The Big Blue

Magnetism

Our values

QVARTZ
This document provides an outline of the shared values and beliefs that we strive to adhere to – as such the outline depicts a desired future state of the QVARTZ civilization. In some companies, an “outline” might seem unambitious, but at QVARTZ it is a daunting task and a venture we undertake with some apprehension.

We are reluctant, neither because of uncertainty about our core values, nor because of the size or geographical spread of our company. We are apprehensive because we feel that the articulation of values and beliefs is ever-changing, and that any attempt at defining them will resemble something like a photograph of a running child. Such a snapshot might give an immediate impression of the child and its whereabouts, but within an hour that same child could be in a completely different context, and within a year the child might have grown to look completely different.

However, all strong civilizations have an equally strong narrative, and a strong narrative is characterized by being interwoven with the values and beliefs of the civilization. So, despite our apprehension, we must illuminate our current translation and interpretation of our values.

But how do we avoid turning our values and beliefs into stale and semireligious dogma? How do we keep them vibrant and alive in our civilization? How do we ensure that the magnetism keeps radiating from our core? And how do we forever prevent our uniqueness from being reduced to slogans on coffee mugs, t-shirts ... or indeed in a pamphlet like the one you are reading right now?!

These questions are addressed in the One High Road section of this pamphlet and are probably more important than the answers given in the preceding sections on the values and beliefs themselves.
QVARTZ was founded by various groups of compañeros who knew each other from previous employments, where they had delivered strong results to clients, who in turn followed them and became clients at QVARTZ; nearly all of them remain clients to this day.

Many companies will claim that they have been governed by the same values for years, some even since their inception.

In contrast to this, it is true to say that QVARTZ was incepted because of our values.

**Results. And Relationships.**

There are two core values that create meaning, shape our culture, define the character of our company and guide how we behave and make decisions.

We see Results and Relationships as interdependent and interwoven.

Results are a prerequisite for Relationships, externally as well as internally. Without delivering Results to clients, we have no relevance or loyalty; without delivering Results as a company, we have no legitimacy or followership.

Obviously, we see Relationships as a prerequisite for Results as well. Likewise, this has both an external and an internal dimension; Relationships pave the way for mutual understanding and commitment, which are key enablers of Results.

In the following pages, we will illuminate the fundamental meaning that these core values offer and propose how we best adhere to them.
QVARTZ is firmly rooted in the traditional, professional values of first-tier management consulting, but we are committed to a consulting model with less dependence on standard methodologies and more on flexible cooperation.

In our work with clients, we combine rigorous analysis and insights with co-creation and focus on buy-in in order to ensure impact and sustainable change – all delivered through pragmatic and inclusive work processes.

In other words, we aim to deliver Results on time, on budget, but also right on target – because we want to challenge clients, without provoking them, on agendas, assumptions, expectations, issues and contingencies.

This will in turn ensure consistent delivery of excellent solutions and client services, and, as a consequence, relevant and long-lasting relationships with leading companies and organizations.


The above are some of the Results the civilization as a whole wants to deliver. We expect the individual member to contribute to this and to celebrate when we succeed. However, we acknowledge and encourage the individual to strive for more personal Results as well.

Recognition. Career. Compensation. Learning. Life balance. Relationships. These are some of the areas where we strive for individual Results.

We believe that Results at QVARTZ are ultimately about realizing dreams. What our individual dreams are is a private matter, but we articulated the first collective dream as being one-of-three in all three, Nordic-by-nature, més-que-un-club and finally as being a company that keeps-on-rockin’ (ask if you don’t know what all this means). This dream should be able to embrace a thousand individual dreams.
If Results mean capitalism, Relationships mean **humanism**. And we want to be a unified, talented and prepared team built on capitalistic humanism.

We want to be trusted advisors and build long-lasting Relationships with our clients. And we want to build a company that lasts well beyond the first generation of partners.

Clients are not and must never feel that they are being treated as a cash cow or a stepping stone. Colleagues are not and must never feel that they are a resource or an adversary.

How do we reach this nirvana?

By recognizing the human being in every client as well as in every colleague – this is in essence our people centrism.

By demonstrating commitment and acting civilized – especially when it is hard or when there is nothing (other than the continued relation) to be gained.

By generously investing our time, thoughts, humor, worries and joys in others without expecting to get anything in return.

By trusting that close Relationships are intensely valuable in their own right.

By being authentic and not assuming a role – carefully maintaining the direct line from inner conviction to outer action.

By recognizing that clients and colleagues might have other priorities and interests than you have or know about.

By taking steps that we as individuals are comfortable with to reduce the so-called professional arm’s length distance that tends to produce cold transactions instead of warm Relationships.
How do our six beliefs relate to the two core values?

The beliefs are the major enablers of the values and also in the delivery of our Client and People Propositions.

**Excellence, flexibility and iconicity** will obviously influence our ability to deliver Results and are as such key to our Client Proposition.

**Civilization, diversity and followership** will obviously influence our ability to foster Relationships and are as such key to our People Proposition.

We have accentuated these six beliefs by weighing them in favor of a range of other characteristics:

Excellence before size, diversity before uniformity, civilization before organization, followership before formal titles, flexibility before standard approaches, delivering success before successful delivery.

The contrast between excellence and size, for example, is not one of good and bad, as we will always strive to leverage on both. It is, however, a decision: If we have to choose, and sometimes we do, we will choose excellence before size, diversity before uniformity, etc.

In the following pages, we will elaborate on our understanding of the characteristics of excellence, diversity, civilization, followership, flexibility and iconicity and on how we best adhere to these beliefs.
Excellence

Excellence is the combination of delivering second-to-none CONTENT, exceeding expectations in STYLE, shape and form as well as engaging with true PASSION.

As such, we do not see quality, or indeed excellence, as a “thing” you can deliver in someone’s mailbox. Rather, we truly see it as an event, a memorable experience, or perhaps one of those iconic moments ... that we might shortlist for QVARTZ’ prestigious man-bites-dog award.

To us, excellence implies that rigorous fact-based, data-driven analysis and problem solving, delivered on par with our most respected global competitors, are merely prerequisites – a license to compete. The same is proven, well-structured world-class transformation skills and unrivalled sector and service line insight.

The content we deliver must obviously be relevant, flawless, insightful and valuable. But that does not always distinguish us from the peers we want to compete with.

How do we go even further? Well, if the abovementioned content is “what” we deliver, we need to carefully consider “how” we deliver it. Just as we can often exceed expectations with regard to the level of insight provided, we must also strive to exceed expectations with regard to the style, shape and form in which we deliver the insight.

Our interactions with or deliveries to clients and colleagues alike must leave behind the impression we are aiming for: Always impeccable and professional, and therefore, more often than not, tailor-made to the specific occasion.

Excellence occurs when we are second-to-none on “what”, have chosen to go beyond on “how”, and when the passion and energy we display are real.

A few of our proof points: Client cases with true change and people transformation. Client testimonials that say it all. Winning the project for its creative approach. Choosing a gym as a venue instead of a conference center. Using brown papers instead of PC. And much more, depending on the audience and the situation.
Diversity

Gender
Profile
Personality

Diversity is the variation we represent collectively across GENDER, PROFILES and PERSONALITIES.

We recognize diversity as one of the key components for creativity and excellence in the work we do and therefore for reaching our goals. At QVARTZ, diversity ensures that like meets unlike, femininity meets masculinity, function meets form, capitalism meets humanism, strategic analysis meets behavioral change, Results meet Relationships … and vice versa!

Some speak about people being “diamonds in the rough”, needing a bit of polishing to fit in. We think it is quite the opposite. We are looking for people who stand out and are “sharp” or have an “edge”.

What value does this create? It ensures openness, understanding, acceptance, dialog and thus a more holistic view and approach to clients and colleagues as well as problem solving and human interaction.

When we succeed with something iconic or intriguing, it often relies on diversity.

Gender is a well-known challenge in our industry – and we want to lead when it comes to the share of female consultants. The pursuit of our People Proposition will be a major vehicle in making this happens.

Different profiles encompass different nationalities, educational backgrounds, work and client experiences, specialist and generalist career tracks, professional competences, years of experience and the curiosity to keep learning. We want them all.

Diverse personalities are another vital key to delivering on our aspirations and propositions. We acknowledge the different underlying characteristics and preferences that drive people, such as their energy, creativity, decision-making capabilities, intuition and feelings.

A few of our proof points: Mix of educational backgrounds. Generalists and specialists. Share of female consultants. Recruitment and Academy activities. Open MBTI profiling of all. Cross-national teams. Staffing and team constellations. Sometimes being the mad ones. And much more.
Management is a role. Leadership is a relationship. Leaders are not leaders without followers. People don’t follow someone because of a title. They follow because a leader has created a connection to something in which they want to participate.
Followership is earned from personal LEADERSHIP, superior SKILLS and the ability to transfer those, as well as keeping AUTHENTICITY in all.

We believe the ability to lead and be led is an absolutely essential characteristic for all members of the QVARTZ civilization to possess.

This means that no one in our company must or can expect only to lead, or indeed only to be led. Some of us will take on leadership roles more often than others, but we will, all of us, be required to take on a leadership role at times and in given situations. The leadership tasks are multiple: leading a critical client relation, a project stream or task, an office, a pitch relying on sector insight, an internal project, a complex segmentation project, as QVARTZback, etc.

Personal leadership is a cornerstone in our civilization. We value leaders who are able to provide the best learning and leadership opportunities for others, who recognize the individual and give and receive feedback in an appreciative manner.

Superior professional skills, such as subject matter expertise, deep sector insight, ability to transform insight to impact, experience from similar situations, special negotiation techniques, etc., play a key role. It might also arise due to undeniable social skills such as the ability to generate trust and commitment from critical people within the civilization and/or with key stakeholders in client organizations.

Followership is not a right that we earn through tenure or previous merits, but rather something that is given to us by fellow members of the civilization. It loses its authenticity if it is imposed, or if it is a consequence of a fixed organizational structure.

Civilization encompasses our appreciative INTERACTION with each other, the high integrity and individual ACCOUNTABILITY on a day-to-day basis and the GENEROSITY we show for greater purposes than the individual short-term benefit.

At QVARTZ, we work and interact as a team, realizing our professional ambitions as part of the team. We are driven by our shared goals while at the same time understanding and supporting that each team member has individual needs, priorities and interests. For us, it is more important how we interact and act than how we are organized. We are concerned with the free flow of knowledge, direct talk and no politics as well as the highest degree of integrity in everything we do. We are open-minded and embrace opportunities.

To act civilized is to voluntarily assume responsibility and accountability for ourselves and the impact we have on others, clients and colleagues alike, but it is also to take on responsibility for influencing others and thereby their impact. It is acting as founders in small and bigger things, stepping up and into the situation when needed. It never really ends.

Generosity is key to understanding the civilization. It is quite simply to be guided by putting in more than you take out. In all situations, smaller and bigger, that we create or are part of. Our civilization is built on inherent and interwoven trust – in the people we work with, externally and internally. Trust in their intentions, abilities, roles in projects and their worth as human beings.

In our company, it is far more valuable to have colleagues who act civilized, than colleagues who only act organized.

Flexibility is another cornerstone of our external and internal proposition. Externally we always tailor our teams to the client situation and needs based on one criterion: MATCH-MAKING. Internally we offer INDIVIDUALIZED DEVELOPMENT, fitting different people’s needs and priorities with the work life. We can offer flexibility because we choose to organize ourselves with the highest degree of AGILITY.

Flexibility means that we do not have a single engagement model, but seek to match diverse and ever-changing client needs by listening to our clients and trying to understand their situation before determining the configuration of the project and our team. Obviously, rigorous strategic analysis requires a different approach and team constellation than for example facilitation of a global transformation. That is matchmaking.

Flexibility also means that we offer the opportunity to influence own career development and work life. We call it individualized development, and it provides personal choices, for instance in terms of thematic focus, project intensity and pace of career progression as a natural part of our development program.

We do this because we recognize and respect that all human beings have different needs and interests, such as family priorities, life situations and sources of energy. We succeed because we invest in capability-building so we all have profound high-quality methods of working. And because we see staffing and people management as two integrated areas – managed together on a day-to-day basis.

Finally, the way we organize ourselves ensures true agility and as such the ability to instantly adapt to our needs. In a kaleidoscope, the same pearls form an infinite number of patterns; in parallel we have the same people constantly in alternating formations. Every project that comes and goes changes our structure.

A few of our proof points: Open offices with free seating. People and staffing management. Intensity tool. Academy. &Frankly. And much more.
Iconicity is a self-invented word hinting at our ability to deliver iconic moments externally as well as internally. It takes various combinations of MAGNITUDE, COURAGE and COOLNESS.

Iconic moments are the select, rare and everlasting images that clients, colleagues and alumni see before their eyes when asked to describe QVARTZ as a company.

All projects, events, deliveries and interactions can produce their own man-bites-dog moments, and we are dedicated to creating these. But like magic, iconic moments are impossible to mass-produce, and as such they must not be mistaken for the results that we all work hard to deliver on a daily basis. We know when we experience a true iconic moment – because we feel it.

Magnitude is not necessarily the same as size. It has more to do with importance or significance. When a UN Secretary General endorses a project we have been a vital part of – that is magnitude. And colleagues who spend part of their summer in Africa working on our CSR initiative – they have magnitude.

The QVARTZ civilization is built on and by courage. The courage not only to dream, but to strive for the realization of our dreams. The courage to disregard much of what is safe and well-established and sign up for the journey towards our Next Practice aspiration.

And the Next Practice aspiration challenges us. We do not believe in standard methodology. We do not believe in prefab. We listen. We configure and tailor-make solutions, team constellations and deliveries to individual client needs. Not because it is easy. But because it is what we believe to be right. The decision to publish annual reports with client cases, to invite clients and friends for cocktails twice a year, etc. – that is cool! And colleagues who unexpectedly deliver a rock concert at a company day or cook a gourmet meal for over 100 people – they have coolness (and some courage as well).

Normality
The conformance to an average or a regular pattern ... the accordance with an established rule

Originality
The ability to think and act independently ... the quality of being new and not derived from something else
At QVARTZ, we are apprehensive about the documentation of our core values and beliefs because we do not want the words that shape our culture and fuel our magnetism to freeze into a fixed definition and with time become alien. Instead, they must live and grow within the civilization and continue to take new forms in terms of how we articulate and exemplify them. One voice argued that the formulation, discussion and reformulation of our values and beliefs is in itself a value. And this viewpoint is not entirely wrong.

We seek the authenticity that can only arise when all members of the civilization share the core values of our company and the beliefs that lie beneath these values. The straight line from inner conviction to outer action is the backbone of all authenticity.

But how is such coherence possible in a civilization that hails diversity? Is it reasonable, or indeed possible, to demand that a part of the inner conviction of each member of our civilization is shared?

We believe that it is possible, but only when each of us finds our own narrative, our own way of articulating the timeless meaning and fundamental value of words like Results and Relationships. And when each of us has our own personal account and explanation of how and when we deliver excellence, diversity, civilization, followership, flexibility and iconicity.

No two versions of this narrative can be exactly the same. A founder will have a deeper narrative, whereas a junior consultant perhaps will see fresher perspectives. Our In-house teams will interpret some elements differently than consultants. And that is a good thing. A sign of life and vitality.

Put simply, it is paramount that members of our civilization use an “I” or a “we” when explaining or discussing our values and beliefs, and never a “they” or even worse a “one” (as in “one could argue”). If it is impossible to take ownership by using an “I” or a “we”, it is better not to say anything at all. However, we hope that this pamphlet will help each of us to express and live it all, each in our own way.

Because no matter how we might individually label and articulate the ideology of QVARTZ, a part of our personal conviction must correspond with and revolve around the two values and the six beliefs that we have sketched in this book.

So step in and step up.

Team QVARTZ