

SUSE Vision, Mission and Values

Whitepaper

Co-Creating SUSE's Vision, Mission and Values

In June 2024, to empower SUSE's 2,500 global employees, across 30 countries, to drive our CEO's new company vision, we delivered an in-house company-wide employee engagement programme to co-create our mission and values. With a culture rooted in collaboration and meritocracy, we knew employee participation would foster optimal ownership and engagement. This collaborative approach ensured alignment on "HOW" to deliver the CEO's vision, with clear, inspiring direction and guiding principles for collective action and decision making; ensuring everybody is working towards shared goals. The result is an aligned understanding of our future and a strong culture equipped for success.

What Did We Do?

To create our mission and values, we turned to the experts on our culture: our people. Instead of outsourcing, a small internal team of experts led the project, which included ideation, workshop design and delivery, data capture and analysis, stakeholder management and decision-making, and communications and creative design.

The process reflected our core values. We trusted our employees to provide valuable feedback, and they, in turn, trusted the Project Team with their inputs. By harnessing the power of community collaboration and prioritising employee choice in the feedback & design process, we delivered a truly innovative solution.

In a nine-week period, over 65 in-person workshops (each consisting of groups from 10 up to 100+) were designed and delivered worldwide, accompanied by virtual sessions gathering additional inputs from over 1,000 participants. Local leaders facilitated workshops in a format that resonated best with their teams across 30+ countries. Our approach was meticulous and unbiased. We presented open-ended questions and free-text boxes for people to freely express their thoughts. Unique flashcards with adjectives were utilised to encourage participants to reflect on words that they would always or never use to describe SUSE. Big shout out to Dan Carlton at [The Paragraph Project](#) who gave us invaluable insights on how to use these cards! Teams brainstormed together on what they believed our mission should encompass, and all 230 individual or team submissions were documented. This wealth of insights was then narrowed down to a shortlist of potential missions, which were put to a company-wide vote. Upon validation by our leadership team, it came as no surprise that our people and leaders were in complete alignment on the winning mission. The response from our people was overwhelmingly positive, mirroring their reaction to our CEO's vision.



We then analyzed the adjectives collected from the workshops and discovered recurring patterns that represented our people's shared understanding of SUSE. The level of engagement from our people was unprecedented. During the nine-week data collection period, we gathered over 4,000 individual comments on what makes SUSE special, and 7,500 inputs into categorising the flash card words defining our company. This process led to the creation of our new values, providing us with a comprehensive framework that captured the essence of our company culture and provided the guiding principles to empower our team to thrive in a dynamic and ever-evolving environment. The result was a mission statement and set of values which complemented our vision, clearly outlining the behaviours and actions every person commits to.

How Did It Impact Our Business?

This project successfully improved employee engagement and cultural innovation. A happier, more empowered workforce, actively involved in shaping our future, are more motivated to deliver optimal business outcomes. SUSE's 5% annual voluntary attrition rate is the lowest in five years. Research from Gallup indicates that companies with highly engaged employees experience 21% greater profitability and 17% higher productivity, and they outperform competitors in earnings per share. Following this project, our employee survey showed a 5-point improvement in overall company-wide engagement within six months. We are confident that this process will positively impact profitability.

For optimal workshop results, it was crucial to establish a clear understanding of visions, missions, and values. This clarity fostered agreement, and leaders were equipped with a toolkit that outlined their importance, further facilitating group consensus.

Additionally, completing the mission and values project before our annual goal-setting cycle allowed employees to understand SUSE's direction and align their goals accordingly.

How Did It Impact Our People's Behaviour?

One of the biggest pieces of feedback we heard from our primarily-remote and geographically dispersed workforce was that they wanted more opportunities to collaborate in-person. Recognizing the vital role connection plays in fostering innovation and meritocracy, we leveraged the mission and values workshops to provide valuable face-to-face interaction for both professional and social engagement. This investment in our people yielded significant results:

1. **Increased employee engagement:** Our company-wide engagement score (eNPS) jumped five points to 50 within two months of the workshops, placing SUSE in the top 10% of Workday Peakon Employee Voice clients in the technology sector.



2. **Fostered an expanded culture of innovation:** By facilitating connections and open communication, we created a wider platform for new ideas and collaborative problem-solving.

This demonstrates a clear link between our focus on employee connection, increased engagement, and a thriving culture of innovation.

It was incredibly rewarding to discover that our newly defined values – **trust, innovation, choice, and community** – were already deeply ingrained in our daily actions. These values organically reflected the existing positive behaviors within SUSE, eliminating the need for forced adoption. This authentic alignment speaks volumes about the strong cultural foundation upon which our company is built on.

How Did the World React?

The mission and values project received overwhelmingly positive feedback from our employees, with a marked increase in engagement levels. Around 70% of employees in over 30 countries attended in-person or virtual workshops. We received over 230 team mission statement submissions, and over half of our employees voted to select the winning submission. Our all-company calls announcing the winning mission and new values had high attendance. Employees enthusiastically embraced the internal marketing collateral and home office gift boxes, further reinforcing adoption. Despite a culture that encourages open feedback, the mission and values project has been met with overwhelmingly positive reception.

Externally, SUSE's Chief People Officer's blog has been read over 600 times at the time of writing this submission, and our CEO's social post has had 251 reactions, eight comments and 30 reposts, which is a higher level of engagement than his average LinkedIn posts. SUSE's mission and values were organically showcased across our social media platforms due to widespread participation from both C-suite executives and employees who shared the values with pride.

