

# AgBiome Core Beliefs and Behaviors

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## Purpose

*This document attempts to capture our core behaviors and the beliefs that underlie them. All AgBiome companies should understand and incorporate these values into their structures, strategies, and day-to-day operations. The principles represented by the beliefs should be used as the ultimate standards by which new policies are evaluated or old policies replaced.*

## Beliefs

1. We believe that high trust among employees and between the company and employees is the foundation of happiness and success.
2. We believe that decisiveness, proactivity and the pursuit of excellence are required for success.
3. We believe that employees should be happy at work.
4. We believe that corporate structures are subservient to the problems they solve, and should not outlast the problems and their solutions.
5. We believe that each employee, along with the company, is obligated to create and maintain a culture of mutual commitment.
6. We believe that we must hire and cultivate people who will thrive in this work environment.

## Behaviors

*Our beliefs only have impact if we consistently behave in ways that project and reinforce them. The package of behaviors listed here is meant to be real, practical, and measurable. Putting these into action gives us a powerful and lasting ability to outperform our competition, and to make our daily life at work more fulfilling and happy.*

- Trust: Trust is the foundation of our culture. We trust each other to work passionately toward our common goals. We trust the organization to value each employee and to help them achieve happiness and success.
  - Extend trust toward fellow AgBiomers; trust first
  - Assume positive intent
  - Treat everyone with respect

- Trust people to fulfill commitments
- Excellence: The pursuit of excellence in everything we do is the only way we can achieve our vision. We must hold each other to high standards, help each other learn, and be comfortable questioning everything in a constructive and direct way.
  - Always look for opportunities for improvement and pursue them: “Nothing is sacred; everything can be improved”
  - Pursue excellence in all things, not just your field of specialization: science, leadership, management, sales, marketing, production, interpersonal relationships, ...
  - Be self-motivated
  - Be a positive influence
- Transparency: We err on the side of sharing information. In order for each of us to be able to act in the best interests of the company, we all need to know and understand those interests.
  - Default to open communication: hold open meetings, proactively and freely share information
  - Ask anyone anything, any time
  - Make priorities visible: company, project, team, individual
  - Communicate frequently and proactively about changes and their impact
- Fun: We spend the majority of our waking hours at work. Also, fun for its own sake is good. Enjoy the people you work with and the things you do together.
  - Support others having fun at work
  - Do fun things at work; invite others to participate
  - Take your work seriously, but don't take yourself too seriously
  - Share successes with others
  - Fly your freak flag; be yourself and welcome others being themselves
- Commitment: AgBiome makes a deep commitment to every employee, and every employee reciprocates. Each of us understands what we do and why we do it, and we keep the best interests of the company and each other in mind at all times.
  - Place the interests of the company first
  - Set clear expectations
  - Pursue purpose driven work

- Fulfill commitments, and don't be afraid to say no if you can't do something.
  - Notice when activities or behaviors don't align with company goals/culture and take corrective action. Don't assume someone else will do it. (aka "don't step over the dead bodies")
  - Hold each other accountable for commitments.
  - Know, understand and contribute to the company goals.
  - Take responsibility for our decisions and actions.
  - Work actively to make things better and expect and encourage others to do the same.
  - Speak up and encourage others to do the same.
- Development: We are a practice culture, not a performance culture. The company commits to supporting the professional development of every employee, and every employee commits to develop themselves in a way that aligns with company goals. We select employees for their ability to grow and improve the organization.
    - Learn the measure of excellence in your discipline, and work to actively advance it.
    - Become an expert.
    - Plan to change. Improve yourself.
    - Admit to mistakes and learn from them, rather than hiding from them.
    - Commit to learning and growing.
- Change and Organization: We are committed to organizing ourselves dynamically around problems, rather than into pre-determined structures that may not work as problems change. Teams form and dissolve as work progresses. Roles are dynamic: we will lead on one team and follow on another.
    - Don't equate job security with project stability.
    - Commit to reorganizing when problems change.
    - Learn to thrive in a dynamic environment of change and ambiguity.
    - Understand and help communicate when change happens.
- Feedback: Getting better at our work is the only way to keep the company growing and improving, and we need to understand how we are performing now if we want to get better. Understanding how we are performing in our roles, and how we behave toward others, requires feedback. Commit to giving and receiving frequent feedback (affirmative or corrective).
    - Ask for frequent feedback. Give others permission to give you feedback.

- Help others achieve excellence by providing feedback
- Show appreciation toward others and recognize their contributions
- Conflict: Disagreement happens all the time and can lead to conflict. Conflict is an intrinsic part of human interaction. We have to recognize it and not shy away from it. Avoiding conflict leads to lack of commitment to one another and to the company. Conflict that is resolved constructively leads to higher levels of trust and closer working relationships.
  - Promptly engage in constructive conflict resolution.
  - Be empathetic; work to understand others' points of view and realize people have different communication styles.
  - Be assertive; understand and express your feelings and desires.
- Decisions: We default to taking action.
  - Actively seek and incorporate expert advice.
  - Make decisions, even if you don't have complete information or consensus.
  - Understand who is impacted by a decision, and be transparent during the decision-making process.
  - Respect and commit to decisions made by others.
  - Expect to make mistakes and learn from them.

Our company has minimum behaviors:

1. Place the interests of the company first.
2. Seek and give feedback on a regular basis.
3. Constructively resolve conflicts.
4. Treat others with respect.
5. Make timely decisions by actively seeking and incorporating expert advice.
6. Commit to decisions made by others.
7. Reorganize when priorities change.
8. Fulfill commitments and hold each other accountable.
9. Improve yourself. Learn and grow.
10. Proactively share information.
11. Have FUN!

## **Appendix**

Lots of stuff didn't end up in our statement of Beliefs and Behaviors. Either it wasn't considered, or was outright rejected. Here are some examples (it's not a comprehensive list of "what we don't believe in"):

Performance over everything - only the best get ahead

Achievement of important goals is paramount

Individuals that perform at the highest level will be compensated at the highest level

We believe competition results in the best ideas and results

We strive for consensus for every important decision

Everyone has an equal voice in all decisions

We are only concerned with a loving peaceful work environment and it doesn't matter what we accomplish

How you look and present is more important than the content

Experts make all decisions

Work is work, and fun is something you should do at home or with friends

Hierarchy is important for quick decision making