

AEB

Common Ground



The people at AEB ...

- ... put shared success ahead of personal gain.
- ... accept responsibility, shape and make decisions.
- ... make consensus-based rather than top-down decisions.
- ... live and love change.
- ... are fair, open, trusting, and appreciative of others.
- ... avoid rules and embody principles.

This makes work fun and inspires passion.

Our values

Our actions are guided by the universal values of justice, tolerance, respect, and autonomy. What this means:

- We offer everyone the same opportunity and do not disadvantage anyone.
- We respect other opinions, perspectives, and attitudes besides our own.
- We practice respectful interaction.
- We create space for autonomy in our work and lives.

Trust

Trust enables courage, openness, and a willingness to make mistakes, paving the way to sound decision-making and powerful, informed actions.

- You have trust in your skills and the teamwork at AEB, giving you strength and confidence to shape the future of AEB together with others.
- You build trust through dialog and don't undermine it by talking about others.
- You can trust all your colleagues to act in AEB's interests – and vice versa.

Openness

Your thoughts and actions come from a place of curiosity, openness, and transparency.

- You welcome and nurture a diversity of opinion and an openness to the perspectives and cultures of others.
- You don't hide your opinion – but you don't insist on being right.
- You communicate with fairness, treat others as equals, and welcome being challenged by other opinions through dialog, feedback, discussions, and arguments.
- You like to share information and knowledge and are transparent in your actions.
- You are curious and you open yourself to, reflect upon, and integrate new trends.

Long-term thinking

Our thoughts and actions reflect long-term goals, with a balance of flexibility and stability.

- You make sure your relationships with customers, partners, and colleagues improve steadily over time.
- You prioritize the common effort toward long-term goals and values over short-term successes.
- You look toward the future but are reliable in the here and now.
- You ensure we don't lose sight of our goals while always fine-tuning them to keep abreast of constant change.

Authenticity

Trusting and open interaction with each other is made possible by people who are authentic and fit in with the values of AEB.

- You are aware of your impact and know your strengths and weaknesses.
- You act in a way that is consistent with your character, convictions, and values.
- You are unique and genuine without being self-absorbed.
- You accept yourself as you are and those around you as they are.
- You are credible, sincere, and honest, so your colleagues can count on you.

Purpose

Purpose helps us do the right things well, providing the rationale and identity that guide our work at AEB.

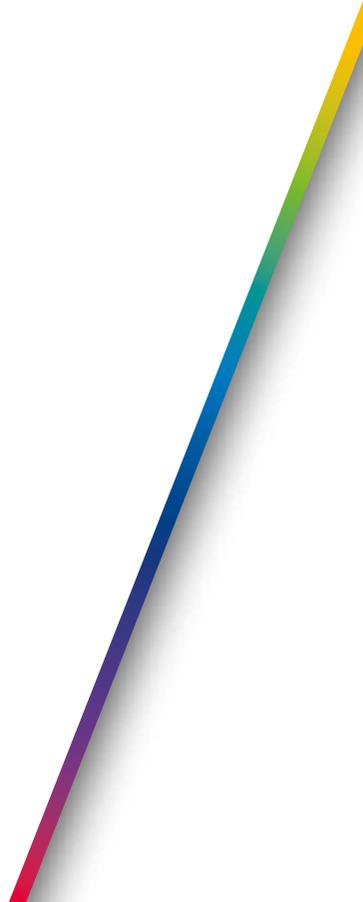
- You ask why so that your actions can engender the right benefit and added value.
- You focus on meaning and results instead of processes and procedures.
- You continuously reflect on whether you are prioritizing the right things and focusing your expertise and energy on the right issues.
- You question actions that are inconsistent with our values, goals, and culture.

Taking responsibility and initiative

We are convinced that people want to take responsibility for themselves and the topics they care about and that everyone can shape change.

- You engage in discussions and make your own decisions.
- You act under your own initiative, not that of others.
- You bear responsibility for the consequences of your actions or inaction.
- You structure yourself, deal with your own actions, and don't point your finger at others.
- You offer constructive feedback and accept it in the same spirit.
- You take care of yourself, reflect on yourself, take responsibility for your own well-being, and make sure you're doing well emotionally and mentally.

How employees describe AEB's Common Ground



A photograph of a group of people in a meeting. In the foreground, a man with short brown hair and a light beard, wearing a grey hoodie, is looking towards the right. In the background, another man with grey hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, is smiling. The background is bright and out of focus. A semi-transparent white banner with a colorful diagonal line on the left side is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

An enthusiastic team means fun,
and fun means success

We devote so much of our time to work, so it only makes sense to infuse our work life with meaning – to work with purpose and joy. And that’s exactly what you get at AEB.

You experience enthusiastic people who are balanced and happy. Who make the company more successful with their attitude and way of working. You meet people who were selected for the power of their personality. You quickly realize how much importance was attached to hiring people who not only have the necessary expertise but also fit into the appreciative environment at AEB – with the goal of working together in such an environment that sparks inspiration and joy each day.

AEB’s values create the forum and nurture a spirit that at its core is defined by humanity and collaboration. Every day, you encounter people who enjoy working at a company with these values and want to help AEB grow with its values. The best results are achieved when you have fun at your work. Fun that you have together with others in an environment with diverse characters and where you can be yourself. When people can use and contribute their strengths, they make an impact and inspire others. This generates space for creativity and lets you live out your curiosity. This is exactly why you see employees getting together even outside of AEB in their free time. You work in open offices and chat with cheerful people when you

take a break in one of the coffee corners. You’ll run into your colleagues at various group sports activities and share hobbies with them. Your performance reviews are held offsite in a restaurant of your choice, and team events and project wrap-up celebrations are not just about work.

“The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.”
It’s most fun to work with people who perform and who pull together to move the ball forward. We inspire one another, we are creative together, and we become better collectively. You are reliable and can count on your colleagues, because it is shared success that drives you, and everyone is part of it. And that is precisely why successes and profit-sharing dividends are shared equally.

People are attracted to interesting topics, so you are not told what tasks to do. There are shared goals, missions, and the appropriate framework to guide you. You take on the tasks that you are passionate about and are in the interests of AEB. Even in an ideal environment, of course, there are tasks that don’t light your fire but still need to get done. Here you join with others, applying sense and reason and unafraid to tackle uncomfortable tasks. All of this contributes to AEB’s image as a place where people can work autonomously on meaningful assignments. Because only when you see meaning in your work do

you develop a bond to your subject and a passion that yields good results.

One’s personal life is also an ingredient in happiness and balance. “Work” and “life” are not opposing forces at AEB. You are very flexible. It’s up to you to decide how much, where, and when you work.

People have different needs at different stages of their careers and lives. They change, and at AEB, you get the support you need. Changes also occur in our day-to-day work: People change assignments, adapt their roles, and learn to know what they want. And here, too, AEB’s values and the people around you provide support so that your head is free for what counts. These attitudes and this team spirit at AEB are fun and help build long-term relationships. All this and much more motivated me to write these words in Common Ground with a smile on my face and share them with you.

We practice freedom and trust

Trust is the foundation on which employees pool their personal potential toward a shared success. Trust applies in every direction. We at AEB trust that everyone else at AEB will do the right thing and act in everyone's best interest. We trust that people with special responsibilities will act with particular deliberation and exercise appropriate caution and consideration. And we trust in you to actively embody personal responsibility.

We feel it's important that everyone has the freedom to think as they like. We live up to this ideal by putting rules in place only where we truly need them. In most areas, we manage without a rulebook and act according to principles. That's why freedom at AEB primarily revolves around these questions:

- What should I do?
- What is more important, what is less important?
- How do I do what I do?
- Where, in what place, do I do it?
- When do I do it?

Questions that you can and must answer for yourself again and again. That can also be really challenging sometimes. That's why you don't need to answer these questions on your own: You can always turn to your

colleagues for sparring and support as we struggle together to find the best solution.

AEB offers a lot of freedom. Freedom can only work if everyone acts with a great sense of responsibility – one that extends to others and looks at the big picture. Freedom stops where it restricts or hinders others. It is essential to respect the freedom of others, weigh competing interests, and find the right balance. This can only work if you add your own perspective to those of the team, the customers, and the company and then show consideration of others and their needs. We consciously accept conflicts and uncertainty – such as which decisions you can make – and resolve them in a joint dialog involving all participants.

Two concrete examples of how we live freedom and (personal) responsibility and how we support and accompany you in this:

Work, vacation, ...

You decide for yourself how to allocate your time. You also choose your own work schedule and how much you can contribute, however it fits you and your current

situation. But please keep in mind that not all roles and responsibilities are compatible with every work model. You can coordinate with your colleagues and other counterparts to define what's doable and set limits, developing a personalized model for yourself. Every employee at AEB also has the option to be assigned one or more fixed dialog partners – what we call "line managers" – for coaching on such matters. Downtime, like short or long vacations, is also important to you. That's why you should take time off as befits your specific situation. AEB has no rules or application process here. You discuss your plans with the other members of your team, community, or project to make sure that neither your colleagues nor our customers are left alone. You then enter your time off in your electronic calendar, which all AEB employees can see, so that everyone knows when you're not there.

Need "more" than vacation? Want to tap into your long-term account for a three-month trip to Australia? Or need to turn your attention to your new home for several weeks? That's always an option as well, of course. It's even more important in such situations, however, that you prepare your absence carefully and communicate it accordingly.



Working together

One place to come together at AEB is communities for people who are passionate about a particular topic and want to think and work with others on it. Everyone is invited to participate: by simply following, actively contributing, or moderating a community. There is no explicit obligation, and anyone can do what they want. This is the underlying principle of the communities.

Communities perform a large part of the work done at AEB: launching customer projects, supporting presales activities, driving products, etc. And the freedom to do what you want only works if everyone also contributes with a great sense of responsibility and commitment to the success of the community.

So it goes without saying that if you can contribute or take on something, you will. That you join the other community members to consider what good availability and response time looks like. And that you communicate actively and frequently. And last but not least, that you are always prepared to work with others to balance risks and opportunities and even leave your own comfort zone to work for the community. Not because there is any prescribed obligation, but because you have the freedom to do it and take responsibility for it.

We maintain an open dialog and are as transparent as possible

At AEB, we practice openness, transparency, and dialog as a means of shaping our culture and our common purpose. This makes itself felt every day: An open and respectful dialog among peers engenders understanding and trust, provides orientation for independent actions and decisions, and helps ensure that other perspectives and opinions are part of the conversation. It helps people enjoy and identify with their work, boosts motivation, and is the basis for developing the company and all employees. All opinions are welcome, as long as they are expressed respectfully and with tolerance.

Our communication: genuine, clear, appreciative

Your communication is characterized by appreciation, openness, and clarity. This guides you in everyday life – both when something is going really well and when conflicts arise and escalate.

In the latter situation, it's particularly important to discuss the matter personally, whenever possible, or

schedule a video meeting. Because some issues are so complex or emotional that they simply can't be solved in written back-and-forth. Other issues get so blown out of proportion through impersonal exchanges that it makes reasonable, goal-oriented communication difficult.

What's also clear: open, appreciative, and clear communication alone is not always enough to resolve conflicts. You always have the option in such situations to bring other colleagues into the discussion if you think it will help achieve a rapid and better resolution.

Positive feedback loops

We expressly welcome your open, constructively critical feedback. This ensures a results-oriented and collegial dialog and helps AEB as a company together with its employees to continuously develop.

That's why you consider feedback a natural part of your regular routine. You prioritize and create the necessary space for it, approach everyone, and speak

up if anything went remarkably well or poorly. And you use established occasions like end-of-project meetings and retrospectives.

It is just as natural for you to accept and solicit feedback from your colleagues. This should also be firmly established in your routine at AEB. The frequency, intensity, format, and duration of exchanges with your line manager depend on your individual needs and may depend on recent events or new options. Taking time for a leisurely, in-depth exchange of views at regular performance reviews is and remains worthwhile.

Knowledge grows, when you share it ...

... so of course you want to share your knowledge. How and when and with whom? That's something you know best. Does it benefit only one colleague? Then why not share it over a cup of coffee. Is it relevant to your team? Then maybe organize a video conference on the topic. Or is it of interest to some or all of the

company? Then use Yammer or other AEB platforms. If you're unsure: Just ask your colleagues. The rule of thumb is that it's better to share one time too often with too many than too little.

Overcoming language barriers

Communication and language can be challenging issues at a company with a diversity of characters, cultures, and nationalities. The guiding principle here as well is clarity and respect – which means trying to ensure everyone understands everything. This doesn't mean that communication has to take place in German and/or in English, however.

Same standards for external communication

Each of us communicates with people outside of AEB, whether it's in direct dialog with customers, partners, and applicants – or in group interactions through social media, the press, or presentations. We strive for an open, appreciative dialog in our external communication as well, one that puts respect and tolerance for other perspectives and cultures above all else.

In general, the principle of personal responsibility applies here as well: You decide what, where, and how you communicate. Want to give a presentation at the



next customs or developer forum? Want to post a picture of HQ in the snow on Facebook? Or a partner asks you for a statement about collaboration? It's all good, and it's all possible.

At the same time, transparency and openness in external communication have their limits. If they hurt AEB's success by disclosing confidential information, for example. Or if they violate the rights of others – if, for example, your HQ snow photo shows another employee and violates their right to their own image.

The same rule here as always: If you are unsure, just ask and start a dialog with your colleagues.



Making a difference
on your own initiative

You want to be the architect of your own day-to-day (work) life, (help) shape your environment, and do things that you find fun and enjoyable and in which you see a purpose. These are precisely the issues where you do well and even excel – where you get results, have an impact, and are successful! And success is your own personal success of having created something, the success of having helped along your colleagues or customers.

All this makes you and AEB successful, is fun, and makes you independent, free, and autonomous. You succeed here because you are acting autonomously within the AEB context. And there is no one to tell you what to do or what not to do.

From this mindset

- you like to take responsibility for yourself, your actions, your areas of expertise,
- you make decisions and are aware of your impact,
- and you constantly question where you can make your greatest contribution to AEB.

That is why we are confident that you'll act and create value from your own inner motivation. We want to make a difference together, celebrate successes, change, and continually evolve: enabling and accompanying and being a part of this journey is fun and makes you happy. This emboldens you to make good decisions within the AEB context. Colleagues value you and your expertise. You inspire and

motivate, and this helps you lead.

You are authentic and genuine with yourself and your colleagues, as well as with customers and partners.

You want to take on and embody responsibility

Offering everyone freedom invites them to take responsibility. You get involved and take responsibility where you have or can develop radiant power.

Dynamic elements can include:

- This might involve doing things for customers (“that’s what we’ve always needed” or “we’ve been waiting for this”)
- Making things easier for colleagues (“the new tool is great” or “thanks for the great service”)
- Committing to the social-environmental sphere
- Supporting colleagues in specific situations

The point of taking responsibility is to take the right steps for you and AEB to move forward.

Responsibility is the signpost that ensures the path we have chosen does not become an end unto itself.

Enthusiasm over rules – that’s leadership

Driving issues forward, taking responsibility – all of that excites you. That’s how you’ll find and motivate allies and “accomplices” for your issues – people with whom you can share responsibility so that you can take on the next challenge. Leadership is the ability and the will to take responsibility; to actively take up assignments, to work on them independently, with others, and in a network; to drive improvements; and to promote your own professional development and that of your colleagues. You can succeed in one-on-one relationships, on teams, and on special projects – depending on your talent, curiosity, and skills.

We rely on enthusiasm instead of instructions, personal responsibility instead of control, participation instead of top-down, dialog instead of “you do it”, principles instead of rules.

Growing with successful people

We are successful when the people around us are. We want to grow together and invest heavily in the development of our employees.

The flat hierarchies, lived personal responsibility, and broad freedoms we have at AEB create a need for a lot of independent decision-makers who make a difference in what they are drawn to and where they excel. We want to build up our in-house expertise. We do many things ourselves and rarely outsource. When we do need to bring in outside providers, we learn from them so that, ideally, we no longer have to rely on them.

Change is a constant companion over the course of our professional lives. At the very least, we must keep up with the times. But we actually want more than that. We want to be one step ahead – show creativity and an innovative spirit.

Development needs a supportive framework

There is a well-known quote from various authors that we stand behind: *The CFO asks the CEO, "What happens if we invest in developing our people and*

they leave us?" The CEO responds, "What happens if we don't and they stay?"

And that's exactly why we set aside the time and empower every employee to:

- choose how they allocate the required resources for training, continuing education, and professional development
- seize internal educational opportunities and initiate their own
- pursue external educational opportunities and share what they learn
- temporarily or permanently explore new areas of responsibility
- continually reflect on their own personal and professional development through meetings with their line manager, mentoring from colleagues, and consulting

We do what makes sense: What helps employees also helps everyone around them and the company.

Development needs you – and others

Development doesn't just happen – and it certainly doesn't somehow happen by itself. It needs your will and a supportive environment. You have the motivation, AEB provides the supportive environment.

Everyone is responsible for their own development. This personal responsibility means we do not have any centralized authority responsible for the development of all employees. Because every individual is unique. You and your supportive environment are always asking yourselves: What is the best way to nurture, support, and push my or your professional and personal development?

Our many line managers have the responsibility and expertise to support you and the other employees in your development. This helps us find the best combinations for development in each individual case.

So it's your choice. The choice of the ideal line manager to guide you in the next phase of your personal and professional development. A coach, sparring partner, giver of feedback, or conversation partner



with an open ear who has sensitivity and empathy for your strengths, your motivation, and your limits. But the responsibility for development doesn't fall on just you and your line manager. Developing also means learning, achieving something, experiencing how things don't work out, failing, getting up, doing things differently, trying something new, daring to do something ... And learning from the dialog and feedback, in a lively exchange among colleagues. This strengthens you and those around you.

Speaking of strengthening yourself and others: "Strengthen the strengths to weaken the weaknesses" remains our guiding principle. We work with each individual's strengths and build on them. Weaknesses don't simply disappear because you strengthen your strengths, of course, but they do become less important. This kind of strategy requires the acceptance, which we have, to deal with personal deficits.

Trial and error allowed

Sometimes it takes more than talk – it takes conscious exploration. The question of whether different assignments in a new circle really suit me and help me and AEB to advance is one that should be weighed and then tried. Starting down and exploring paths of development, finding out that this is (oh so) right for me – or that, eek, it wasn't a good move after all. Turning around and changing course is permitted. Development is often not linear, as much as we would like it to be so as not to disappoint ourselves or those around us.

Further development: Onward and upward?

The world does not stand still: Social change, technological developments, and changes in our market all mean that our products also change, and so will your responsibilities and assignments. Processing and understanding these changes and developing ourselves to accommodate them is a mandate that we all naturally share – as we actively shape these changes. Further development means for us: "Keeping up" or "embracing change." Exactly as it suits me, my individual situation, and the requirements. Onward and upward? It depends. It depends on you.



Pursuing a course of long-term thinking and stability

We want to be a successful business and to reconcile this success with the needs of our employees and customers and of society and the environment. What's more, we want to leverage this success to motivate and move our customers and partners to share and adopt this mindset as well. In short, we want our actions and our capacities to help make the world a little better – as quickly as possible, but above all with a long-term, sustainable impact.

This requires proactivity, the courage to invest in the future – and a workforce that is committed and passionate about this. This ensures AEB's long-term success and healthy growth. It is also essential that customers, partners, new talents, and we ourselves perceive AEB as an attractive company. That's why your actions are driven by long-term thinking and stability, which you consciously weigh against the lure of short-term economic gain. This is reflected in our efforts toward long-term, appreciative, trusting relationships with employees, customers, suppliers, and partners. Swap out a proven supplier because their competitor is a few euros cheaper? That's not AEB's style. This is where we engage in an open dialog. Our long-term, collaborative approach

makes it possible to develop new things together and generate sustainable value.

Part of day-to-day life is always rediscovering the right balance between the development of the company, the professional development of the individual, and job security. And the sustainability of our activities on behalf of society.

This will lead to tension at one point or another, since our goals may well be competing. Is it worth traveling to an appointment by car instead of by train just to save two hours of travel time, for example?

Openly debating, wrestling with positions and approaches, trying things out, arguing over the "right" decision – yes, that's exactly how it should be. The world is not (only) black or white, right or wrong. It is in a constant state of change. Our value compass helps us use this change and an opportunity and make good decisions under these conditions. And the determination to prioritize long-term success and lasting impacts.

A high standard – and one we intend to meet and make room for.



Our culture is not set in stone / shaping and changing – confidently being ourselves

AEB's culture and identity are inextricably linked. It is the people of AEB who make up this identity and, in so doing, shape its culture. Our shared values are front and center here. But social, societal, and workplace changes also leave their mark on AEB's culture.

Even though our culture should not be driven by the latest trends, current events do continually influence (or determine) how our culture develops and adapts over time.

During normal times – but even in extraordinary

times such as the recent pandemic – we manage to shape our structures proactively with the trust deeply embedded in our AEB DNA. We question ourselves and the way we work, interact, and communicate with one another. We succeed in working from home, taking personal responsibility (and having a personal impact), pulling rather than pushing, and fostering a community life because the people of AEB sense our values-driven culture. We know and respect our shared values and are aware that everyone at AEB, through their behavior, contributes to our culture.

In our AEB culture we actively shape how we define

leadership, how we make decisions, and how we want to treat one another – with feeling, understanding, and compassion, each and every day.

We are AEB: unique, mindful, responsible, reflective, non-conformist, impulsive, honest.



AEB