with their creativity and positive outlook.





**“Pass the beat” challenge** - they asked their music creators to collaborate on a track, to keep the creativity flowing during the lockdown, and to one by one “pass the beat” around. The challenge included 20 music creators that had 24 hours to work on the track individually before passing it on for the next person to add layers. The collaborators were located across nine major locations, including Stockholm, Texas, Los Angeles, and Portland, that had similar locked-down circumstances. The result is this wonderful mix:  
<https://www.epidemicsound.com/blog/passthebeat/>

### For their people

The value of “*come together*,” which talks about uniting, collaborating, and doing things together, was also shown by how Epidemic Sound treated their people during the pandemic. “Our employees are wired for connection, with this being why many join and stay with the company,” said Maria Waddington, Chief People & Culture Officer. But as the company closed their offices, they needed to find new ways to do this, moving to a more digital approach much in the same way as their business and products.

Digital soon found a home in weekly live updates that provided business updates and a Q&A with their CEO, all transparently sharing both progress and thinkings. Social activities were also moved to a digital format, enhancing the digital togetherness. One example was their social distancing discos, where they leveraged the musical talents of their workforce to run discos for their entire workforce and their families. And speaking of family, they moved their office choir to a digital choir, allowing family members to join in on the digital experience and the fun. These both gave employees opportunities to come together and also to celebrate, which is another Epidemic Sound value.

But as with most companies, not everything was discos and singing throughout the pandemic, and they had the difficult challenge of making 79 of their employees redundant due to business changes. But living their values yet again, they did this in a respectful and people-focused approach, setting up a “One Epidemic Network” to support, coach and provide opportunities for these important members of their team. “It was part of our core to do it in an empathetic way with a big heart. It’s what our employees expected of us, both those that were leaving and those that were staying, and if we had done it differently they would have been disappointed in us,” said Waddington.



## The company

In 2015, eve Sleep's founders had an idea to change how you shop for mattresses, letting you order one at a click of a button and deliver it in a box along with a 100-nights at-home trial. Five years on and eve are now a Sleep Wellness brand and provide a whole range of sleep-inducing goodies to solve those horrible little worries we all have as we nod off to sleep, all still delivered straight to your door. With their 55 employees, they're on a mission to unleash the power of sleep wellness for all.



## Their values

eve Sleep's five values are:

1. We are experts in support	2. We keep things simple
3. We are yellow	4. We don't believe in being sheep
5. We won't sleep until you do	

## Bringing their values out to play

eve Sleep's values were launched in February 2020, one month before they went into lockdown. Many companies in this situation would have waited until things were back to "normal" before embedding and integrating them, but instead, the business decided to use this opportunity to weave their values into a variety of initiatives. This showed their employees the values were here to stay and were critical now and in the future to how they ran their business, treated their people, and supported one another.

### For the community:

One of eve Sleep's values is that "***we are experts in support,***" which talks about flying the flag of wellbeing, and being uncompromising in making the lives of their customers, and each other, better. Here are a few ways they helped and supported not just their customers, but the community, at the start of the pandemic:



**Donations to hospitals** - to play a role in improving sleep quality and wellbeing for as many people as possible during this critical time, eve Sleep donated mattresses and pillows to a number of hospitals to help their staff get much-needed rest between shifts.



**Donations to key workers** - to support key workers, employees were given the opportunity to nominate key workers in their life and send them a sleep well gift box including pillows and bedding to help them with their own well being, support them through this time and put a smile on their faces. These boxes were given to traditional key workers who supported employees throughout the pandemic in meaningful ways, even having one employee gift a box to their local butcher!

### **For their people:**

The new values also created opportunities to shine through in eve Sleep's people initiatives, including the introduction of these three programs:



**Simply the Best program** - the Simply the Best recognition program was launched in week two of lockdown, and aligns with their value "***we are yellow,***" which talks about celebrating successes and efforts. The program has been great for driving awareness of the new values, making employees feel appreciated, and helping employees learn more about the business and each other during these challenging times.



**Small Acts of Kindness program** - another new program has been the Small Acts of Kindness program, aligning to the value "***we are experts in support.***" Small tokens were sent out to employees to support them with their struggles, with gifts ranging from flowers to plants, and even dry hair shampoo for one employee who was without water for an entire week.



**Make Someone Smile program** - the final example is the Make Someone Smile program, which aligns to their value "***we are yellow,***" focusing on the part of the value that talks about positivity and waking up on the right side of the bed. Everyone was given the name of a colleague and told they could spend £5 to send them a secret gift. This not only brought a smile to everyone's face, but also helped them stay connected and supported, sending the message that they're all in it together.



## The company

Flipkart is an Indian e-commerce company that was started in 2007 by selling books online. Now, over a decade later, they are India's largest online marketplace and one of India's leading technology powerhouses that is disrupting the way India shops online.



## Their values

Flipkart's four values, which they call their "ABCs with integrity," are:

1. <b>Audacity</b>	2. <b>Bias for Action</b>
3. <b>Customer First</b>	4. <b>Integrity</b>

## Bringing their values out to play

### To the community

When the pandemic hit in India, Flipkart quickly stepped up to ensure essential items could be delivered across the country, adapting and changing existing systems and practices to meet these new and demanding needs. Being "**customer first**," one of their core values, they brought in their other values of "**audacity**" and "**bias for action**" to come up with ways to connect the entire ecosystem to achieve the end-to-end delivery that was necessary for their customers.

"Innovation sprang up during these challenging times, with the team coming together across multiple functions to build solutions in quick time to service our customer, translating ideas into action with a sense of urgency and a sense of pride," said Krishna Raghavan, Chief People Officer.

Here are a few ways they did this:



**Local taxi drivers** - with a large number of local taxi drivers not working due to reduced travel, Flipkart brought them in to deliver essential items to customers, supplementing their normal delivery network to meet the increasing demands.



**Re-tooled fulfillment centers** - fulfillment centers were modified to be able to focus on and deliver essential items in a much larger geographical area.



**Local merchants in Kiranas** - they partnered with small and large local merchants to connect and deliver merchandise to customers in need.



## For their people

The story of how Flipkart supported their employees throughout the pandemic is also firmly grounded around their values, and also around safety. Time and time again they went above and beyond to support their 120,000 employees, the majority of which were working in fulfillment centers across India, whether they were permanent or contract workers.

“We thought about the entire lifecycle, from awareness to prevention and finally, in how to deal with the virus. We asked ourselves - how can the company step in and support our employees at the various stages in the best way?” said Raghavan.

Here are a few ways the company supported their employees:



**Awareness sessions** - they conducted over 4,000 awareness sessions with their employees across the country, emphasizing the importance of safety and how to minimize their exposure through certain precautionary measures.



**On-site doctors** - Flipkart did something that was an industry-first by deploying doctors to be located on site at a number of their fulfillment centers, being there to take care of their employees at any point in time.



**Testing** - with private testing in India not being comprehensive and mature, they entered into relationships with diagnostic labs across the country to make tests easily available to their entire workforce.



**Extended life insurance** - they extended life insurance cover for their contract workers, increasing their entitlement through intermediaries to be the same level as provided to their permanent workers.



**Coronavirus fund** - they created a fund that would be paid to employees should they get the coronavirus to cover any ad hoc expenses.

Flipkart employees also stepped up to focus on safety by coming up with simple yet effective inventions to maintain high standards of hygiene, living their values of “**audacity**” and “**bias for action.**” An example was a foot-powered touchless hand sanitizing dispenser that was developed by employees at one of its fulfillment centers, and was then replicated at its fulfillment centers across the country.



### The company

Macmillan Cancer Support is one of the largest British charities and provides physical, financial, and emotional support for those with cancer, so they can live life as fully as they can.



### Their values

Macmillan's seven behaviors and five supporting experience principles that guide employees to deliver a consistent Macmillan experience are:

Behaviors:	Experience principles:
1. Delivering results	1. Empathy
2. Learning & improvement	2. Proximity
3. Communicating & influencing	3. Resolution
4. Acting as one team	4. Inspiration
5. Enabling change	5. Empowerment
6. Making decisions	
7. Engaging people	

## Bring their values out to play

### For their people

One of the challenges Macmillan faced at the start of the pandemic was how to support and communicate with their furloughed employees, which was 36% of their total workforce. With guidance from the government reducing the contact with employees, they needed to find a way to stay connected and provide support to this important group of employees.

So living behaviors such as “**learning & improvement**,” which is about looking for ways to improve and do things better, they created a separate communications platform for furloughed employees, mirroring their Top Banana communications portal that was used for the rest of the workforce. They took this extra step so that furloughed employees would feel connected to the business and to each other during these times of uncertainty. “The longer employees were on furlough the more they worried and wondered if they were still needed by the organization. We wanted to stop these feelings by helping them feel a part of the business, reminding them that

the company was looking forward to them returning,” said Sam Dewey, Reward & Wellbeing Manager.

The platform evolved over time to include biweekly newsletters and surveys to gain an understanding of how employees were feeling and what support they required. “It’s been a learning curve for us, showing us the importance of creating something personal and relevant for this group of employees,” said Dewey.

Another challenge was supporting the wellbeing of their workforce. Driven by behaviors such as “**embracing change**,” which involves constantly looking at the bigger picture and to better ways of doing things, the organization acted on this value in countless ways, such as:



**Wellbeing platform** - prior to the pandemic, Macmillan had identified a need for a wellbeing platform, and were considering putting one in place. But as the pandemic started, and wellbeing became a focus and priority, they decided to move quicker on this important initiative. So after trialing a new wellbeing platform, they launched it to their entire workforce, including furloughed employees, delivering an online platform providing education, support, and tools to meet the needs of their employee’s personal wellbeing.



**Social connections** - “Working at a charity is very social, very fun, because everyone is here for the same reason and the same purpose. But with this disappearing overnight, we needed to find a way to recreate these social connections and unify the workforce,” said Dewey. So with the help of an activity calendar, Dewey and the team organized daily activities such as quizzes, bingo, workouts, meditations, and cooking to name a few. It’s been such a success that it’s evolved into “Green Get Togethers,” aligning with their “Go Green” branding, and continuing to deliver social connections in different and meaningful ways.



**Including volunteers** - prior to the pandemic, Macmillan’s Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) was only available to their 2,000 permanent employees. But seeing the need to also support their 20,000 volunteers, they made the decision to extend and provide EAP to them as well. “The pandemic really made us think of our workforce differently, making sure we met the needs of our whole team,” said Dewey. Since this is not a normal practice, it really brings “**acting as one team**” to life as it shows the personal care delivered to each and every important member of their workforce.



## The company

Microsoft is a multinational technology company that develops, manufactures, licenses, supports, and sells computer software, consumer electronics, personal computers, and related services. Their mission is to transform the way people live, play and connect through great technology, developing new ways for people to interact with technology at home, at work, and on the move, while transforming education and public services and supporting the economy.



## Their values

Microsoft's three values are:

1. Respect	2. Integrity	3. Accountability
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## Bringing their values out to play

### For the community

At Microsoft, they were committed to doing their part to protect the health and wellbeing of the communities in which they operate, providing technology, tips and resources to their customers to help them do their best while working remotely. Here are just two of the many ways they did this:



**Provided local support** - throughout their local communities, Microsoft jumped in to provide local support. An example was in the Puget Sound region, where the company was founded, and where they made the decision to continue to pay their vendor hourly service workers their regular wages even if their work hours were reduced during the pandemic. These included individuals who worked at their cafes, drove their shuttles and supported their on-site tech and audio-visual needs, doing this to recognize the hardship that lost work would mean for them.



**Provided help for 25 million job seekers** - Microsoft identified that one of the ways to genuinely create an inclusive recovery was to provide easier access to digital tools to improve the skills of people hardest hit by job losses, including those with lower incomes, women, and underrepresented minorities. To help address this need, they launched a global skills initiative aimed at bringing more digital skills to 25 million people worldwide by the end of 2020. This initiative brought together every part of their company, combining existing and new resources from LinkedIn, GitHub, and Microsoft.

## For their people

The same level of care was given to Microsoft employees, living values such as “**respect**,” respecting the new challenges their workforce was facing and respecting their individual and unique set of needs. Here are two of the many ways they did this:



**Virtual interviews** - Microsoft's recruitment efforts did not slow down during the pandemic, which meant they needed to quickly find an alternative to face-to-face interviews. Like others, they made the decision to bring them online by moving to virtual interviews, but then took it to the next level by creating a playbook to clearly explain the process and how to be successful in a virtual environment. This is a great example of respecting the changing needs of both hiring managers and candidates, creating a solution to set them up for success, overcoming the new challenges they were facing.



**Role-modeled maintaining balance and health** - recognizing the importance and challenges of maintaining the balance of work and home and of a healthy lifestyle during the pandemic, Microsoft decided to bring in their leaders to help role model it to their workforce. They had leaders share personal stories of the challenges they were having and what they were doing to overcome them, signaling that everyone was having challenges in one way, and that it was OK to talk about it so that together they could address and overcome them. One such post was by a leader in the U.S. who talked of the challenge of not being able to see her elderly parents due to lockdown. The reaction by employees encapsulated all of their values as many wrote to the leader to say that they would be happy to pop in and check in on her parents.



## The company

The National Basketball Association (NBA) is a global sports and media business based in the U.S. that is passionate about growing and celebrating the game of basketball. In addition to running the league's on-court activities through their four leagues, they also manage media relationships, develop marketing partnerships, and oversee licensing of NBA merchandise. Off the court, they're deeply committed to social responsibility, supporting education, youth and family development, and health-related causes through NBA Cares.



## Their values

The NBA's four values, or what they call the "four corners of our court," are:

1. Integrity	2. Respect
3. Teamwork	4. Innovation

## Bringing their values out to play

### For the community

The NBA is not just viewed as a basketball organization, but as an organization that is a social icon. The world looks at how they'll think and act when it comes to not just sports, but to political and social issues as well. Guided by their values, they've shown time and again how their values are more than just words.

This has been the case throughout the pandemic, when the league used its vast digital footprint and the powerful voices of teams, players, coaches, doctors, and others across the NBA family to launch "NBA Together" - a global community and social engagement campaign aimed at supporting, engaging, educating, and inspiring youth, families, and fans in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The program was centered around these four pillars:



**Know the Facts** - this pillar is about amplifying the latest global health and safety information, sharing guidelines and resources so that important and life-saving facts are known. To support this pillar, the NBA launched a "Coronavirus Information For NBA Fans" webpage, providing content and links for their global fans, plus the latest information on developments in their regions and how to best protect themselves and others from the virus.

The NBA and WNBA also used the influential voices of players, coaches, and legends through public service announcements to inform fans on the best



ways to stay safe and healthy in both their body and mind as the world faces the rapidly changing and evolving pandemic.



**Acts of Caring** - this pillar is about shining a light on the power of community and volunteerism by inspiring one million big and small acts of kindness. The NBA called on players, fans and the general public to share ways they were supporting friends, families, and communities by posting photos and videos with the hashtag #NBATogether on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok.



**Expand Your Community** - this pillar is about encouraging fans to expand their communities through content, activities, and virtual engagement in an effort to stay physically and mentally healthy and active. It included the launch of "Jr. NBA at Home," an interactive content series for young people who were unable to play with their friends and teammates, but still wanted to be active, working on their game and connected with the NBA.

In addition, the NBA engaged with education and wellness partners such as Discovery Education, Scholastic Inc., and NBA Math Hoops, to promote existing resources for students and parents that have been adapted for at-home learning. And in an effort to combat the higher levels of anxiety and stress during these uncertain times, the NBA, in partnership with Kaiser Permanente and Headspace, provided mental wellness and resiliency resources and tools to encourage fans to be mindful of their mental wellness and the wellbeing of those around them.



**NBA Together Live** - this pillar was about keeping people socially connected with their favorite players and teams. They did this with live daily interviews with members of the NBA family, taking questions from fans on Instagram live, and streaming classic games.



## The company

Ordergroove is a U.S. commerce technology platform that is on a mission to simplify consumers' lives by transforming the buying experience. They make consumers' lives easier via removal of friction, and help their retail customers by moving from one-and-done transactions to recurring, commerce-enabled customer relationships.



## Their values

Ordergroove's four values are:

1. <b>What you see is what you get</b>	2. <b>We're in it to win it</b>
3. <b>We drive results</b>	4. <b>We're comfortable being uncomfortable</b>

## Bringing their values out to play

### For their people

At Ordergroove, they worked as a team to lean into their values to lead them through unprecedented and challenging times. Along the way, the team learned valuable lessons about what worked (and what didn't!).

One example was how they redesigned their flexible work policy, using their values as a "gut check," going through them one by one as they developed an approach to use moving forward. Here's how else they leaned into individual values:



**What you see is what you get** - this value is about feeling safe to be your authentic self, and was used throughout the pandemic as they encouraged employees to share the chaos at home as they moved to working remotely. One example was holding a contest for the most creative way to set up your office space, celebrating the authenticity of what you see is what you get. Employees shared photos ranging from using toasters, kid's easels, anything and everything showing their new human working space, including one person who put their dining room chairs on the table to create a standing desk. Another way was by constantly reminding employees to never say you are sorry for an interruption, whether that's from kids, pets, roommates, whatever, because that was your authentic life at that moment.



**We're in it to win it** - this value is about getting to the right answer, no matter who comes up with it, focusing on collaborating to hit their goals. To support this during the pandemic, Ordergroove set up new Slack channels and

additional recurring meetings to recreate the “drive-by” conversations. Employees leaned into this value as well, stepping up to cover for colleagues impacted more by the pandemic without a second thought, collaborating and winning together.



**We drive results** - this value is about focusing on results and outcomes, and not just actions. This was seen in the decision to close their offices earlier than the government mandate, sending the message that it doesn't matter where you work, but rather the results you deliver. It also was a part of how the team celebrated the achievement of goals, creating a biweekly team toast and a “good news” channel in Slack to make sure they were recognizing the results being delivered during the challenging economic downturn.



**We're comfortable being uncomfortable** - this value is about riding the rollercoaster, and as Karen Weeks, SVP People said, “This pandemic has been the mother of all coasters, but we were up for the challenge.”

They tried and tested new approaches and programs, constantly asking themselves, “OK, what do we do now?” For instance, to combat Zoom fatigue, the team decided to focus on activities that were easy for employees to do from home, like creating cards for seniors to give back to the community, or submitting ideas that were easy for employees, such as new recipes people were trying while being home.

As Weeks said, “While there was definitely burnout and fatigue with all the change and the emotional rollercoaster we all were on, the ongoing changes didn't throw us, and everyone was able to adapt quickly.”



## The company

Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) are a leading, growing, independent housing association with a clear social purpose, providing homes and services people want and can afford. They are the largest social housing landlord in Plymouth, UK, responsible for over 16,000 properties providing homes to over 35,000 people, and pride themselves in doing the right things by their residents and employees.



## Their values

PCH's four values are:

<b>1. Do the right things</b>	<b>2. Care</b>
<b>3. Respect</b>	<b>4. Listen</b>

## Bringing their values out to play

### For the community

When the country and their residents were in lockdown, PCH jumped in to provide help and support to them, living each and every value along the way. Here are five examples of how they did this:



They were one of the first housing associations in the country to commit not to evict any of its residents due to a loss of income from the coronavirus, before legislation preventing evictions was announced.



They kept residents informed through regular news updates on their website and weekly e-newsletters to those signed up for their digital services.



For employees who were unable to do their usual jobs, they were empowered to volunteer with local charities to deliver food parcels to residents in need and make welfare calls to older and more vulnerable people living in their properties.



They helped hundreds of residents apply for benefits and worked with partners in the police and local council to tackle issues such as the illegal disposing of waste and anti-social behavior.



They provided residents with online courses through their “Learn for Free” program and held chat groups to help keep people connected and ease social isolation.

### **For their people**

The pandemic presented huge challenges to PCH as their workforce was suddenly separated into three very different groups, with 30% initially being put on furlough, 48% working from home, and 14% being asked to continue to work on site in their communities. What this meant was that they needed to quickly find a way to connect and communicate with them all, getting information to them in the right way and at the right time.

Their solution was to develop a COVID-19 hub on their employee communications platform that they named “Jannet,” since in Plymouth, people are called “Janners.” The hub delivered daily updates on COVID-19, operational information on what was critical to know in order to get their work done, as well as a section where employees could post stories and photos to share their personal experiences.

To kick things off with the employee posts, Angie Scott, Head of Communications, shared what she called her “confessions” post, detailing her experiences of juggling working from home and homeschooling, leading by example to show that it was OK to show the human struggles you were dealing with. Another great example came from a surprising source - an employee by the name of Mark, who Scott described as a “big burly builder,” who decided that every day he would share a video that included a daily thought. He named it “Thoughts from Mark’s mound” as he filmed them on a grass bank just outside PCH’s stores building where he picked up his stock early each morning.

The platform proved to be extremely successful, with a massive 87% readership. Scott explained: “Through our daily updates, our staff felt connected and well informed. They also had somewhere to instantly raise their fears and concerns – it was a great temperature check of staff mood and morale, plus a really good indicator of emerging issues. This meant all the difference in acting quickly and solving issues before they became problems. It helped to build valuable trust and confidence between our senior managers making important decisions and our workforce. We made absolutely sure we were living our values – we weren’t just saying it, we listened, respected our staff’s views and cared enough to take action. Most importantly we made sure we were doing the right things.”



## The company

Student Maid is a Florida-based cleaning and concierge service dedicated to providing exceptional customer service while at the same time empowering the rising generation of leaders. When you hire from Student Maid, you are investing in opportunities for local students to learn and grow, taking these life skills, confidence in themselves, and leadership abilities as they approach their futures.



## Their values

Student Maid's ten values are:

1. Take your moral fiber	2. Roll with the punches
3. Jump through flaming hoops	4. Don't leave us hangin'
5. Be classy, not sassy	6. Own it
7. Unleash the creative dragon within	8. Pay it forward
9. Speak now or forever hold your peace	10. Raise the roof

## Bringing their values out to play

### For their people

Student Maid used their values to react to and support their people throughout these challenging times. Whether it's through their value "**own it**," which is about taking ownership for your situation, accepting responsibility, and acting on it, or "**jump through flaming hoops**," which is about going above and beyond for each other, or "**roll with the punches**," which is about adapting to and accepting changes as it comes instead of resisting it, their values have come out to play countless times.

An example is when they made the decision to temporarily close their business well before they were mandated to do so by the state, not wanting to put their employees or customers at risk until they had adequate personal protection equipment (PPE) or cleaning products.

"We couldn't look at it from a revenue perspective; that would've meant we had to stay open, no matter what. Instead, we asked ourselves – if money were no object, what decision would we make? The answer was obvious, we had to close our business until we could ensure everyone's safety. We knew we would lose a ton in



revenue, but to us, there was no other option we would accept,” said Kristen Hadeed, CEO & founder.

But that left them with another dilemma, as closing the business meant their team members would no longer get the paychecks they relied on to pay for rent, tuition, groceries, and other bills. And since cutting them off from their livelihood didn't align with their value of “***don’t leave us hangin’***,” Student Maid made the decision to pay employees as much as they could for each pay period they were closed.

They crunched the numbers and found that they could give each member of the team \$200 per paycheck, which for the majority of their part-time cleaners would be similar to what they would have made anyway, but for others, it wouldn't be nearly enough. So they called a virtual company-wide meeting, telling team members what they were able to do, giving employees who were going home to be with family the choice to give up part or all of the money to go to those who really needed it. The response unequivocally confirmed their decision, with the team relieved that they didn't have to choose between a paycheck and their health, grateful that no one was being laid off and that the company was paying them what they could, while employees were able to step up to support one another.

The biggest impact of this and other actions has been the level of trust within their team, with employees seeing that when it mattered most, the company walked the talk and stuck to their values. “Long-term, we believe this translates to loyalty from our team members, and even our customers,” said Hadeed.



## The company

Teleperformance is the global leader in customer experience management, with over 300,000 interaction experts speaking 265 languages and dialects across 80 countries, serving over 170 markets.



## Their values

Teleperformance's five values and the associated mantras are:

<b>1. Integrity:</b> "I do what I do, I do what I say."	<b>2. Respect:</b> "I treat others with kindness and empathy."
<b>3. Professionalism:</b> "I do things right the very first time."	<b>4. Innovation:</b> "I create and improve."
<b>5. Commitment:</b> "I am passionate and engaged."	

## Bringing their values out to play

Teleperformance's (TP) mission and values represent how they think and act every day to achieve their main goal, "***happiness from inside out.***" And this was no different throughout the pandemic, with each of the five values shining through the actions taken by Teleperformance to support their community and employees.

### For the community

TP employees have always been committed to supporting their community, ranging from their "Knitters & Knatters Club," where they got together to knit hats for hospital neonatal units, to volunteering time at care homes to help with gardening, acting as reading buddies, and so much more. But with this no longer being possible, they pivoted to continue to provide support with different forms of kindness and empathy.

One way they did this was with their "Keep Smiling" campaign, which had the taglines of "working together to keep the nation smiling, helping care homes spread the joy." Cards were designed by TP employees and family members that displayed hand-drawn images and upbeat messages such as "Be strong, things will get better," "Storms don't last forever," and "Keep smiling." Uplifting messages were written on cards and sent to residents in care homes as well as key workers, delivering them along with treats so that they didn't feel forgotten and, of course, kept smiling.



### For their people

And when it came to their people, TP again went above and beyond to provide support in this new world. “We started by asking our employees what they needed to keep them engaged, to stay healthy, and to stay connected,” said Lisa Dolan, Head of Employee Engagement for UK & South Africa.

To help, TP created a number of channels to make sure they could connect with employees, keeping them up to date with important company news, and to share tips on how to look after themselves. One example was their “Keeping the kids busy” channel, where they shared crafting ideas, homeschooling tips, how to keep kids active, and even weekly activity packs for TP Tots and TP Teens. Another example was their “Your Health & Wellbeing” channel, where they shared tips and articles on how to keep the mind and body healthy, and links to activities such as Mindful 10:10, which were ten minute mindfulness sessions held at, you guessed it, 10:00 am.

TP also used competitions to drive connections throughout the pandemic, putting their creativity on display. These ranged from an Easter craft competition for kids, to a poetry competition for employees and family members where they could submit a poem about someone they looked up to as a hero, to a TelePETformance competition where photos were submitted showcasing the talents or funny habits of their pets. You name it, and they had a competition for it, all serving as a means to connect, interact, and celebrate together.



## The company

The Granite Group (TGG) is a third generation family-owned U.S. distributor of plumbing, heating, cooling, water, and propane supplies. With 45 branches across six states in New England, including both wholesale and retail locations, the company prides themselves on providing best-in-class products and services to their customers. Their team of nearly 600 delivers on this by living up to the company’s tagline of: “Solid as our name.”



## Their values

TGG’s six values, which are held together through the acronym “Praise,” are:

1. Professional	2. Relationships	3. Aggressive
4. Integrity	5. Service	6. Entrepreneurial

## Bringing their values out to play

### For the community

TGG has always been a community-focused organization, with their “TGG Cares” Committee organizing volunteering events for employees to participate in, and with the company providing financial support, reimbursing employees up to \$250 for volunteering activities. But when the pandemic hit, and volunteering activities such as organized charity runs were no longer taking place, they decided to pivot and create a new way of giving back and, at the same time, do something to support the physical and mental health of their employees.

The result was an organized “Virtual 5k,” where they invited employees to run or walk a 5k on their own, submitting pictures to celebrate and share their experiences with one another. And for every employee that participated, TGG donated \$25 to their local food bank, giving back to the community in this much-needed way. This initiative showcases TGG values such as “*integrity*,” doing the right thing for the community, and “*entrepreneurial*,” finding ways to make things happen.

### For their people

TGG has always had a strong culture, and, borrowing from their tag line, it was “as solid as their name.” Their values and culture helped them stay strong throughout the pandemic, supporting and caring for their people so they could support and care for one another and for their customers.

One way was by keeping their workforce informed throughout the pandemic, doing so through a comprehensive and thorough communications strategy. Led by their executive virus response team that was put in place from day one, they sent out daily communications from CEO Bill Condron to provide updates, sharing both good news and bad. They also committed to answering employee questions within 15 minutes, and although they were fast and furious, the team managed to respond to them all. “We took a thoughtful approach to communications from the beginning, we met people where they were at, trying to approach everything with empathy, listening to their individual needs,” said Tracie Sponenberg, Chief People Officer.

Another way was by pivoting and moving their annual employee meeting to a virtual event. Packed with information and business updates, the event helped add a bit of normality and at the same time, re-connect the entire workforce. “While it was tough not to see everyone in person, it was wonderful to see everyone online, from their homes,” said Sponenberg. And to make it feel more like their annual meeting, each employee was sent a voucher for a free pizza.

TGG also lived their value of “**entrepreneurial**” in how they encouraged their individual locations to run their businesses throughout the pandemic. After receiving protocols on how to keep their people and customers safe, they were given the freedom to decide where to go from there. For example, did they want to open their doors for customers or have curbside pickups? The choice was left up to individual owners to decide what was right for them.



## The company

Tony's Chokoloney was founded in 2005 by journalists from the Dutch TV-program "Keuringsdienst van Waarde" (Food Unwrapped) after they discovered that the big chocolate manufacturers sourced cocoa from farms with illegal child labor. Since then, Tony's has grown to be the number one chocolate brand in the Netherlands, expanding into the U.S., UK and EU to deliver on their important mission and create an even bigger impact.



## Their values

Tony's Chokoloney's four values are:

1. Outspoken	2. Makes you smile
3. Willfull	4. Entrepreneurial

## Bringing their values out to play

### For the community

The value of "**makes you smile**," which talks about looking at the bright side, to keep laughing, and being full of energy to move chocolate mountains, was lived time and time again throughout the pandemic. In fact, it's meaning became even deeper, delivering smiles in different ways to support and reinforce their long term commitments to everyone they worked with.

Whether it was the people who came into the office to serve lunch, give chair massages or lead personal training classes to employees, or cocoa farmer partners in Africa, Tony's supported and put smiles on their faces throughout the pandemic in a variety of ways. They did it financially, paying them their normal fees regardless of whether the actual work was done, by staying connected to them, checking in to see how they were doing, or in the case of the farmers, helping them navigate through the situation together.

Here's a statement that talks about this last act of support from their website:

"For the cocoa farmers we work with, the coronavirus is a real threat. Keeping social distance is even harder if you live in a small house with your extended family and have no way to stock up on groceries for a week. Even simple extra hygienic measures are difficult when you rely on communal water points and soap is a luxury. By putting up posters with health precautions, as well as handing out leaflets and

locally-made soaps, we promote and support preventive measures. In addition, we are also leveraging the network of community facilitators and Tony's ambassadors to raise awareness about the virus. Spread the word, not the virus!"

### For their people

The value of "***makes you smile***" was also front and center in everything Tony's did to support their people throughout the pandemic. As Sophie Dopheide, Culture Champion, said, "We always try to make our team smile, especially in this surreal period!" Here are just two of the many ways they did this:



**Gift boxes** - each week during lockdown, employees received special gift boxes. The first one was a Quarantony survival kit, packed with the essentials required for lockdown including Red Bull and Jagermeister, since their company ski trip was cancelled due to the pandemic. Others included food from local restaurants, to put smiles on the faces of not only their employees, but also the businesses they were supporting. And to close out lockdown, the final box was a Staycation kit, packed with everything to have a beach holiday at home since travel was still not allowed, and on a more serious note, the choice of a few books on the topic of anti-racism.



**Recognition wheel** - at Tony's, they have a "Wheel of Wonders" that employees can spin whenever they win the Tony's Award or other recognition awards. During the pandemic they adapted it to be the "Quarantony Wheel," that employees could spin after winning one of their many online quizzes or other virtual team activities taking place during lockdown. Some of the wheel prizes were a six-pack of Corona, toilet paper, a voucher for a visit to the hairdressers, a LEGO kit, a movie night kit, and a voucher for a meal cooked by their office chef.



"In everything we did for our people during the pandemic, we wanted to bring our strong culture and rituals to their homes, creating connections and driving engagement," said Dopheide.

They did this by living another value, "entrepreneurial," which talks about pushing limits and breaking barriers to get things done. It's safe to say that Tony's accomplished this, proven by their creativity and perseverance to put smiles on the faces of their people and the wider community time and time again.





## The company

Twinkl Educational Publishing began life in 2010 as a husband and wife start-up, working from a tiny back bedroom. Today, Twinkl is a truly global business, providing over half a million resources and content to support teachers and leaders around the world. Everything they do supports the global teaching community, being committed to transforming people's lives through education.



## Their values

Twinkl's four values are:

1. Lead the way	2. Go above and beyond
3. Do the right thing	4. Be lovely

## Bringing their values out to play

### For the community

When schools began to close because of COVID-19, the Twinkl team recognized that through their mission to ***“help those who teach”*** and their value of ***“do the right thing,”*** they could and should be a part of the solution, supporting not just schools but parents, who for the first time had to become the teacher. So they quickly offered free access to their library of over 650,000 educational resources to both teachers and parents to keep their children learning at home.

They also lived the value of ***“lead the way”*** as they shifted priorities to what mattered most during the pandemic, redeploying their teams to make their home learning hub easier for parents in their new capacity of a teacher. “Parents are not trained to teach, so they look for and use resources in different ways. This meant we had to adapt our platform to meet their needs, creating a tool that was accessible and easy for them to use,” said Tim Elgar, Head of Culture and Leadership. The updated hub now provides daily activities to help fill the days and offer much-needed variety, as well as book readings, live lessons, positive news updates, and more to help the overall learning experience.

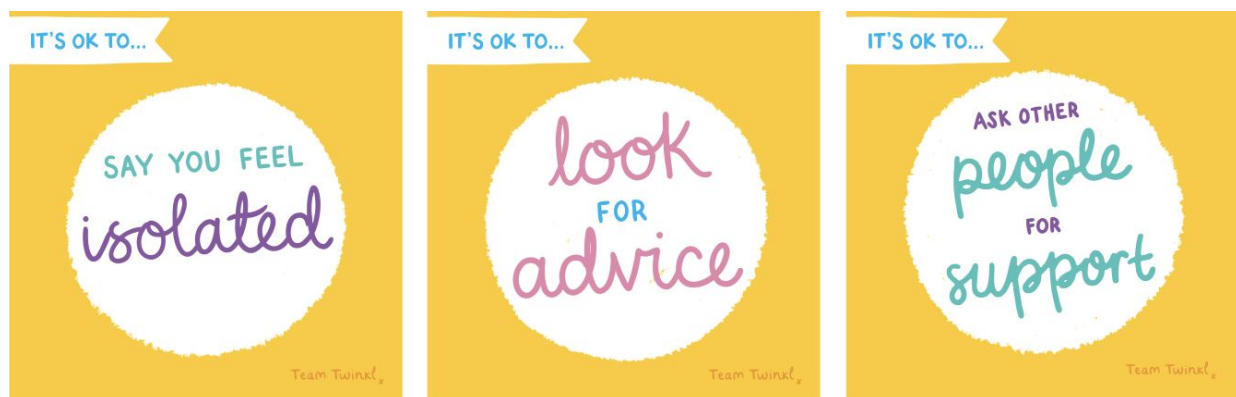
The response has been extremely positive, with more and more people from across the world sending in messages about how much the resources have helped. And the same is true with their team members, with the experience uniting them behind their

mission and values, making them proud to work for a company that has contributed throughout the crisis.

### For their people

Twinkl recognized early on that in the same way that their learning hub delivers a flexible approach to learning, they needed to create and deliver a flexible approach to how their team members would work remotely. “The office environment is the same for everyone, but working at home differs drastically based on your personal circumstances. Some have kids at home with them, some live alone, others are in an apartment living with a group of friends. We wanted to tell team members that it was OK to do what’s right for them,” said Elgar.

So aligning with their value of “**be lovely**,” which talks about seeking to be helpful, being transparent, speaking up, and psychological safety, they created what they called their “It’s OK” campaign. Each week messages were sent out that shared examples of what it was OK to do or feel. Some examples were that it’s OK to have more catch-ups, talk about work-life balance, grab a virtual coffee, switch off your notifications at the end of the day, ignore devices during a break, tell someone you’ll get back to them as soon as you can, change your working style to adapt to home working, and suggest ideas to help your team adapt.



These messages gave team members guidance so they didn’t have to work out the unwritten rules for themselves, and so they understood what is expected and not expected of them. It helped them “**be lovely**,” based on what that was and meant to them personally, and “**do the right thing**” for themselves and for the company.



## The company

VaynerMedia is a global digital marketing agency that builds creative campaigns from insights gained through micro-content to produce and ultimately drive actual business results. They propel some of the biggest brands in the world to the intersection of attention and culture through their teams in New York, Los Angeles, London, and Singapore.



## Their values

VaynerMedia's seven values, or what they call guiding principles, are:

1. Tenacious	2. Teamwork
3. Entrepreneurship	4. Empathy
5. Curiosity	6. Optimism
7. Gratitude	

## Bringing their values out to play

### For their people

Throughout the pandemic, VaynerMedia continued to live by their values, or as Claude Silver, Chief Heart Officer said, "Continue to walk our talk and do the right thing for our customers and our people."

One example is in how they treated employees being let go during the pandemic, which is no different than their pre-pandemic process, weaving the value "**empathy**" in from beginning to end.

"It's all about how you make someone feel in those moments when you are changing up their lives," said Silver. And for this reason, the team at VaynerMedia looked at each person individually, being proactive in understanding their needs and adapting their approach empathetically to suit them.

"It's about integrity in words and actions, understanding your impact, and landing in a way that doesn't crush the person but sets them up for the future," said Silver.

Another example is with their "12 at 12 sessions," which were born out of as Silver said, her "selfish desire to connect with my people." She offered these online sessions to anyone, and, you may have figured out, they happened at 12 every day.

These sessions combined fun activities such as icebreakers, as well as the opportunity for employees to honestly speak about how they were feeling and doing. "It was a great way to connect people from around the world who didn't know each other as well as those who worked in the same office who didn't know each other," said Silver.

They have been such a success that Gary Vaynerchuk, CEO, has started doing his own version of them as well. They complement the other ways that he has communicated throughout the pandemic, openly and transparently, living the company values to support the team through these challenging times.



### The company

Viisi is a company based in the Netherlands that specializes in mortgage advice. Their mission is to change their industry, making it more sustainable and more focused in the long term, doing so through their services and through their people-first principle and approach. This has worked well for them, with their business significantly growing over the years while achieving impressive customer ratings of 9.8 out of 10.



### Their values

At Viisi they chose not to have a “standard” list of values, instead they have what they call their “**Golden Rule.**” As Tom van der Lubbe, Co-Founder said, “You can find the Golden Rule in most religions. It says you should treat others like you want to be treated yourself. The rest is common sense—there are no other rules.”

## Bringing their values out to play

### For their people

At Viisi, putting their people first and living their Golden Rule have helped them be voted “Best Workplace” since 2016, winning first place in 2019 and 2020. So as they entered the pandemic and faced the challenges faced by most organizations, it was only natural for them to be front and center in how they made business and people decisions.

One example has been in their approach to layoffs. As van der Lubbe explained in his blog titled “It's About Solidarity, Stupid! (Why Avoiding Layoffs Makes Sense)”:

“It’s all about your people. Now more than ever. But in knee-jerk reactions to the coronavirus many companies are laying off large numbers. I want to shout out to the shareholder-value managers driven by their spreadsheets: This is not only inhumane. It is bad for your business! Why? It will harm your company. Companies that treat their people best in bad times emerged as winners in the past.”

And with this mindset, Viisi managed to avoid layoffs throughout the crisis so far.

Another example is in how they decided to treat and support their employees as they went into lockdown and had to deal with their individual challenges. They came up with three categories of employees that were based on their personal work and home circumstances, **paying them their full salary regardless of the category:**

- 1 **Green:** These employees could and did work their normal hours.
- 2 **Orange:** These employees could work part-time as they had parenting, homeschooling or other responsibilities for the remainder.
- 3 **Red:** These employees could choose not to work at all as they had a partner who was a key worker, or a family member who tested positive for coronavirus.

The idea behind this approach was to support the entire person, both from a work and a home perspective. It was also about supporting one another, showing their strong solidarity as a team, working together to get the work done. As van der Lubbe said, “It’s about having those with strong shoulders help to carry and support the others.”

Both of these examples really brought to life the concept of the Golden Rule, deviating from the norm to focus on doing what’s right, regardless of the short-term cost. And what about the cost to the business? Well, according to van der Lubbe, “we had higher productivity throughout because we removed employee’s fears and created psychological safety. At the end, it’s just a human thing: We treated each other as human beings and not as human resources.”



## The company

Welcome Break is one of the UK's leading independent motorway service operators, having 27 sites spread across the country that are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and attracts 85 million motorway customers annually. Their purpose is to delight road-weary travellers by offering unexpectedly human experiences in comfortable, clean, and safe surroundings, aiming to make people feel human again, energized and ready for their journey ahead.



## Their values

Welcome Break's three values are:

1. We care	2. We are a team	3. We deliver
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## Bringing their values out to play

### For their people

Welcome Break found themselves in a challenging situation as the UK went into lockdown. They had to balance the needs of their 3,500 employees who were being put on furlough, and because the government required them to remain open and provide essential services, the 1,500 who needed to come to work at their motorway service stations.

They rose to the challenge fueled by their value “**we care**,” doing so in a variety of big and little ways, taking the concept of care to the next level. Here are just a few of them:



**Food allowance** - prior to the pandemic, only managers received a food allowance to pay for their meals when they worked at one of their motorway service stations. But to show they cared about every employee coming into work during lockdown, they extended it to them all. “We wanted everyone to have a lunch on us” said Nicola Marshall, People Director.



**Isolation hotline** - when the symptoms of COVID-19 first came out, Welcome Break quickly decided to set up an isolation hotline, somewhere employees could go for timely and accurate information on this very confusing and critical topic. They pulled two members of the HR team to work on this, asking them to read every piece of government guidance to ensure they were equipped to support the over 500 employees who at some point in time needed to go into isolation.



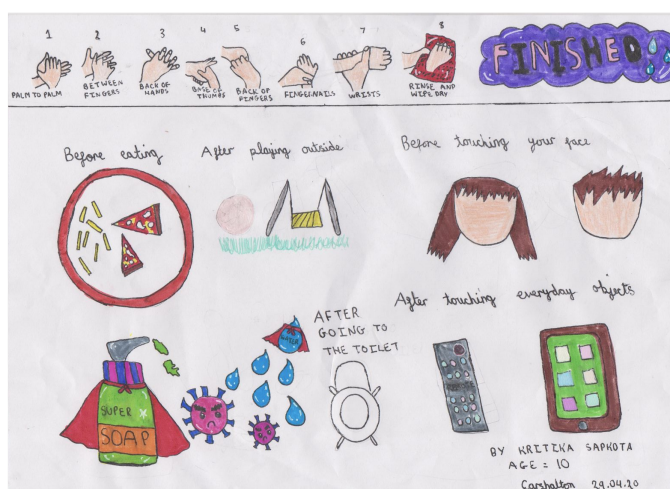
They had one person who dealt with employee queries, and the other who called each person in isolation personally to understand their symptoms and give them guidance. In addition, they created a 30-page FAQ document that was posted on their intranet that included the most up-to-date information and links, requiring the team to keep on top of the changes happening nearly every day.



**Clap for the team** - to thank their employees for their contributions during lockdown, the team at Welcome Break created their own version of the UK Thursday night clap for the NHS celebration. They created a short video that included each member of the leadership team saying thank you as they clapped, with the overall message being “tonight we clap for you.”



**Coloring competition** - they held a coloring competition for the children of their employees, asking them to create a poster about the topic of washing your hands. The winner had their image hung up in the restrooms, showing they cared for each other by understanding and respecting this important and essential practice.



**Leadership pay cut** - and finally, to show that they cared and also to live the value of “**we are a team**,” the leadership team took a 20% pay cut. This showed that it was not just furloughed employees who were having their salaries reduced by 20% (the UK government furlough scheme paid 80% of their salary), but that the leaders would make a sacrifice to show that they were in it together.



## The company

YMCA St Paul's Group (YMCA) is a charity that works across London and beyond to support young people and communities. They do this by providing services to vulnerable and homeless young people, working with children, youth and families in the community, running five Health and Wellbeing Centers, and offering a range of inclusive activities to meet local needs and provide a safe space to learn new skills, get healthier, meet people, and make a connection.



## Their values

The YMCA's four values are:

1. Inclusive	2. Aspirational
3. Excellent	4. Honest

## Bringing their values out to play

### For the community

The safety and wellbeing of their young people and their communities are at the heart of what the YMCA does, delivering on their vision of "helping young people and communities thrive and flourish." This did not change during the pandemic, although they had to find new ways to deliver these critical services and this level of support in different ways.

Here are a few ways they did this:



**Virtual gym classes** - as their gyms were being closed, the YMCA very quickly responded by moving to virtual gym classes, offering them not only to their members, but to anyone for free with a voluntary donation.



**Virtual choir** - with donations received, they set up a virtual choir as a way to help the elderly with feelings of isolation. Whether they were a part of the choir or just listened, it was a way to be a part of something and feel connected to others.



**Support to youth** - to ensure that the youth continued to feel supported and engaged during these very challenging times, they moved activities and resources online. And since many did not have access to technology, through funding received, they provided free smartphones and tablets, ensuring they could easily access these critical tools, networks and resources.



**Counselling to residents** - for residents in their hostels, they quickly realized that they needed a different kind of support, so quickly adapted what and how they delivered counselling. They focused on making sure that everyone understood lockdown rules, that they felt safe and that they did not feel alone.

### For their people

The wellbeing of their employees was also a focus of the YMCA during the pandemic, placing their people first, which aligns with their value of being “*inclusive*.”

Here are a few ways they did this:



**Coffee mornings** - they held virtual coffee mornings with employees as a way to provide updates from the leadership team and to help everyone continue to feel engaged and connected.



**Appreciation video** - to thank their frontline heroes, they created a number of special appreciation videos that contained words of appreciation from colleagues and managers, sharing via WhatsApp and the organization’s intranet with their workforce and the wider YMCA community.



**Supported working from home** - when they moved to remote working, the YMCA very quickly made the decision to make sure that everyone was equipped to effectively work from home. One example was by paying for internet service for those that previously did not have it, and sending chairs and screens to people’s homes to ensure that they could do their job and stay connected in this new virtual world.



**Supported work-life balance** - to encourage and support employees taking the time to get the balance right between home and work, they came up with a variety of initiatives that were driven by their CEO. One was putting an hour each day in calendars for breaks, having a no meeting day booked in each week, having end of week virtual cocktail evenings and pub quizzes as well as sharing videos of what they’d done in their time off to get people talking. All of this was designed to help people talk about the important parts of wellbeing.



**New engagement hub** - during lockdown, the YMCA launched “Thrive,” their new online one-stop-shop employee engagement hub as a way to help employees feel connected, to support their wellbeing, and to drive employee recognition. “We launched during COVID as a way to unify the organization, putting in place tools and resources to help our people and stay connected whether they were onsite working or on furlough,” said Nicola Kent, Head of Organizational Development.



## The company

Zip Co Limited (Zip) offers point-of-sale credit and digital payment services to consumers and merchants in Australia, NZ, U.S. and the UK. Their driven team of “Zipsters” is passionate about providing alternative digital payment and credit solutions that make people’s lives easier, giving them greater freedom and control.



## Their values

Zip’s four values are:

1. Customer first	2. Own it
3. Stronger together	4. Change the game

## Bringing their values out to play

### For the community

Throughout the pandemic, Zip was responsive to the changing needs of their customers, living their “**customer first**” value in a variety of ways. Here are a few ways that Zip continued to put the customer first:



Ensured customers were aware of their hardship policy, helping them work through loan repayments to meet their financial needs and challenges.



Fast-tracked the development of a new product called “Shop Everywhere,” which allowed their customers to use their Zip app to pay interest-free online for products at almost every online retailer.



Let customers know they could pay household bills by using their Zip account, allowing them to settle bills with the provider right away, but paying it off over time, interest-free.



Shared with customers that other essentials such as fuel and groceries could be purchased with the clever use of pre-purchased Zip gift cards.



Supported merchant partners who were struggling with a loss of in-store traffic by helping them to move to online shopping, introducing them to a new customer base.

By understanding the impact of the pandemic on their customers, and then adapting their products and services accordingly, Zip was able to help customers control their finances during these unprecedented times. As Larry Diamond, CEO and co-founder, said, “We’re living through one of the toughest challenges of our generation. We’ve never known a situation like this. More than ever, we need to be there for each other.”

### For their people

Zip was also responsive to the needs of their people, their other customers, showing this in numerous ways, such as:



**Mental health support** - as in other organizations, employees at Zip were dealing with an extra level of anxiety and stress due to the pandemic. Because of this, they encouraged employees to take time off if they felt it was necessary, paying them their regular salary. “We didn’t want our employees to have their finances as another stress trigger, having to decide between taking time off to focus on their mental wellbeing or paying their bills,” said Jennifer Mumford, Director of People & Development. One of the ways they did this was through a “Zip Day Off” over a long weekend to give their team extra time to recover, spend time with loved ones and say “thank you.”



**“Meet the executives”** - at the start of the pandemic, the team moved to weekly All Hands virtual meetings, incorporating a new “meet the executive” section. Executives shared pictures from their childhoods, including awkward teenage photos, and told stories of pivotal moments in their lives that made them who they were today. “It showed the human side of our executives, showing vulnerability, sharing stories and acting in a way to bring the team closer together despite everything else going on in the world,” said Mumford.



**Supporting managers** - at Zip, a lot of first time managers were asked to step up and lead in a different way, due to lockdown. To support them, the team ran focus groups to gauge feedback, discover pain points and just understand day-to-day emotions. On the back of this, they introduced virtual Zip Lead and global leadership communities, connecting leaders to share their experiences and lessons along the way. One fun part of this was introducing 1:1s with emojis to kick off conversations about how people were doing during these unprecedented times.



## The company

Zoom is a global company that helps businesses and individuals bring teams, family, and friends together in an easy, reliable, and frictionless cloud platform. Committed to delivering happiness, believing that the greatest, most sustainable happiness comes from making others happy, they deliver this through their platform every single day.



## Their values

Zoom's five values, which all center around the concept of "care," are:

1. We care for community	2. We care for customers
3. We care for company	4. We care for teammates
5. We care for ourselves	

## Bringing their values out to play

As Zoom's business exploded almost overnight, expanding from a B2B (business-to-business) to a B2C (business-to-consumer) company, they worked around the clock to innovate and make sure their product was frictionless and supported the needs of their existing and new customers. From grandmas to six-year-olds, from CEOs to Prime Ministers, their product showed every customer that Zoom cared about them, and at the same time, allowed customers to show they cared for others.

"Knowing the difference our platform was making was the glue that held the Zoom team together as they worked tirelessly to overcome challenges such as privacy and security in this new world. We shared stories that brought to life our culture of caring and our mission to deliver happiness," said Lynne Oldham, Chief People Officer.

## For the community

At the start of the pandemic, Zoom decided to adjust the product to support new use cases. One key group for this product were teachers, who when schools abruptly closed in the middle of the school year, were faced with the challenge of teaching students who were now based at home. So they reached out to schools to give them free access to their platform, resulting in more than 100,000 schools in 25 countries using Zoom as their virtual classrooms.

Another way Zoom supported the community was by partnering with the American Heart Association (AHA) for the “**#TakeABreak**” initiative, aimed at encouraging people to set personal boundaries as the lines blurred between work and home. They worked together to create programs that encouraged people to set personal boundaries, putting their health first and giving them time to disconnect.

“I’m happy to be rolling out this program with the AHA,” said Zoom founder and CEO Eric S. Yuan. “While Zoom has been helping people stay connected and productive during this pandemic, we know that never unplugging can cause stress and affect heart health. I deeply value happiness and mental health and have been personally impacted by cardiovascular disease in a family member. I want our company to lead the way in empowering people to put their health first.”

### For their people

Zoom also showed their people that they cared, delivering happiness in many ways. With the help of their employee-run Happy Crew, they sent out care packages and held numerous Zoom-related virtual activities such as an open mic night, meditation and fitness classes. Two additional examples of caring, the first sponsored by the Women’s Employee Resource Group (ERG) and the second by the People Experience team, are:



**Camp Zoomitude** - since many employees didn’t have somewhere to go for the summer because of the pandemic, they took the idea of Zoomitude, which is their word for “gratitude,” and created Camp Zoomitude, bringing summer camp in-house. Both kids and parents loved that three days a week they could join in on camp-based activities as well as the Friday recap called “Smores N More” with a family sing-a-long where they were joined by the CEO himself!



**Wellbeing** - wellbeing was a key focus throughout the pandemic, with Zoom stepping up to support people as they dealt with the challenges of the times, making it more accessible and meaningful to their workforce. One way was by changing the monthly wellness payment, letting employees use it in any way they felt best supported their individual needs. From using it for food delivery to buying things for their home office to home exercise equipment, it helped employees get through the crisis with the support of Zoom.



## Acknowledgements

As with my original book, “**Bringing Your Values Out to Play**,” this special eBook has been a truly collaborative effort, and for that I am grateful.

Let me first thank my special “values warriors,” who were kind enough to let me interview them for the plays, even though they were extremely busy supporting their people in the midst of the pandemic. Here they are in alphabetical order: Andy Preacher from Aioi Nissay Dowa Insurance, Cheryl Allen from Atos, Daniel Strode from Banco Santander, Fiona Hunter from BrewDog, Jeri Doris from Delivery Hero, Maria Waddington from Epidemic Sound, Faye McLean from eve Sleep, Krishna Raghavan from Flipkart, Samuel Dewey from Macmillan Cancer Support, Karen Weeks from Ordergroove, Angie Scott from Plymouth Community Housing, Kristen Hadaad from Student Maids, Lisa Dolan from Teleperformance, Tracie Sponenberg from The Granite Group, Sophie Dopheide from Tony’s Chocologney, Tim Elgar from Twinkl Educational Publishing, Claude Silver from VaynerMedia, Tom vanDerLubbe from Viisi, Nicola Marshall from Welcome Break, Nicola Kent and Efrat Burl from YMCA St Paul’s Group, Jennifer Mumford from Zip Company, and Lynne Oldham and Beth McLaughlin from Zoom.

Let me next thank my wonderful eBook team, my former colleagues at Reward Gateway, who helped create this lovely document. To Chloe Deiulis, for waving your magic editing wand over my words, to Leonie Williamson for cleverly updating the cover to make it align with the theme, and to Patrice Dassardo for turning my boring Google document into a beautiful eBook.

And finally, I’d like to thank my wonderful mom who passed away this year. You were with me all the way in writing this eBook as it represented so much of who you were - someone who cared for and supported anyone and everyone. You will be missed but you will never be forgotten!