

# Human Values in the Age of COVID-19

**How should current & emerging human values influence the business decisions you're making right now?**

Human values guide us to take the human element into consideration as we interact with others and can serve as a guidepost for organizations as they conduct business. While human values are not the same as an organization's "core values," they are closely connected. **humanworks** considers human values in its research and applications in working with organizational leadership and human resources teams. These values drive consumer behavior, company direction and should align with an organization's core purpose. This document considers four 2020 trending human values and dives into both how they're shifting in the age of COVID-19 and how they can help you make sound business decisions with your most valuable asset – your people – at the core.

## Read for:

### Research:

Current research on the values driving human behavior today and their shift due to COVID-19.

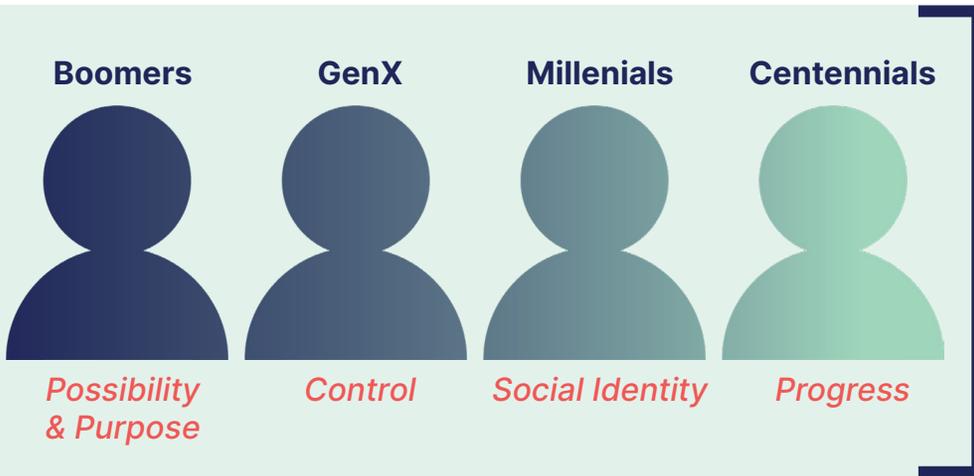
### Application:

Five opportunities for business growth directly related to your employee experience.

# The Research: Four Human Values in Focus

## Wellness

Wellness was a central motivator moving into 2020, with its definition expanded across categories beyond physical health to include technology, politics, travel, mindfulness, environment, etc. The meaning behind this quest for well-being has shifted through generations:



COVID-19 brought wellness back to the most basic level – physiological needs such as breathing, food and water. The focus on broader “wellness” has now transitioned a focus on hygiene and cleanliness.

### Adjacent values to wellness surfacing in response:

- Safety
- Security
- Protection
- Shelter

## Control

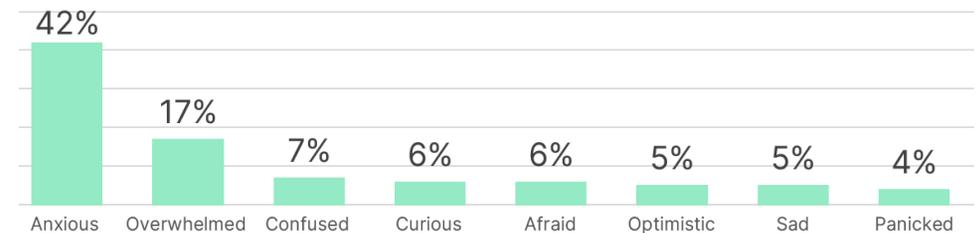
Control was a central motivator moving into 2020, with its definition centered around the ability to influence one’s surroundings and to predict, manage and successfully react to the occurrence of stressful events. The craving for control was felt most as it related to data privacy and trust in large institutions:



**“If the opportunity arises, most business will take advantage of the public if they feel they are not likely to be found out.”**

COVID-19 brought concern over disruption to routines in addition to worry over personal health. It also brought feelings of anxiety (more than fear) and uncertainty. The focus on control has manifested in panic buying and stockpiling in order to manage our emotional state.

### The Word That Best Describes Current Feeling



Global Open Source Survey: The Emotional Impact of COVID-19

### Adjacent values to control surfacing in response:

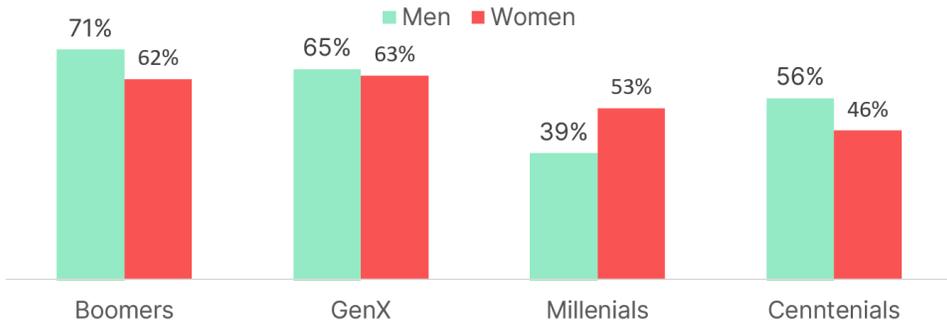
- Contribution
- Adaptability
- Autonomy
- Accomplishment

# The Research: Four Human Values in Focus

## Empathy

Empathy was a central motivator moving into 2020, defined by the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. Empathy was a driving value for both men and women of all generations:

**“Empathy/Compassion has become very/somewhat more important to me recently.”**



COVID-19 brought a reminder of what we have in common – our shared humanity – and has allowed us to better understand each other. The focus on broader “empathy” has manifested in a shared global narrative. “We’re all in this together, even if we are apart.” Vulnerability and humanness are being celebrated.

**Adjacent values to empathy surfacing in response:**

- Realness
- Genuineness
- Connection
- Responsibility

## Optimism

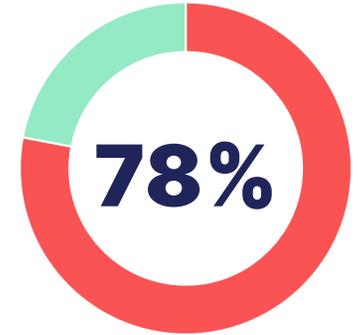
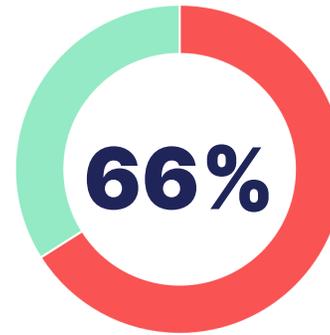
Optimism was a central motivator moving into 2020, defined by hopefulness and confidence about the future or the successful outcome of something. Optimism has been a hallmark of our culture, with over 80% of both the Millennial and Centennial generations feeling enthusiastic about the possibilities ahead.

Amidst COVID-19, Americans remain optimistic about their life post-pandemic:

**Thinking about the next five years...**

*“Very/somewhat optimistic about the future of the **country**.”*

*“Very/somewhat optimistic about own **personal** future.”*



*Kantar U.S. MONITOR: COVID-19 Survey, March 17-20 (18+)*

**Adjacent values to optimism surfacing in response:**

- Hope
- Gratitude
- Opportunity
- Creativity

**Beyond COVID-19, these human values may shift:**

- Wellness > Cleanliness
- Control > Escape
- Empathy > Unity
- Optimism > Progress

# The Application: Five Opportunities for Business Growth

How businesses act and treat employees now will leave a legacy. Messages communicated and actions taken today will be remembered by customers and employees for years to come. **humanworks** recommends these five considerations and practices as you continue to navigate and balance the success of your business with the health of your organizational culture.

## Bring your core values to life as a unifying force within your organization

- Using values as the foundation for communications reminds employees of your organization's purpose and gives a supporting reason for every decision you make and message you send. Alignment to core values triggers a feeling of control. Values can also serve as an outline for piecing together communications that may be especially challenging right now.
- How can you leverage the practice of gratitude to move your organization forward? Gratitude programs such as gratitude challenges, journals, or Strategic Coach®'s 21-Day Gratitude Focus exercise can inspire employees and bring them back to what is truly at the heart of your organization. Where there is a "why," there's a way.
- Connect people together and celebrate success through refreshed recognition efforts. Simple efforts that tie back to values such as communication callouts or leadership acknowledgement can go further than tangible rewards in a time like the present.

## Use this time to emphasize employee growth and performance

- Employees are ready to rise up and contribute from the couch. Continue meaningful work through intentional assignments. If

it's not a busy time, evaluate department procedures, clearly document processes, open opportunities for training, focus on updating performance reviews. If now is the busiest you have ever been, let them rise to the occasion. Hear ideas, try their solutions and let them have a hold of the reins.

- Discover the true authenticity of every individual on your team. Leverage tools such as the Kolbe A™ Index or the Unique Ability process to focus on employees' natural ways of working. When employees are free to work according to their natural strengths, team synergy surges. Reduce anxiety and address fatigue, fear and frustration through helping employees under-

## Develop and test an adaptable system of operation that creates a clear line of sight

- Companies are pivoting their business models to meet the needs of those in need, but consider also what employees need. What is your strategic people-focused plan post-crisis? Are you ready to experience transform what has happened and make your plan of action to move forward, leveraging those learnings? Gather feedback from your people – through pulse surveys, discussion groups, leader-led conversations. Work won't be the same. Listen and learn.
- Establish and maintain leadership expectations. Set the stage now and hold leaders accountable as we move through this time together. What does your leader guide look like? What

# The Application: Five Opportunities for Business Growth

new ideas can you implement to foster stronger people leaders, and what existing practices can you revisit to ensure consistency, understanding and alignment to the core values?

- Technology was a considered a barrier to empathy, and now it's become an ally. You may have been thrust into new technologies and practices willingly or unwillingly, but you're in the midst of it now. Take control by reviewing data security practices and policies. Now is the time to align on technology and

## Meet your employees' craving for well-being - now and for the future

- What is in the well-being toolkit your organization is providing to employees? This toolkit must now include balance resources, a focus on mental health and best practices for the new office environment. How can you create a toolkit that helps employees consider the future of their wellness journey and supports them while they're on it? This is particularly necessary for employees who may be furloughed or working reduced hours. Keep them close, and keep them well.
- What can you do to offboard employees who are transitioning out of the organization in a way that creates ambassadors of your employer brand? Consider transition discussions rooted in core values, support offerings such as an Employee Assistance Program or job search resources and tools that can inspire confidence such as the Kolbe A™ Index or Strategic Coach's Unique Ability process. Set these individuals up for future success and even a potential future return to your organization. How can you stay well-connected through communications, surveying and virtual networking opportunities?
- Helping employees establish their own purpose and set of core

values can create a more effective team. Employees who know their "why" and what they stand for will more easily align to organizational core values and purpose, in turn having a stronger connection to their role and responsibilities. Passion begins with purpose.

- Relationships are key to well-being. How can your team support clients or suppliers? Do you work with those in essential roles? What can you do now to support those who kept us going during the crisis? What can you plan for now that can be enacted in the future? How can this craving for contribution be met while elevating your business relationships?

## Audit and elevate your communication practices, ensuring everyone contributes

- Leverage a single point of truth solution for all communications, ensuring one source is the hub for all employees. Share the same message to all employees at the same time. Provide an opportunity for those messages to live and be referenced.
- Let authenticity guide your messaging. Overcommunicate and be empathetic. Be relevant, be human. And then, ask for feedback.
- Recognize the difference your employees have already made, big or small. Highlight what you have put into practice that differentiates your business. Spotlight what you have well under control. Do each of these often.
- Embrace an entrepreneurial mindset. Give everyone a voice. What new business opportunities can be discovered through a new practice of challenging employees to be innovative and ingenious?

# Take Action

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**humanworks** is ready to work with your leadership team to solve your organization's people needs through your unique lens. Let's target your people touchpoints together and create an activation plan for success.

## How is this done?

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We work through a unique practiced wisdom called **The 8**.

### **EVERYONE'S UNIQUE**

*Activate Instincts & Discover Talent*

### **EVERYONE BELIEVES**

*Identify Values & Create Vision*

### **EVERYONE CONNECTS**

*Develop Relationships & Foster Teamwork*

### **EVERYONE CONTRIBUTES**

*Question Together & Communicate Clearly*

### **EVERYONE RISES**

*Energize Systems and Inspire Leadership*

### **EVERYONE LEARNS**

*Improve Performance & Encourage Development*

### **EVERYONE THRIVES**

*Boost Well-Being & Enliven Community*

## About humanworks

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We help you discover the pulse of your organization and show you the best practices to bring it to life. Working side-by-side with you, we will create your touchpoint plan that will have the greatest impact and results based on your unique needs. This could include enlivening your core values, getting the right person in the right seat based on their natural talents and abilities, developing your system of operation, and building high performing teams. You have a culture to elevate and we have a unique process that will guide you and transform your organization. You have a people problem to solve, we have a way to see it in a new light.

**humanworks** 

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