



Value-sensitive briefing.

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Publication date:
2021

Document Version
Peer reviewed version

[Link back to DTU Orbit](#)

Citation (APA):
van der Voordt, T., & Jensen, P. A. (2021). Value-sensitive briefing.
<https://betterbriefingfordesign.com/2021/10/28/value-sensitive-briefing/>

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Value-based briefing

Theo van der Voordt and Per Anker Jensen

The concept of “value” refers to what is important to people in their lives, ethics, and morality, and to beliefs that steer our behaviour and everyday actions. In addition to universal human values, cultural differences come to the fore as well. For instance, a feminine culture is associated with being more cooperative and caring for the quality of life, whereas a masculine culture is associated with being more competitive and striving for success. Similar differences come to the fore in organisational cultures. In workplace design, a high power distance may result in a higher level of privacy, territoriality, extra square meters, and a luxurious interior design for top managers, as an expression of their status and position in the organisation. Organisations who adopt the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility will likely pay more attention to societal values such as sustainability and incorporate the triple P of People, Planet and Profit or Prosperity.

Value-sensitive design and management

Architectural design may be defined as a synthesis of form, function and technology, embedded in a social, cultural, economic, and political context, and subject to specified conditions such as time, money and legislation. The last decades, a plea is coming to the fore to addressing *human values* as well, so-called value-sensitive design, for instance health and safety and equal treatment of people.

In the area of Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM) and Facilities Management (FM), a growing body of knowledge is being developed on how buildings, facilities, and services can add value to clients, end-users and other stakeholders, and society as a whole. “Added” refers to the difference between alternative choices. Adding value through well-thought design and management choices in the development of new buildings or interventions in buildings-in-use regards the trade-off between their contribution to the fulfilment of organisational objectives, end-user needs, interests of other stakeholders, and societal values, and the costs, risks and sacrifices to achieve these benefits.

Briefing for a better fit with human needs and interests

Incorporating societal values and values of clients, end users and other stakeholders in design and management of the built environment is a prerequisite to provide a sustainable built environment that fits with people’s needs and interests. Incorporating “value-thinking” in the briefing process is important as well. A main distinction is the one between transaction value and use value. The former focuses on the economic trade-off between costs and benefits such as increased value of assets and return on investment. The latter focuses on end-user requirements such as workplaces that contribute to employee satisfaction, health and safety, productivity, creativity and innovation. Client’s values include inter alia a positive image, support of organizational culture, adaptability, risk control, and corporate social responsibility.

It is quite difficult to incorporate all values at the same time and to balance between conflicting values and different needs of various stakeholders. User involvement with workshops and brainstorm sessions may help to prioritize different values on level of importance, urgency and feasibility, and how to translate values in spatial and functional requirements in the briefing phase.

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