

Our Principles

Introduction

Welcome to Elevate's Principles.

We've identified twelve interrelated Principles to guide the daily behaviours we should all expect from each other to bring our Core Values to life. These Principles are the product of enthusiastic, thoughtful input from hundreds of Elevaters across every business unit, function, and geography, and research into organisational psychology, sociology, and management.

Why go to so much trouble to assemble a book like this? Because we believe that Peter Drucker was right when he wrote, *"Culture eats strategy for breakfast!"* We can foster a healthy culture by committing to a shared frame of reference for what matters most. This is especially important given our fast-paced, decentralised, global business. To succeed, we need to understand what binds us all together. By writing these Principles down and talking about them, we strengthen our shared ability to make decisions and work together in ways that make a difference.

You might be struck by how interconnected these Principles are. Even though they are numbered for reference, they are not a list. They might be better described as a 'fabric' of interwoven and mutually reinforcing threads. They can be read in any order, adaptable to personal interpretation, and applicable to any situation.

The Principles in this book are food for thought, discussion, experimentation, and application, not a rigid, prescriptive operating manual. Also, they are not a one-time read; they are something to reflect upon and revisit. Re-reading them in a different order may spark new insights. Lastly, even though this text was crafted with care, I encourage you to read between the lines to develop an intuitive sense of Elevate's culture rather than to get hung up on specific word choices or syntax. To borrow advice from the Zen tradition, *"When you point your finger to the moon, if you look at the finger, you miss the point."*

In a world that is increasingly VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous), we have written these Principles down to offer an enduring, clear, shared guide to how we can navigate our Elevate journey together. We hope you find the ideas in this book meaningful and inspiring in portraying who we are, what we aspire to be, what we believe, and how we behave.

Sincerely,

Liam Brown

Founder, Chairman, and CEO

Los Angeles, January 2023

Our Principles: Our Core Values in Action

We Care

We listen to our customers' needs and help them solve their business problems. Our work is a positive influence on our personal lives and the lives of our families.

1. We bring out the best in each other
2. We value our relationships
3. We bring our whole selves to work
4. We inspire each other



We Innovate

We celebrate creativity. We challenge the status quo and continuously ask of ourselves, and each other, "How can we improve?"

5. We challenge ourselves to keep improving
6. We never stop learning
7. We take calculated risks
8. We discuss, decide, and commit

We Deliver

We are careful about the commitments we make to our customers and to each other. We do what we say we will.

9. We delight our customers
10. We earn the trust placed in us
11. We accomplish more together
12. We step up

Principle 1 **We bring out the best in each other**

- **We assume positive intent**
- **We empower, support, and celebrate each other**
- **We focus on the situation or behaviour, not the person**

Why is this meaningful?

The business world provides an abundance of adversity—customer demands, relentless competition, and other forces beyond our control—without needing to make life more complicated by creating unnecessary friction among ourselves.

Business is a team sport. Effective teams play to the individual players' strengths for the success of all. Each of us has the power to be a positive or negative influence on our teammates. We use that power for good, recognising that it's in our collective interest to bring out each other's A-game. *"No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care"* is a quote attributed to United States President Theodore Roosevelt that we can all relate to at some level.

Success as a team depends on cooperation and collaboration. This is founded on trust, which is earned by being authentic, doing what we say we will, being empathetic, and giving each other the benefit of the doubt.

As humans, we all have good days and not-so-good days. We help when a teammate is struggling, trusting they will do the same for us when needed.

What does this look like in action?

- We give everyone a fair shot at fulfilling their role and give those who show promise a chance to grow
- We empower our people to make decisions, to act—including taking calculated risks—and to own the outcomes
- We support each other, especially when the going gets tough



- We give credit where credit is due
- We recognise that misinterpretation breeds friction; therefore, when things aren't clear, we give each other the benefit of the doubt and cultivate open dialogue rather than jumping to conclusions
- When conflict between teammates does occur or when constructive criticism is warranted, we focus on the problematic situation, behaviour, or results, not on judging people. Having an open conversation about causes, effects, and corrective actions is productive; judging someone is not

Principle 2 **We value our relationships**

- **We build sincere, authentic connections**
- **We cultivate trust**
- **We temper our ambition to win with respect, empathy, and kindness**

Why is this meaningful?

Humans are social animals, and forming relationships is as old as our species. As well as a remarkable ability to make predictions and the ingenuity to invent tools, our success lies in our ability to communicate, share knowledge, understand each other, and work together.

Taking the time to get to know someone requires effort, but that effort pays off. Fostering trusting relationships enables people to spend less time and energy guarding against being harmed and more time and energy on accomplishing goals. This is as true for our customers as it is for our colleagues.

Studies have shown that people in companies with high trust have more energy at work, lower stress, better engagement, higher satisfaction, and greater productivity than those in low-trust businesses. This validates what we already intuited—that our relationships provide us with a rich source of inspiration and collaboration, new or different perspectives, emotional support, and a sense of belonging.

Relationships are complex and imperfect. Being different individuals with different viewpoints, we don't always agree. But by handling our disagreements with mutual respect, we can learn from each other, prevent collective blind spots, and strengthen our connections.

Our customers work with us to achieve business results. At the same time, they also want a great customer experience, including reliability, authenticity, empathy, and integrity. We recognise that cultivating these qualities in our relationships helps our business succeed while making our work experience more meaningful and fulfilling.



What does this look like in action?

- We treat others as we want to be treated
- We make a genuine effort to get to know each other
- We value long-term sustainable relationships over short-term profits
- We prioritise our success as a team over our successes as individuals
- We behave with reliability, authenticity, empathy, and integrity
- We practice active listening, acknowledging each other's expertise, and learning from each other
- We make room for others to participate meaningfully in conversations
- We show appreciation for each other's efforts and seek to understand each other's challenges
- We can find at least one good trait in every colleague and customer
- We admit it when we make mistakes, and we make things right

Principle 3

We bring our whole selves to work

- We respect and value all experiences, perspectives, and ideas
- We stand up for each other
- We believe diversity improves business performance

Why is this meaningful?

Seeking 'work/life balance' is a flawed and misleading goal, according to many psychologists and sociologists, because it presumes 'balancing' work, home, community, and self is a zero-sum of trade-offs.

Instead, a more practical, fulfilling, and sustainable goal is to pursue *integration* between these four aspects of life—being real and being whole. Unlike the traditional (old-fashioned) model of the workplace, in which many people hide or compartmentalise a great deal of themselves, this more integrated way of living allows us to be more ourselves more of the time and to connect more meaningfully with each other. This holistic approach enables us to improve all elements of our lives rather than gaining in any one dimension by sacrificing in another.

Like most worthwhile goals, this takes effort. Enabling this healthier, more sustainable approach requires cultivating an environment where it is safe to bring our whole selves to work. We do this by treating each other with respect, including respecting our differences.

Many studies have found that businesses with greater team diversity are more successful and profitable than less-diverse businesses. Research has also shown that diverse teams are collectively smarter because working with people who are different from us (or who have other ideas and experiences) stimulates our brains to think in new ways, improving mental performance. Diverse groups tend to focus more on facts, consider those facts more comprehensively, and remain objective when making decisions or taking action. Furthermore, diverse perspectives make teams less susceptible to shared blind spots.



What does this look like in action?

- While we are a team, we are individuals with talents, needs, wants, aspirations, and fears, and all of us have a place and a voice
- While we are global, we cross cultures, welcoming different beliefs, ideas, experiences, and identities
- We act with humility, empathy, curiosity, and respect
- We try to see situations from each other's perspectives without presuming that we truly understand
- When someone with a different perspective than ours speaks up, we listen, knowing they may have insights where we have blind spots
- We do the right thing even when it is uncomfortable or inconvenient
- We make hiring and promotion decisions based on merit, considering potential as well as experience, and we insist on diversity in our candidate pools
- We make it safe to disclose our mental or physical health issues or disabilities
- We use language mindfully and respectfully when talking about diversity or discrimination

Principle 4 We inspire each other

- We pursue greatness
- We do what is right, not what is convenient
- We have fun

Why is this meaningful?

Along with our impulse to form relationships and our primal need to belong, another quintessentially human trait is asking ourselves, “*Why am I here?*”

We, as humans, are fiercely attracted to the idea of a higher purpose—of striving for something greater than ourselves. This can have powerful positive effects. It sparks motivation, engagement, and action. The pursuit itself makes us feel more alive. When we share a common cause with others, it unites us and strengthens our social bonds. And, perhaps most importantly, when we act with a higher purpose, we almost always achieve better outcomes.

As a team, we share several purposes that are larger than any one of us: to serve our customers well, to make a positive difference in the world, to succeed as a business, and to have fun doing it. People may differ on the details, but we can generally agree on the main themes. When we pursue these goals, we manifest the behaviours outlined in this book: We bring out the best in each other. We challenge ourselves to keep improving. We earn the trust placed in us. And so on. This is not a coincidence; it’s a flywheel.

By embracing this, we create a virtuous cycle of inspiring each other. As author and inspirational speaker Simon Sinek reminds us in his book, *The Infinite Game*: “*When we are inspired, pursuing greatness becomes a fun, friendly, infinite game in which there are no winners or losers; there is only ahead and behind.*” When we feel discouraged, a colleague’s words and actions can re-energise us to persevere in our pursuit of shared goals that make our challenges more surmountable and our achievements more fulfilling.



What does this look like in action?

- We work towards goals that are bigger than our self-interests
- We find purpose and fulfilment in helping others
- We ensure others understand how their work contributes to our collective goals
- We 'show up' fully in meetings and dialogue, making ourselves available to others
- When things are difficult, we ask ourselves, *"Am I acting out of fear or purpose?"*
- We reframe negative interactions to focus on what really matters
- We recognise that innovation starts with inspiration
- We take time to feed our minds with new ideas
- We bring a sense of humour, fun, and positivity to work

Principle 5

We challenge ourselves to keep improving

- We never settle for the status quo
- We take initiative
- We embrace change as opportunity

Why is this meaningful?

In his bestselling book *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Daniel Pink, writer on business, work, creativity, and behaviour, explains that in the modern business world, we are motivated by three things, one of which is: “Mastery – the urge to make progress and get better at something that matters.”

This deep-seated human desire to improve in meaningful ways is also good for business. Pursuing mastery helps us improve and innovate at all levels—as individuals, teams, departments, and as a company.

Improvement is incremental change, whereas innovation can be radical change. Both are valuable in different ways, and the interplay between the two delivers the most value. Innovation may sound more glamorous, but the daily, incremental improvements win races and make up the majority of progress in an organisation—progress without which innovation rarely realises its promise. At the same time, without innovation, incremental improvements will never take us beyond the limits of the status quo.

By leaning into both forms of change, we satisfy our basic human impulse to do better and make a difference, which in turn drives the success of our business.

What does this look like in action?

- We ask ourselves, “How would I want this to work if I was paying for it?”
- We bring an experimental, hypothesis-testing mindset to work
- We take the initiative to improve as individuals, as teams, and as a company



- We ask ourselves, *"Why do we do it this way?"* and *"Is there a better way?"*
- We challenge ourselves to improve before asking others to do the same
- We aren't discouraged by practical limitations; we embrace constraints and work within them
- We set achievable stretch goals, even as we keep one eye on the moon
- We find ways to improve without sacrificing results

Principle 6 We never stop learning

- We listen
- We communicate candidly and constructively
- We treat our mistakes as opportunities to improve

Why is this meaningful?

As Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, eloquently said, *“The learn-it-all does better than the know-it-all.”* This is especially true in an industry undergoing significant change, and embracing this mindset positions us to help shape the future of the legal sector. Most of us find some joy and fulfillment in learning, so learning on the job enhances our career opportunities and improves our job satisfaction.

Since life-long learning is so important, its different forms relate to several other Principles. For example, we learn from each other (Principle 2: We value our relationships); we learn from experimenting (Principle 7: We take calculated risks); we learn by questioning what we think we know (Principle 5: We challenge ourselves to keep improving), and we learn by listening to alternative points of view (Principle 3: We bring our whole selves to work).

The deepest learning requires asking good questions. Three of the most straightforward questions are often the most useful: *“Why?”*, *“Why not?”* and *“What if?”* These offer an invitation to learn (rather than signal negative or off-putting aggression or domination) when we are in a challenging yet safe situation where we know learning is our intent.

Since Elevate operates at the intersection of several disciplines—law, technology, business, data, and design—we can benefit from *‘The Medici Effect.’* This idea, articulated by diversity, innovation, and creativity expert Frans Johansson, in his book of the same name, argues that breakthrough ideas occur more often when experts from different fields are brought together in an environment where they can explore new concepts that emerge at the intersection of their fields.



What does this look like in action?

- We strive to ask better questions and don't shy away from hard questions
- We learn from each other, often from those who are different from us
- We actively encourage others to critique and improve our ideas
- We embrace failure as an opportunity to learn, seeking root causes when diagnosing problems
- We welcome new challenges because they prevent stagnation and complacency
- We unlearn habits that got us where we are if they won't also get us where we're going
- We think of our careers as a series of different learning curves, and we start a new learning curve when we feel ourselves getting comfortable having mastered something
- We bring experts from various fields together and explore the new ideas that appear at the intersection of their fields

Principle 7 **We take calculated risks**

- **We favour action over perfection**
- **We practice agility and flexibility**
- **We embrace mistakes as a natural part of learning and improving**

Why is this meaningful?

One of the most prolific inventors of all time famously said, *"I didn't fail 1,000 times. The lightbulb was an invention with 1,000 steps."*

Thomas Edison and countless other inventors have proven that we accomplish more when we embrace design thinking and experimentation. Unstructured, unfocused experimentation generally yields more questions than solutions. But when we thoughtfully structure experiments that test clear hypotheses and manage risk, we substantially increase the chances of useful outcomes.

With experimentation comes inevitable failure, which is scary. When we try something new, we know that it might fail, but we also know that we will learn and improve. When we embrace failures as learning opportunities, they can often teach us more than our successes. The best time to fail is sooner rather than later so that we can learn from mistakes and course correct more quickly. When failures occur, we focus on the objective facts respectfully, giving each other the benefit of the doubt and focusing on how we can improve.

We achieve more by encouraging clear-eyed experimentation and converting failures into improvements.

What does this look like in action?

- We foster a work environment where it is a safe place to try, fail, and learn
- We approach experimentation and results, including both success and failure, as a team sport



- We challenge ourselves to try—even if trying scares us
- We value the scientific method of testing, learning, and improving
- We don't allow the perfect to be the enemy of the good enough
- We use data to inform and validate our hypotheses and plans
- We plan with a reasonable amount of thoughtfulness, then we act, pivot, and course correct
- We design risk mitigation practices that are proportional to the risks they mitigate

Principle 8

We discuss, decide, and commit

- **We have difficult conversations constructively**
- **We know when to stop debating and take action**
- **We respect the decision-maker, the decision-making process, and the decision**

Why is this meaningful?

Learning organisations prize and practice their decision-making skills, continuously improving the competency for making and executing timely, well-reasoned decisions.

In his book *Think Again*, psychologist Adam Grant reminds us that solving problems in today's fast-changing, global, and frequently polarising contexts requires mental flexibility, humility, the inclusion of diverse perspectives, and the willingness to set our egos aside in service to the greater good.

Grant uses the term 'rethink' to describe practices that can help our business and world be better. Rethinking requires each of us to recognise our own cognitive biases and practice being more open to the ideas of others.

We rarely have all the information needed to make a decision. We don't have to agree with or even like the duly-authorised decision-maker, but we do need to respect their authority to make a decision. So long as we've had the opportunity to share our points of view, we commit to executing whatever decision the decision-maker makes, even if it is not the one we would have made.

What does this look like in action?

- We hold our own opinions and beliefs loosely and seek new knowledge and possibilities with curiosity and enthusiasm
- We generate new hypotheses and validate or invalidate them with data
- We practice active listening and consider diverse views



- We embrace being wrong, delighting in the joy of learning something new
- We surface more ideas by helping others crystallise and articulate their thoughts
- We ask more questions than we proffer solutions
- We value the process of getting to the best answer, even when we know the best answer may be a for-now answer rather than a forever answer
- We can revisit decisions when new information indicates it would be prudent to change direction, but until then, we get behind the decision and the decision-maker

Principle 9 **We delight our customers**

- **We make it easy and efficient for our customers to work with us**
- **We ask our customers what we can do better, and then we do better**
- **We make our customers proud to be our customers**

Why is this meaningful?

Understanding customers' needs and desires, the problems they wish to overcome, and the pain they want to remedy is more important than traditional measures of customer satisfaction. While we measure how customers feel about how we serve them, we never lose sight of them as individuals, and we try to walk a mile in their shoes.

It is essential to understand what our customers care about and ensure our processes and practices align with what they value. When we make it difficult to do business with Elevate, we lose sight of what one of the most influential management thinkers of all time, Peter Drucker, famously wrote is the ultimate purpose of any business, *"To create and retain a customer."* None of us enjoys hearing negative feedback, but feedback is the breakfast of champions. Customer complaints are not problems to be avoided—complaints are gifts to be welcomed! They tell us that a customer still wants to do business with us—they care about the relationship with Elevate and want to fix the problem so they can continue doing business with us.

In 2003 Bain created a new way of measuring how well an organisation treats the people whose lives it affects—how well it generates relationships worthy of loyalty. Net Promoter Score (NPS) asks customers how they will behave in the future. The best way to earn customer loyalty will always be putting their needs front of mind and creating extraordinary value for them, even if that sometimes means putting Elevate's short-term interests second.



What does this look like in action?

- We ask and deeply listen to understand what our customers value
- We align our business strategies and operating practices with what our customers value
- We invest in meaningful relationships with our customers to understand their businesses and the complexities of their problems and develop solutions that win their trust
- Our customers know that their success is our highest priority
- Our customers know that we create extraordinary value in return for their trust and investment
- Our customers view us as trusted partners and advisors, not as vendors
- We welcome complaints as opportunities to learn, improve, and earn customer loyalty
- We believe that delighting customers is everyone's responsibility

Principle 10

We earn the trust placed in us

- We value fairness and forgiveness
- We have positive intentions
- We honour our commitments

Why is this meaningful?

Trust can be defined as a belief in another person's abilities, integrity, and character. Not only is trust something that personal relationships are built on, but trust is also the glue of most successful organisations.

Business success requires a willingness to cooperate with and have faith in others. Work gets done with and through people. There's nothing more impactful on people, their work, and their performance than trust. The question is, how much faith and in whom? When our company's money and resources are on the line, how can we gauge whom we can trust? And how do we signal to others that they can trust us?

In his book *Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*, leadership expert Stephen Covey makes a compelling case for the value of trust in business relationships. He encourages us to practice personal integrity by being trustworthy and reliable, practising and encouraging open and honest communication, and being responsible for our actions.

But integrity isn't everything. Competence matters too, and competence is often assessed by reputation. When we break trust—for example, by promising work we can't or don't deliver—we damage our reputation and reduce the likelihood of accumulating greater benefits from exchange and cooperation with the same partner (and perhaps others) in the future.

Trust, when broken, is very difficult to repair, so every effort must be taken to establish trust in the first place and diligently protect it.



What does this look like in action?

- Our behaviours align with our intentions
- We inspire trust in others through our character and competence
- We trust to collaborate
- We care, and others recognise and believe that we care
- We understand that trust underpins the enduring success of every relationship
- We trust ourselves and others, meaning we also forgive ourselves and others
- We communicate frequently, honestly, plainly, and simply
- We build our reputation in the marketplace by building trust with others consistently over time

Principle 11

We accomplish more together

- We share a mission
- We are mutually accountable to each other and the team
- We succeed together

Why is this meaningful?

Business, like football, basketball, or cricket, is primarily a team effort. Both business and sports depend on individuals who are ambitious, focused, and able—and sometimes hard to manage. In sports, there's a saying, *"Are you playing for the name on the front of the jersey or the name on the back?"* On the front of the jersey is the team name, and on the back is the individual's name.

The qualities that make individuals valuable to teams—drive, focus, perfectionism, high expectations, and above-average intelligence—can make them difficult for others to work with. For example, self-confidence can aid our decision-making but alienate others when we come across as domineering. A superior intellect can help us solve complex problems but also lead us to dismiss the contributions of others too quickly. Whether in basketball or law, individual star players often find it difficult to replicate their superior performance when they move from one team to another. The success of individuals is rarely the result of raw talent alone but also builds on the support of the team around them.

We understand that healthy teams have tensions. Individuals cooperate even as they compete with one another for resources or opportunities. Camaraderie and rivalry coexist, as do control and autonomy, and the need to be creative and follow policies or processes. But we believe there is nothing a team of motivated Elevators can't achieve together if we all buy into something bigger than ourselves, understand our role in reaching that goal, and are willing to put aside personal accolades for team success.



What does this look like in action?

- We have a shared understanding of the team's mission
- We are committed to the team's goals
- We have clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and agreed-upon ground rules
- We practice and improve on an established decision model
- We practice open communication, valuing differences of opinion
- We meet our deadlines and achieve our goals
- We measure our success by the results of the team, not by the results of the individual

Principle 12 **We step up**

- **We are all leaders**
- **We make no excuses and cast no blame**
- **We adhere to our principles regardless of the situation, the leader, or the goal**

Why is this meaningful?

Every one of us will eventually arrive at a 'rubber meets the road' moment, if we haven't already. At that point, we have an opportunity to make a difference and to be a leader. We look for leadership at every level of the organisation, not just from the top. And leadership is something that we can all learn through practice.

So what's the secret of being a great leader? In their book *Extreme Ownership*, former Navy SEAL Officers Jacko Willink and Lief Babin teach us that *"to be a leader, we must step up and take complete responsibility for our actions and decisions without making excuses or blaming others."* This means that, even in difficult or challenging situations, we own up to our mistakes and take charge of finding solutions.

What does this look like in action?

- We believe in the mission
- We take action to make the difference
- We do the right thing—asking forgiveness, not permission
- We empower our team and explain the 'why' for what we're doing
- We communicate proactively in a transparent, clear, and concise manner
- We persevere
- We are honest with ourselves and check our ego



- We look inwardly first and own our mistakes and failures
- We learn and grow every day
- We invest in relationships

My Thoughts

My Thoughts

