MATERIAL
INNOVATION
INITIATIVE

Examples of Values in Action

Assimilating to a new culture is hard, whether it is a move to a new country or a new company. We take our culture very seriously and it is the foundation for all of our interactions, work, and effectiveness. Understanding expectations in how we work with each other is critical. While we have MII's Values, Norms, Ethics, and Code of Conduct to lay out the principles for our interactions, sometimes we all need specific examples of how these values play out in day-to-day life. This is a living document that we will update when we see situations that require more clarity for the team.

Is there a situation or value missing? Please let us know!

Resources:

- MII's Values, Norms, Ethics, and Code of Conduct
- Anonymous form if someone isn't exemplifying MII's values

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Your work and your time

How many hours do we work?

If you are a full-time team member, you should be working 40 hours a week. You may end up working more than 40 hours one week. In that case, please consider working fewer hours next week. In order to prevent burnout, you need to take care of yourself.

If you have too much work on a regular basis, please speak with your supervisor to help prioritize your work. Your supervisor is there to help you prioritize your work. Your supervisor can't help you if they don't know you are overworked. You will not be judged negatively for approaching your supervisor and asking for help.

If you are not working 40 hours a week, please talk to your supervisor about what additional work you should do.

Your time and duties

What is expected of you during normal working hours and on weekends?

- You are expected to structure your 40 hours per week as suits you. However, you should be available during some "normal" working hours (9am - 5pm in your time zone) for phone calls with other team members and stakeholders.
- Please remember to turn off emails and Slack notifications on the weekend if you are someone who feels the need to respond or will check work.

> *Example:* My supervisor emails me on a Saturday, how do I respond? You don't! Wait until Monday (unless you're working part of your 40 hours, in which case, respond). Don't worry, no one gets more brownie points by responding on the weekends.
>
> *Example:* Ok, but my supervisor tells me it's urgent – do I need to do it now? No, your supervisor should be aware it is your weekend, but you can prioritize it when you are back at work. Please let Human Resources know if this is a recurring problem. And remember - turn off your notifications!

Doublechecking your work

Please make sure you double-check your work. Google Docs offers a spelling and grammar checker - take advantage of it. (Grammarly is also a great, free option.) We are a professional organization serving professional audiences who have high standards. Whether we agree with it or not, people do make assumptions that our analysis is sloppy if our words and presentation are sloppy. Please always strive to present your work in a professional manner. Questions to ask as you read back through your work:

- Where is the audience coming from and what information do they have already?
- How do people flow through it / how do they intake the information?
- Does it offer the information the reader needs?
- Is it concise but informative?

> *Example*: when Cortney and Nicole were making the itinerary for the retreat, they used the website to come up with names to facilitate the sessions. However, Elissa wasn't on the website yet so she was left off as a facilitator. During a second review, they realized Elissa was left off and were able to add her before sharing.
>
> *Example*: Cortney submitted Board documents for Board approval but had made many typos/mistakes, including misspelling "Material" in the title. A quick re-read would have saved the embarrassment!
>
> *Example*: when making a form, do a test run to see how people will experience it and flow through it.

Be a critical thinker

Think about who your audience is, what they need to know, and what background you need to provide for them to understand what you're stating. This principle applies to all of your work: internal and external.

Making Decisions

When making decisions, think about who will be affected by the decision. Have a conversation with that person(s) affected. If you disagree about who is making the decision or what that decision is, raise it with that person. If you don't feel like you can raise it with the person, speak to a third party including, but not limited to, your supervisor or Human Resources.

I made a mistake - now what?

If you make a work mistake, be transparent about it. Be accountable. Ask yourself if you need to own your mistake to your supervisor and/or other team members.

Apologize for the mistake, find a solution, and fix it.

> *Example:* If you missed a deadline because you got too drunk the night before and slept in, you don't need to detail that. You do need to say, "I'm sorry I missed it because I slept in. And I'll get it to you within the hour."
>
> *Example:* Nicole sent a newsletter out to MII supporters about the use of silk and the number of silkworms required to make silk. She had made an incorrect calculation leading to inflated numbers. A supporter emailed her pointing out the mistake. She then researched the figure, realized the supporter was correct, and needed to take action to correct her mistake. She emailed all of the newsletter subscribers with an explanation for the mistake, the correct information, a calculation on how she came up with the new numbers, an apology for the mistake, and she gave credit to the supporter for the help.

Come with solutions, not just issues

Problems will happen. Don't just repeatedly raise issues without raising solutions too (although we recognize this isn't possible in 100% of situations).

If others have solutions, work with them to find the best solution and outcome possible.

You should respond to emails in your inbox within 48 hours

You may need to send a holding email but it should be sent within the 48 hours. Similarly, if you need information from an email recipient, please ensure you detail the deadline in your email

- *Example:* You are working hard on the Year in Review report and will be working full-time on the project all week. You receive an email from a colleague asking you a question. Instead of answering next week when you are no longer working

on the project, you send an email saying, “I am working all week on the Year in Review. Mind if I get back to you next week?” Then add an Asana task to reply so you don’t forget!
    - *Example*: You have an urgent question for Cortney. She is in the middle of a big project and may not respond until the project is finished. You should either put “HOT” in the subject line or detail a deadline by which you need the information in the email – preferably both.

Your Job Responsibilities

You should have a **job description** and it should **reflect your current responsibilities**. If you don’t or if it doesn't match your actual responsibilities, you need to speak with Operations. This is important - don’t let it slide!

Mental Health Days

Mental health days are meant to help avoid burnout and are not just “free” days off. They exist to support you during emergencies (including days where you are mentally struggling or feeling completely overwhelmed), diagnosis, and preventative care.

You must report mental health days (to Cort for now). If we find a person taking too many mental health days, we need to talk about overload, larger issues, taking more time away from work, etc. Please note, you need not reveal why you are taking the days but it helps Human Resources know if your workload is too much.
Diagnosed mental health issues requiring medical support should be told to Human Resources (you don’t have to reveal that it’s mental health or what the diagnosis is), but this will allow us to understand why you are taking time off, particularly large amounts of time off. It will also allow us to make any reasonable accommodations for your working life and health. Note: we don’t need to know all of your diagnoses; this only applies if it is affecting your ability to work and/or work your hours.

- **Time in lieu** - when you work more than your hours one week (or day, or month), you are entitled to what’s called time in lieu.
    - Time in lieu has to be taken within ten (10) working days of the increased time working. If you work 60 hours each week for the month of May, please take 20 hours each week throughout the month of June (or a week off in June).

- *Example*: I worked hard on the conference, working 60-hour weeks for an entire month. Can I take 2 days off? Yes! Take the time off but note that these do not qualify as mental health days.
    - *Example:* I travel for work on a Sunday meaning I did not have a two-day weekend. Take the next working day off!

- **Unlimited PTO**
    - Unlimited PTO (with a minimum of 15 days, 5 of which must be taken consecutively) is a great benefit. However, it doesn't mean you can take a week off every month. You still must complete your job to a satisfactory degree.

    - *Example:* I work more than 40 hours per week on the regular. I plan to take five weeks per year where I'm only working 10 hours per week. This is ok because you're making up over time!
    - *Example*: I take a few days throughout the year but then want to take a three-week vacation during the summer. Please check with your supervisor to ensure this doesn't interrupt any other leave or projects in your department. You may have to check-in with your supervisor once or twice during your vacation, but this is totally fine as long as your work is getting done on either side!

- You must **share information in the weekly reports**, where appropriate. You should record information that is helpful and/or interesting to the team. Think about if you were on another team, what you would want to know?
    - What may seem boring to you but it may be integral.
    - If it displays our culture and/or values in action, then please include it.

    - *Example:* You may need to pull LinkedIn connections software into emails. If you don't share this information, someone else may know software to assist or find it important to their work.
    - *Example*: You made a mistake but emailed the affected stakeholders to explain your error and corrected yourself. Please include this in the newsletter! It a) shows accountability, honesty, and willingness to fix your mistakes and b) normalizes not knowing everything and being human.

- **You must read the weekly reports**. The weekly reports are not an exercise in everyone thinking through what they've done that week. They are there to inform the other departments and team members. Please take the time to read each weekly report. Should you have any questions, please raise them with the relevant department or, if you feel your question would be useful for everyone else, ask in Slack inline with the weekly report.

- A **healthy workplace** means that it is a safe work environment where you are encouraged to be yourself while doing your work. It means it is a workplace where life-work balance is allowed and encouraged without taking advantage of the system. It does not mean that you will be happy with your work 100% of the time. It does not mean that your work will not be critiqued. It does not mean that your colleagues must be your friends. It does not mean that you are guaranteed a job with MII and therefore don't have to abide by our values or complete your work.

Working with others

- The way you **approach a situation makes a difference** in how people answer the situation.
    - Describe situations from your perspective to others and provide examples of behaviors, particularly when detailing any difficulties or upsetting interactions. This can be difficult to do so try to avoid saying "this is what you're doing. Do you want to add anything/What do you have to say?" Instead try something like, "I noticed when I did/said X, you responded with Y. Can we discuss that further?" Give them the space to share what happened from their perspective. Think about how the other person will perceive the request.

    - *Example*: At team meetings, we should be asking "what do we want to discuss at the next team meeting" rather than "this is what we will be discussing at the next team meeting."
    - *Example*: In your 1:1 with your supervisor, they are short with you about a task you just completed. Instead of letting it stew or being angry, try asking "It seems like I may have done something that upset you?" This will put the onus on the supervisor who will need to detail what is going on. Asking "why are you being so short with me?" will automatically put anyone on edge and it can easily devolve into animosity and/or denial.

- **Calendars**. If you put something on someone else's calendar, please include an agenda or at least tell them what the call is about. This ensures everyone comes to the call prepared.
    - If you want a social call, you have to ask as not everyone is in a position to have a social call. Not everyone is available or wants to be social. Please be mindful of this.
    - We encourage social get-togethers but more along the lines of a coffee break during the work day or longer after hours. Having hour-long phone calls to socialize should be done outside of your work hours.

    - *Example:* You add a calendar invite to Nicole's calendar to discuss synthetic materials. You don't add an agenda or even a brief description. Nicole shows up unprepared because she did not know what the meeting was for. To the extent possible, please always include an agenda.

- **Notes**. All meetings should have notes, especially external meetings. Ensure these are saved on the Drive and can be found in a search.

- **Assume best intentions** when working with your colleagues. If you're worried someone is upset with you, it's best to address your feelings directly.
  - Don't let issues fester. Raise it when they happen so issues can be sorted sooner rather than later.
  - Just talk to them (or email them).
  - Consider raising the issue with them in a gentle way, leaving room for their perspective.

  - *Example:* Cortney is short with you in an email and you feel slightly offended by it, especially because you have been working through some personal issues and she doesn't seem to have remembered that. Assume best intentions. Ask yourself, "is this normally how her emails read?" If not, or if it is worrying to you, email or call Cortney and ask, "Are you ok? Your email seemed short with me and I wanted to check in."

- **We expect the vast majority of situations internal to MII is caused by ignorance. However, this may not be true for best intentions. The person who is best to judge the situation is the person who was hurt by the situation. You need not always assume best intentionsif someone has violated our Values and/or Code of Conduct.** If someone is intentionally malicious, or if they are careless with the effect of causing harm, best intentions should not be assumed. We do not assume misogyny, sexism, racism, ageism, xenophobia or any other -ism is done with best intentions. These actions will be taking seriously and dealt with accordingly. HR is a safe space and you should feel comfortable bringing issues to HR.

- If someone in the organization has **upset or angered you**, try not to be short with them and don't ignore them.
  - If the person reports to you, you must speak with them.
  - If you report to the person, speak to them as soon as possible in a gentle way. If you feel uncomfortable with that, speak to HR to talk about solutions.

- **Honesty and transparency.** Honesty doesn't mean you need to share everything with your colleagues. Share what you're comfortable with and share what's necessary for the situation with that individual person. Your relationship will differ depending on the person you are speaking with.

- If you **change your due dates in Asana**, share that with your colleagues affected and update their due dates accordingly. This will avoid the situation where people have set aside time to complete a task only to learn that the task isn't ready for them to complete. If you assign a task to someone in Asana, make sure you put in a due date.

- I’ve been tagged in a **task on Asana but it’s not my task**. What should I do?
    - Message the person who assigned you the task and ask for clarity. Do not just assign the task to the person you think should be assigned. It may be the case that you were assigned that task for a reason and it should not be reassigned.

- **If you think someone is acting in a way having a negative effect on the team**. Please speak directly to the person, Human Resources, or your supervisor. You may also use the anonymous form. Detail what you’re seeing and why you think there is a negative impact on the team.

- If you are approached with a **negative perception of your behavior**, remember best intentions. If this person is coming to you, it must be because they have noticed something they perceive as being negative.

    - *Example:* Someone on the team approached me with a negative perception of my behavior. It made me mad or angry or sad. What should I do?
        - Assume best intentions: “Thank you for raising this with me. Can you expand on that? [...] I thought this was important to raise because A, B, and C but I can see that that may be perceived as negative. If I had phrased it in this way instead, would that have been better?”

- If you think **someone is doing their job poorly or incorrectly** and you think you can help them, think about whether the person has already thought of this or how you can best raise your solution. This can be a touchy subject, particularly if your field of expertise is not the same as theirs. Ask for a meeting to discuss your ideas and present your reasoning why you think your idea(s) is the better route. Ultimately, if they still disagree or follow their own path, you have to accept their expertise and move on.

- **Always refer to the experts on the team (or even outside the team).** Please remember that none of us can do everything. We are a team because we each bring our own experiences, thoughts, and expertise. You must rely on each other to get the best work product possible. If you are in Development, you cannot know SciTech work intimately enough to make decisions for the team or, in some instances, even for use in your own work. Coordinating with your colleagues is what they are there for, and it often means you have to ask them to help you complete your work (e.g., drafting a grant application). No one is going to think less of you or your ability to do your job by asking for help from the experts.

    - *Example*: Alexis is writing a grant report on synthetic materials. She understands that SciTech is an integral part to this application but she doesn’t want to bother Sydney or Ranjani for help in drafting the technical parts of the application. However, without coordination with the SciTech team, including asking them to draft the more technical parts of the application, she is doing MII a disservice. In this instance, Alexis would be utilizing the expertise of the SciTech department for the benefit of MII and our public. (Note: this is not a real-life example and is for use for illustration purposes only!)

- **Ask questions first and offer opinions second.** In meetings, questions should always be asked first before offering any opinions. Important questions to ask are key facts, positives and negatives of different perspectives or outcomes, and ensuring you fully understand the situation at hand. After questions have been asked and you understand the situation at hand better, you can then offer your opinion and/or thoughts on the subject matter.

- **Weekly team calls**. What is expected of me for weekly team calls?
  - You are expected to read the pre-readings and agenda before the meeting.
  - You are expected to have your camera on for most of the team meetings. Because we are entirely remote, putting names to faces and having that "face to face" time is very important.
    - Of course, sometimes this won't work for you or isn't feasible. We'd rather have you in attendance without your camera on but you need to appear on camera more often than not.

- **You don't know everything**. It's ok to not know what you don't know! Saying "I don't know that. Let me get back to you" is a completely valid and complete statement. At this point, go away and talk to others who might know the answer. Once you know, go back to the original question with the stakeholder and let them know what you found out. No one expects you to know everything; please don't think you should.

- I **worry about raising an idea or question** because I don't know if it's important/stupid. Should I mention it? Yes! There are no stupid questions or small ideas. Your comment or question might be on the minds of other people. It may also be useful in helping us think of something in a different light or raise something others hadn't yet considered.
  - If someone raises an idea or comment you think is silly, remember that explanations help us grow, as people and professionals. It's likely that we will all ask silly questions or raise something unrelated at some point.

Supervision

- **Setting priorities.** Your supervisor may go over your priorities with you in your 1:1 meetings. They may trust you to manage your own priorities. Please note that either approach is more of a management style than a comment on the individual. If you would prefer one approach above the other, please speak with your supervisor. If you are feeling overwhelmed or confused, speak with your supervisor for help in setting your priorities.

    - *Example:* My supervisor just gave me a new assignment without a deadline. Now I am uncomfortable and don't know how to prioritize. I'm feeling overwhelmed with no direction. Speak to your supervisor about it sooner rather than later. Tell them you are struggling and need help prioritizing.
        - As a supervisor, ensure you are taking the time to hear what your supervisee is saying. Assist them in understanding what their workload is and what their priorities should be.

- **Explaining tasks and reasons**. It is important to explain why something should be done the way it is and why it is being done in the first place. Part of this is to encourage and include team members. Another part is opening up the conversation to other team members' ideas that could be useful or even just providing the context for them to complete their job successfully. Finally, MII encourages career development. Providing background and explanation assists in growing our team members in their career progression.

    - *Example:* Do I take 15 minutes to explain why we do something and/or how we do it? Or can I just spend 5 minutes telling someone the way I want it done or even doing it myself.
        - Take the extra time to explain how and why something is done. Delegation ultimately makes it easier for you and will give you time in the future to do other tasks. Without knowing why we are doing something, the person doing the task will understand how something should be done and why it is important.

- Every supervisory relationship at MII should have **weekly 1:1 meetings**. These meetings are a time to discuss challenges, celebrate successes, prioritize workload, information-share, and generally catch up. If you are not having regular meetings with your supervisor, please speak with your supervisor or Human Resources.

- **Everyone processes information differently**. Please be mindful of this. Some people will process conversations or information immediately, others need time and space to process. Be aware of others' processing styles and figure out how best to work together. It does not matter whether you process information in the moment or after some space as long as you work together to find what works best for both of you.

    - *Example*: Cortney processes information via writing. Often, Nicole will raise an issue or thought with her in their weekly 1:1s. Cortney will ask if she can think about the topic and revert back, usually in a long email detailing her thought process. Nicole and Cort may then have another call to further discuss or it may become an email conversation. Nicole, on the other hand, processes information in the moment and can often detail her thinking in the moment. Both styles are legitimate.

- How do you **raise micromanaging** with your supervisor? MII wants to foster a work environment where people are comfortable raising issues, even with their supervisors. We hope you feel comfortable in gently raising it by saying something such as, "I've been tasked with this project but I feel you may not trust me to complete it. Can we discuss that?"
    - If you don't feel comfortable raising it with your supervisor, speak to Human Resources.
    - As a supervisor, if your supervisee raises concerns that you may be micromanaging, feel free to take some time away from the conversation to think over this, if needed. "I hear what you're saying. Can you provide some examples? Do you mind if I think through it and come back to you about it?" As long as you actually revisit the conversation later. If you have been micromanaging or feel you no longer trust them to complete their work, provide the feedback that makes you feel that way and discuss the next steps to help rectify the situation. No one should be micromanaging anyone else's work but a loss of trust is often a sign of a larger issue.

- **Pushing back on your supervisor and others.** There is a way to push back without making it personal. You can use "I think" statements or raise concerns in a constructive manner.
    - At some point, the decision(s) have been made and you will have to let your pushback go. This absolutely does not mean that you should not raise your opinions on the next decision.

    - *Example:* There is a team discussion about a decision. A decision is made but a team member disagrees with it. The team member should raise their concerns during the discussion process, e.g., "I think we should consider Solution B because Solution A seems to be a problem for these reasons." Ultimately, after a conversation, you have to abide by the decision that is made and move on. Sometimes, it is easy to dwell on the issue but it can hinder your ability to work and act as a team member.

Have we missed something? Let us know!

Nicole's notes from retreat:

Examples of internal innovation:
- Info sessions for the open positions
- Weekly reports - can add categories if something doesn't fit

What do we want from you?
- Approach your work with curiosity, learning, and ownership.
- Ask questions when you don't understand something.

-