



# Responsible Guiding Principles 101

The world is complex. Technology has consequences. There will always be trade-offs. Over and above the law, you need guiding principles to align on and create collective responsibility within organisations and projects.

But what makes a good guiding principle? What makes a guiding principle responsible or ethical? How many principles should you have and how can they work together? We've created some guidance below:

## Guidance For Responsible Guiding Principles

- **They cost you.** A guiding principle articulates what you do and what you stand for. That inherently means it also declares what you don't do - and this may close some doors or opportunities.
- **They provide direction and clarity.** Principles are statements of intent about how you are achieving your mission and vision. It should be clear both internally and externally who is valued by the organisation and how you conduct business. Responsible principles will include more stakeholders than only the organisation and its users.
- **They describe behaviour.** They describe how someone in an organisation interprets a value into how they make decisions. Principles should be true, not dreams.
- **They take consequences into account.** They should outline an organisations risk appetite and where it is ok to fail and where it is not.
- **They outline responsibility.** Principles address ethical concerns related to the work and give guidance on where to draw lines and how to be inclusive.
- **They position an organisation in the context of its communities.** They outline the relationship between the org and the communities it operates within, and how they want to be in those communities.
- **They guide a value exchange.** They share what the value exchange between stakeholders are.
- **You can tell stories about them.** All of your principles should have a story behind how they came to be, why they are important to your organisation, and how they are used in practice within daily decision-making.
- **You can count them on one hand.** Or maybe on a hand a half – but they should be memorable.
- **They build and support each other.** Principles should work together as a set that spell out the secret sauce of your organisation. They should not actively contradict each other.