

Guiding principles

for responsible, trustworthy businesspeople

Any kind of human cooperation is built on trust in common values and practices. Business too cannot function without this basic trust or "social capital". So, it makes commercial sense to invest in this trust. But merely complying with the law is not enough, after all: not everything that is legally acceptable is also honest and fair. Aligning yourself with the common rules of human cooperation allows you to build a reputation as a trustworthy businessman or businesswoman.

These "Guiding principles for responsible, trustworthy businesspeople" were developed by businesspeople of the steering committee "Corporate Responsibility" based on the traditional principles of the "honest merchant" and adopted by the general assembly of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry IHK Darmstadt Rhein Main Neckar. They are intended to provide a modern reference for anyone who makes decisions for or in companies.

Responsible, trustworthy businesspeople

1. possess **commercial judgement**. They have extensive business knowledge that allows them to run their companies successfully.
2. guide themselves in their actions by the **long-term and sustainable success** of their company. This is only possible if they take account of the impact of their business activity on people, the environment and the climate. Generating short-term profits is no primary business goal for them if this could result in disadvantages for long-term success.
3. provide and demand trust. They **stand by their word**; their handshake is binding. They negotiate fairly, fulfil their agreed obligations and bill correctly.
4. take an **open-minded and liberal** position. They rely on a free economic system with open markets that promotes competition for new ideas and solutions.
5. stand for **tolerance** and appreciate the **diversity** of people. Any form of discrimination is incompatible with their ideas of a liberal society.
6. are conscious of their **function as a role model**. They practise their values and inspire others by their own conduct.
7. create the **conditions for responsible action** within their company – as managers who define the value framework, and as employees who get involved and contribute towards practising these values.
8. feel **responsible for their region**. They are committed to preserving and improving economic and social structures – in their own interest and for future generations.
9. stand by their values also in **international business**. As critical partners, they attempt to influence practices that deviate from these values.
10. orient themselves by their moral compass even **in difficult times**. They form a supportive community characterised by mutual support.