Kindland™

JUST BE KIND®

KINDNESS WORKS:

The Business Case for Kindness

Research Demonstrating the Value of Kindness in Leadership, Organizational Performance, Employee Well-Being, and Economic Success

Kindland is presented by Values-in-Action Foundation.

Values in action®

Values-in-Action Foundation

6700 Beta Dr. Ste. 120 | Cleveland, OH 44143 | 440-463-6205 | BeKindland.org

@BeKindland #Kindland

Executive Summary

Kindland
JUST BE KIND

For decades, kindness has often been viewed as a personal virtue rather than a business strategy. Today, a growing body of research from leading universities, healthcare institutions, consulting firms, and business journals demonstrates the opposite.

Organizations that intentionally cultivate cultures of kindness consistently outperform their peers across many of the metrics that matter most to executives, including:

- **Employee engagement**
- **Innovation**
- **Productivity**
- **Financial performance**
- **Retention**
- **Customer loyalty**
- **Organizational resilience**
- **Collaboration**

Kindness is no longer simply "the right thing to do." It is increasingly recognized as a competitive advantage.

Kindness Creates Better Decisions

Kindland
JUST BE KIND

Research consistently shows that kindness encourages:

- Greater cooperation
- Reduced interpersonal conflict
- Higher psychological safety
- Increased willingness to collaborate
- Better decision-making, particularly during periods of uncertainty and stress

As organizations become more complex and knowledge-based, these qualities directly influence innovation and long-term success.

Leadership in Times of Uncertainty

In 2023, the Harvard Business Review concluded that during periods of anxiety and uncertainty, kindness is more than a desirable leadership trait, it is a strategic asset.

- Better thinking
- Stronger collaboration
- Higher creativity
- Improved adaptability
- More effective leadership

"Kindness creates the conditions for better thinking."

Andrew Swinand,
CEO of Publicis Groupe

>> Source

The Health Benefits of Kindness

Kindland
JUST BE KIND

Research summarized by the Mayo Clinic concludes that simple, free, positive acts of kindness produce measurable physical and psychological benefits.

Individuals who regularly practice kindness experience:

- Higher self-esteem
- Greater empathy and compassion
- Improved mood
- Lower stress hormones
- Reduced blood pressure
- Increased social connectedness
- Greater life satisfaction
- Enhanced overall well-being

Kindness benefits not only the recipient, but also the person giving it.

Kindness Improves Workplace Performance

Research by Emma Seppälä and colleagues links psychologically safe, supportive workplaces with healthier and more resilient employees.

- Lower stress levels
- Lower blood pressure
- Stronger immune function
- Higher engagement
- Greater resilience
- Increased retention
- Improved productivity
- Reduced absenteeism
- Better collaboration
- Higher workforce resilience

Healthy organizational cultures produce healthier organizational outcomes.

Kindness Drives Business Value

A 2026 study conducted by George Mason University examined approximately **1,100 publicly traded companies** and found that employee perceptions of kindness and organizational culture were consistently associated with stronger market valuations.

Companies characterized by respect, fairness, employee development, and supportive leadership experience:

- Lower employee turnover
- Higher engagement
- Stronger innovation
- Better organizational performance

The study concluded that perceived kindness functions as an economically meaningful indicator of organizational strength.

Consumers Reward Kind Companies

81% **of consumers are more likely to purchase products or services from companies they perceive as kind.**

Corporate culture increasingly influences customer trust, brand loyalty, and purchasing behavior.

Empathy Improves Retention

A 2023 Deloitte leadership initiative found that managers trained to lead with empathy experienced measurable organizational benefits.

- Greater employee engagement
- Improved workplace relationships
- Approximately 33% lower voluntary turnover within one year

Empathy and kindness strengthen leadership effectiveness while reducing the high costs associated with employee turnover.

>> Source

Kindness Creates Positive Behavioral Change

A four-week workplace study conducted with Coca-Cola Madrid demonstrated the powerful ripple effects of kindness.

- 278% more prosocial behaviors than the control group
- Nearly ten times more positive social interactions by the conclusion of the study
- Higher reported life satisfaction
- Increased job satisfaction that remained measurable months after the study concluded

Kindness spreads through organizations in measurable and sustainable ways.

>> Source

Emerging Research

London Business School (2026)

Hundreds of teams • Thousands of participants

Recent research evaluated how kindness expressed through cooperation, respect, and agreeableness shapes team performance and behavior.

Better team decision-making	Teams are better able to weigh information and reach sound conclusions.
Stronger collaboration	Respect and cooperation improve the quality of working relationships.
Reduced conflict	Constructive behavior helps prevent unnecessary interpersonal friction.
Constructive engagement	Teams show greater willingness to engage productively during difficult situations.

These findings reinforce the growing evidence that kindness is a practical leadership capability, not simply a personal characteristic.

Why This Matters

Kindland
JUST BE KIND

Organizations today face unprecedented challenges:

- Employee burnout
- Talent shortages
- Workplace stress
- Rapid organizational change
- Mental health concerns
- Polarization
- Customer distrust

Traditional management tools alone cannot solve these challenges.

Organizations that intentionally build cultures grounded in kindness, respect, empathy, and psychological safety are better positioned to attract talent, retain employees, innovate, serve customers, and create sustainable long-term value.

Kindness should be viewed not as a "soft skill," but as a strategic organizational asset.

Conclusion

Kindland
JUST BE KIND

The evidence continues to grow.

Across healthcare, psychology, organizational behavior, economics, leadership research, and business performance, one conclusion consistently emerges:

KINDNESS WORKS.

- **It improves individual well-being.**
- **It strengthens organizational culture.**
- **It enhances leadership effectiveness.**
- **It increases customer trust.**
- **It improves business performance.**
- **And it creates stronger, healthier communities.**

As organizations prepare for the future, kindness represents one of the most accessible, affordable, and impactful investments leaders can make.

RESEARCH APPENDIX

The Impact of Kindness in the Workplace

The Economics of Kindness, Baringa (2023)

Summary: Baringa surveyed 6,028 consumers across seven countries to examine how perceptions of corporate kindness influence consumer behavior. Among U.S. respondents, 81% said they were more likely to purchase from companies they considered kind, even during an economic downturn. In addition, 57% said they had refused to purchase a product or service within the previous two years because they perceived the company as unkind.

Top Finding: Corporate kindness can directly influence purchasing behavior. Consumers are more likely to support companies they view as kind and may actively avoid companies they perceive as unkind.

Additional Source:
Kindness Should Be Table Stakes for Your Organization
https://www.baringa.com/en/insights/economics-of-kindness/kindness-should-be-table-stakes/

Everyday Prosociality in the Workplace, Coca Cola Iberia Study (2018)

Summary: In this peer reviewed workplace study, 111 employees were randomly assigned to be givers, receivers, or controls. Givers completed five acts of kindness for designated colleagues over four weeks. Employees who received kindness later performed 278% more prosocial behaviors than the control group, while both givers and receivers experienced longer term well being benefits.

Top Finding: Kindness can spread through a workplace. Employees who receive acts of kindness are more likely to extend positive behaviors to others, creating a measurable ripple effect across the organization.

Additional Source:
PubMed
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28581323/

Citation: Joseph Chancellor, Seth Margolis, Katherine Jacobs Bao, and Sonja Lyubomirsky, "Everyday Prosociality in the Workplace: The Reinforcing Benefits of Giving, Getting, and Glimpsing," *Emotion*, 2018.

Empathy and Effective Management, Deloitte

Summary: Deloitte has published research examining empathy and effective management. However, a specific 2023 "Leading With Empathy" pilot reporting a 33% reduction in voluntary turnover has not been verified.

Top Finding: Deloitte's broader research supports the importance of empathy in management, but the 33% turnover statistic should not be used unless the original source can be located and confirmed.

The Humankindex: Kind Leadership and Innovation, Fast Company (2021)

Summary: A national study of over 3,000 U.S. employees found that organizations with high "Kindness Quotient" scores were dramatically more innovative and purpose-driven. Employees at kind organizations were 5× more likely to rate their workplace as innovative, 120% more likely to feel purpose, and 89% more likely to generate new ideas.

Top Finding: Kindness has a causal relationship with innovation capability and long-term competitive advantage.

Consumers Choose Kind Companies, Baringa (2023)

Summary : A global survey of 6,028 employed consumers found that 81% of U.S. respondents prefer buying from companies they perceive as kind, and 57% have boycotted brands they view as unkind. Kindness was defined through transparency, fair pay, integrity, and community care.

Top Finding: Kindness yields a direct financial advantage, strengthening consumer trust, loyalty, and willingness to pay—especially among younger consumers.

Why Kindness at Work Pays Off, Harvard Business Review (2023)

Summary: Synthesizing decades of research, HBR shows that daily acts of kindness drive measurable gains in engagement, retention, and productivity. Recognition and supportive behaviors release dopamine, serotonin, and endorphins, chemicals strongly linked with performance and well-being.

Top Finding: Kind leadership produces higher productivity and retention, positioning kindness as a cultural performance driver rather than a soft skill.

5 Reasons Making 'Kindfulness' Cool at Work Has Unexpected Positive Consequences, Forbes (2022)

Summary: Pulling from mental health and HR data, this article highlights that kindness reduces loneliness, increases safety, and boosts retention. Importantly, 77% of job seekers prefer companies that explicitly list kindness as a value, and 89% of younger workers rank mental health and kindness as top workplace priorities.

Top Finding: Kindness programming improves talent attraction and retention, workplace safety, and organizational productivity.

The Influence of Kindness on Academics' Identity, Well-Being and Stress, PLOS ONE (2024)

Summary: In a study of 182 professionals, structural equation modeling revealed that receiving dignity-affirming kindness at work increases well-being, strengthens organizational identification, and substantially reduces stress.

Top Finding: Receiving kindness—not only giving it—significantly improves well-being, reduces burnout, and strengthens organizational commitment. Link:

Google's Project Aristotle (Multi-Year Study)

Summary: Google's analysis of 180+ teams found that psychological safety, not talent, seniority, or workload, is the strongest predictor of high performance. High psychological-safety sales teams exceeded targets by 17%, while low-safety teams underperformed by 19%.

Top Finding: Psychological safety, a core expression of kindness in team dynamics, is the number one driver of team effectiveness and innovation.

Everyday Prosociality in the Workplace, UC Riverside / Coca-Cola Iberia Study (2018)

Summary: A month-long intervention with 88 employees at Coca-Cola Iberia showed powerful ripple effects: receivers of kind acts performed 278% more prosocial behaviors, witnessed 10× more kindness, and experienced strong gains in happiness. Givers reported lasting increases in job satisfaction and reduced depressive symptoms.

Top Finding: Kindness spreads through "positive contagion," generating self-sustaining cycles of improved climate, well-being, and performance across organizations.

Research Explains the Big Difference Between Kind and Nice" (Fast Company)

Summary: Explores why "kindness" is more powerful than "niceness" in organizational settings, drawing on Humankindex data and behavioral science research.

Top Finding: Kindness, rooted in accountability and clarity, drives creativity, trust, and team performance, unlike niceness, which avoids conflict and reduces clarity.

Forbes (2024) — "How Kindness Drives Employee Engagement and Business Growth"

Summary: Reviews leadership and engagement research showing that workplace kindness improves morale, strengthens engagement, and contributes to long-term business growth.

Top Finding: Kind leadership is associated with stronger employee engagement and improved business performance outcomes.