

MOTIVATING YOUR PEOPLE TO ENGAGE WITH RESPONSIBLE AI



A Values Canvas Case study

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GETTING STARTED WITH RESPONSIBLE AI



Embracing AI is no longer an option, it is an expectation. However, AI is known to be risky business, as it comes with significant investment requirements, up to 93% failure rates, and a concerning lack of confidence in today's context of countless AI mishaps. There are many ways that AI can go wrong, but in a world demanding the adoption of this cutting-edge tool, how can companies ensure it goes right?

This is where Responsible AI & Ethics comes in. The only way to consistently grow customer trust, mitigate unnecessary harmful risks, and get the most out of an investment in this technology, Responsible AI practices are quickly becoming the standard of operations for success in AI.

So, where do you start?

Originating from the book *Responsible AI* by Olivia Gambelin, **the Values Canvas** is a holistic management template for developing Responsible AI strategies and documenting existing ethics efforts. Designed to drive success in developing and using AI responsibly, it brings clarity on where to start and if something is missing in a company's journey to becoming Responsible AI-enabled.

THE VALUES CANVAS

The Values Canvas is made up of three pillars: **People**, **Process**, and **Technology**.

People looks at who is building or using AI, Process is focused on how AI is being built or used, and Technology is about what AI is being built or used. Each pillar is broken down into three elements, with each element capturing a specific need that your Responsible AI initiatives must fill. Another way to think about this is that the elements highlight the impact points in which you can translate your ethical values into reality for your company and technology through strategic solutions. You can hone in and work on a single element solution, or zoom out to understand how all the element solutions work together to create an efficient and effective Responsible AI strategy. In the case of the People pillar, the three elements are **Educate**, **Motivate** and **Communicate**.

In this case study we focus on the first of the three People elements: **Motivate**. In this element, we are looking to fill the need to cultivate a company culture that fosters active participation in Responsible AI practices and ethical decision-making habits. A Motivate solution is then any business motivator designed to positively reinforce the habit of engaging with ethics and Responsible AI practices.

This case study is one of a nine-part series on the Values Canvas. To explore the Values Canvas, access the full case study series, and discover further resources, visit www.thevaluescanvas.com.



THE NEED

Introducing Maikre

Maikre* is a Fortune 100 global firm providing a wide range of marketing services to its enterprise clients, including multi-media advertising campaigns, search engine optimization, web development, and email marketing and automation.

Maikre’s mission is to be a trusted partner for its clients in scaling effective and authentic multicultural marketing campaigns. Since the onset of generative AI and the prevalence of AI tools for marketing, Maikre has faced increasing pressure from its Board of Directors to actively adopt these promising new tools. Although Maikre is not currently developing its own AI solutions, it is avid adopter of emerging solutions to support in everyday business operations, as well as plans to build its own solutions in the near future.

**Maikre is a fictional company invented for the purposes of this case study*



Using AI to Support Company Culture Development and Business Operations

Because of the international spread of clientele and emphasis on providing multicultural marketing campaigns, Maikre’s workforce operates on a global scale. This means that Maikre teams often work across multiple time zones and must be sensitive to cultural differences in working style.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Maikre had been experiencing significantly higher burnout rates and was struggling to keep employees motivated due to the feelings of disconnection originating from the pandemic working environment. Additionally, Maikre leadership had been reporting difficulties in effectively managing geographically and culturally diverse teams, both because of hybrid in-office/work-from-home practices as well as the geographic dispersion of their employees.

The issues of burnout, disconnection, and management inefficiencies, combined with the pressure of the Board of Directors to embrace emerging technological solutions, led Maikre to begin adopting a variety of AI tools to support basic business and human management functions. The primary goals of using this technology were to bring their diverse culture closer together and to reestablish trust in leadership.

At first, the new AI tools seemed to be working well. Thanks to performance tracking systems, leaders were better able to guide their teams to success, and employees were finding new ways to connect through the company-wide rewards software. Things were running smoothly, and Maikre was making plans to expand the scale and variety of AI tools in use.

However, one of the ways Maikre had started to use AI was to generate content for email campaigns. Although the system proved to be very efficient in generating large quantities of content, it only took three months for Maikre's top client to report complaints with the new email campaigns stating significant problems with the cultural sensitivity of the content. Apparently, the new email campaign content was not taking into account various national holidays and culturally sensitive topics, pushing irrelevant, and in some cases offensive, content to different

countries without regard to the wider cultural context. As Maikre prided itself on its ability to adapt and scale multicultural marketing, this was a serious issue to discover.

After some digging, Maikre recognized that although their teams were readily embracing the use of the AI new tools, the teams hadn't been properly trained on how to manage the use of the tools nor how to spot when something was going wrong. In this specific case, multicultural sensitivity and bias mitigation had gone unchecked, creating a significant problem with Maikre's top client. In order to fix this urgent problem, Maikre invested heavily in company-wide training programs related to both ethics and emerging technology, including overall Generative AI training, and function-specific AI training.



Three months after the rollout of the programs, Maikre ran an assessment to get insight into the impact of the training. Much to Maikre's surprise, there had been little to no engagement with any of the new skills and techniques being taught in the training, despite the programs being mandatory for all employees. Instead of widespread use of new skillsets, Maikre employees were being inundated with an overwhelming amount of new information and were lacking any form of motivation to actually digest or use it. Even worse, it was discovered that the added pressure of the additional training was further contributing to the burnout rates of employees.

Frustrated with the lack of progress in the necessary changes in the email campaign content, Maikre's top client was threatening to pull out of its contract. Maikre knew something had to be done, and fast.

Maikre's Needs:

- Immediate: Fix the AI-generated content issues with its top client
- Med-term: Motivate its employees to engage with the new ethics skillsets
- Long-term: Reduce the high employee burnout rates



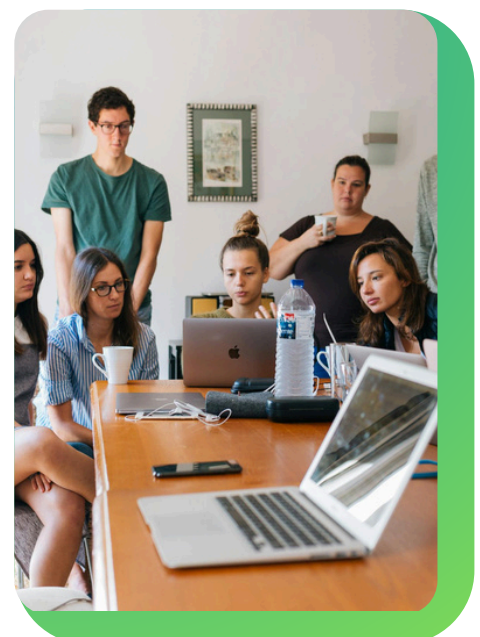
The first step of the ethical audit was to conduct a robust stakeholder analysis at the organizational, group and individual levels. This analysis looked at the current state and desired future state of each stakeholder group, the estimated willingness of each group to change, the causes of resistance, and possible mitigations. The primary purpose of conducting the analysis was to uncover who exactly needed motivating within the Maikre teams.

From the analysis, Maikre was surprised to discover it was not one, but two stakeholder groups in need of motivation to engage in ethical practices.



First, it became clear that although the leadership teams were committed to the company's investment in Responsible AI, they did not necessarily model the desired behavior nor use the tools provided for ethical guidance in their teams. When asked why, it was discovered that the Maikre team leaders had created a culture of competition within leadership and would often compete against one another to see whose team could finish a project faster.

With this discovery, it became abundantly clear that the second stakeholder group in need of motivation was in fact the project teams under the competitive team leaders. Because the team leaders were motivated by competition, and that competition was judged based on how fast a project could be completed, the team leaders were pushing their project teams to perform as fast as possible. This meant that project teams were not being encouraged, in fact even discouraged, from giving any attention to the ethics training, let alone learning how to adopt the new skillsets, for fear of extending timelines.



Seeing how this subtle company culture practice was impacting the overall company, Maikre knew that this behavior needed to change. Employees were being motivated to cut corners and speed through project delivery, not for the sake of the client but instead for a competition that had started as friendly and had turned toxic over time. Instead of this culture of competitive speed at all costs, Maikre determined that it needed to motivate employees to engage meaningfully with the new ethics training. This would in turn encourage new ways of working together to deliver value to clients and stakeholders, as well as autonomous decision-making in alignment with the company's mission, values, and RAI requirements.

At this point, Maikre knew who needed motivation, as well as what types of behaviors and actions were needed, but the question of how they would achieve this motivation still remained. To help determine how to motivate leadership and project teams to engage meaningfully with the new ethics training and skillsets, a cross-departmental task force with representatives from HR, Legal, IT, RAI Governance, and all managerial levels convened to align on an effective incentive structure representing both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators.

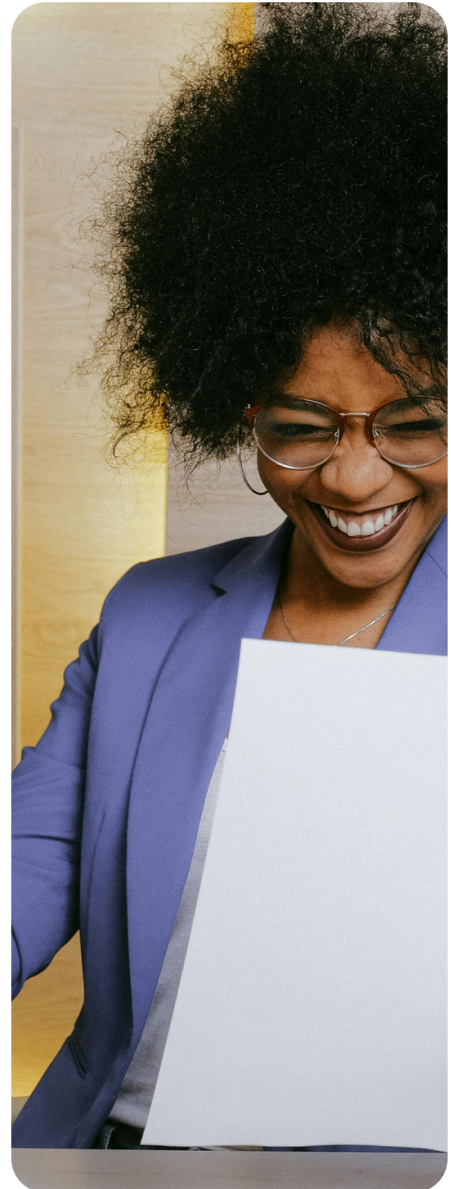
Using their own experience, as well as feedback from impacted stakeholders, they assessed the degree and severity of change needed for the leadership and project teams, taking into account potential employee burnout and overwhelm in order to better understand what kinds of initiatives would be needed to continue to drive value over time.

Recognizing that a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic motivators were necessary, the task force explored a variety of options.

Extrinsic motivators proposed included a confidential and independently monitored hotline to surface ethical concerns along with an independent ethics committee to review issues and propose solutions; monetary rewards and public recognition for ethical and RAI-proposed solutions that were adopted by the company; frequent and open group discussions about ethical issues related to both AI and organizational culture where ethically focused behavior is publicly praised, recognized and rewarded; and publicizing demonstrable evidence and changes made when gaps are identified and closed.

On the other hand, proposed intrinsic motivators were specifically tied to the satisfaction of competence, autonomy, and relatedness and an internalization of social, and organizational values and norms. These motivators included stimulating a learning-based environment that rewarded inquiry and surfacing issues; connecting training to results; allowing employees to self-report on AI ethics performance and receiving targeted training and support as needed; and regularly communicating messages and stories that emphasized the intrinsic value of learning and personal autonomy without devaluing the performance and efficiency.

Reviewing their options, the task force decided that a combination of an updated performance review process that emphasized tasks related to Responsible AI & Ethics in a new set of KPIs, along with quarterly stand-up meetings during which an employee would be highlighted for a particularly well-executed project that clearly used the new ethics skillsets in action. Both the performance review update and quarterly highlights would create a counterbalance to the current company culture.



If Maikre were filling out the Values Canvas, their Motivate solution statement would have looked like the following:

Maikre leadership and project teams need to incorporate the new ethics skillsets in their daily workflow and will be motivated by new KPI performance reviews and quarterly shout-outs.

THE OUTCOME

With the combined KPI performance reviews and quarterly shout-outs in place, Maikre began to see a shift in the company leadership culture.

Previously, Maikre leadership had been competing on speed of project delivery, causing pressure on their project teams to cut corners and disregard any new training being introduced into the workflows. By adjusting KPIs so that speed of project delivery was no longer the primary objective, and instead quality of content was given greater significance, competing on how fast a team could deliver a project was no longer seen as desirable by leadership. Although efficient delivery was still important, teams were now more motivated to ensure the necessary quality checks, such as the ethical and cultural checks, were being completed. The new KPI performance indicators helped to shift attention onto the quality of the project, creating both the time to engage with the ethics training and the motivator to use the new skillsets to help further improve project quality.



In addition to the KPI performance adjustments, the quarterly shout-outs helped to further motivate both the leadership and project teams to engage with the new ethics skillsets. Shout-outs were given to individuals who were tangibly using the new ethics training to align decisions and AI use with the company mission and values. In calling out and reinforcing the desired behavior, the quarterly shout-outs were helping to motivate project teams and leadership to find new ways to use the ethics training by providing examples of and praise for the change towards ethical use of AI.



Thanks to the Motivate efforts being made, Maikre was able to save its contract with its top client. First, because leadership was no longer competing on counterproductive KPIs and project teams were being rewarded for using the new ethics skillsets, Maikre's top client saw an immediate shift in the quality of content not only in email campaigns, but across all content-based initiatives. Although Maikre was still using the same AI tools to help generate the content, Maikre employees were now using the newly trained ethics skillsets to effectively and responsibly use the AI tools. This enabled the teams to make adjustments to content when necessary to better align with cultural contexts, and to spot a problem before it content was published to the client.

By demonstrating the progress and commitment to change, Maikre also experienced an increase in loyalty from its top client. The client had been ready to pull its contract only a few months before, but on seeing the significant strides towards meaningful change, the top client felt that Maikre had listened to its concerns and was willing to invest the time and resources needed to ensure customer success.

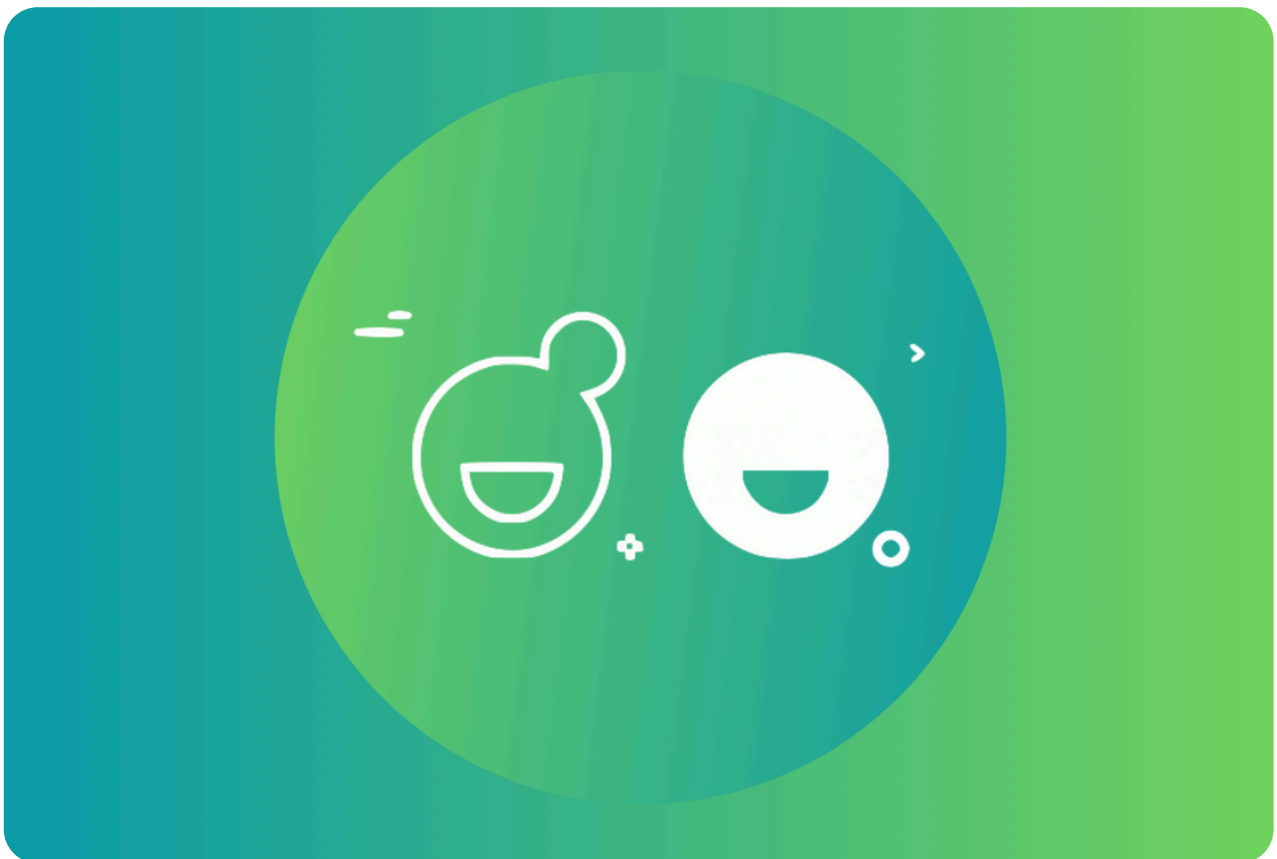
Finally, a third, and somewhat surprising, benefit to Maikre's Motivate solution was a decrease in overall employee burnout. Thanks to the ethical audit Maikre had conducted at the start of the initiative, Maikre had a clear baseline to judge progress against and was able to recognize the significant impact the new Motivate solution was having on the company overall.

The Motivate solution had effectively countered two of the biggest contributors to the high burnout rates at Maikre. First, was the speed at which project teams had been forced to work at. The toxic competitive culture of the leadership teams had been creating almost impossible expectations for the project teams in terms of speed of delivery, causing employees to feel constantly like they were underperforming and needed to work far outside their normal hours in order to meet deadlines. By shifting the KPI performance reviews to focus more on the quality of the projects instead, the speed-at-all-costs pressure was alleviated, giving project teams more reasonable timelines and the ability to leave work to working hours.



The second biggest contributor to the high burnout rates at Maikre had to do with a general feeling of lack of purpose across both leadership and project teams. Ever since the company changes made to adapt to the pandemic times, teams had been experiencing a sense of disconnection and lack of purpose in their work. It had become difficult for employees to find a connection between their own work and the company's mission, and this lack of purpose had become a significant contributor to burnout rates as Maikre employees increasingly felt their work meaningless. Thanks to the Motivate solution's quarterly shout-outs, praise was given to those utilizing the new ethics skillsets to align work and decisions with the company mission and values. This new emphasis encouraged Maikre employees to once again find purpose in their individual work and connection to the bigger mission of the company.

Overall, Maikre had learned an important lesson. Although there had been an original need to deploy ethics training for the responsible use of AI, education is only one part of the story. **Motivating people to use that training is absolutely critical to the successful adoption of both ethics and AI tools.**



THE AUTHORS



Antonia Nicols

Antonia Nicols is an organizational design consultant helping global clients shape their business strategy in alignment with emerging technology and governance policies. Her ability to research and anticipate trends, synthesize ideas, and tell compelling stories to engage stakeholders maximizes project return while minimizing workplace disruption, consulting on multiple projects to create AI centers of excellence for large clients. Antonia has also published several articles on ethics in the metaverse and web3.

Olivia Gambelin

One of the first movers in Responsible AI, Olivia is a world-renowned expert in AI Ethics whose experience in utilizing ethics-by-design has empowered hundreds of business leaders to achieve their desired impact on the cutting edge of technological innovation. As the founder of Ethical Intelligence, the world's largest network of Responsible AI practitioners, Olivia offers unparalleled insight into how leaders can embrace the strength of human values to drive holistic business success. She is also the author of the book *Responsible AI: Implement an Ethical Approach in Your Organization* with Kogan Page Publishing, and the creator of The Values Canvas, which can be found at www.thevaluescanvas.com.



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To learn more about why, how and when
to use the Values Canvas, read:

***Responsible AI: Implement an Ethical
Approach in Your Organization***

