



**KINDNESS**  
*for BUSINESS*

*Our manifesto*

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Our manifesto

is about radically changing the mindset  
and the culture of leadership and organizational models,  
recognizing that most of those applied today are no longer adequate  
to respond to today's and tomorrow's challenges. We advocate for a new  
philosophy that embraces business as a force for good, puts human beings  
at the center, and ultimately has a positive impact on our communities and  
our planet. For us, this is the KINDNESS culture. KINDNESSforBusiness  
was created with the intend to offer a one-stop shop of inspiration,  
knowledge and practical tools to help anyone wishing  
to introduce KINDNESS in their organization.

”



*Allen Vernier*

KINDNESSforBusiness co-founder

Discover our team at

[www.kindnessforbusiness.org/team](http://www.kindnessforbusiness.org/team)

Sign the manifesto at

[www.kindnessforbusiness.org/manifesto](http://www.kindnessforbusiness.org/manifesto)

# Introduction

KINDNESSforBusiness believes that KINDNESS is the basis of life-long business healthiness. Every enterprise is a micro-world that lives and breathes in a larger context. Its decisions and actions bear consequences not just for shareholders, but also for workers, suppliers, stakeholders and society as a whole. Thus, **every enterprise can choose to be a force for good.**

Yet, today most of our organizations still operate based on principles inherited from 19th-century models, unsuitable to address current and future challenges. Our organizational models are still encrusted in traditional top-down structures that prevent the full expression of human potential.

The result is a gigantic mass of disengaged people, and a reasonable likelihood that many organizations will not survive in the long term.

KINDNESSforBusiness' manifesto focuses on **making our business organizations more humane, more fulfilling and ultimately more profitable.** It sets out our five principles, on which we're seeking support from today's and tomorrow's leaders.

In summary, we advocate for a new business philosophy based on:

- generative abundance,
- trust, and,
- collective intelligence.

# Who are We ?

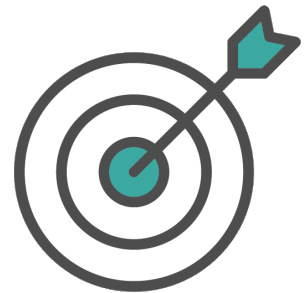


KINDNESSforBusiness is a movement created by **a group of entrepreneurs, executives and leaders** who have all been engaged in the reinvention of their organizations to make them more positive and human-centric, and are determined to achieve positive change by being active within their own context and inside our movement.

# Our vision...

... is to **build a human-centric professional world together.**

# Our mission...



... is to promote **a business operating philosophy based on so-called Generative Abundance**, by:

- disseminating knowledge to create awareness and support change-makers and leaders in adopting new practices and tools and, above all, a new mindset fostering more human-centric organizations;
- demonstrating that this paradigm is not only innovative but is also accessible, viable, and beneficial.

Our view is that this new paradigm must be embedded in a renewed expression of capitalism that can fulfill the interests of all stakeholders and have a positive impact on the community and on the planet.

# Definitions

## What is KIND leadership?

It is leadership that:

- integrates a greater and deeper purpose creating meaningful environments for all employees;
- conveys a mindset and a set of practices and values within the organization that:
  - develop the human potential inside and outside the organization,
  - create shared value benefiting employees, clients, suppliers, shareholders and other stakeholders, in a continuous, circular flow,
  - achieve positive impact on the community and the planet,
  - ultimately, deliver a stronger business.

## What are KINDstones™?

KINDstones™ are units of KINDNESS that serve to measure the impact of our efforts. A KINDstone™ is a tool that:

- is consistent with the UN Sustainable Development Goals,
- reinforces and disseminates individual and organizational KINDNESS,
- helps businesses demonstrate their commitment to KINDNESS,
- builds the reliability and sustainability of human-centric businesses over time.

# Definitions

## **What is KINDNESS?**

KINDNESS is a mindset that relies on showing respect and demonstrating trust, towards employees, stakeholders, the environment, and the community in which the enterprise operates. It entails an attitude of responsibility, generosity, creativity, and collaboration across businesses, governments, and civil society organizations for the common good.

## **What is Generative Abundance?**

Generative Abundance is a creative force based on unconditional giving, that can trigger a virtuous chain of positive spin-offs that become a multiplying force, bringing about an over-abundance to the benefit of all actors.

## **What is trust?**

Trust is the belief in the reliability, truth, and ability of someone.

## **What is collective intelligence?**

It is the enhanced capacity created when people work together to activate a wide range of information, ideas, and insights, often aided by technology.

# The current situation

The advent of digitalization, the rapidly evolving business environment (characterized by the VUCA scenario - volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) and a massive shift in the aspirations of citizens have begun to outline a brand-new world. The leadership and organizational models currently in use are no longer suitable. The disconnection between new challenges and traditional answers, mainly inherited from 19<sup>th</sup>-century models and based around a mechanical conception of our world, has produced a mass of disengaged professionals. Combined with a lack of a human-centric reality, our organizations suffer from a real **pandemic of malaise**.

The Coronavirus crisis has dramatically accelerated this process showing not only that radical change is possible but that **what we thought was impossible can be realized**. Enterprises have been at the epicenter of this profound but initial change. According to a 2021 risk trend analysis report<sup>1</sup>, the private sector has emerged from the pandemic with higher levels of public trust than governments. This is both an opportunity and a huge responsibility. Companies of all sizes will be under pressure not to go back to the practices of the past. Moreover, they will have to increase their attention to employees' well-being, as well as intensify efforts to generate a positive impact on their stakeholders, on the environment, and on society as a whole. In short, they will need to embrace **a new way to measure their success**.

<sup>1</sup> Avonhurst, Vax Populi: Assessing political risk, resilience and relapse, March 2021.

# The opportunity

We firmly believe that we can introduce a true and effective principle of KINDNESS in business **that benefits the business.**

The outcome of such a paradigm shift would be a lasting improvement of our organizations towards:

- gaining agility,
- leveraging collective intelligence and harnessing an unrevealed source of creativity,
- improving human potential and developing self-awareness,
- delivering a better experience for employees, customers, and all other stakeholders,
- creating greater value as well as more shared-value and impact.



# Who do We Speak To?

The target audiences of KINDNESSForBusiness are **the actors of today and those who prepare the actors and organizations of tomorrow.**

Today's actors are:

- **project owners** - including projects such as NGOs and foundations - who want to shape their projects and their teams to create a meaningful and impactful business,
- **business owners** who want to change the nature, the culture, and the organization of their business to adapt it to their values and to leave a positive mark for the future,
- **CEOs and business unit managers** who have enough autonomy to experiment with alternative approaches of doing business,
- **change-makers and positive activists** that are committed to bringing to life the vision of their organization without letting bureaucracy get in the way of its realization,
- **employees** who want to bring contributions, ideas, and change to their organization.

The actors who are shaping the leaders of tomorrow are:

- business school professors and educational actors,
- head-hunters and outplacement agencies,
- executive coaches,
- mentors.

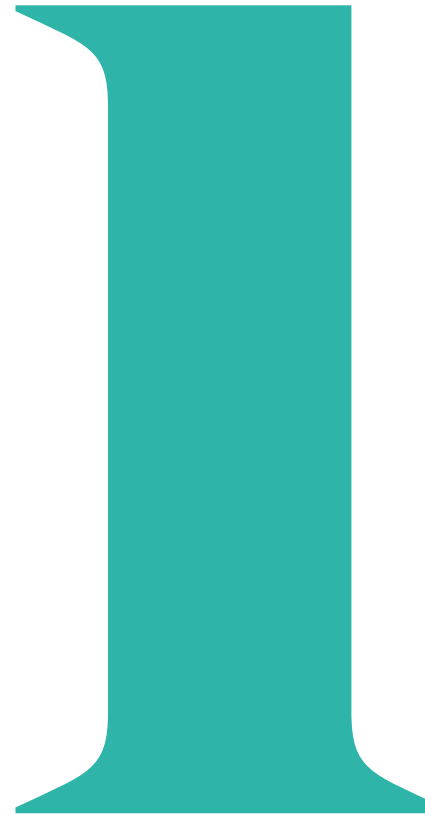
The background is a solid teal color. Faintly visible in the background is the word 'YES!' in a light teal, sans-serif font. A large, hand-drawn, light teal circle is also present, partially overlapping the text.

# Our Manifesto Principles

# Manifesto Principle 1



**BUSINESSES SHOULD EMBRACE A NEW WAY TO MEASURE THEIR SUCCESS THAT INCORPORATES PROFIT AND THE POSITIVE AND MEANINGFUL IMPACT THEY CREATE ON THEIR PEOPLE, THEIR STAKEHOLDERS, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH THEY OPERATE.**



There's never been a time like this - one where businesses are being called to be a force for good. The persistence of global inequalities and challenges - all confirmed and worsened by the COVID19 pandemic - have generated a legitimate expectation that businesses look beyond financial returns and take responsibility for their impact on social and ecological systems on which a more equitable economy depends.

Numerous business leaders, academic researchers, policymakers, lawyers, and civil society organizations around the world agree that economic actors cannot continue their never-ending need for growth *and* survive into the long term.

Shifting to economic models that consider the impact on all stakeholders - including communities, workers, customers, the environment, and the shareholders - is the necessary new paradigm we should all tend to, if we want to contribute to the creation of healthier and happier communities, save the environment, and attain a more just and inclusive economic system.

To allow for this shift to happen, we must embrace a mindset of responsibility, generosity and creativity, and work together across businesses, governments, and civil society organizations for this common goal.

# Manifesto Principle 2



**LEADERSHIP SHOULD ADOPT TRUST, RESPECT AND TRANSPARENCY AS FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS OF THEIR ORGANIZATIONS, SUPPORTED BY A SOLID PRINCIPLE THAT ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE EQUALLY WORTHY.**



People come first. There is no basis for considering some human beings more worthy than others. Nor for maintaining work environments where workers feel deprived of meaning and become disengaged. Most issues arise from an organizational culture that bases its *modus operandi* on the assumption that people cannot be trusted. All “command & control” practices derive from that.

A huge amount of research shows that the act of empowering people has a beneficial effect on an organization’s productivity. When people are trusted, they go the extra mile, and they tend to trust *in return*, enabling long-lasting positive work relationships. The cost of distrust is huge, both in economical and psychological ways. Yet many workers say they do not feel trusted by their managers. They feel disrespected and manipulated.

The solution is to move to a “trust & empower” culture, one in which we acknowledge our mistakes and accept the mistakes of others, we actively listen to others and involve them in problem resolution, we provide feedback candidly, we share bad news transparently, we recognize and celebrate successes, and we align our actions with our words and vice versa.

A fulfilling and engaging work environment is what we all desire and we need to take responsibility to behave in ways that will make that happen.

# Manifesto Principle 3



**DISTRIBUTION OF DECISION-MAKING AND INFORMATION WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION IS THE KEY TO ENABLING COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE TO MATERIALIZE.**



The human brain is an impressive instrument that has evolved over thousands of years to enable us to prosper in a wide range of conditions. But it is wired to avoid complexity and to respond quickly to ensure survival. When we look for solutions to a business problem, we tend to seek information that confirms our assumptions, and we are heavily influenced by how a solution is presented.

Thanks to technology, organizations have access to a phenomenal amount of data to use when making decisions. However, in traditional organizational models, the concentration of power and information in only a few hands and brains means data are still interpreted by a limited number of people at the top of the organization. Thus, more data does not normally translate into a greater diversity of viewpoints.

Nonetheless, organizations do have the opportunity to tap into people or groups that haven't traditionally been included by reaching across hierarchical or functional barriers inside the organization, as well as from the outside. By broadening the number and the type of individuals generating or evaluating solutions, collective intelligence enhances organizational capabilities to better address the challenges of our times, while also contributing to create a more rewarding environment for everybody in the organization.



# Manifesto Principle 4



**WE ARE ALL INTERDEPENDENT, AND WE ARE ALL PART OF A SYSTEM THAT HAS FINITE MATERIAL RESOURCES YET ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE PEOPLE'S WELL-BEING, FULFILLMENT AND SATISFACTION.**

# 4

Good begets good. Giving generates giving. The more we give to each other, the more our collective 'wealth' grows.

At the early stages of our life, we are all entirely dependent on others to care for us and to meet our most basic needs. As we grow up, we strive to become independent and to take care of ourselves. But our deepest human needs – safety, belonging, fulfillment – cannot be fulfilled without us taking care of each other.

Owning the truth of interdependence requires embracing our human nature and cultivating an understanding of, and an appreciation for, our fellow humans. We also cannot only behave like “humans” at home but forget to do so when we work. Striving to generously give to others in every situation and embody the idea that “It’s not about me” generates a wealth of opportunities to achieve meaning for us and others. Partnering with and supporting others will result in the kind of outcome that would not be possible when everyone operates as independent entities.

Achieving interdependence and activating the virtuous cycle of giving is an intentional act. Independence may produce change, but only interdependence can give birth to transformation.

# Manifesto Principle 5



**IN A CONTINUOUSLY AND RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD, WE MUST EMBRACE OPENNESS, CREATIVITY, AND INCLUSIVITY.**



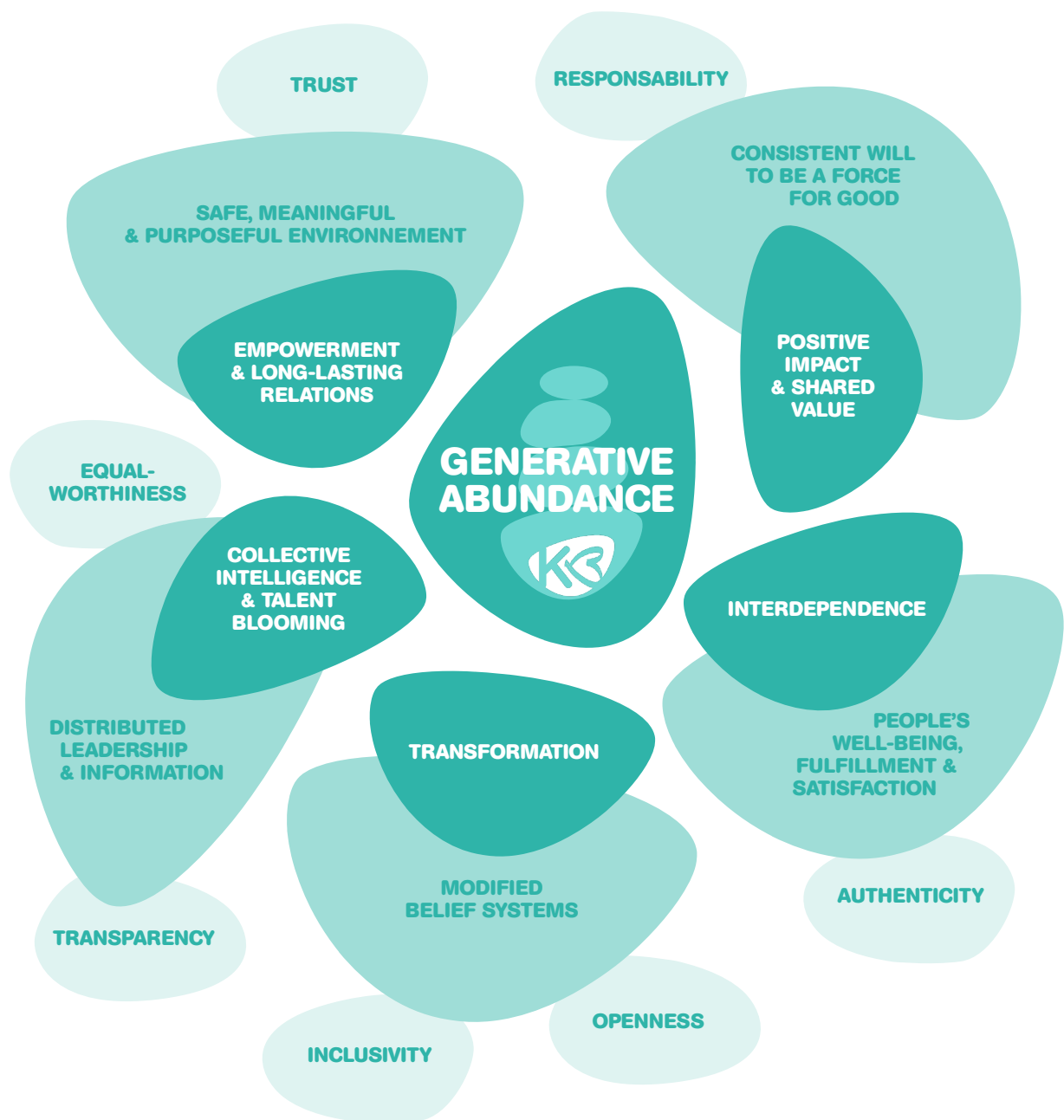
We have learned the hard way that even dramatic changes can happen unexpectedly. Alongside severe consequences, change can bring significant opportunities. Technology allows for minority voices to be heard. Economic recovery creates space for green revolutions. The worsening of inequalities pushes leaders to find long-awaited solutions. Interconnectivity provides humanity with the possibility to explore new perspectives.

We must build a future where the commonalities among human beings are a solid, shared landscape on which different races, religions, languages, opinions, as well as differences related to any other kind of orientation are viewed as a source of richness rather than division.

Combating biases requires challenging belief systems. Achieving true diversity requires a cultural reformation. In order to leverage our creativity, the most important skill of our century, we must open up to everything possible, and even to what seems, to our generation, impossible.

Fluidity and ambiguity are the new normal. They provide opportunities for everyone to find a dimension, regardless of pre-existing models. KINDNESS is the infinite space in which everyone can develop his abilities and realize his aspirations.

# Our manifesto in essence



# Join us!



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