

# IS YOUR PERSONAL BRAND TRUSTWORTHY?

by Glenn Williams



As we step into 2022, whether boldly or with some reservations, there is a degree of uncertainty about how this year will unfold.

Over the holiday break you may have [paused to reflect](#) on the goals you want to achieve, what really [drives you to succeed](#), who [champions you in your pursuits](#), and what success looks like in your personal and professional life.

Whether you are starting in a new role, getting ready to launch a new idea or product, planning to see your company move to the next level, or wanting to develop your own ability to adapt more readily to challenges, your values play a critical role in your success.

## How values influence decisions and behaviours

Our values guide all our decisions and behaviors and have real world outcomes. If you value honesty, you will interact with the world through this lens. This may include owning your mistakes, making deals where there is a win-win outcome, or giving feedback to a member of your team or a direct report with the goal of seeing them flourish. If you were to view yourself as a brand, is it one that others trust and value? Knowing what values are foundational to your personal brand will not only contribute to your success, but also the sustainability of that success. The consistent expression of your values influences and mobilizes others toward achieving your goals and helps you become more resilient in the face of challenges.

If we are in a leadership role, it is only a matter of time before our values are challenged. We can feel pressured to make decisions that conflict with a belief, value, or ethic that is important to us. Sometimes it involves the difficult decision to do what is best for the business knowing that it will have a significant impact on staff. Other times, it is the temptation to take shortcuts where the ethics are questionable.

*"Rarely do leaders make big moral failures out of the blue, rather they result from small compromises made over time."*

Many high-profile leaders have become prominent by making major acquisitions or closing important deals, only to make headlines for moral or [ethical failures](#). The recent [criminal conviction](#) of Theranos founder Elizabeth Holmes is a timely example of charismatic leaders who have come undone by a lack of character. When the character of a leader is brought into question, it raises concerns not only about their reliability and trustworthiness as an individual, but that of the company as well. *Can I trust the brand if there are doubts about the leader's character as demonstrated through their behavior?* Both the individual's and the organization's reputation are tarred by a lack of character – and no amount of

charisma will repair the damage. This has obvious implications for a business's bottom line and long-term success.

*"Leadership excellence is based more on character than charisma."<sup>1</sup>*

Research by Harvard Business Review<sup>2</sup> involving 800 business leaders and more than 7000 peers, superiors and subordinates found that charismatic leaders are perceived to be effective, but only in low-stress situations. However, the last two years especially have taught us that **low-stress situations aren't the norm**, and leaders must be able to navigate unprecedented circumstances. Character sustains what charisma cannot, and is the variable that separates great leadership from good leadership.

Character is our core values expressed in action. It is the line you draw when the invitation to compromise is presented. It's who you are when everything else is stripped away. Building character is an experiential learning process – and is practiced one decision at a time. The lifelong process of character building doesn't come without cost. We know how hard it can be to make tough decisions that affect those closest to us, the people we work with and the organizations we lead. Sometimes the cost is monetary, sometimes it's others' opinions or perceptions of you and your performance. Being resilient is the ability to tap into character and be unwavering when there is an agenda that is misaligned with that of the leader, the team, or the organization.

It's not a simple task, but courage is one of the virtues foundational to building resilient character, and courage is built through practice too. When faced with a bigger dilemma, you'll find the courage you need is there if your character has been built over time by years of making smaller choices that align with who you are and what you value.

## **Do you know what your values are?**

It's difficult to maintain your values when you don't know what those values are. If you don't have clearly defined and articulated core values, it impedes strategic decision-making, and your company culture is susceptible to being created by others who may or may not align with the vision and purpose of your organization.

## **What's the bottom line?**

Set yourself and your business up for greater success this year by clearly defining your core values – your set of guiding principles through which you make decisions, build company culture, and create a brand others can trust. Maybe you are clear on what values are important to you. Take some time to

review them and see if they align with the goals you have for 2022.

For LCP Global, the values we centre our work on are alignment, reflection, focused momentum, courage, and generosity.

---

## References

<sup>1</sup> Sankar, Y. (2003). Character Not Charisma is the Critical Measure of Leadership Excellence. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 9(4).

<sup>2</sup> <https://hbr.org/2017/09/too-much-charisma-can-make-leaders-look-less-effective>