



ASX100 Business Values Review

A 2023 Review of the Espoused Cultural Values of ASX100 Companies

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Acknowledgments

In producing this report particular thanks are due to Ms Shelley Hartland without whom the spark would not have been lit to conduct this analysis. From there, thanks are due to Dr. Edward Brooks of Oxford University for his agreeing to share the codebook used in their UK study, a share that enhanced this study and its international comparability. Last for their sage advice and guidance, Mr. Adam Grodecki and Ms. Kate Adams of the Forward Institute in the UK.

Acknowledgement of Country

In the main, this report was written on the traditional lands of the Yugarabul, Yuggera, Jagera, Turrbal and Gubbi Gubbi peoples. We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the lands on which we live and work and pay our respects to Elders, past, present, and future, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We recognise sovereignty was never ceded and that the land that is Australia was founded on the genocide and dispossession of First Nations people. We acknowledge that colonial structures are still in place and as such the struggles of First Nations peoples continues. The wounds that have lasted for generations will perpetuate forward and not heal unless we engage in ongoing listening and discussion with those who have been and still are so harmed. The process of full healing will take generations and we support all efforts to achieve justice, recognition, and respect for all First Nations people. We humbly receive their advice and guidance on how to realise such outcomes so that we can all move together into a better future.

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Executive Summary

The cultural values of a company matter because they are developed and articulated to guide organisational members in their behaviours, and how they engage with and respond to the challenges that their organisation faces. Thus, espousing values, stating them, and communicating them is a method of facilitating alignment of organisational participantsⁱ and, in turn, driving results.

This report is a 2023 review of the espoused values of the ASX100, showing that most companies (97%) articulate between three and six values. Then, when considering the actual values across the ASX100 what is revealed is sameness, with 80% of the companies listing at least one of the top three, and 88% one of the top five. The top five being collaboration, integrity, excellence, respect and creativity/innovation.. This similarity points to the companies in the sample seeking the same key behaviours from employees. Such a result may indicate mundane similarity, or it might point to something more fundamental about society, or the challenge of organisational success being a team sport when rewards can be biased to individual performance.

At the other end of the scale, the least popular values are generosity, improving, problem solving, thinking differently and discretion. A telling aspect of these least popular values is that generosity appears so little yet is inherent to how we encourage each other to be in society. However, the result is not unexpected as corporations with their focus on shareholder value, can leave little room for generosity to be enacted.

Additional analysis revealed no correlation between the values and financial or ESG performance, and only minor differences between sectors. Also, these Australian results revealed a similarity when compared to studies from other jurisdictions, showing that Australia is not doing anything particularly different in terms of values. The degree of sameness may mean the value recipe of company success is solved. However, the wider challenges facing companies are how and if they can help facilitate a transition to a low-carbon economy and more sustainable outcomes for themselves and society.

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Such a transition may require values such as bravery, care, long-term thinking, and honestyⁱⁱ. Unfortunately, such values are not popular within the ASX100.

One final piece of analysis using ESG scores revealed that companies with the highest ESG scores had relatively more preference for values of courage, responsibility, simplicity, respect, and transparency compared to the overall sample. This result is a possible signal that to create more sustainable outcomes some difference in values may be required and thus the values recipe of companies may need to be adjusted to enable a successful transition through the challenges we face.

Reflecting on the results of this review, challenges to practitioners arise which are:

- Is the similarity in values reflective of necessity, a lack of imagination or something else?
- Is the similarity in values helping businesses realise advantage or is there a regression to the mean?

By posing these questions, we ask you to reflect and consider, could you challenge your business to be different?

To close, the value recipe for ASX100 companies appears to be settled and Australia is not much different to anywhere else. However, the value recipe for companies that will enable a successful transition to more sustainable societies has yet to be understood.

If you would like to discuss the findings of this report please contact: Prof. Nick Barter on LinkedIn. Or alternatively via the website: futurenormal.net.

The pursuit of a more sustainable future may require a fresh approach, challenging the established corporate values.

The 2023 review of ASX100 companies' espoused values reveals a striking uniformity, with a majority embracing commonly shared values such as collaboration, integrity, and excellence.

Introduction

This report discusses the results of a 2023 review of the espoused values of the Australian Stock Exchange Top 100ⁱⁱⁱ companies (ASX100). The rationale for the review arose from two factors. First, no study of this kind appears to have been conducted in Australia, yet similar studies have been conducted in other jurisdictions; for example, there have been studies in the UK on the FT250 companies and in the USA on Fortune 500 companies^{iv}. Second, values matter in the context of the narrative framework of a company and how it wishes to conduct itself, and what outcomes it wants to pursue.

More specifically, values are typically defined as personally or socially desirable beliefs that go beyond specific situations to guide people's behaviours^v. A more thorough definition is that values are 'long-lasting constructs, which have emerged from the collective beliefs, experience and vision of a group or all members of the organisation, about what the organisation holds should be of intrinsic worth, and which have (explicitly or implicitly) certain weight in the process of decision making and the evaluation of individuals and organisations in terms of their modes, actions and end states'^{vi}.

In short, values matter to the success of a company.

Moving on from such definitions, values are guides to desirable actions by organisational members^{vii} and they matter to areas such as the interpretation of an organisation's strategic issues and choices, change, decision making, employee commitment^{viii}, leadership and organisational identity^{ix}. Further, it is contended that the long-term success of a company is enhanced when core values remain relatively constant and are not just espoused but also enacted through everyday behaviours.

Consequently, it is safe to say that values really do matter for organisational success. Further, they are considered core to organisational culture^{xii} and even charged with being the 'soul' of a company^{xiii} and or the 'glue' holding a company together^{xiv} that helps ensure operational effectiveness, performance^{xv} and the attraction, selection, and attrition of organisational members^{xvi}. This demonstrates the importance of values and their place as a key tool in helping ensure organisational success.

Nevertheless, a challenge is that there is often a difference between the values espoused and the values enacted^{xvii}. In other terms, the values the organisation states about itself, perhaps on its corporate website, are those it might espouse.



Whereas the values performed by members of the organisation in their everyday work behaviours are those that are enacted. Between these two there will likely always be a difference and the challenge of effective leadership is to minimise this difference. The case of Enron serves as a stark example of corporate values that were fundamentally disconnected from the actions of the company, leading to one of the most notorious corporate collapses in history. Enron, once hailed as an innovative and highly profitable energy company, claimed to uphold values such as integrity, respect, communication, and excellence. These values were prominently displayed in company documents and speeches by executives. However, the reality was a stark contrast. Enron engaged in a range of unethical and illegal activities to inflate its financial statements and stock price, such as off-balance-sheet accounting, deceptive financial reporting, and energy trading schemes that manipulated energy

prices. These actions ultimately led to massive financial losses, the destruction of employees' retirement savings, and the loss of trust among investors and the public.

The collapse of Enron in 2001 highlights the dangers of espousing values without genuine commitment and ethical behavior. In this instance, corporate values were little more than a façade, used to create a false image of a responsible and trustworthy company. The discrepancy between the espoused values and what was enacted helped to shatter public confidence in not only Enron but also the broader corporate sector^{xviii}.

More recently and within the Australian context, in 2023, Qantas an airline which many consider as the pseudo national carrier, is facing a series of challenges from employees, competitors and customers. Customers (and the corporate regulator, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission) are accusing it of selling

knowingly cancelled flights, competitors are accusing it of using influence to shut them out of the air travel market in the country, and employees are taking the company to the high court because of illegal sackings^{xix}. Such behaviours have led to an apology by the incoming CEO and challenges to the chairperson of the board^{xx}. Yet Qantas hails itself as having the following values: responsible, respectful, resilience and excellence. However, as with Enron, these espoused values seem to have been left behind relative to what is enacted.

To help ensure the gap between espoused and enacted values is minimised, it is argued that leaders should communicate the values, behave in line with them, regularly revisit them, ensure selection and training is done in line with them and reward employees' values-aligned behaviour^{xxi}.

However, as with all things, this is perhaps easier said than done, as there is always likely to be some gap between an individual's behaviours and the interpretations of others. Nevertheless, leaders who behave to expectations tend to be more effective relative to those that do not.^{xxii}

When taken together, the importance of values highlights that while they may be considered 'soft' cultural issues, they are critical to performance and the 'hard' edge of effectiveness. Thus, their importance

reinforces, as per Peter Drucker, 'culture eats strategy for breakfast'^{xxiii} and the soft of culture, eats the hard of strategy every time.

Given the context above, it is timely to review the espoused values of the ASX 100, the largest 100 companies on the Australian Stock Exchange. This said, it is important to note that this initial report is not one that gets 'under the hood' to explore the enacted values of the companies relative to those they espouse^{xxiv}, rather it concentrates on reviewing the espoused values of the companies, those values they state on their websites or in their corporate reports. To close this introduction, the report proceeds in the following way.

The next section highlights the method of gathering the data and process of analysis, then the results are presented. Finally, the results are discussed with conclusions and possible next steps brought forward.

An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road that curves along a steep, forested cliff on the left and a rocky coastline on the right. The road has white lane markings and a guardrail. The cliff is covered in dense green and brown trees. The coastline features a mix of dark rocks and sandy patches where waves are breaking. The ocean is a deep blue. In the bottom left corner, there is a white-bordered box containing a quote.

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Leaders must communicate,
embody, and reward values-
aligned behavior to bridge the
gap between espoused and
enacted values.

Method

The first task in exploring the espoused values of the ASX100 companies is to gather a list of the companies. This list was gathered in March of 2023, then due to elapsed time re-gathered in June 2023, as the ASX100 list is updated every three months. Consequently, 102 companies were analysed, as during the time of the review some new companies joined the ASX100 while others fell away^{xxv}.

Once the list of companies was gathered, the corporate website of each company was reviewed for its statements of espoused values. Typically, such statements are found in the 'About Us' section of the website or alternatively listed on the company's investor relations pages. When gathering this data, if the values were not immediately evident, a simple search of the site and or the company's code of conduct typically brought forward a result.

Once the data was gathered, it was coded using the software NVivo and values were categorised together in appropriate groupings. The codebook for sorting the values was provided by the team at the Oxford Character Project, who had conducted a UK study of company values in July 2022 supported by the Forward Institute

and the John Templeton Foundation^{xxvi}.

After the coding was completed, the initial analysis was to rank the values by popularity. Then the values were analysed by industrial sector, financial performance and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) scores of the underlying companies. This sector, financial performance and ESG data was gathered from the Refinitiv database.

The use of this data allowed an exploration of questions such as whether companies with integrity as a value have a higher ESG score, or an improved Return on Assets (ROA), or whether they are from a particular sector relative to other companies or sectors in the sample?

In addition to reviewing the values by sector, financial performance and ESG data, we also reviewed the values against a summary framework of values put forward by Dominick et al in 2018^{xxvii}. This 'Organisational Values Reflection Framework' was derived from their work exploring the values of the Fortune 100 companies and splits values into three key primary categories: (1) Relationships, (2) Performance and (3) Change^{xxviii}. Wherein relationships concerns, relationships with others and self-regulation; performance is about outcomes and results; and change is about innovation and continuous development^{xxix}.

The final piece of analysis was to compare the results of this ASX100 review to international studies. The comparator studies were the UK values study, an MIT study from 2020 on large US companies^{xxx}, a 2019 paper that explored the espoused values of Fortune 100 companies^{xxxi} and the AMO strategic advisory firm's study of global corporate values from 2022 that explored 455 companies across 19 markets^{xxxii}.

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Using this data, we investigated whether integrity-focused companies show higher ESG scores, improved ROA, or sector-specific advantages.

Results

As indicated previously, in the final analysis, 102 ASX100 companies were reviewed because of elapsed time and the changing composition of the ASX100. Of these, 97% had espoused values with just three companies not having any that could be found on their website or in available documentation. Figure 1 highlights the distribution of companies relative to the number of values publically stated. As shown, the most popular number of values for a company to have is five and, excluding zero, the lowest is two and the highest ten. Overall, 88% of companies had between three and six values.

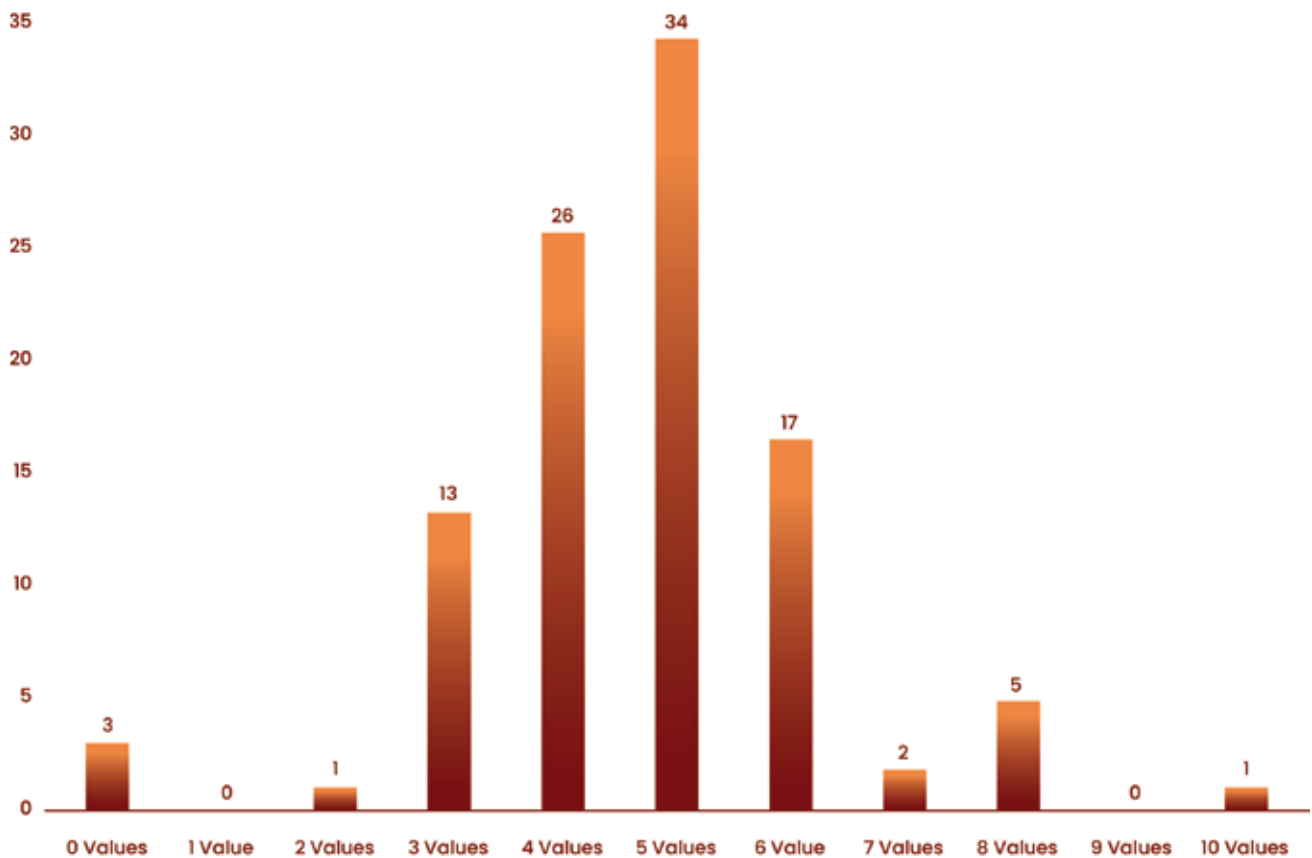


Figure 1: Number of Companies by the Number of Values

From coding the values of the ASX100, as shown in Figure 2, 37 different values were identified. The most popular value was collaboration, with the top five being (1) collaboration, (2) integrity, (3) excellence, (4) respect and (5) creativity/innovation. From the least popular end, no companies had values of technology driven, hope, gratitude, or friendliness which were evident in the UK values study of 2022.

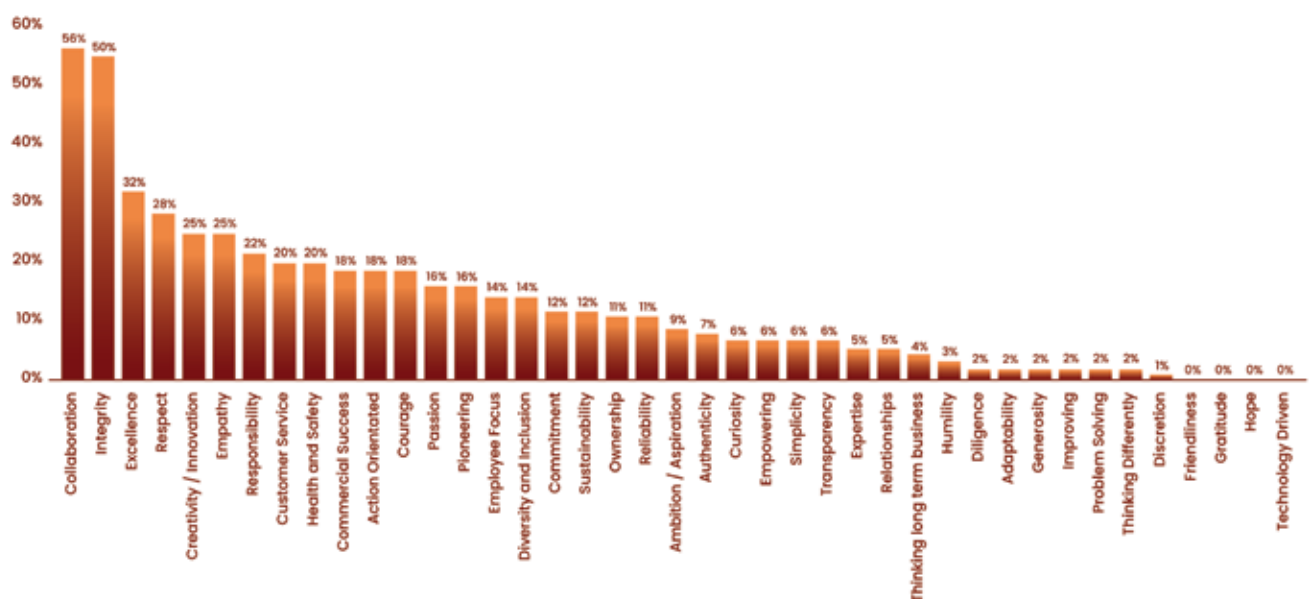


Figure 2: Values of the ASX100 by Percentage of Companies with that Value

When reviewing the values and the cumulative number of companies of the sample from the most popular to the least popular, as shown in Figure 3, what becomes evident is 'that 80% of the companies list at least one of the top three values and 88% list one of the top five values. This leaves only 12% of companies not having at least one of these five values.

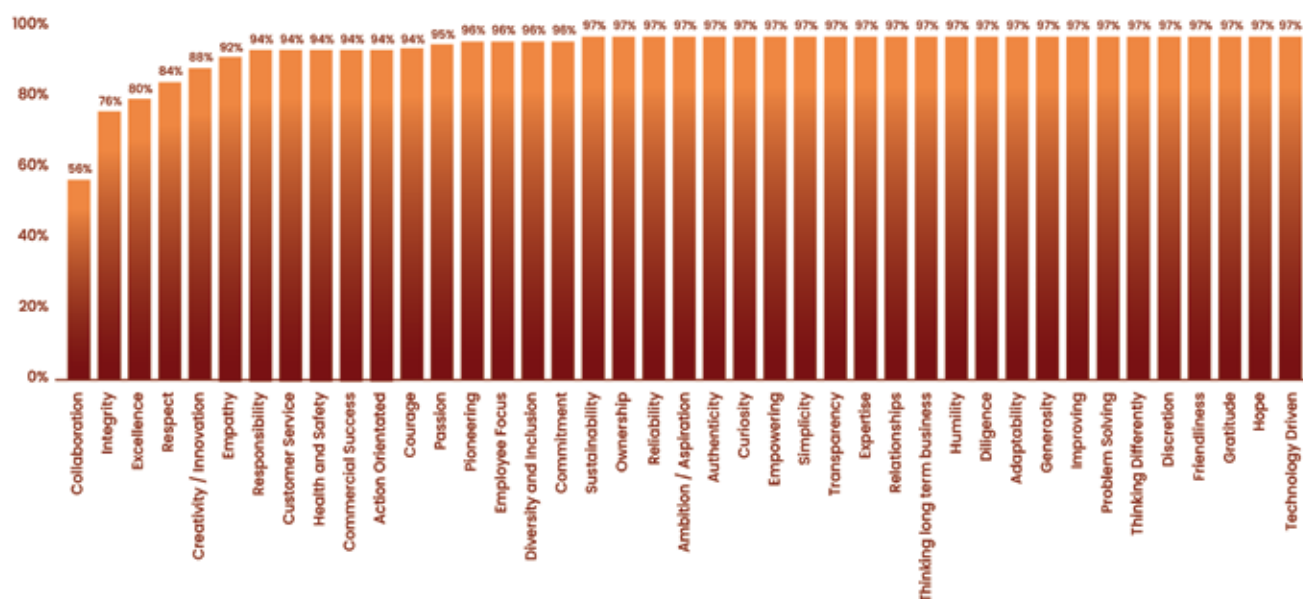


Figure 3: Values by Cumulative Percentage of ASX100 Companies
(Starting with the Most Popular Value to the Least Popular Value – Left to Right)

Alternatively, when reviewing the cumulative number of companies in the sample from the least popular to the most popular values, as shown in Figure 4, what can be seen is that 20% of the companies only have values that are in the top 13 categories, from collaboration to passion. While 80% of companies have one of their values that is outside of these first thirteen categories, from pioneering to discretion.

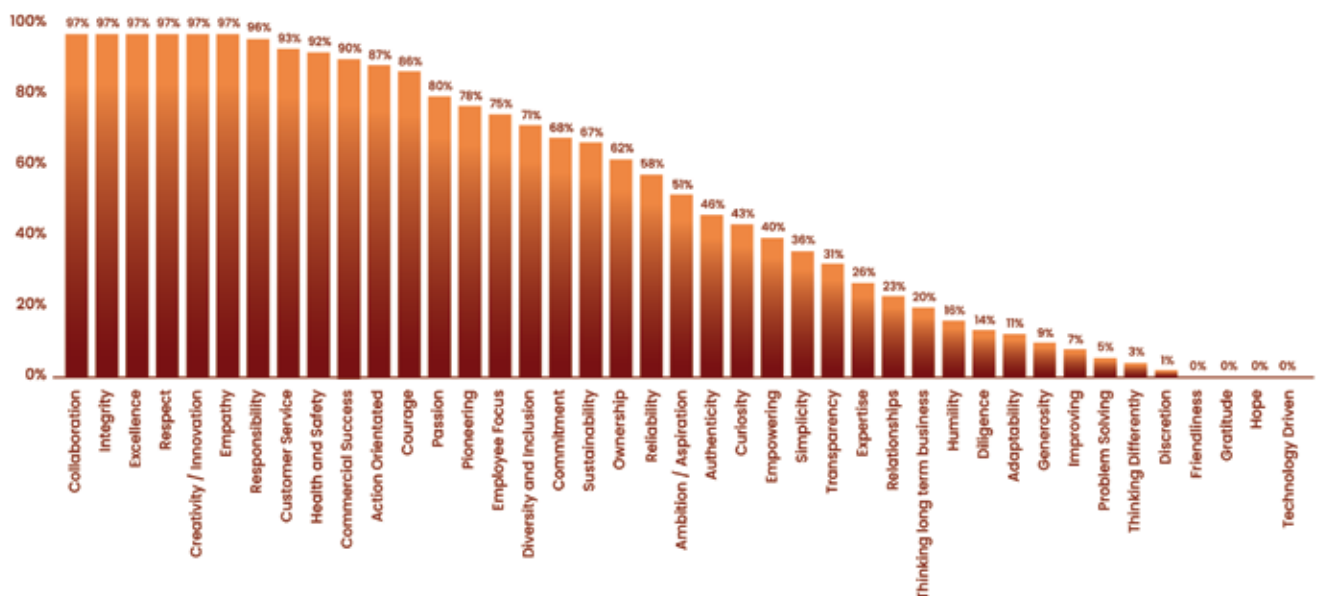


Figure 4: Values by Cumulative Percentage of ASX100 Companies
(Starting with the Least Popular Value - Right to Left)

Moving from the overall popularity of values, the sample was also analysed by industry sector. Across, the sample, eleven different industry sectors were represented. As can be seen in Figure 5, the three most represented sectors in the sample are (1) materials (mining), (2) financials and (3) industrials. When reviewing the different industrial sectors by the popularity of different values against the sample overall, differences in sector emphasis began to appear.

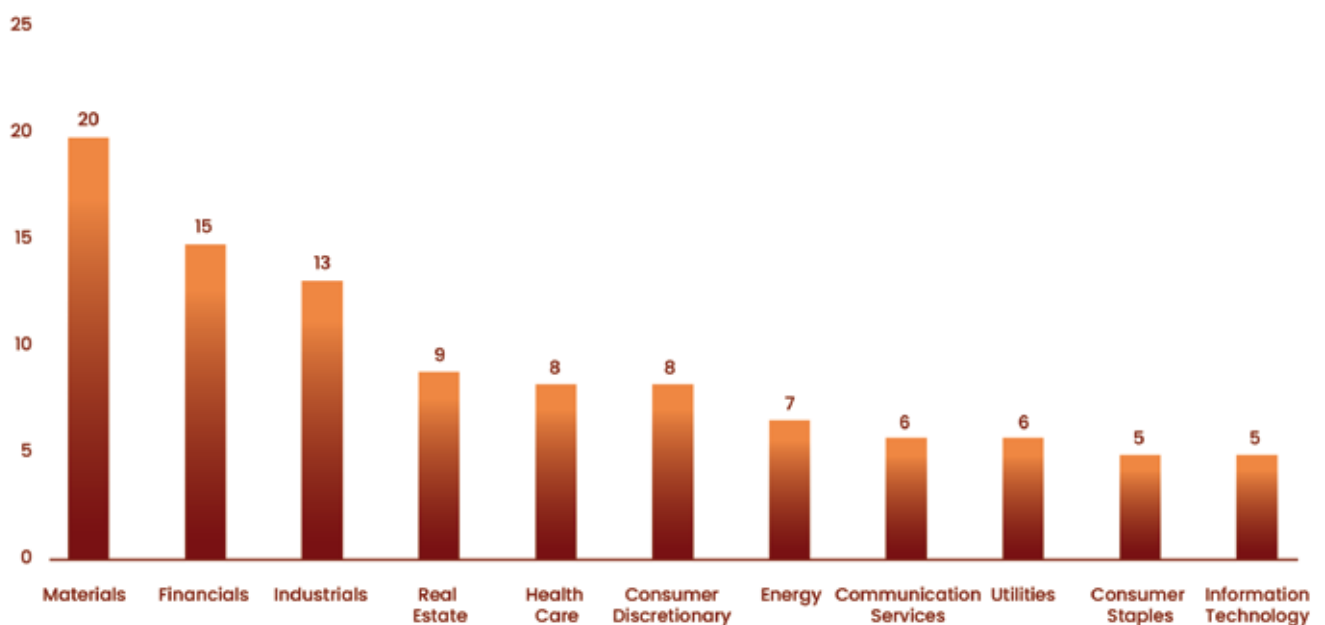


Figure 5: No. Companies in the ASX by Industry

For example, as Figure 6 highlights, the materials sector places more emphasis on respect, health and safety and commercial success, and less so on creativity than the overall sample. Whereas the financial sector places more emphasis relative to the overall sample on integrity, excellence, responsibility, pioneering, ownership, and expertise, and less so on respect (see charts in the appendix for comparisons of all individual sectors against the overall sample). The industrials sector places more emphasis on integrity, excellence, respect, customer service and health and safety. For other sectors, what comes forward is that the healthcare sector has a strong emphasis on customer service and excellence and less so on respect and collaboration. The energy sector places greater emphasis on collaboration, integrity, responsibility, health and safety, and commercial success, and less so on customer service. The consumer discretionary sector places more emphasis on empathy and passion, and less so on collaboration, excellence, and respect. While real estate places greater emphasis on thinking long term and creativity, and less so on responsibility.

Moving from how the values were distributed, financial performance and ESG data were gathered from the Refinitiv database, and the values were analysed by whether companies with a particular value trended a particular way. For example, did companies with integrity have, on average, a higher ESG score or improved financial performance? This analysis revealed no discernible trends, indicating that a company's choice of values does not correlate to its financial or ESG outcomes, within this sample.

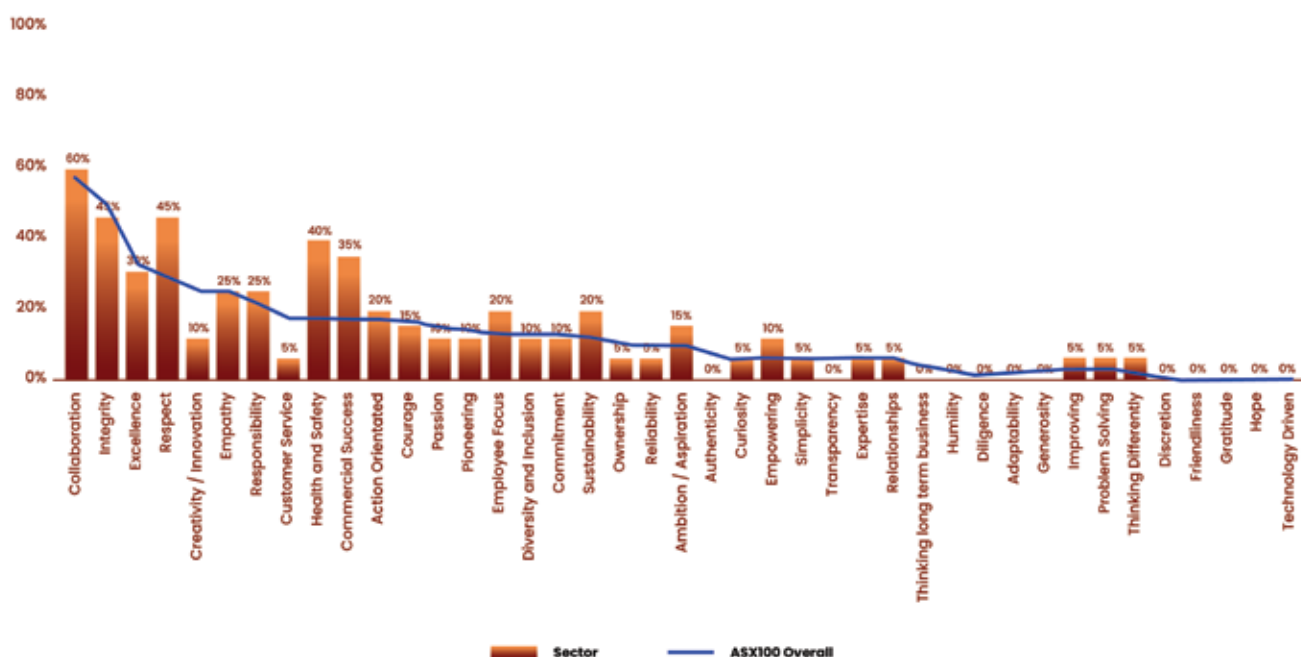


Figure 6: Values of the ASX100 relative to the Materials Industry Companies of the ASX100

The penultimate piece of analysis was to explore the values against the summary framework of Dominick et al (2018). From mapping the coded values to the three categories of this framework and then cross-referencing that with values espoused by the ASX100, we found the following result, as shown in Figure 7.

The result highlights how overall across the ASX100, 48% of the values are grouped to relationships, 39% to performance and 13% to change. Then within each of those groupings, for relationships, there is a slight lean towards an external perspective, whereas for performance the lean is to internal and intra-personal perspective.

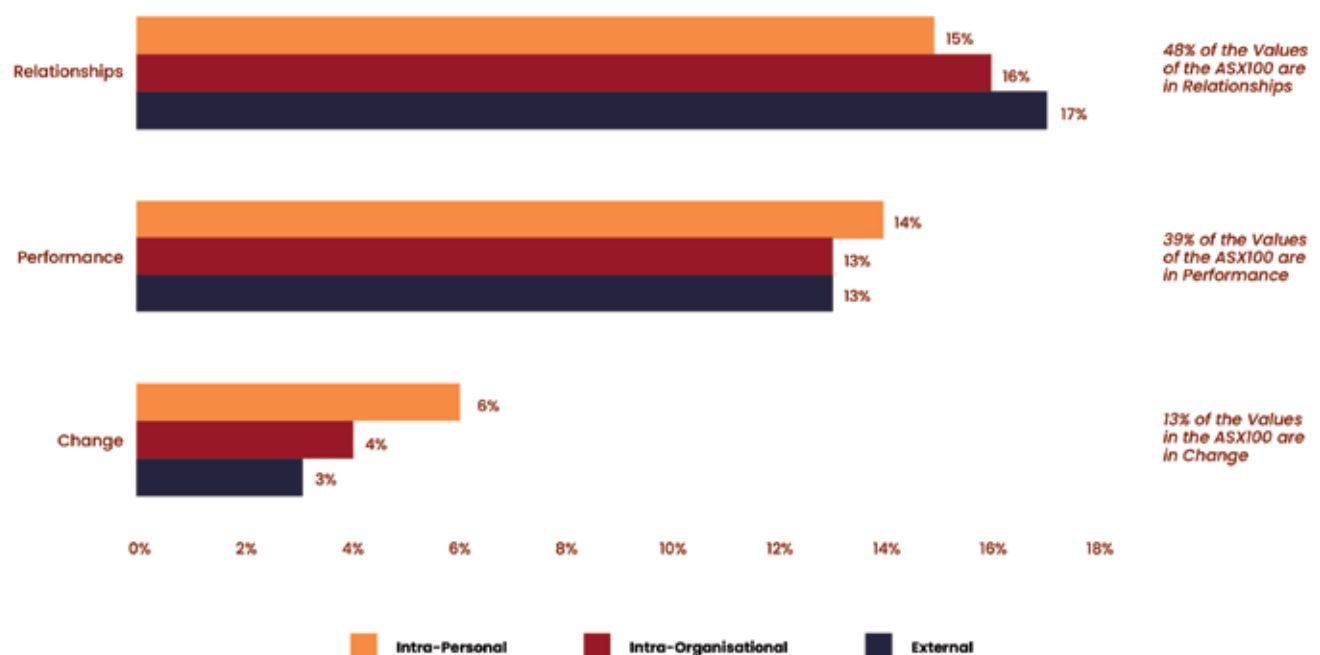


Figure 7: ASX100 Values by Percentage of Companies Relative to the Organisational Values Reflection Framework

While for change, the lean is towards an intra-personal perspective^{xxxiii}. We then cross-referenced this coding to different industries in the ASX100, as shown in Figure 8.

From this analysis what appears is that consumer staples are placing more emphasis on relationships relative to other sectors and less emphasis on performance values, while the IT sector emphasises values of intra-personal change.

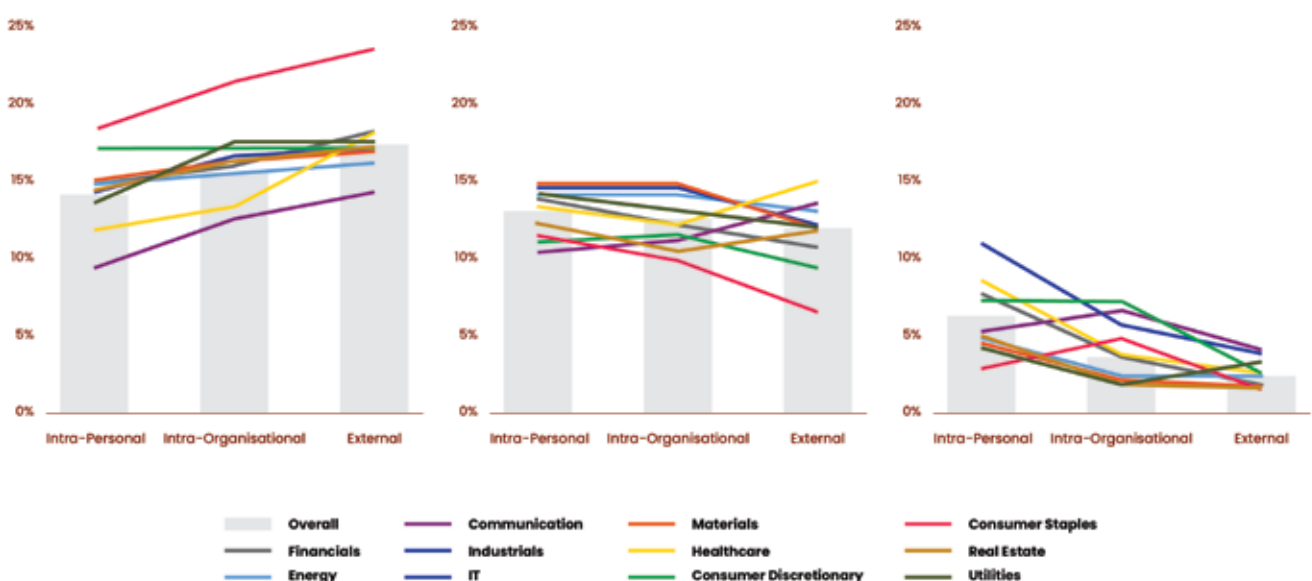


Figure 8: Mapping Industries within the Organisational Values Reflection Framework

The final piece of analysis was to compare the results of this study to other international reviews, shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparing the ASX100 to Studies from Other Jurisdictions					
Comparator	This Study ASX100 (2023)	UK Values Study (2022)	MIT Sloan (2020)	Fortune 100 (2019)	AMO Values Most Valued (2022)
Average No. Values per Company	4.7	4.0	73% of companies had between 3.0 to 7.0 values	9.6	4.3
No. Distinct Values across Sample	37	42	62	24	N/A in their methodology
Top 5 Most Popular Values	1. Collaboration 2. Integrity 3. Excellence 4. Respect 5. Creativity	1. Collaboration 2. Integrity 3. Excellence 4. Customer Service 5. Creativity	1. Integrity 2. Collaboration 3. Customer Focus 4. Respect 5. Innovation	1. Excellence 2. Client-driven 3. Integrity 4. Teamwork 5. Professionalism	1. Integrity 2. Innovation 3. Respect 4. Responsibility 5. Sustainability
Bottom 5 Least Popular Values	1. Generosity 2. Improving 3. Problem Solving 4. Thinking Differently 5. Discretion	1. Problem Solving 2. Hope 3. Discretion 4. Gratitude 5. Technology Driven	1. Value 2. Independence 3. Responsible 4. Loyalty 5. Civility	1. Fairness 2. Strategic 3. Agility 4. Autonomy 5. Humility	Not available in the report as individual values.

What is evident from the table above is the degree of similarity. This is particularly evident in the most popular values—integrity, creativity/innovation, and collaboration/teamwork. Likewise, there is some element of similarity in the least popular, in that they are typically values that emphasise some form of gratitude, generosity, humility, civility or fairness.

To summarise, the key points that have emerged from the analysis are:

- Very few companies in the sample, just 3%, do not have espoused values clearly stated on their websites.
- 88% of ASX100 companies have between three and six values. The most popular number of values for a company to have is five.
- The five most popular values of the sample are, in order—collaboration, integrity, excellence, respect and creativity/innovation.
- The five least popular values are generosity, improving, problem solving, thinking differently and discretion.
- 80% of the companies have one of the first three most popular values—collaboration, integrity, and excellence. With 88% having one of the first five most popular values.
- When reviewing the popularity of values by different industries, what becomes apparent is that some industries over index in certain values relative to the overall sample. For example:
 - The materials industry over indexes relative to the overall ASX100 in the values of collaboration, respect, customer service, and action orientation.
 - The financial industry over indexes in collaboration, integrity, and respect.
 - The industrials sector over indexes in integrity, excellence, respect, commercial success, and customer service.
 - The healthcare sector over indexes in commercial success and relationships.
 - The energy sector over indexes in collaboration and integrity.
 - The consumer discretionary over indexes in empathy and passion.
- When reviewing the values relative to financial and ESG performance of the underlying companies no pattern is revealed.
- In analysing the values against a summary framework that concerns organisational reflection, 48% of the values of the ASX100 concern relationship behaviours, 39% performance and 13% change.
- When comparing the results of this study to those from other jurisdictions, the degree of similarity is high. There is no evident Australian difference.

Discussion

Values are developed and articulated to guide organisational members in their behaviours and how they engage with and respond to the challenges, large or small, rare or every day, that they and their organisation contends with. Thus, espousing values, stating them, and communicating them is a method of facilitating alignment of organisational participants^{xxxiv}. Thus values are key to driving results. Hence, it would be expected that stating them would be popular and the results of this study reinforce this, 97% of the ASX100 companies having an espoused set of values.

Further, given the importance of values being understood across the company, it would be expected that the espoused set is not too large to enable ease of recall and subsequent enactment. This result appears evident, as the most popular number of values for a company within the sample to have is five. Building on this notion of ease of recall, some of the companies formed acronyms out of their values, for example having values of; community, accountability, respect, and excellence to enable the formation of an acronym of CARE; albeit the effectiveness of such acronyms is unclear.

When considering the values across the ASX100 sample, what is revealed is similarity; 80% of the companies share the three most popular values—collaboration, integrity, and excellence, while 92 % have these three values and the next two most popular of respect and creativity/innovation.

This similarity points to the companies in the sample seeking the same key behaviours from employees. In turn, it highlights how no one company stands out and how perhaps none of these companies are trying to be different. This may be an outcome to be expected given the ASX100 companies are a particular sample with an undoubted desire to meet a similar set of outcomes such as an increase in share price or dividend payments. However, this said, 37 different values are represented across the ASX100 and 80% of the companies have a value that is in the long tail of values ranging from passion to discretion. This indicates dominant similarity with some minor nuance.

Nevertheless, that so many companies are seeking similar behaviours and that the most popular values are relatively everyday—collaboration, integrity, excellence—is perhaps telling in two potential ways.

First, such similarity might indicate that these popular values are the recipe for organisational success and hence the prescription is always going to be the same.

Alternatively, and second, because these popular values ask relatively little of individuals compared to what might be expected of them as everyday human beings, their popularity may be a reflection upon wider society and the challenge of organisational behaviour. To explain, it is possibly self-evident that most of us, most of the time, would expect to exhibit behaviours of collaboration, integrity, and excellence in our everyday interactions, be that as employees or citizens.

Hence, that such values are so popular and called out specifically perhaps tells us something about how much companies must do to engender and reinforce these behaviours that should be every day for us all. In this there is either a potential reflection upon society's ineffectiveness in engendering everyday values or alternatively a reflection on the challenge of organisations.

Wherein success in organisations is a team sport, yet rewards are invariably individualistic, and this individualism is reinforced by high levels of pay inequality, particularly for CEOs^{xxxv}. Given this context, for an organisation to succeed it must encourage collaboration, integrity, and excellence, yet at the same time as it is reinforcing these values to obtain success, it will undercut this intent by ensuring some in the organisation receive outsize individual rewards relative to others.

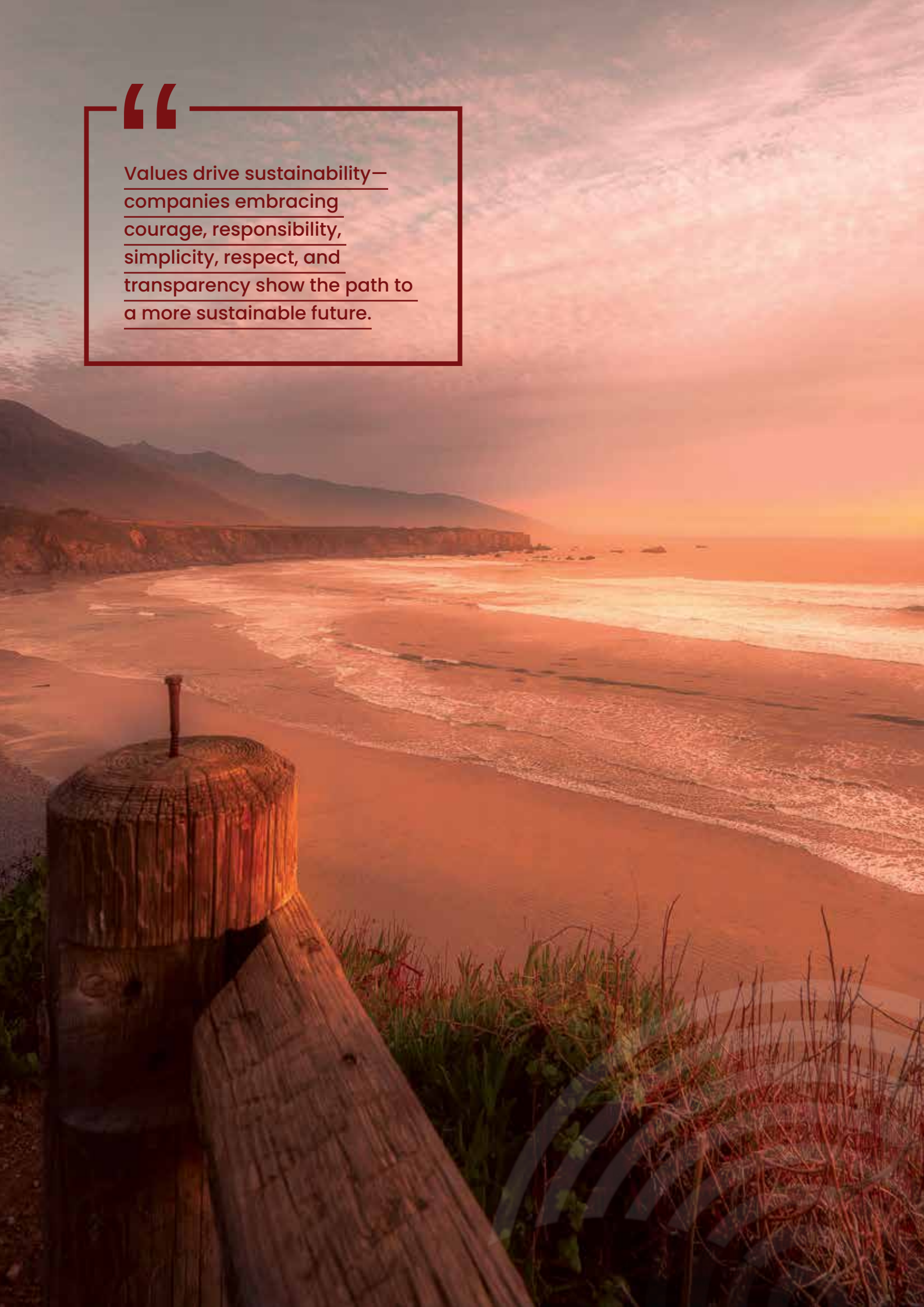
On the other end of the scale and reviewing the five least popular values of generosity, improving, problem solving, thinking differently and discretion, a telling aspect is that generosity appears so little. There is little desire in the sample for organisational members to be generous with each other. Such a situation might be expected given the sample and their likely focus on shareholder value, a mantra that leaves little room for generosity. However, it is again telling, that an everyday behaviour that is encouraged in many of us is given so little attention within the context of the desired values of ASX100 participants.

When considering financial performance, the results indicated no correlation between any values and ESG or financial performance metrics. That no correlation was found again reinforces the degree of sameness in the values across the sample. Building upon this sameness, when categorizing the values against relationships, performance, and change, again sameness came through, as the values fell consistently into these three categories in similar proportions across different sectors. Albeit there was some differentiation in two sectors.

The first, consumer staples companies placed greater emphasis on relationships and less so on external performance. While the IT sector placed greater emphasis on intrapersonal change, perhaps an indication of the rapidity of change in this sector.

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Values drive sustainability—
companies embracing
courage, responsibility,
simplicity, respect, and
transparency show the path to
a more sustainable future.



Last, when comparing the results of this study to international studies, sameness again comes to the fore. Sameness in terms of the most popular values of integrity, excellence, collaboration, and creativity/innovation. And sameness in terms of the least popular values of humility and generosity. A perhaps not unexpected result given the studies were conducted in English-speaking democracies and on large, publicly listed firms.

In summary, the review of the ASX100 values reveals sameness. Sameness between companies and similarity when compared to other jurisdictions. Building from this, some obvious questions begin to emerge: Why are some values more popular than others? Is this degree of similarity revealing the secret sauce for companies, i.e., the most popular values are key to organisational success? Or is the sameness a result of mundane isomorphism? Or are the values a reflection on society? Going further, are some values prioritised because of the tension between group outcomes and individual rewards? Answering such questions requires further investigation and could perhaps constitute a future study.

Outside of the parameters of this study, the wider challenges facing companies are how and if they can help facilitate a transition to a low-carbon economy and more sustainable outcomes for themselves and society. Hence,

building from the base that is this study, an avenue of future research questions might be: What are the values of the world's most 'sustainable' companies? How do these values compare to those that are popular in the ASX100 and or other jurisdictions? Will those values enable the transition to a low-carbon economy and a more sustainable society? The Forward Institute in the UK argues that responsible leaders of the future will value diversity, bravery, care, long-term thinking, and honesty^{xxxvi}. Likewise, shifting to more sustainable outcomes has been argued as society needing to have a new paradigm where we pursue quality and conservation^{xxxvii}. Unfortunately, such values are not popular within the ASX100.

Nevertheless, one final piece of analysis conducted on the sample was to compare the values of the overall sample to those of the ten companies in the sample with the highest ESG score—using ESG scores as a kind of proxy for a company acting more sustainably. The results of this analysis were that values such as courage, responsibility, simplicity, respect, and transparency are more popular relative to the overall sample for those companies with the highest ESG scores. This small piece of analysis is perhaps a signal that to create more sustainable outcomes, some difference in values may be required and thus the values recipe of companies may need to move beyond sameness to difference to enable an effective transition.

Conclusion

Corporate values serve as a crucial foundation for an organisation's identity and culture. On the surface, they are a set of guides for desired behaviors. While some may view corporate values as merely a formulaic form of public relations, their true purpose goes beyond optics. Corporate values are intended to represent an organisation's commitment to a set of behaviours that when coupled with a company's broader narrative framework (its vision, mission, and purpose) can guide decision making and action in any one moment. When what is espoused is also enacted, there is likely to be employee engagement and in turn the business will realise rewards. However, when what is espoused is not enacted, values become empty slogans and trust is eroded among all stakeholders. Hence, aligning what is espoused to what is enacted matters. Wherein such alignment is not a one and done solution, it requires constant gardening.

To close, this report has been generated from conducting a review of the values of the ASX100, a study that appears to be a first for Australia. The results reveal sameness. Sameness as over 90% of the companies having one of six values—(1) collaboration, (2) integrity, (3) excellence, (4) respect, (5) creativity/innovation and (6) empathy. The degree of similarity likely leaves the reader with a feeling of 'so what'. This 'so what' is powerful, as the result highlights that perhaps the values for company success are similar because they are all solving the same problem. Or perhaps it reveals that there is a lack of imagination that drives the similarity. Either way, the results do prime a shrug of the shoulders.

However, while closeness is revealed, the study also provides a comparison base for future research. Further, when we consider our future, we face the key challenge that companies will likely be key enablers of this transition and it is unclear what the value recipe for such a transition is, whether it is more of the same or different. A signal from the data is that more sustainable companies may place greater emphasis on the values of courage, responsibility, simplicity, respect, and transparency. Further, given the intergenerational challenge of transition, it might also be expected that values of care, long-term thinking, and thinking differently would be effective and thus more popular too. These types of values are not popular

in the ASX100 sample; however, they may need to be if we are to transition. This then raises the question of whether the values of the companies that claim to be more sustainable are notably different from others and whether they provide an insight into the value recipe that companies will need for a successful transition. These questions are for a new phase of research outside of the scope of this report. In summary, the value recipe for ASX100 companies appears to be settled.

It's sameness and this carries between studies on company values from other countries. Thus, Australia is no different, pursuing the same value recipe for its listed companies as the USA and the UK. Last, if you would like to reach out for a conversation about this study and or explore supporting the next phase of research, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

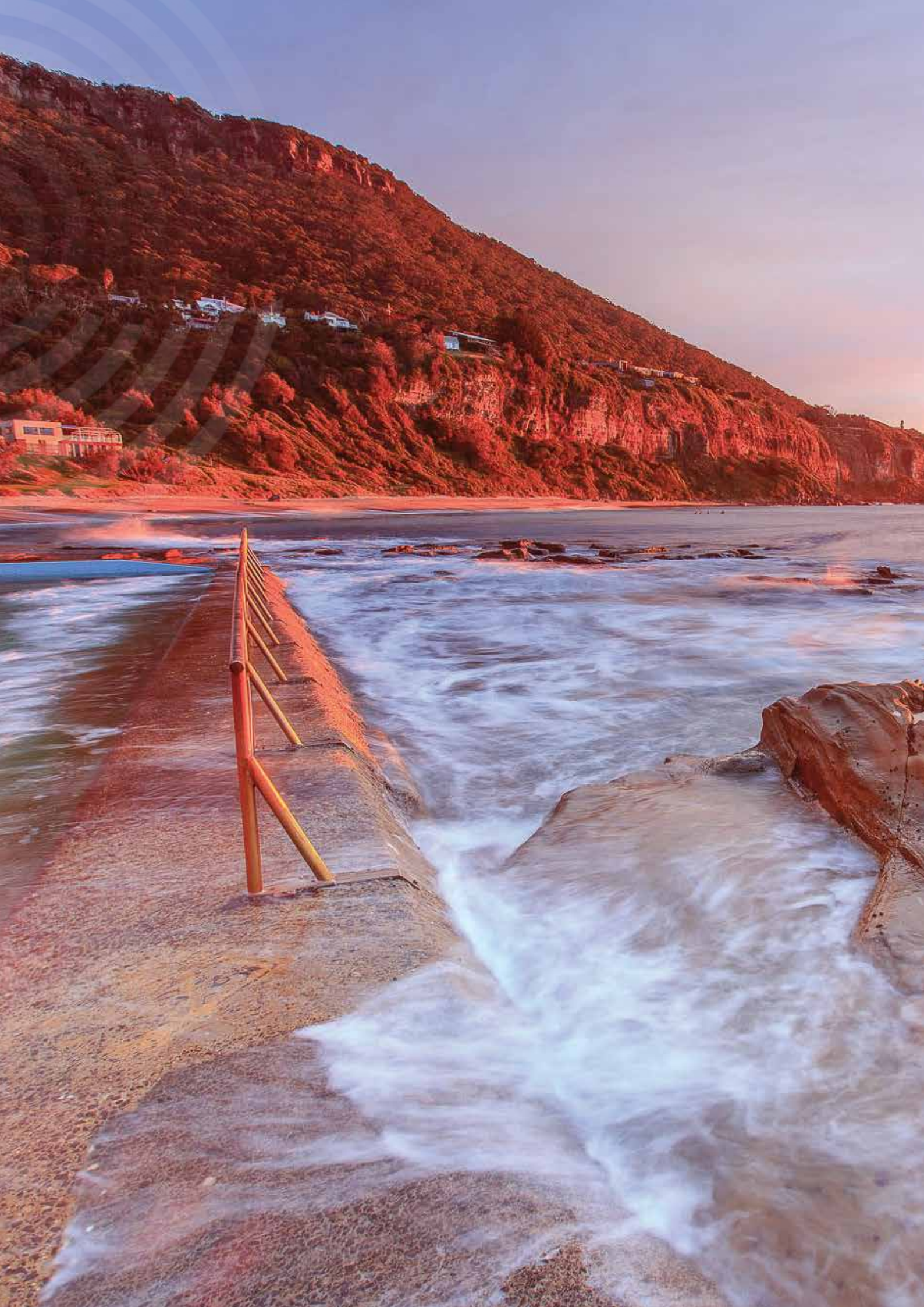


Appendix

Table 2: List of ASX100 Companies Analysed for this Review.

Company Name									
AGL Energy Ltd	Alikem Ltd	Ails Ltd	Altium Ltd	Amcpr plc	Ampol Ltd	ANZ Group Holdings Ltd	APA Group	Argo Investments Ltd	Aristocrat Leisure Ltd
ASX Ltd	Atlas Arteria	Auckland International Airport Ltd	Aurizon Holdings Ltd	Australian Foundation Investment Company Ltd	Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Ltd	BHP Group Ltd	Bluescope Steel Ltd	Boral Ltd	Brambles Ltd
Carsales.com Ltd	Charter Hall Group	Cleanaway Waste Management Ltd	Cochlear Ltd	Coles Group Ltd	Commonwealth Bank of Australia	Computershare Ltd	CSL Ltd	Dexus	Domino's PIZZA Enterprises Ltd
Ebos Group Ltd	Ebos Group Ltd	Evolution Mining Ltd	Fisher & Paykel Healthcare Corporation Ltd	Flight Centre Travel Group Ltd	Fortescue Metals Group Ltd	Goodman Group Ltd	GPT Group	Harvey Norman Holdings Ltd	IDP Education Ltd
IGO Ltd	Iluka Resources Ltd	Incitec Pivot Ltd	Infratil Ltd	Insurance Australia Group Ltd	James Hardie Industries plc	JB Hi-Fi Ltd	Lendlease Group	Liontown Resources Ltd	Lynas Rare EARTHs Ltd
Macquarie Group Ltd	Mecury NZ Ltd	Medibank Private Ltd	Meridian Energy Ltd	Mineral Resources Ltd	Mirvac Group	National Australia Bank Ltd	New Hope Corporation Ltd	Newcrest Mining Ltd	NEXTDC Ltd
Northern Star Resources Ltd	Orica Ltd	Origin Energy Ltd	Pilbara Minerals Ltd	Pro Medicus Ltd	Qantas Airways Lt	QBE Insurance Group Ltd	QUBE Holdings Ltd	Ramsay Health Care Ltd	REA Group Ltd
Reece Ltd	Resmed Inc	Rio Tinto Ltd	Santos Ltd	Scentre Group	Seek Ltd	Seven Group Holdings Ltd	Sonic Healthcare Ltd	South32 Ltd	Spark New Zealand Ltd
Steadfast Group Ltd	Stockland	Suncorp Group Ltd	Technology One Ltd	Telstra Group Ltd	The a2 Milk Company Ltd	The Lottery Corporation Ltd	TPG Telecom Ltd	Transurban Group	Treasury Wine Estates Ltd
Vicinity Centres	Viva Energy Group Ltd	Washington H Soul Pattinson & Company Ltd	Wesfarmers Ltd	Westpac Banking Corporation	Whitehaven Coal Ltd	Wisetech Global Ltd	Woodside Energy Group Ltd	Woolworths Group Ltd	Worley Ltd
Xero Ltd	Yancoal Australia Ltd								

Note: ASX100 companies are the largest companies listed on the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) by market capitalisation. The list of companies in the ASX100 changes on the 3rd Friday of every three months (March, June, September, and December). Due to these updates and the analysis being conducted between March and June, in total 102 companies were analysed. The first list of companies was gathered on the 27th of March 2023, an updated list on the 16th of May 2023 and then a final list on the 23rd of June 2023.



Additional Figures

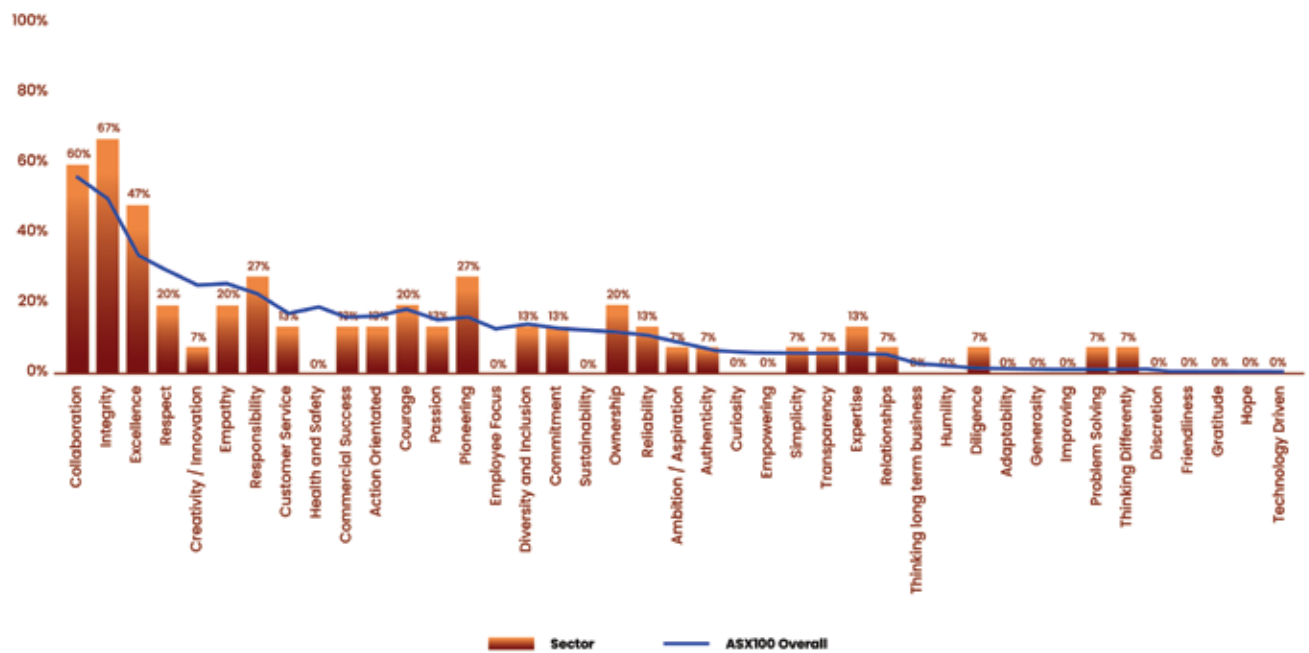


Figure 9: Values of the ASX100 relative to the Financial Industry Companies of the ASX100

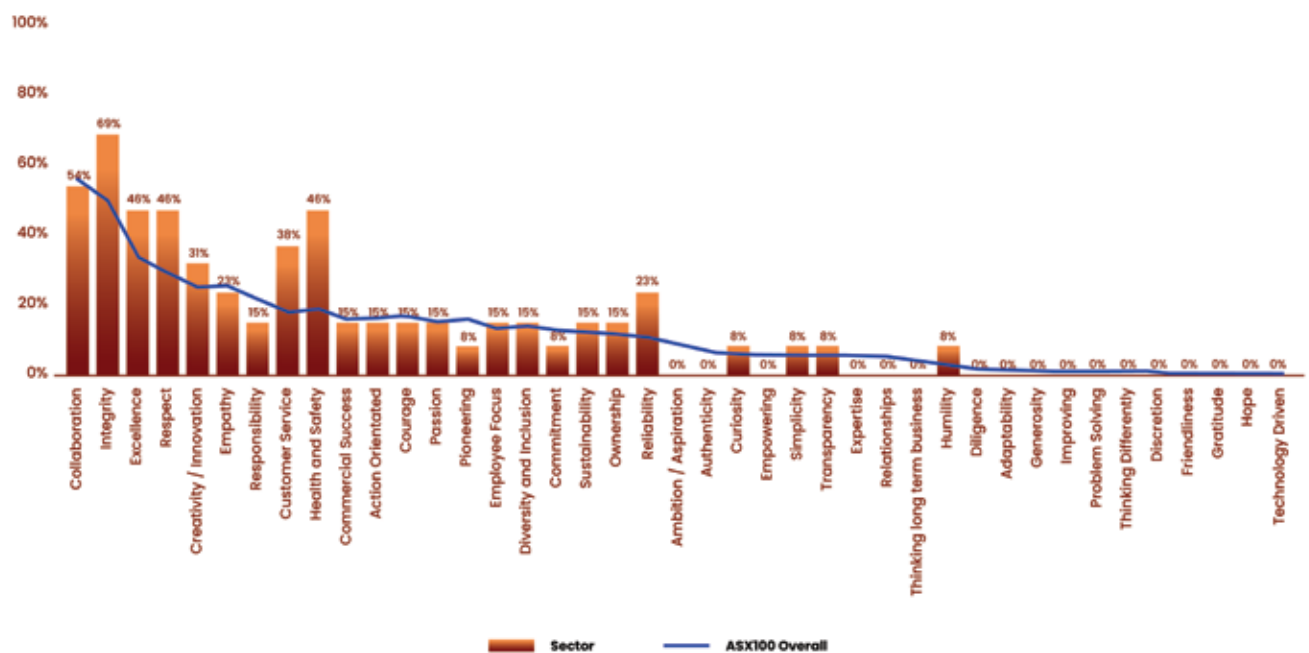


Figure 10: Values of the ASX100 relative to the Industrials Companies of the ASX100

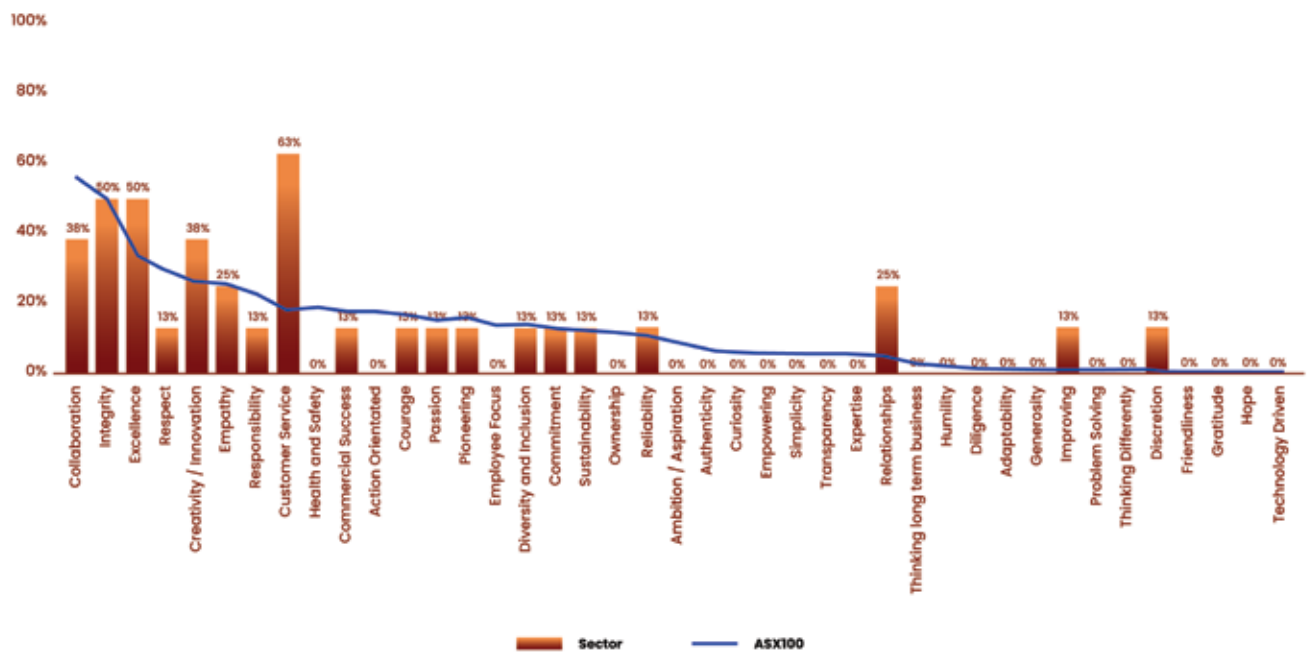


Figure 11: Values of the ASX100 relative to the Healthcare Industry Companies of the ASX100

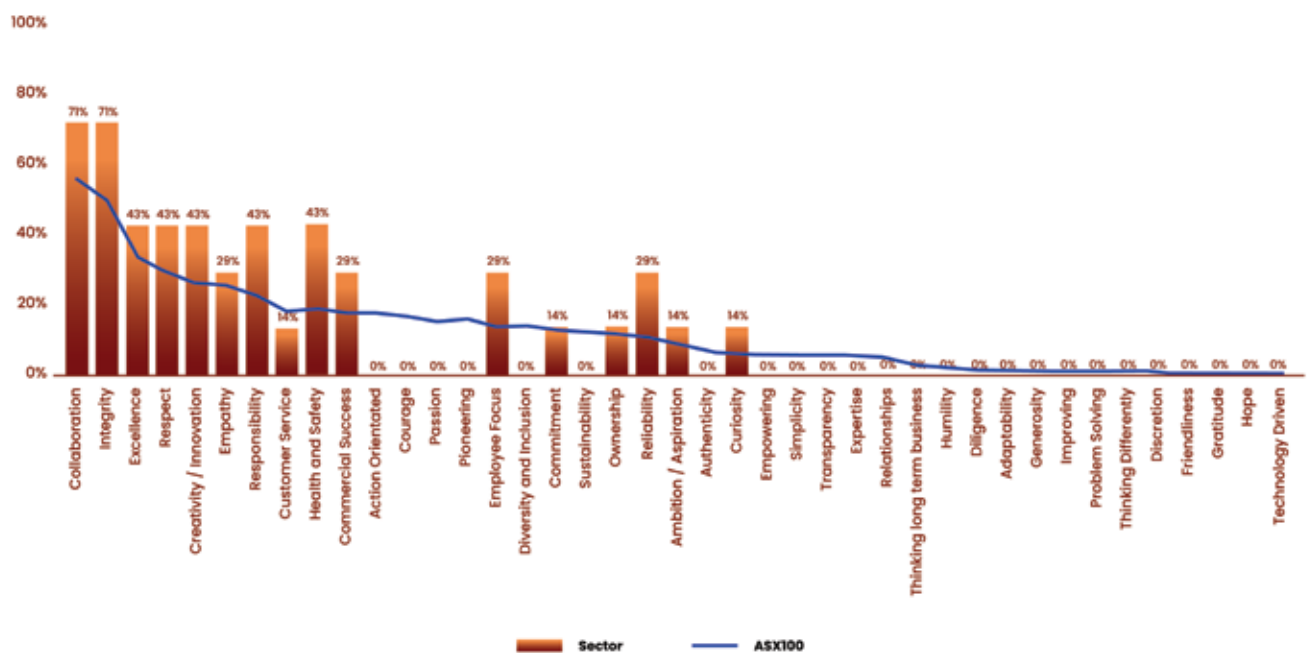


Figure 12: Values of the ASX100 relative to the Energy Sector Companies of the ASX100

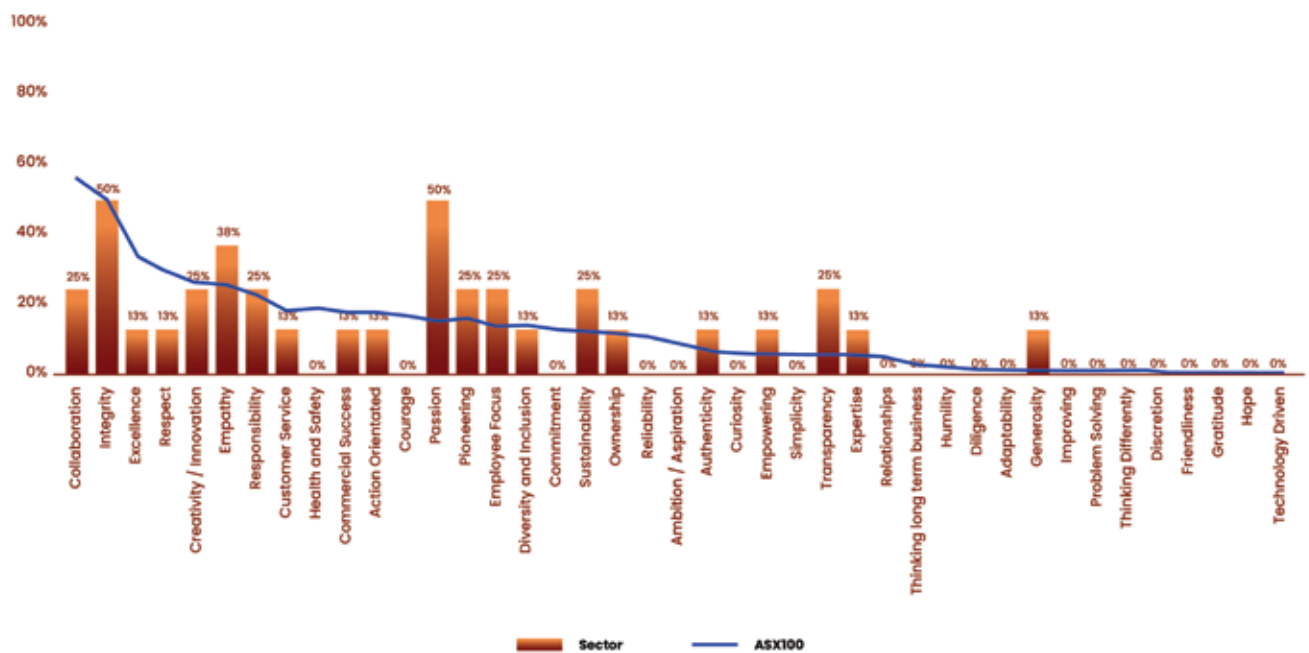


Figure 13: Values of the ASX100 relative to the Consumer Discretionary Companies of the ASX100

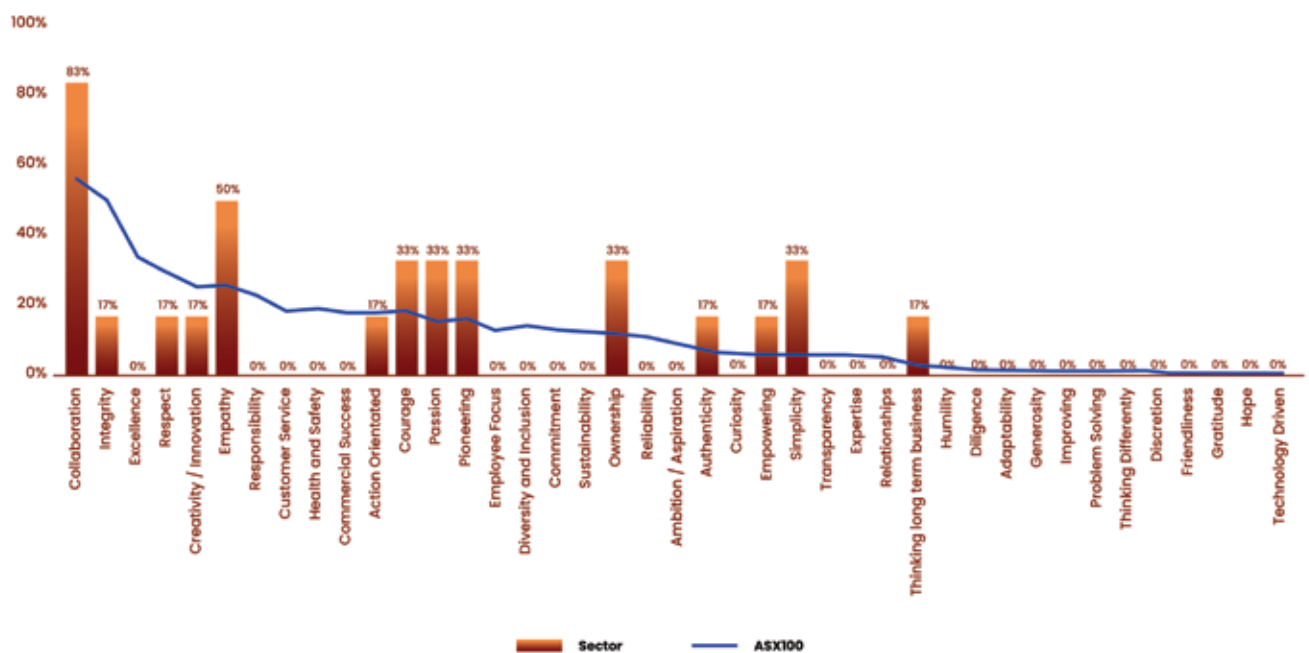


Figure 14: Values of the ASX100 relative to the Communications Companies of the ASX100

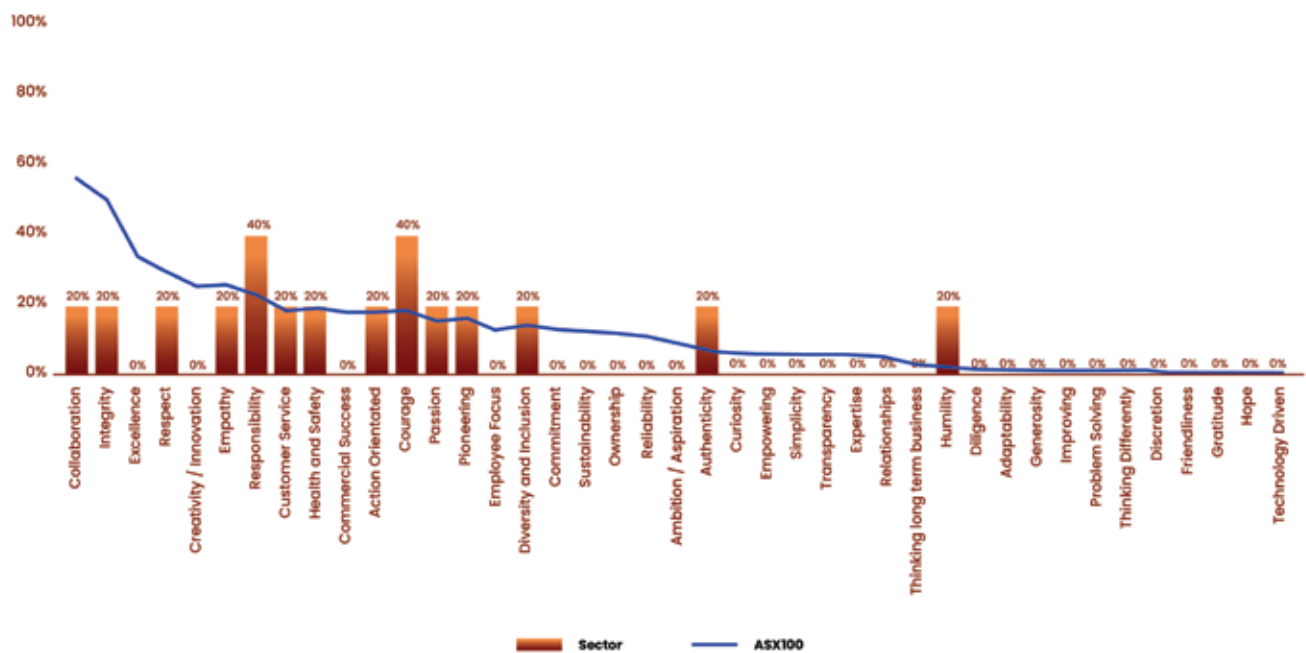


Figure 15: Values of the ASX100 relative to the Consumer Staples Companies of the ASX100

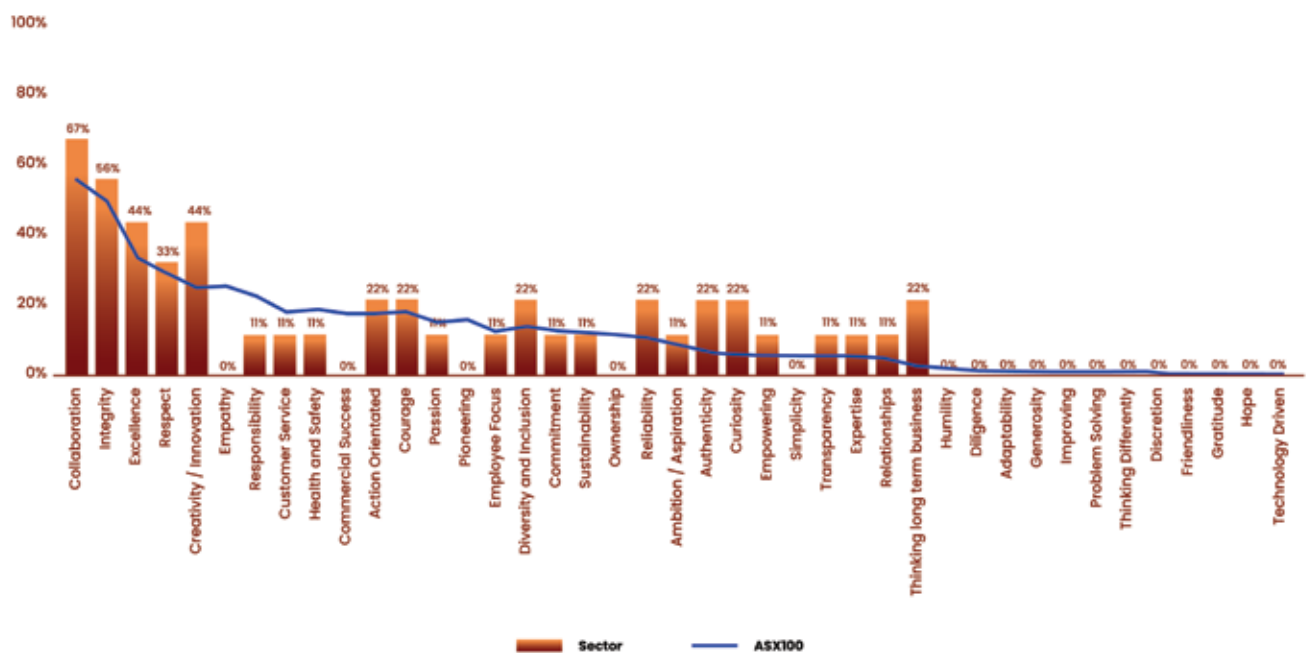


Figure 16: Values of the ASX100 relative to the Real Estate Companies of the ASX100

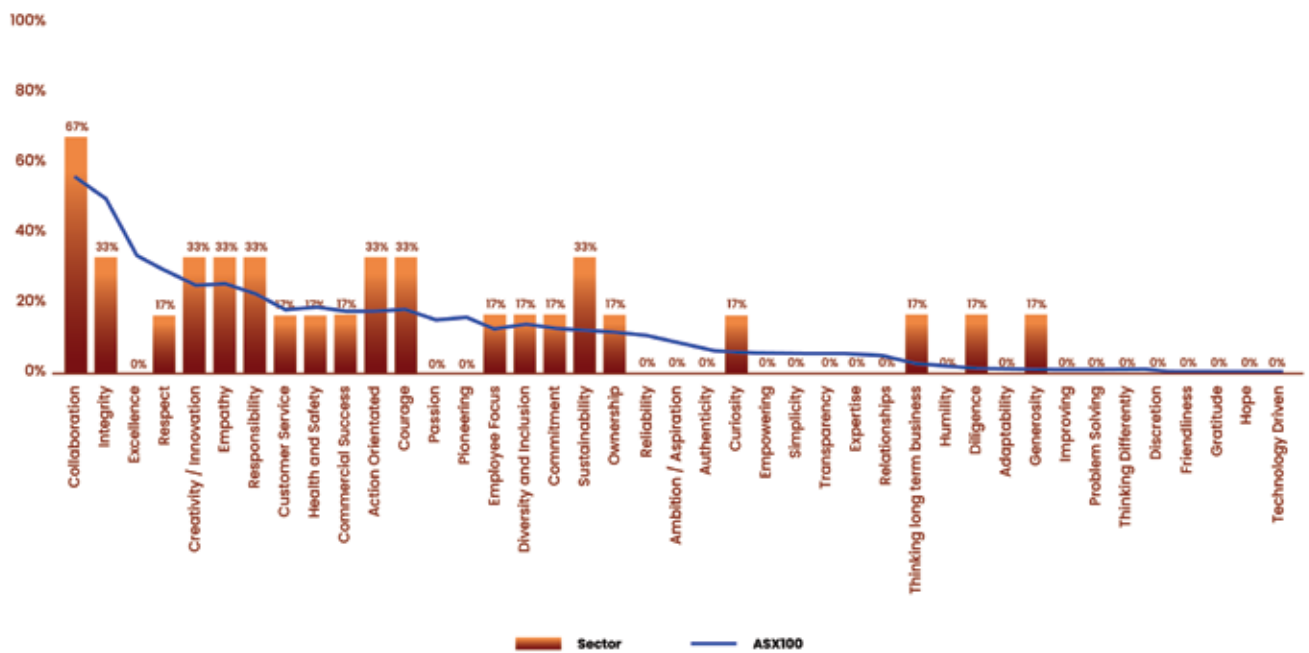


Figure 17: Values of the ASX100 relative to the Utilities Companies of the ASX100

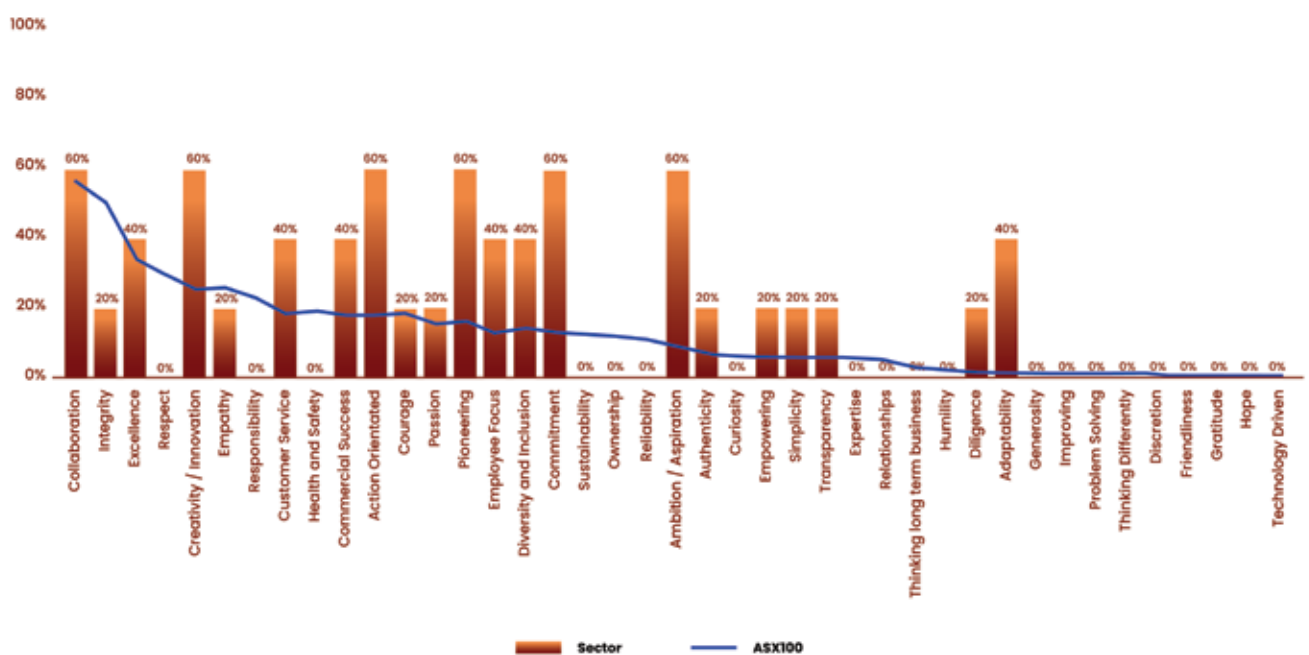


Figure 18: Values of the ASX100 relative to the Information Technology Companies of the ASX100

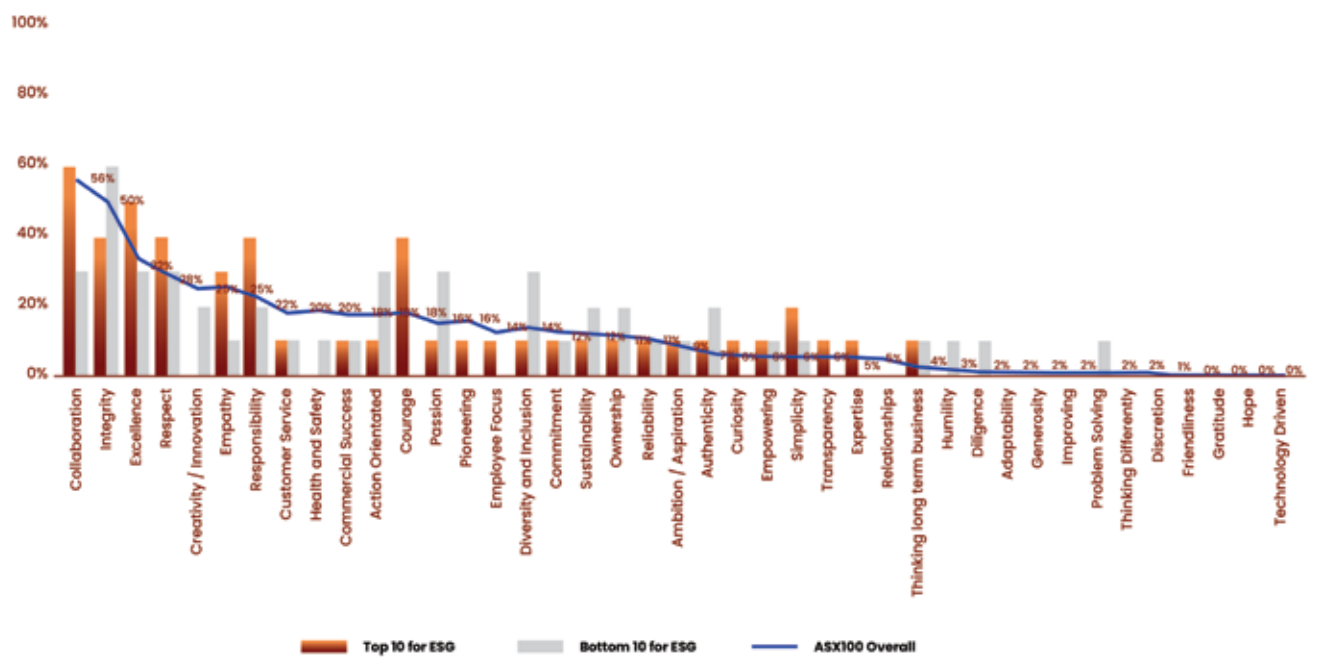


Figure 19: Values of the Top 10 Companies with the Highest ESG Score relative to the ASX100





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Coding with NVivo, validated by a Kappa coefficient of 0.93, our analysis explores company values from websites. Utilising cross-tabulation in NVivo and Excel, we integrate Refinitiv data for insights into sectors and ESG values.

Coding Technique and Analysis

Coding was conducted using NVivo R1 (2020) for Mac, with the data on the espoused company values being gathered from the companies' websites.

As indicated, the coding was conducted against the codebook that had been used in the UK 2022 business values study. Once all the companies had had their values coded, the validity of the coding was tested. To do this, two researchers independently coded 10% of the sample and conducted a coding comparison query on the NVivo software. This query returned a k value of 0.93. This k value is called a Kappa coefficient and a value above 0.75 indicates excellent agreement between the researchers.

To analyse the coding by sector and relative to ESG values, cross-tabulation queries were initially run in NVivo, then this data was extracted and cross-tabulated within Microsoft Excel against data gathered from the Refinitiv database.



Summary Description of the Most Popular Values

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As this analysis drew upon the UK values study, the summary description of the six most popular values is drawn from that 2022 report, except for respect. For a fuller description of values, please refer to that report .

1. Collaboration — encompasses teamwork within organisations as well as collaboration with business partners.
2. Integrity – A commitment to doing the right thing and committing to ethical behaviour to build trust.
3. Excellence – Commonly considered as keeping standards up, striving for the best.
4. Respect – Commonly considered as having due regard for another person to help build trust.
5. Creativity/innovation – New ideas (creativity) and implementing them (innovation) are almost self-evidently vital to most businesses.
6. Empathy – to understand and respond to the needs of customers and colleagues.

Biographies of Authors

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Nick is Professor of Strategy and Sustainability at Griffith Business School in Brisbane. Completing his doctorate at the University of St Andrews, his career has spanned industry and academia. Strategy consulting with EY, to leading the Griffith MBA, to advising organisations on moving past myopic approaches.

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Rebecca Park is a Research Scholar for the Program for Leadership and Character at Wake Forest University, North Carolina. Rebecca holds a Ph.D. in Positive Psychology, an MSc in Psychological Research Methods and a BSc in Psychology from the University of Lincoln. She is also an Associate Fellow at the Oxford Character Project. Her research focuses on the measurement of virtues, exploring character, leadership and values within organisational settings, and the evaluation of character-based courses, particularly in higher education settings.

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Anya is a Senior Lecturer and Discipline Lead in entrepreneurship and innovation at Griffith Business School. Her expertise lies at the intersection of entrepreneurship, sustainability, and social impact exploring how entrepreneurial action helps tackle complex social and environmental problems. She works closely with stakeholders from government, industry, community, CSIRO, and international collaborators such as Indonesian National Research and Innovation Agency.



This author group combines academic excellence with practical experience, spanning strategy, economics, positive psychology, and entrepreneurship.

Their diverse talents converge to provide a comprehensive perspective on addressing complex societal and environmental challenges, offering valuable insights for discussions in strategy, economics, and interdisciplinary intersections.



ISBN No.

Endnotes

ⁱ Barter, N. and Fleming, C., 2023. *Future Normal: 8 Questions to Create Businesses Your Children will be Proud Of*. Routledge.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.forward.institute/how-we-think>

ⁱⁱⁱ Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) companies are companies listed on the Australian stock exchange. The ASX100 are the largest companies by market capitalisation. The list of companies in the ASX100 changes on the 3rd Friday of every three months (March, June, September and December). The list of ASX100 companies was gathered from this website: <https://www.marketindex.com.au/asx-listed-companies>

^{iv} The UK Business Values Survey of 2022 is available at the following website: <https://oxfordcharacter.org/research/uk-business-values-2022>. A study of Fortune 100 companies is as follows: Dominick, P.G., Iordanoglou, D., Prastacos, G. and Reilly, R.R., 2021. Espoused values of the “Fortune 100 best companies to work for”: Essential themes and implementation practices. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 173, pp.69–88. There is a large scale (n=500) study of American Companies by MIT/Sloan available at: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/when-it-comes-to-culture-does-your-company-walk-the-talk/>

^v This definition draws from Mueller, K., Straatmann, T. and Schumacher, S.K., 2021. Organisational values. In *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-being Research* (pp. 1–13). Cham: Springer International Publishing. Mueller et al (2021) in turn draw upon the following references for this definition: (1) Bourne, H. and Jenkins, M., 2013. Organisational values: A dynamic perspective. *Organisation Studies*, 34(4), pp.495–514. And Rokeach, M., 1973. *The Nature of Human Values*. Free Press.

^{vi} Stavru, S., 2013. What do we know about organisational values? A systematic review. Available from: <https://research.uni-sofia.bg/handle/10506/1166>. The quote is from page 31 of this document.

^{vii} This definition of organisational values draws from Mueller, K., Straatmann, T. and Schumacher, S.K., 2021. Organisational values. In *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-being Research* (pp. 1–13). Cham: Springer International Publishing. Which in turn draws on Schwartz, S.H., 1992. Universals in the content and structure of values: Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries. In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 25, pp. 1–65). Academic Press.

^{viii} For discussion see Bourne, H. and Jenkins, M., 2013. Organisational values: A dynamic perspective. *Organisation Studies*, 34(4), pp.495–514.

^{ix} Bourne, H., Jenkins, M. and Parry, E., 2019. Mapping espoused organisational values. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 159, pp.133–148.

^x Dominick, P.G., Iordanoglou, D., Prastacos, G. and Reilly, R.R., 2021. Espoused values of the “Fortune 100 best companies to work for”: Essential themes and implementation practices. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 173, pp.69–88. Citing Collins, J.C., and Porras, J.I., 1996. Building your company’s vision. *Harvard Business Review*, 74(5), p.65.

^{xi} Waterman, R.H. and Peters, T.J., 1982. *In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies*. New York: Harper & Row.

^{xii} For example, see the following article: Mueller, K., Straatmann, T. and Schumacher, S.K., 2021. Organisational values. In *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-being Research* (pp. 1-13). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

^{xiii} For discussion for example see, Malbašić, I., Rey, C. and Potočan, V., 2015. Balanced organisational values: From theory to practice. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 130, pp.437-446. Or Batstone, D., 2003. *Saving the Corporate Soul & (Who Knows) Maybe Your Own*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Or Collins, J.C., and Porras, J.I., 2008. CMR classics: Organisational vision and visionary organisations. *California Management Review*, 50(2), pp.117-137.

^{xiv} Van den Berg, P.T. and Wilderom, C.P., 2004. Defining, measuring, and comparing organisational cultures. *Applied Psychology*, 53(4), pp.570-582. (p.571)

^{xv} Hartnell, C.A., Ou, A.Y. and Kinicki, A., 2011. Organisational culture and organisational effectiveness: A meta-analytic investigation of the competing values framework's theoretical suppositions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(4), p.677.

^{xvi} Schneider, B., 1987. The people make the place. *Personnel Psychology*, 40(3), pp.437-453.

^{xvii} Harvey, W.S., Osman, S. and Tourky, M., 2021. Building internal reputation from organisational values. *Corporate Reputation Review*, pp.1-14. And Burnkrant, R.E. and Cousineau, A., 1975. Informational and normative social influence in buyer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 2(3), pp.206-215.

^{xviii} Bourne, H., Jenkins, M. and Parry, E., 2019. Mapping espoused organisational values. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 159, pp.133-148.

^{xix} For discussion see this news article: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-09-05/qantas-alan-joyce-fall-from-grace-qatar-accc-flights-shares/102810986>.

^{xx} For discussion see this article: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-09-21/qantas-chairman-richard-goyder-dodges-calls-to-quit/102884674>.

^{xxi} Dominick, P.G., Iordanoglou, D., Prastacos, G. and Reilly, R.R., 2021. Espoused values of the "Fortune 100 best companies to work for": Essential themes and implementation practices. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 173, pp.69-88.

^{xxii} Dorfman, P., Javidan, M., Hanges, P., Dastmalchian, A. and House, R., 2012. GLOBE: A twenty-year journey into the intriguing world of culture and leadership. *Journal of World Business*, 47(4), pp.504-518.

^{xxiii} Tallman, S.B., Shenkar, O. and Wu, J., 2021. 'Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast': Use and Abuse of Culture in International Strategy Research. *Strategic Management Review*.

^{xxiv} Argyris, C. and Schön, D.A., 1997. Organisational learning: A theory of action perspective. *Reis*, (77/78), pp.345-348.

^{xxv} The first list of the ASX100 was drawn on the 27th of March 2023, a final list was drawn on the 23rd of June. The list was gathered from <https://www.marketindex.com.au/asx-listed-companies>.

^{xxvi} <https://oxfordcharacter.org/research/uk-business-values-2022>

^{xxvii} Dominick, P.G., Iordanoglou, D., Prastacos, G. and Reilly, R.R., 2021. Espoused values of the “Fortune 100 best companies to work for”: Essential themes and implementation practices. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 173, pp.69–88.

^{xxviii} Given the importance of values, it is perhaps unsurprising that scholars have developed numerous theoretical models to categorise them. For example, the Competing Values Framework (CVF) has been developed which has dimensions of internal, external, control and flexibility against which values can be mapped. Likewise, values have been categorised against five dimensions; (1) autonomy, (2) external orientation, (3) inter-departmental coordination, (4) human resource orientation and (5) improvement orientation. While other models that map values to axes of conservation, self-enhancement, openness to change and self-transcendence have also been formed. Or alternatively values have been mapped to a mission-based model that categorises to, business values, relational values, development values and contribution values. Furthermore, value clusters of community, interpersonal relationships, competence, and character have also been identified.

^{xxix} The framework then also has three sub-categories within the primary categories of (i) intrapersonal, (ii) intra-organisational and (iii) external.

^{xxx} This is the study of American Companies by MIT/Sloan available at: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/when-it-comes-to-culture-does-your-company-walk-the-talk/>.

^{xxxi} Dominick, P.G., Iordanoglou, D., Prastacos, G. and Reilly, R.R., 2021. Espoused values of the “Fortune 100 best companies to work for”: Essential themes and implementation practices. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 173, pp.69–88.

^{xxxii} The AMO study from 2022 is available to download here: <https://abernathy.h-advisors.global/news/amo-values-most-valued-2022/>

^{xxxiii} In conducting this exercise, we also did the same analysis for the UK sample using data from their published report. (The UK Business Values Survey of 2022 is available at the following website: <https://oxfordcharacter.org/research/uk-business-values-2022>). The profile was similar, with the UK sample having 44% of companies with relationship values, 41% performance and 15% in change.

^{xxxiv} Barter, N. and Fleming, C., 2023. *Future Normal: 8 Questions to Create Businesses Your Children will be Proud Of*. Routledge.

^{xxxv} See the following link for the 2023 review of Australian CEOs pay by ACSI (Australian Council of Superannuation Investors): <https://acsi.org.au/media-releases/ceo-bonuses-retreat-from-post-covid-high-ceo-pay-research/>.

^{xxxvi} <https://www.forward.institute/how-we-think>.

^{xxxvii} Gladwin, T.N., Kennelly, J.J. and Krause, T.S., 1995. Shifting paradigms for sustainable development: Implications for management theory and research. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(4), pp.874-907.

^{xxxviii} The UK Business Values Survey of 2022 is available at the following website: <https://oxfordcharacter.org/research/uk-business-values-2022>.

Contact us

If you would like to discuss the findings of this report please contact: Prof. Nick Barter on LinkedIn.
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