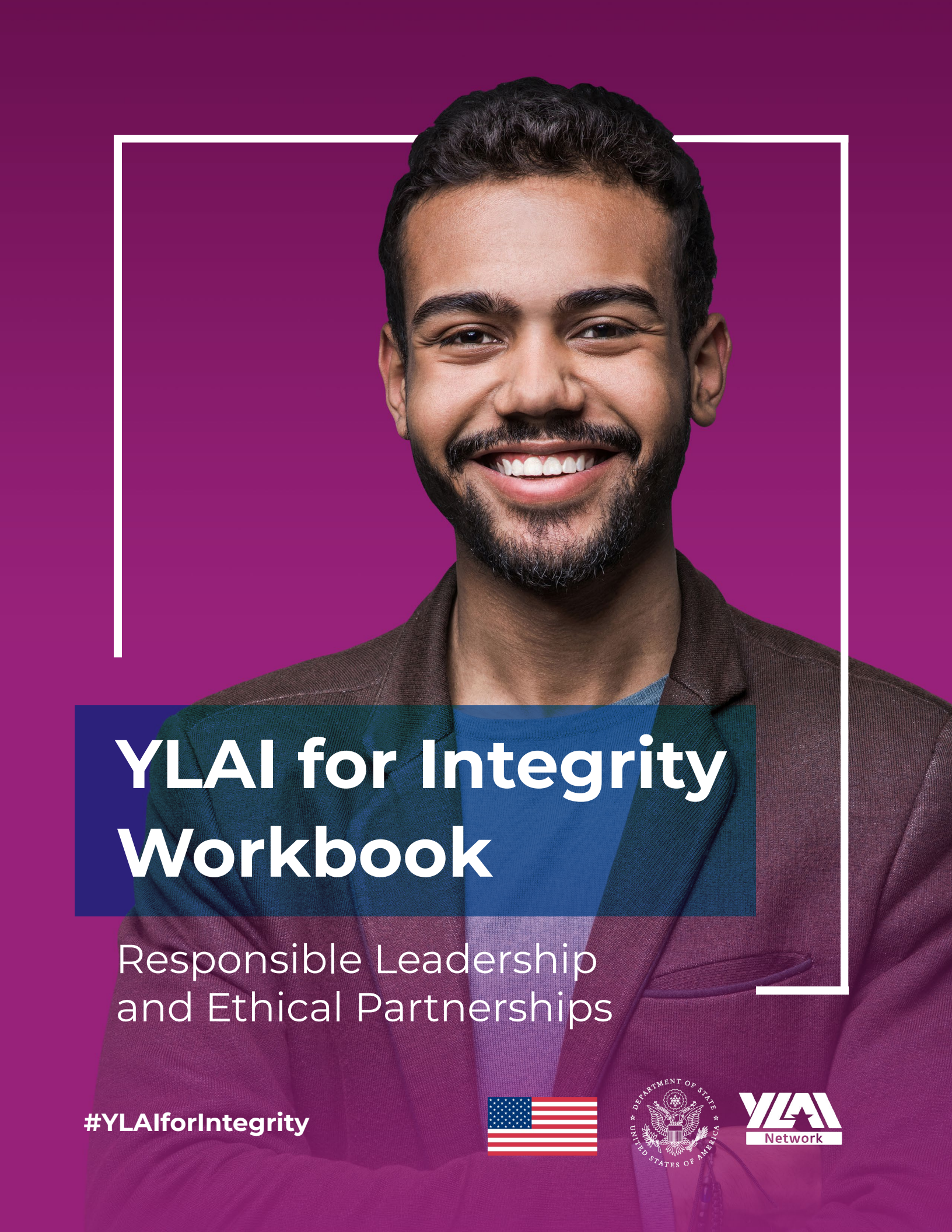

YLAI for Integrity Workbook

Responsible Leadership and Ethical Partnerships

#YLAIforIntegrity

YLAI Network

YLAI for Integrity Workbook: Responsible Leadership and Ethical Partnerships

Young entrepreneurs and leaders, this workbook is for you! This YLAI Network workbook will introduce you to the core concepts of responsible leadership and will help you define your personal values and your business values. Then you can identify what you value in forming professional relationships or partnerships with other individuals or businesses.

This interactive workbook will guide you through various exercises, prompts, and worksheets, helping you to define your values with a personal code of ethics, establish accountability with your actions, and identify and achieve your goals with like-minded partners.

Section 1: Understanding Responsible Leadership and Integrity

Section 2: Defining My Values as a Responsible Leader

Section 3: Forming Partnerships With Ethical Leaders

Section 1: Understanding Responsible Leadership and Integrity

This section will introduce what responsible leading looks like in practice. You will be encouraged to recognize ethical and unethical behavior and perform a self-assessment on how you currently facilitate behaviors of ethical leaders. In this section, you will also learn the top three ways to implement integrity-building practices for yourself and your workplace.

Exercise: Recognizing ethical behaviors

Before recognizing what makes a responsible, ethical leader, let's assess behaviors that you already consider ethical and responsible.

Check the box of the statements that you believe exemplify ethical behavior as a leader. Leave the boxes blank if you believe the statements indicate unethical behavior as a leader.

☐ I recruit extensively, but I employ my family first when it comes to hiring for my company.	☐ I encourage my employees to come to me with any issues they have faced in the workplace, and they trust they will not face retaliation.
☐ I support people of all backgrounds and identities, and I will not discriminate based on those factors at any point in my organization.	☐ I am respectful and kind to my stakeholders, my partners, my employees, my manufacturers, etc.
☐ If someone in my workplace makes jokes that others find offensive, I ignore it.	☐ I do not pay close attention to how my stakeholders and partners feel about me and the work environment I have created.
☐ I am really strict with my employees and watch their every move for mistakes.	☐ I believe it is okay to lie about impending layoffs and large company changes to my employees when necessary.
☐ I communicate regularly on any regulations or updates my team should know about.	☐ Encouraging diversity and inclusion is not a priority for me and my workplace.
☐ I do not find it that important to be responsive and timely.	☐ I do not feel the responsibility to handle ethical dilemmas when they arrive
☐ I believe it is important to collaborate and respect my team and encourage them to do the same.	☐ I do not think it is important to communicate to my employees the laws and conduct of the office; they should just know them.
☐ I will be fair and I will not display favoritism in the workplace.	☐ When my employee makes a mistake, I will not ask questions and I will just terminate their employment.
☐ I set an example of ethical behavior in my decisions and my actions.	☐ I prohibit any form of harassment in my organization.

Why do you believe some of these items are unethical? What ramifications might they have in the workplace?

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Self-reflection: How ethical am I?

Do any of these unethical items look familiar to you from your daily life, your work, or your previous employers?

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You are learning to recognize what characterizes a responsible leader and the steps to become someone that others respect and want to emulate. Knowing what not to do is just as important as knowing what to do.

Leading responsibly in the workplace

While recognizing ethical and unethical behavior is one of the most essential steps to leading with integrity, there are many other ways to make sure that you are being a responsible leader and that you are creating an environment that is ethical and responsible as well.

Responsible leadership starts with being responsible ourselves, leading with authenticity, and upholding ethical and moral standpoints.

Three of the most important ways to prioritize integrity as a leader include:

- Implementing a code of ethics.
- Recognizing unconscious biases.
- Fostering a culture of accountability.

Understanding these three key lessons and putting them into practice is essential to creating a positive and ethical workplace environment, which results in a more empowered and successful organization or business.

Implementing a code of ethics

Developing a code of ethics, or a code of conduct, for your organization is an essential step in recognizing your ethical standards. This code helps to communicate to employees, consumers, and potential partners those standards and your commitment to them. Aligning your code of ethics with your mission is key to giving your organization a positive foundation.

A good formula for creating a code of ethics is to consider what non-negotiable values exist for your organization. These could be honesty, timeliness, teamwork, consideration, respect, etc. You should also consider your organization's mission, and make sure that is reflected in your code of ethics. The next section in this workbook will go deeper into identifying your values and formulating your own code of ethics.

A code of ethics is an important piece of your internal organization, as it sets out the regulations, values, and standards of conduct you find essential in yourself and in your employees' behavior. It will strengthen your organization's morale. It also sets a solid foundation for any future corrective action, as it should help identify clear violations of conduct — for example, if an employee was harassing another. A code of ethics is also helpful externally, as it shows that you are a responsible company, and it shows your stakeholders, consumers, and partners that you value integrity and are taking actions to build your company culture with integrity in mind.

Recognizing unconscious biases

Understanding and managing bias is the first step to building a diverse, inclusive, ethical organization or business.

Bias is a preference or tendency in favor of or against one person, group, or thing when compared to another. While some biases, such as a preference for mustard over mayonnaise, may be harmless, other biases can lead to unfair conditions and judgment. Prejudice is a type of bias against a person or a group of people based on preconceived judgment or opinion. When people act on these prejudicial attitudes, it is called discrimination.

Bias can be conscious or unconscious, and it can have serious implications in the workplace. Conscious bias is when there is a known bias toward a particular person or group. For example, this is where nepotism raises issues, as someone may prefer working with a family member over a stranger. However, it may be unethical to exercise this bias when hiring over a more qualified candidate who is not a relative.

Understanding and addressing bias helps to make for a stronger organization and is an essential part of leading with integrity. While conscious biases should be readily recognized and addressed, let's take a look at forms of unconscious biases, biases you may not even be aware you have. These play a role particularly when hiring or recruiting, but these biases can also lead to favoritism or discrimination, creating an unfair work environment with low morale, low trust, and low efficiency.

Forms of Unconscious Bias

(With examples of their implications on hiring and recruitment)

CONFIRMATION BIAS	SIMILARITY BIAS	AFFINITY BIAS	HALO EFFECT	HORNS EFFECT	CONFORMITY BIAS
This bias involves favoring information that confirms your previously existing beliefs or biases, instead of reviewing information on its own merits.	This bias is one where individuals prefer others who have similar personalities, looks, preferences, and beliefs.	This bias refers to our tendency to gravitate toward people we have an affinity to, perhaps because they remind us of someone or something we know and love.	This bias is the tendency for positive impressions of a person to reflect or influence judgement in other areas.	This bias is the opposite of the Halo Effect, and is a tendency for negative impressions of a person to reflect or influence judgement in other areas.	This bias is where, if you form a different opinion than the rest of a group, you're more likely to change your mind to agree with them. This is also known as peer pressure.
For example, an interviewer sees the university a job candidate attended, and has preconceived notions about that university before the interview. The interviewer takes that into account more than the candidate's qualifications and answers in the interview.	*For example, an interviewer learns a job candidate plays soccer every weekend, and wants to hire this individual because they could play soccer together.*	*For example, a job candidate lived in the same small town as the interviewer. The interviewer sees a commonality between them, making this candidate more favorable to hire because the two have that shared experience.*	*For example, one candidate interviews for a position and discusses attending a well-known workshop. The interviewer is impressed and may take that into consideration more than their other qualifications.*	*For example, when interviewing, the job candidate may state a preference for a particular sports team. If this opposes the interviewer's preference, the interviewer may unconsciously have a negative impression for the remainder of the interview.*	*For example, when a hiring team reviews an applicant and three members state their distinct preference while one other disagrees, the one will likely conform to the three other members' preferences in the group setting.*

Other common forms of prejudice and bias include age bias, gender bias, name bias, height bias, beauty bias, racial bias, ethnicity bias, and far more. These biases can affect our behavior and treatment of others, hiring of qualified candidates, and respect for employees and partners in the work environment. These biases can lead to acts of discrimination and overall low morale. It is essential for those in leadership to set the tone for their organization to be diverse, respectful, and inclusive of all individuals, and ensure the same among their employees and their partners.

Even though it may be a natural instinct for us to judge people before we know them, understanding what can be done to avoid it can prevent us from making biased, and unethical, mistakes that could limit the effectiveness or reputation of our organization or business.

What biases do you think you have had in the past? How are you going to work to change those biases?

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Fostering a culture of accountability

While you may already be a responsible and ethical leader, there are multiple ways to continually assess and self-reflect on how you are leading with integrity and ethics. Fostering a culture of accountability and being a model of accountability is key to this self-reflection and will strengthen your leadership.

Strong leaders facilitate an environment with their peers, partners, and employees where they are encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback. Without that culture of accountability, a leader's decisions and motives can go unchecked, and may be criticized. The lack of transparency may lead to resentment and distrust within the organization.

How to build a culture of accountability

Leadership can model accountability and expect it at all levels, and encourage accountability as everyone's continued responsibility.

- Define what accountability means to you and your organization.
- Establish meaningful goals together as a team.
- Support employee growth and education.
- Be transparent about your motives with your team and with your partners.
- Ask for feedback regularly from your peers and your team.
- Encourage your team to learn and grow from mistakes.
- Continue your own education and growth as a leader with resources and workshops.

Ask yourself these questions.

- Do I regularly get feedback from others?
- Do I regularly and effectively communicate with my teammates and my partners?
- Do I have someone I trust to keep me accountable?

Assess your current level of accountability and indicate areas where you are excelling and also ways that you could improve.

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Remember: A successful entrepreneur = a responsible leader. By taking steps to become more responsible in your leadership, you and your entrepreneurial ventures can thrive!

Section 2: Defining My Values as a Responsible Leader

This section will focus on identifying your own personal values and beliefs, and how they translate to your business or entrepreneurial endeavor. Exercises about defining and prioritizing personal and professional values and developing a code of ethics are key components to help you grow as a responsible leader.

Why should I know my values?

Whether we realize it or not, the decisions we make are often based on our values. When it comes to our personal goals and our business goals, we turn to the core beliefs that we hold important to help us achieve these goals. When we are clear about our values and what we find important, it helps to make important decisions.

Prioritizing these values for yourself will create a foundation for what you find to be a priority in your business. Knowing how to lead with these values will help you create a successful culture where you are able to achieve your goals more effectively and be true to yourself.

What values do you admire in leaders you respect? Do you identify with those values?

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Now take a minute to think about what you want to accomplish, both personally and professionally, before you start thinking about your values.

What are your top three goals for yourself?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are your top three goals for your business or entrepreneurial endeavor?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Great! Keep these goals in mind when you are thinking about what values you find true to you and your business, as they will help you look at your goals in new ways.

Exercise: Identifying my values

Check five to seven boxes that you recognize as your top values for yourself and mark with an X five to seven boxes for you and your business. *Note that your personal values and business values can be the same or different.*

☐ Accomplishment	☐ Accountability	☐ Accuracy	☐ Adventure
☐ Ambition	☐ Approachability	☐ Attention	☐ Balance
☐ Boldness	☐ Carefulness	☐ Caring	☐ Collaboration
☐ Community	☐ Composure	☐ Confidence	☐ Consistency
☐ Creativity	☐ Credibility	☐ Curiosity	☐ Dependability
☐ Detail-oriented	☐ Determination	☐ Diplomacy	☐ Discovery
☐ Diversity	☐ Education	☐ Empathy	☐ Empowerment
☐ Enthusiasm	☐ Equality	☐ Expertise	☐ Exploration
☐ Fairness	☐ Fairth	☐ Family	☐ Freedom
☐ Fun	☐ Generosity	☐ Grace	☐ Health
☐ Honor	☐ Humility	☐ Independence	☐ Ingenuity
☐ Intellect	☐ Justice	☐ Legacy	☐ Loyalty
☐ Order	☐ Originality	☐ Perfection	☐ Positivity
☐ Professionalism	☐ Selflessness	☐ Service	☐ Speed
☐ Status	☐ Structure	☐ Success	☐ Teamwork
☐ Timeliness	☐ Tolerance	☐ Trustworthiness	☐ Uniqueness
☐ Unity	☐ Wealth	☐ Wisdom	☐ Work-life balance

Why are these values important to you?

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Exercise: Prioritizing my personal and business values

Now that you have recognized values that are important to you and your business, your next step is to prioritize these values.

Knowing these priorities will help you give direction to how to achieve your goals. For example, if you recognize that one of your goals for your business is to reach more consumers, and two of your most important values are creativity and ingenuity, you can deduce that you should work to use your creativity and ingenuity to find innovative ways to reach new customers, such as engaging through a new digital platform.

PERSONAL VALUES	BUSINESS VALUES
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____

Developing a code of ethics

After learning the importance of setting a well-defined and prioritized, value-oriented code of ethics in Section 1, let's put that into practice. This code should reflect the foundation for your company, so it should be unique and thoroughly considered. Here are a few tips to follow before you consider the example and complete your own code of ethics.

- Align with your organization's mission.
- Use a values-based approach.
- Be functional.
- Use clear and concise language.
- Be specific.
- Request input from your employees.

Example: Code of ethics for a sample fashion design company, Styles Limited.

Code of Ethics: *Styles Limited (SL)*

- **Be respectful.** SL promises to treat others with respect and act in a professional, transparent, and honest manner.
- **Encourage accountability.** SL recognizes accountability as a priority. All individuals, regardless of position, should be held accountable for their actions and regular feedback will be encouraged.
- **Give back to the community.** SL will focus on researching opportunities to give back to the local community, promote job creation and growth within the community, and facilitate at least two volunteer projects every quarter.
- **Be sustainable.** SL will promise to incorporate sustainable practices, source our materials ethically, and manufacture and market our products taking into account environmental and socio-economic impacts.
- **Prioritize diversity and inclusion.** SL welcomes and supports people of all backgrounds and identities. This includes but is not limited to members of any sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, social and economic class, educational level, color, sex, age, size, family status, political belief, religion, and mental and physical ability.
- **Build ethical partnerships.** From our manufacturer to our marketing partners, SL promises to form partnerships with like-minded individuals and groups who place an emphasis on community, inclusion, and sustainability.

Now it's your turn!

For your business or organization, write five to seven items that fulfill your code of ethics. They can go back to your acknowledged values, priorities, and goals and should be specific promises to what you want your organization to look and act like. While you should reassess and update your Code of Ethics as necessary, you should think well into the future for how you want your organization to be structured.

Code of Ethics: _____

1. _____

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2. _____

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3. _____

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4. _____

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5. _____

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6. _____

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7. _____

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Section 3: Forming Partnerships with Ethical Leaders

This section will reflect on the key concepts learned in the previous section and will help you properly build future relationships and partnerships with others who share your values. This section includes a code of ethics contract template to keep in mind when forming partnerships, as well as a Venn diagram template to identify shared values. Additionally, you will identify your core beliefs and will be encouraged to adhere to the actions they represent.

Exercise: Aligning values with potential partners

Now that you have identified your personal and professional values and goals, and you have built the foundation of your code of ethics for your business, you have a better understanding of your identity.

When you enter a business agreement or a professional partnership, it is important that your partners and relationships align in the values you find most important. Not doing so could result in disagreements at any point in the relationship that could have adverse effects on your success. Finding the right partners that recognize your shared values aids your organization's long-term stability and impact.

Who are your potential partners?

Whether you are looking for someone to run your organization with you, or you are looking to hire contractors to help with your marketing efforts, you will form many relationships and partnerships with other individuals. Here are some examples:

- Co-owners
- Employees
- Funding partners
- Contractors
- Manufacturers
- Investors
- Stakeholders
- Local businesses and schools
- Suppliers

Who do you need to partner with? Who would make your business or organization better, and in what ways?

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Tips for aligning with like-minded partners

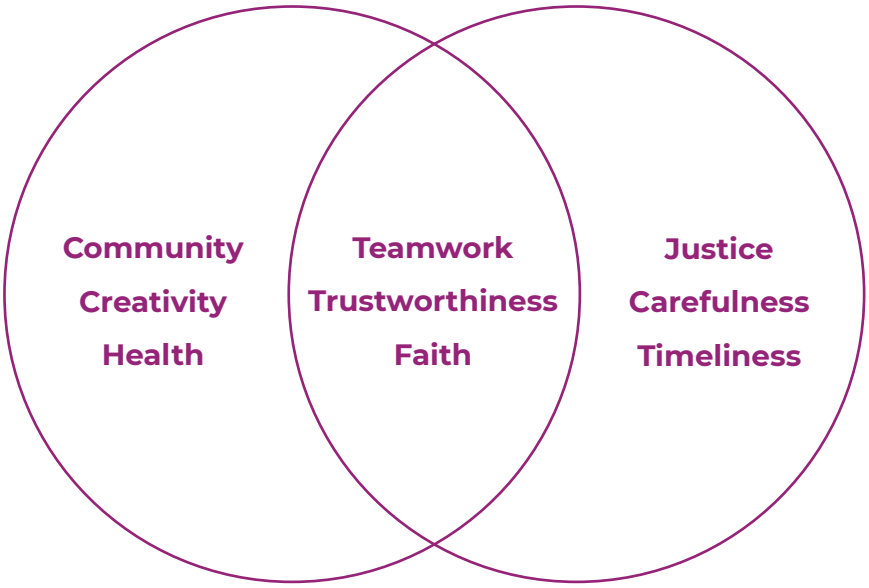
- Ask questions. Get to know your partners, avoiding unconscious biases, and getting to know their values and their own goals.
- Be honest. Be upfront about your intentions and your goals.
- Create partnerships with others who understand leadership.
- Create relationships with others who have mapped out their values and a code of ethics for themselves or their business.
- Get references. Ask others who have worked with these individuals or groups if they are good partners, or if any issues arose.
- Discuss the potential partnership with your current partners or people you trust.
- Make sure that you and your partner agree about both the goals of the company and the methods.
- Follow your intuition. If something feels wrong about your partner's character or beliefs, it may require you to reassess your relationship.
- Think about the long-term as well as the short-term potential benefits and issues with this partnership.
- Write a formal partnership agreement with the goals and values of your new partnership.

Exercise: Aligning my values with my partners

Using this Venn Diagram example, you can see how Business 1 on the left values community, creativity, and health highly. Business 2 values justice, carefulness, and timeliness highly. These two businesses' most important values that align with one another include teamwork, trustworthiness and faith as their most important values.

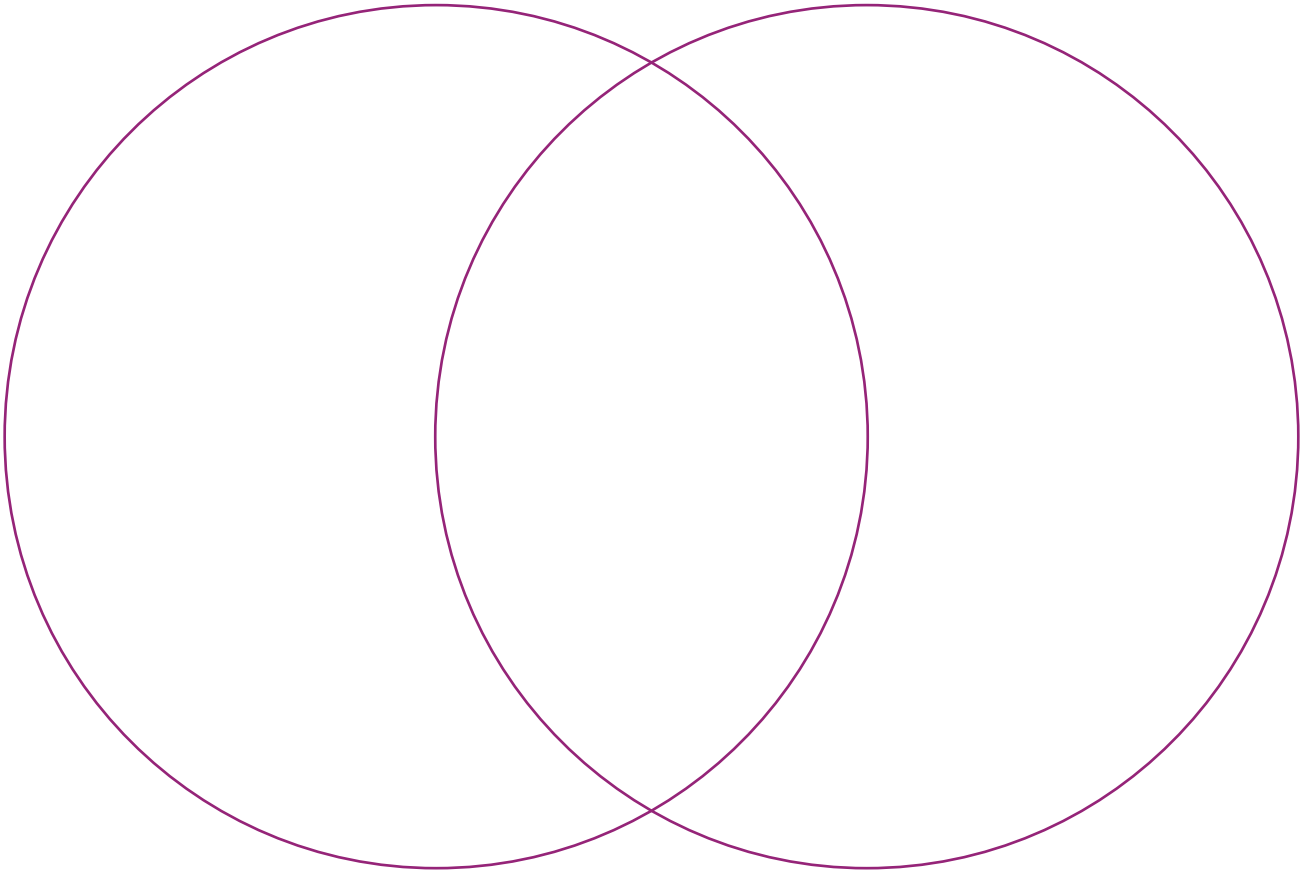
This is to say, just because one business does not value creativity as highly as the other business values carefulness, that doesn't mean they will not work well in a partnership. Often, these different values may reflect their strengths and be beneficial in a partnership. However, if a business values teamwork highly, and their potential partner does not believe in teamwork, that could result in issues and disagreements that could make this partnership unhealthy.

So it is important to make sure those key prioritized values align in the middle of this Venn Diagram, and to understand which values do not align to understand if these differences mean you can work together or not.



Now it's your turn!

After recognizing your prioritized values, before you enter a partnership, consider utilizing this Venn Diagram to assure your values align where they most matter to both you and your potential partner.



Next steps: If you want to take a partnership to the next level, consider developing a shared, written code of ethics agreement so that both organizations can operate within your established shared values. This can make your partnership stronger and more resilient through individual or shared challenges. Understanding that you know what to look for when you are considering a partnership, it is important to create an agreement that illustrates your shared values and an outline of your partnership.

Congratulations!

By completing this workbook, you have successfully taken an important step to becoming a more responsible leader, and thus a more successful entrepreneur. By understanding ethical behavior, identifying your values, recognizing unconscious bias, building a code of ethics, and promising to partner with like-minded professionals, you are leading with integrity and you will set the path to inspire others to do the same.

Take this information with you to each partnership you create. Responsible leadership is adaptable, so you should regularly reassess and reconsider your values along your ever-changing entrepreneurial journey.

Responsible Leader Promise

Now understanding the importance of my values, my ethics, and forming ethical partnerships, I promise to implement my code of ethics, stay true to my values, and form relationships and partnerships with like-minded people.

Sign here: _____

Additional Resources

- **YLAI Online Course - Fundamentals of Responsible Leadership for Entrepreneurs**
- **YLAI Online Course - Responsible Leadership on Transparency and Good Governance**
- **Managing Bias - Facebook**
- **Google re:Work's lesson for unbiasing in the workplace**
- **Project Implicit Self-Assessment**
- **Accenture - Responsible Leadership Report**
- **United Nations Development Programme - Business Integrity Toolkit for Young Entrepreneurs**