

A Values Manifesto for the American Worker

by [Scott Pickard](#)



The American Worker is the true and authentic engine of the U.S. economy: hard working, innovative, unafraid of risk, productive, efficient, can-do, get the job done. We go to work every day to build, repair, maintain, clean, deliver, teach, inspire, heal, protect, invent, design, create, entertain, serve, manufacture, and on and on. We are the ones who actually get things done. And according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), the 133 million American Independent Workers (non-union, “employed at will”) make up almost 90% of the U.S. workforce. But unlike our fellow union workers, American Workers are not bound together by an organizational structure with rules and dues; but rather, the resilience and power and spirit of the American Worker is guided and motivated by a set of values that we have shared for as long as there have been workers.

You might call it, *A Values Manifesto for the American Worker*.

We are loyal to our employers and owners

Every non-government job can be traced back to one person (entrepreneur) who had the guts and confidence to take the personal risk required to start and grow a business that created jobs. Therefore, we believe owners make the rules of their work domain because they take the personal risk and shoulder the responsibility to make our payroll every month. There is nothing stopping us from becoming owners ourselves and building our own organizations, culture, and values as we each see fit. *It’s a free country*, as we have always believed, so we each have the self-determination to decide and act as we choose.

We have always been willing to sacrifice and go with less for the company we work for if tough times demanded it. We generally do not file grievances or lawsuits. We work out issues with our employers face-to-face. We have always been loyal to our employers, unless of course, that loyalty is not reciprocated. We can always choose to walk out the door to a new and potentially better opportunity.

We are ready to do what needs to be done

Like most people, we do just about any task at home to take care of our families. We are prepared to do the same at work because it is, we think, the natural instinct of people to pitch in with a team, solve problems, and get things done wherever we find a need or whenever we are asked to help.

We believe arbitrary quotas and constraints that limit productivity go against the grain of the basic human impulse to continuously improve, go faster, work harder, produce more, and increase quality. We simply do as much as we can as efficiently as we can each workday while maintaining standards of quality.

We do not accept payment to not work. We generally do not need or collect unemployment. We reemploy ourselves almost immediately if we lose a job because our strong survival instincts drive us to always be prepared for adversity.

We accept the responsibility to survive on our own

We believe that in the working world, it is up to each worker to take full responsibility for their continuity of employment and to take care of their families. We believe that once a worker accepts that responsibility, they will take the actions to survive each and every day instead of waiting for someone else to take care of them. We believe that to enjoy the benefits of a free marketplace, each American Worker must own this responsibility.

Leaders (especially presidents) who politicize so-called *workers' rights and entitlements* do a tremendous disservice to society by continuously promising what the nation does not have the cash to pay for without creating more debt. That kind of thinking and rhetoric is fueling a *slow-burning bankruptcy* in our cities, states, and nation.

We believe that we come into this world with no absolute entitlements except for what our parents can provide for us until we are capable of providing for ourselves the quality of life, safety, and happiness that we all seek and that we each earn with our own hands, minds, and hearts.

American Workers are survivors and take nothing for granted.

We care for those less fortunate than us

We believe that *survival of the fittest* does not mean that those less fit are left to struggle. We believe that if each community cares for their own family, friends, neighbors and citizens that are less fortunate, then we'll all be okay.

We believe that we should all pitch in to support those that need some extra help as long as everyone else helps out in proportion to their means. We know that to maintain the continuity of work, a person must stay healthy, but some of us face adverse health issues and emergencies and disasters that come suddenly with no warning over which we have no control. The American Worker will be there to help. We make contributions to help the poor, chronically sick, disabled,

and victimized. We do what we can to share and help out others that need our help, knowing they will do the same for us when the time comes.



However, we do believe that good health is enhanced by our attitudes and effort and determination to keep ourselves healthy. We don't want to be sick, so generally we don't get sick, and we don't take sick days. When you hire the American Worker, you get 100% uptime. We live life to be healthy, to work hard and to play hard.

We always spend less than we earn

Wherever we are in our work journey and the pay we receive, we live within our means. How can an American Worker financially sustain themselves and their families any other way? We pay all our bills. We pay our proportionate fair share of income taxes.

We generally do not file for personal bankruptcy because we do everything in our power to prevent it. We believe in *resilience*. We accept that the randomness of life and the axe of accountability will eventually strike us all, and when it does, we take our medicine and deal with it. We don't believe democratic societies can or should bail out every person or organization no matter how *too big to fail* they are. We are skeptical of *too big to fail* bailouts when the loudest voices are coming from those that stand to lose the most wealth in their portfolios. The American Worker believes in one set of rules for all, both the haves and the have-nots.

We don't expect anything free from anybody. We want to earn what we can based on our individual ability to earn; otherwise, it has no value to us.

We know what we are worth and we speak for ourselves

We do not require third-party organizations to establish our fair market value as workers. We rely on the marketplace to be a very efficient (if not brutal) system for establishing fair market value of the American Worker. Our leverage is our experience, skill, value, and the freedom of self-determination (i.e., *you can take this job and shove it.*)

We do not pay money to another person to sit at the negotiation table with our employers on our behalf. We are individually responsible for that task, and we save the money to invest directly in our professional and personal development.

The American Workers' market value over the years has been, plus or minus, fair. It has never been propped up or guaranteed by a contract, lockout, walk out, picket line, strike, sickout, blue flu, quota, restriction, injunction, entitlement, you name it. We give our employer the benefit of the doubt that our pay is what our employers can reasonably afford for the business to be financially sustainable for the long term. *It's a free country*, as we have always said, so if we cannot work out a mutually-acceptable level of pay, we can always go elsewhere or start a business of our own.

We always land on our feet

We don't assume that any job can last forever. The world is global, competitive, and volatile, and we deal with that reality by preparing ourselves and always having a backup plan. We almost always remain employed but when we do lose a job, we are prepared to drop back a rung or two on the ladder (if need be) to rebuild ourselves with more experience and education/training, most of it low-cost to free in today's online lifetime-learning world. When it comes to providing for and protecting our families, we never rest and we never give up.

We believe "chance favors the prepared mind," and it also favors the prepared American Worker who is relentless about lifetime learning so that she or he is always employable at any age. We make no excuses for adversity that inevitably will come our way. We go to the library, get online, and for free we learn and train to qualify for all kinds of good jobs on this planet. We don't wait for an organization to train us and find us another job. We go get it on our own. We make getting a job a full-time job. Our attitude is to wake up at dawn and not come home until we find a job. That's not to say that getting a job is sometimes hard, but we wake up each day with that attitude, day after day, for as long as it takes to get that next job.

We respect Organized American Labor and are appreciative of their contributions

We respect and appreciate what union workers have done for our country and the good job that they continue to do today. We believe it is critical in this world for independent and union workers to stand side-by-side to get things done.

But the fact is, American Independent Workers comprise 90% of the U.S. workforce. We are the independent, self-sufficient, lean and mean American Workers driven by several key principles:

- Subsidiarity: We believe in the *Principle of Subsidiarity* which says that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest, and least centralized competent authority.
- Trustworthiness: We are skeptical of the trustworthiness of all things BIG: Government, Corporate Business; Nonprofit Organizations, even Religions. Fundamentally, we believe that wherever wealth and power are concentrated, it inevitably becomes the breeding ground for unethical opportunistic behavior, greed, cronyism, corruption, and fraud. History driven by human behavior predictably repeats itself in this regard.
- Self-Determination: While adhering to the Rule of Law, we never hand over our individual self-determination to any person or organization if we don't have to.

The American Worker is the Economy

The American Worker is the true engine of OUR ECONOMY which is not a politician's or a government's or a corporation's or a party's economy. It has always been and will always be, OUR ECONOMY, and the politicians are hired by and report to the American Worker. No one person (or President) has all the answers and the power and the money and the time to unilaterally lift our country's economy up and forward in the face of increasing global competition.

Only each individual American Worker can make an impact starting at 8:00 am tomorrow morning, magnified by the strength and power and resilience of values shared among 133 million American Workers. We need not wait another 4-8 years for the federal government to come to the rescue. We, the American Workers, know what to do and together we can change the world for the better, right now.

Nose to the grindstone, let's go get it done, just as we always have.