



LIVING OUR VALUES

WE ANIMALS
MEDIA

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At We Animals Media we are guided by the core values of generosity, collaboration, excellence, leadership and integrity. This Living Our Values document describes how these values are reflected in the way we conduct ourselves as a team and as an organization.

It paints a practical picture of the behaviours that are fundamental to who we are and how we function. This picture is something we hold ourselves up to and call ourselves into. When something shows up that is not this, it will call us to adjust. All team members are empowered to hold each other accountable to living our values.

This document was created from an exercise the WAM team conducted during which we brainstormed the ways the WAM values are exemplified in how we conduct, and aspire to conduct, our day-to-day work. Those exemplifications were then synthesized and categorized under the headings in this document.





HOW WE THINK ABOUT OUR WORK AS A NONPROFIT AND ANIMAL PHOTOJOURNALISM AGENCY

WAM as an organization is grounded in generosity and excellence. We are thought leaders that get our work done through collaboration and integrity. Our work serves animals by serving the people and organizations working to create change with powerful visuals.

We aim to be the best in the world at documenting the animal issues of our time. From the photographs to the captions and presentation, our work keeps the bar high for animal photojournalism.

We hold ourselves to the highest benchmarks with everything we produce. Our work is recognized as being high quality photojournalism, on par with industry leaders for visual quality and journalistic standards.

We are also thought leaders. We recognize that we don't have a recipe to follow and must spearhead a new genre to accomplish our mission – and we recognize that this will sometimes feel uncertain and unstable. At the same time, we aim to remain humble. We seek guidance and learn from those who have accomplished important things before us.

While we aim to be the best at animal photojournalism, we are never in direct competition with others. Our allegiance is to animals and the people making change for animals. We work together towards that goal, not against, and we never forget that what got us here today is our spirit of generosity, and in return, the generosity of our donors and supporters.



HOW WE CAPTURE AND TELL ANIMAL STORIES (AND HOW WE DON'T)

As a photojournalism agency, integrity in the entire storytelling process – from editing images to writing captions to pitching stories – is paramount to exposing the facts of the matter, as well as gaining and maintaining the trust of audiences, users and collaborators.

At the same time, we don't pretend to be objective or impartial observers. We value animals as subjects with lives worth documenting and reporting on. Their stories are diverse and important and we strive to portray them in ways that further their interests. We bring visibility to the practices animals are subject to because we want to see an end to them. By the fact that we choose what to investigate and document we recognize impartiality is not possible, yet we are committed to not distorting the truth.

We also recognize that who is behind the lens and telling the stories makes a difference to how a story is portrayed and value diversity in our photojournalists and storytellers as essential to producing the highest quality work.

We recognize that storytelling is a creative endeavour and give space and support to, and put trust in, our photojournalists to execute their vision.

Our photographers and videographers hold themselves to our code of ethics. While we're a vegan organization at heart, we believe that a plurality of approaches is beneficial to improving welfare and decreasing suffering.



HOW WE COMMUNICATE, INTERACT AND WORK WITH OUR USERS, CONTRIBUTORS, DONORS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS (AND HOW WE DON'T)

USERS AND PARTNERS

We serve those working to create change for animals, and that's present in how we communicate and what we prioritize. We keep a close eye on trends so we can provide what's most useful for campaigns and media. We serve with our photojournalism and also with our expertise and guidance. We are prepared to provide pro-bono services where necessary to ensure promising organizations are able to conduct high-impact investigations and campaign work. We are friendly, personal, professional and helpful.

PHOTOGRAPHERS / VIDEOGRAPHERS

All animal photojournalists (APJs) are comrades, never competitors. We support APJs whether they work for us or not. Photographers want to work for us because they are inspired by our mission and because of our reputation as leaders in the field. Our artists are financially compensated for their work and supported through training, mentorship and guidance.

DONORS AND FUNDING BODIES

We are a non-profit organization and recognize this work requires funding supplied by individual donors and funding bodies. We keep our donors up to date on the work we are doing and explain its value. While we generate some revenue from sales, our work is made possible by the people who fund We Animals Media because they believe in our mission. We recognize that we are accountable to our donors and use their donations strategically and effectively. We believe our work will continue to be financially supported so long as we serve the people working for animals through our spirit of generosity.

VOLUNTEERS

We value the time and skills that volunteers give freely to our organization and we recognize the impact of their contribution to our mission. We show our appreciation and offer opportunities for learning and building community.



HOW WE COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER (AND HOW WE DON'T)

We strive for a culture of direct communication (clear is kind) and recognize that this is not always the easiest thing to do. We take ownership of mistakes, miscommunications or dropped balls without excuses, knowing that this type of accountability wins far more respect than skirting blame. “Oops, that was on me” goes a long way. We value hearing from the various voices on our team. We don’t shy away from rumbles (aka disagreements); we see constructive, respectful disagreement as important to the collaboration process and instrumental in achieving standards of excellence.

We empower thoughtful decision making. There comes a time when after considering multiple sources of information, a decision must be made by the project owner. We empower that decision even if we would have made it differently, recognizing that there are different ways to achieve desired outcomes.

We empower each other to set and respect boundaries. Saying no and creating space for others to say no can sometimes be the kindest thing for ourselves and for a sustainable work culture.

We do not diminish each other or our work. We are actively committed to a culture free of gossip and as such encourage each other to work out issues directly first as much as possible. Most issues can be resolved with each other directly. If interactions with another person are discussed it is with the sole purpose of how to improve those interactions.



HOW WE GET OUR WORK DONE AS A TEAM (AND HOW WE DON'T)

We are strategic and we plan thoughtfully. Our projects all have a purpose that ties to our strategic plan and objectives. Any new initiative is first justified as serving our plan.

We know that our work is made stronger through cross-departmental collaboration, gathering feedback and iteration. We enjoy the process of collaboration, avoid attachment to our own ideas and remain open to the notion that other approaches may also further our goals.

We give projects the time and space they need to be done well in service of excellence. The work environment at WAM is deliberately not fast-paced; we work carefully so that we can achieve more for animals. We are fast and efficient when a problem is truly urgent and when we are responding to a newsworthy issue.

Goals and projects have a single owner. Owners can and are encouraged to delegate, and ultimately owners are accountable for a project's success. We give lead time when

assigning deadlines and communicate as soon as possible when they look unachievable and negotiate adjustments. We're flexible about deadlines when it makes sense.

We acknowledge the subject matter of our work can be emotionally difficult and that people manage this differently. We put systems in place to mitigate emotional distress and burnout, including limiting unnecessary exposure to graphic images. It is not a job requirement to "suck it up".

As a remote team, we value schedule autonomy and flexibility; it is up to team members to create a work schedule that works best for their productivity and collaboration with the rest of the team. We honour our commitments and each other's time by ensuring each meeting has a purpose and begins and ends on time.

Fun and light-heartedness are essential. We take the time to crack a joke or make that pun.

HOW WAM TREATS ITS STAFF

WAM is seen as a good place to work. WAM treats its team members as individuals with full lives, not merely as job functions. Our policies and practices are set up to extend support to individuals day-to-day and in times of need in a manner that supports and prioritizes the overall health of the team. WAM encourages its team members to standards of excellence through performance reviews and further training opportunities. Focus is on quality of outputs and collaboration rather than time spent at a desk.

While we understand that our team members are drawn to contribute to the mission, we recruit, retain and reward talent by offering fair and transparent pay, recognition and perks. Our recruitment processes are respectful and structured to reduce bias.

HOW WE LEARN AND HOW WE HANDLE MISTAKES

It matters to us that our work is achieving real-world impact. To that end we take learning seriously by setting goals and using data to measure the effectiveness of our strategies wherever possible, recognizing that we achieve little without the groups we serve and that outcomes often take a long time to materialize. We take the time to actively learn together by reflecting on projects and are more than willing to admit to suboptimal outcomes. Doing so allows us to learn and ultimately be more effective for animals.





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