

# Creating Valuable Values

Helping Shop Direct develop  
a new set of values

ORION CASE STUDY

SHOP   
DIRECT



**ORION**  
Transforming HR

# Helping Shop Direct develop a new set of values

**So often the fate of new corporate values is to get splashed over posters in reception, and then get quickly forgotten about. How can you make sure that this doesn't happen? There are two key steps: develop them from the bottom up, and then deliver them from the top down...**

Shop Direct are the business behind wellknown brands like Littlewoods.com, Very.co.uk and Isme.com. In late 2014 their new CEO and leadership team set about devising a three year strategy to transform them from a traditional catalogue business to a world-class digital retailer.

The underpinning of this involved thinking how they could create world-class engagement and turn that into a real competitive advantage. After researching how other successful businesses achieved this, what they found was all these businesses had one thing in common – they all had absolute clarity on their purpose and were values led.

Now, the good news was Shop Direct already had a clear purpose, something that had been part of their business for some 80 years: to make good things easily accessible to more people.

But their values? As a business that evolved hugely over recent years – though they had an instinctive sense of them, they knew that had lost sight of precisely what these were. Even their leadership team themselves couldn't quote them.

They decided that to become a values-led organization they'd need to totally relook at this area, and this was where they asked us to get involved: to help them design an approach they could follow to create a new set of values, and then bring them to life through the business.

Here's how we helped.

# Develop from the bottom up

**“Both myself and our Group People Director had worked with Orion Partners before. We knew they would bring best practice, but also pragmatism. What we like about Orion Partners is they take theory and they turn it into the language of your organization.”**

Sarah Willet, Director of HR and People Services,  
Shop Direct

## Uncover don't create

So what did we do? Well, one of the first things we said to Shop Direct at the very beginning was that this project wasn't about creating values. Instead they needed to see it as how they could uncover the values already in the business – the values already driving their best performers.

Of course, this does make life a bit more difficult, as it means values can't be created by a small group of people brainstorming with a flip chart in a meeting room. Instead the key was to take a 'bottom up' approach...

## Do a lot of listening

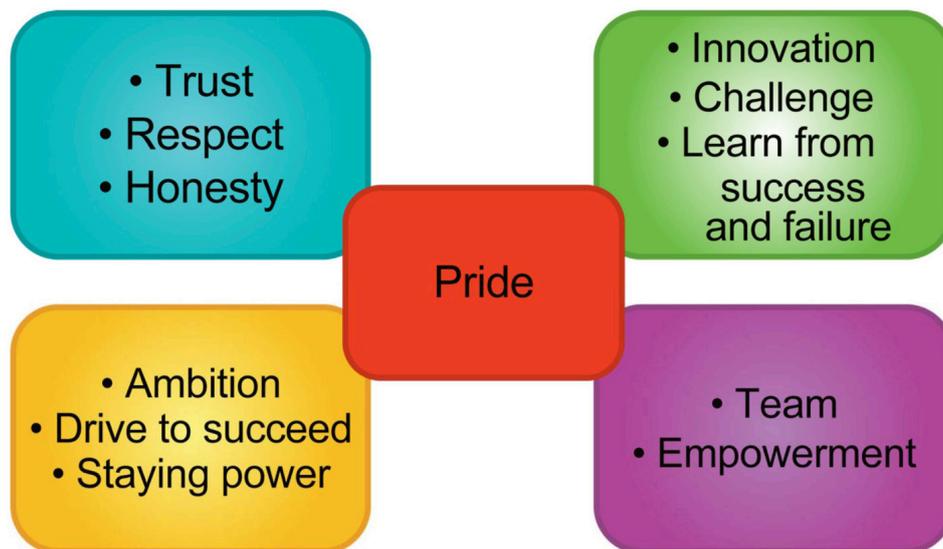
The bottom-up approach we designed for Shop Direct basically meant doing a whole lot of listening. Together with the Shop Direct project team we held 11 colleague listening groups, spoke to 120 managers and did 50 more in-depth interviews with top performers from the CEO to pickers and packers in the warehouse. Overall we spent over 1,000 hours listening.

When it comes to finding the values that drive people the all important insight is 'why?': why do they do what they do? Why do they behave the way they do? Why do they turn up and do their job to the best of their ability every Monday morning?

Together with Shop Direct we designed a framework of questions to find out Shop Direct's why?

## Turn feedback into a framework

1000 hours of listening produces a lot of notes!  
So our next challenge was turning all that raw data into something meaningful. We first grouped the raw data into 12 dominant themes.



We then took these themes back to Shop Direct and asked their People Forums (small crossfunctional colleague engagement groups) to refine them down to five 'buckets'. Then Shop Direct's project team split up into five groups. Each group then worked up an expression of the value itself and its supporting strapline:

These then became the 5 values...

**BELONG @ SHOP DIRECT**

				
<b>TRUSTED</b>	<b>AMBITIOUS</b>	<b>PROUD</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE</b>	<b>TOGETHER</b>
<i>We act fairly, honestly and responsibly</i>	<i>We are the best we can be</i>	<i>We are proud of the part we play in people's lives</i>	<i>We thrive on new ideas and learn from our mistakes</i>	<i>We succeed together</i>

**MAKE GOOD THINGS EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO MORE PEOPLE**

The final part – still collaborative – was to take these values back to Shop Direct’s People Forum. Over a series of workshops we asked these forums to talk about what the values would look like in real life.

Based on this feedback we built up a behavioral framework showing what each of the values meant and how the company could bring them to life. It was called *Belong@Shop Direct* – a framework using the words actually given to us by Shop Direct colleagues, and designed to be easy to understand and apply.

 <p><b>TRUSTED</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I respect and appreciate others</li> <li>• I do what I say</li> <li>• I say it like it is</li> <li>• I play my part and let others play theirs</li> </ul>	 <p><b>AMBITIOUS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I believe in myself and the business</li> <li>• I set the bar high for myself</li> <li>• I challenge myself and others to do more</li> <li>• I give my best in everything I do</li> <li>• I am excited about the future and the part I play</li> </ul>	 <p><b>PROUD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm passionate about our products and services</li> <li>• I'm obsessive about our customer</li> <li>• I champion Shop Direct and our brands</li> <li>• I speak up for my customers, colleagues and business</li> <li>• I leave things better than I find them</li> </ul>	 <p><b>INNOVATIVE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I look for ideas to champion our purpose</li> <li>• I ask "what if?" and encourage others to</li> <li>• I jump in, give it a go and learn</li> <li>• I'm curious and always looking to find better ways of doing things</li> <li>• I make the right things happen</li> </ul>	 <p><b>TOGETHER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I help others succeed</li> <li>• I contribute to the wider team</li> <li>• I put in more than I take out</li> <li>• I do better by listening to and involving others</li> <li>• I offer and seek support, especially when under pressure</li> <li>• I love to celebrate when others succeed</li> </ul>
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# Deliver from the top down

**In our experience, embedding any change is all about starting at the top. So in contrast to the bottom-up approach for developing Shop Direct's values, we developed a top-down process to help Shop Direct start living their new values.**

The first part of this was creating and running a 360° feedback process for Shop Direct's top 40 senior managers, followed by a one to one coaching session with the individual and then team workshops to review the results. This not only introduced the leaders to the new values and behaviors, it also showed each leadership team how they measured up against them, what they needed to do differently – and started to help embed the values as the framework for how we want and expect people to behave.

Of course, it's not just about the leaders. Since their introduction, there's been a huge amount of work done by the Shop Direct HR and corporate communications teams to spread the word to the bigger team. In a matter of weeks they managed to cascade the values to over 4,000 people.

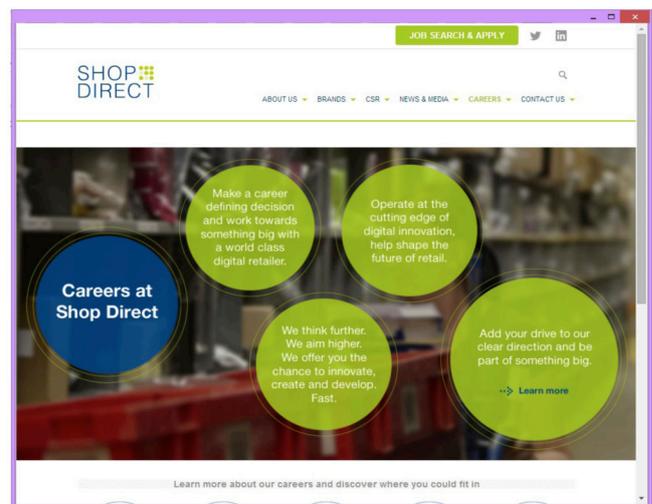
**“Orion Partners really helped us hold a mirror up to ourselves and make sure we're living the values and that we're committing to do something about them.”**

Sarah Willet, Director of HR and People Services,  
Shop Direct

# How is it being used – A common approach

Shop Direct are embracing their values and using them as a set of guiding principles that all colleagues live by. The values shape all their people processes: how they attract, hire and retain talented people; ensuring colleagues understand their role, know how to behave and how they will be measured; and that leaders, through their leaders@Shop Direct development programme, are clear on how they need to lead their teams through the values to help their people be the best they can be.

The newly launched on-line recognition scheme – Shine – also reinforces the importance of colleagues delivering against the company purpose and living the values. It's Shop Direct's way of retaining a culture that's uniquely and distinctly theirs.



LEADERS@SHOP DIRECT

**MAXIMISING**  
**PERFORMANCE**  
YOUR PART | VALUES | DEVELOPMENT

Objective setting	Review	Comparative rating	Mapping questions	Group wide themes	Local themes
• Support to set clear leadership goals	• Clarity on the expectation	• Consistent way of reviewing leadership performance	• Work with ORC to map leadership behaviour to engagement index	• Visible way of reading leadership from a colleague perspective	• View of leadership strengths or weaknesses in functions

Your Shoutonline)))

# Measuring the impact

**When it comes to impact, new values can often be a slow burner. But in less than a year, Shop Direct's 'Your Shout' engagement scores increased by 6% points overall. The score measuring pride in working for Shop Direct went up by 9%, and the amount of people feeling a strong sense of belonging to Shop Direct up by 7%.**

**"Whether I'm in the coffee queue or just through presentations, the values are being talked about, and called out when they're not being lived! They're not perfect by any means, but we're so much further on that I thought we'd be."**

**"Across the board, engagement has really gone up. Which you don't normally expect in a project like this. But it's because the values have been created by the people, so they're already connected to them. All we did was bring them to the forefront. They're not just posters on a wall, they're absolutely our culture."**

Sarah Willet, Director of HR and People Services,  
Shop Direct