

# The Williams Way

**Williams**

Plumbing & Heating Supplies

## Why are we here

### *Plumbing matters!*

Having clean water, functioning drainage and warm, dry homes is important for everybody's well-being.

You can't have clean water, decent drains or warm homes without a reliable supply of pipes, fittings, valves, bathroom equipment, boilers, radiators, controls etc.

*Selling toilets may not be the most glamorous profession, but it is one of the most important.*

## Our Vision

We aim to be the best plumbers' merchant in Britain for our chosen customer type, and the best employer in any sector.

## Our Mission

We sell great products at competitive prices with fantastic service, and have fun doing it!

## Our values



**INTEGRITY**

We choose to do **THE RIGHT THING**, because it is the right thing to do, even when it is not easy, and even when no-one would know if we compromised.

## Our values

LOYALTY



We look after the people who look after us. This includes staff, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. Loyalty is a two-way street, and we place a high premium on *mutually beneficial long term relationships*.

## Our values

AMBITION



We relentlessly search for ways to grow and improve our business. We are never satisfied with being “good enough”. We are dedicated to being *noticeably better* than our competitors.

***Everyone in the business is responsible for upholding our values. If you think upholding values is airy-fairy nonsense, you need to work somewhere else.***

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## Our Strategy

There are many different types of customer buying the products that we sell.

It is not efficient to configure a single business's resources to meet the different needs of every type.

We focus on trade customers who value high levels of personalised and local service and are looking for long-term, trust-based, mutually profitable relationships. We structure our business to ensure that our core customers have the best possible experience and that we become their preferred supplier.

As an independently owned business, we have a natural affinity for other independent, owner managed businesses. We speak the same language.

***Aligning our business to our core customers means we may not be the ideal partner for other customer groups. Whilst we welcome a wide range of customer types, we don't compromise on our dedication to our core customer.***

## The right products

We sell great products in each segment of the market.

We understand that some customers want premium brands, some customers want reliable mid-market products, and some jobs come with a tight budget.

Our minimum two year warranty on every stock product shows our commitment to selling reliable products.

We don't try to carry every product on the market and concentrate on manufacturers and suppliers who want to work with us.

Our commercial team are charged with selecting the products that we sell, and they need to be awesome at this.

Every colleague can help them be awesome by providing feedback about quality, customer comments, and potential new products.

## Clear Pricing & Great Value

Most of our customers don't employ buyers and don't have accounts departments.

Haggling over a price or dealing with an incorrect invoice is a waste of their time and therefore their money.

We offer all customers great value regardless of their spending power. There is no need to haggle and our invoices are invariably accurate.

Our commercial team negotiates with suppliers and sets our selling price framework, and they need to be awesome at this. Every colleague can help them to be awesome by sharing market information.

***By publishing our price list we create a target for our competitors to aim at. It is worth it for the value that our clear pricing policy brings to our customers.***

## Exceptional service – every day

Competitors sell the same products as us, and some of them have much more buying power than us. We might sometimes be beaten on price, but we must never, never be beaten on service.

Our service has to be noticeably better than our competitors. Not just a little bit better – we must be so outstanding that customers will actively choose us over competitors, every time.

We don't have a rigid view of what great service is. We hire people who are passionate about service and empower them to find new ways of being brilliant.

Every colleague must be awesome at this! No half-measures and no "off days"!

***Great customer service is not cheap, and being the best may sometimes mean that we sacrifice short term profit. This is a price worth paying, to maximise the lifetime value of the customer, not just today's transaction.***

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## Our colleagues and culture

A great workplace culture stems from everyone living the values, every day. It requires honest people, working hard together with mutual respect to achieve ambitious goals.

We promise to treat colleagues fairly, pay them well, provide meaningful benefits and good working conditions, give them practical and sensitive support when needed, and provide the training and resources that they need to do a great job.

We ask our colleagues to continuously update the skills and knowledge required to excel in their role.

We are tolerant of people, but intolerant of poor behaviour or poor performance.

We tackle problems head on, even if that means difficult conversations.

We welcome colleagues from all backgrounds into the Williams family.

We reward teams and individuals for what they contribute to the business, not for the length of time they have worked here.

We constantly look for opportunities to improve our culture.

We like to say “thank you” for a good job.

## Our customers

We ask three things of our customers:

- Help us to understand your business needs so that we can give noticeably better service than our competitors
- Be nice to our colleagues
- Pay our bill in full and on time

*Everything else is down to us.*

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## Our suppliers

We ask this from our suppliers:

- Send us good quality products
- Give us the terms and service package needed to effectively sell your product or brand
- Respect our right to set our own selling prices
- Address problems swiftly and constructively

In return, we promise:

- We will promote your product or brand to the very best of our ability
- We will work with you to make this a mutually profitable relationship

***We place a premium on long standing, mutually profitable business relationships.***

## Our shareholders

Only employees can buy our shares, and all of our shares belong to employees, retired or ex-employees, or to the estates of colleagues who have passed away.

***We have no institutional shareholders, venture capitalists or private equity partners forcing us to make the wrong choices for short term reasons.***

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## Our managers

We owe our colleagues the very best management that we can provide.

The managers role is:

- To lead, manage, coach and inspire the team
- To organise the team to deliver mind-bendingly fantastic customer service
- To be active in managing the team Profit & Loss
- To uphold our values and ensure a great, supportive and safe workplace culture

***Managers are the keystones of our organisation. We ask all our managers to commit to becoming better managers, not just better plumbers' merchants.***

## Our customer facing teams

Our business works best when our customer facing teams make customers happy.

Our customer facing teams should be able to spend at least 90% of their time and energy making customers happy.

Our customer facing team managers should be able to spend at least 90% of their time and energy making customers happy, either directly or by developing their team.

Every other part of the business should be organised to give our customer facing teams what they need to maximise the number of happy customers.

***The needs of our customers always, ALWAYS, ALWAYS trump our administrative convenience.***

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## Our support teams

Our support teams exist to help our customer facing teams be awesome.

They do that by:

- Removing obstacles to awesomeness
- Responding promptly and helpfully to requests
- Providing effective tools and resources that are intuitive and easy to use
- Simplifying systems and streamlining necessary processes
- Avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy
- Focus on making customers happy

We refer to our office based teams as “Central Support” and not “Head Office”. This is because the role of these teams is to support people, not to boss them around.

***Every bit of unnecessary red tape diverts effort and attention from making customers happy, and therefore undermines our business.***

## Our Policies

We have as few written policies as we possibly can. If our colleagues understand our vision, mission and strategy, and share our values, they are likely to make good decisions on their own.

On the occasions where a written policy is necessary it must:

- Be as concise as possible
- Use plain English and avoid jargon
- Be easily accessible

***Our main focus is on outcomes and values, not unnecessary processes.***

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## Recruitment

When recruiting, we should ask ourselves two questions:

- *After an initial settling-in and training period, will this candidate perform in the top 50% of people doing similar jobs in our organisation?*
- *If I had a young relative entering the workforce, would I be happy with them working for, or alongside, this candidate?*

If we cannot answer a clear “yes” to both of these questions, we should keep looking.

Our teams expect us to hire the very best new colleagues that we possibly can, not the cheapest, or the most readily available.

We have to work hard and smart to find great candidates and then pick the best of them.

If we make a mistake in recruitment, we should recognise the fact promptly, and respectfully and generously move the individual out of the business.

***We hire for attitude and aptitude, then train for skills. We never hire the least bad candidate that shows up for interview.***

## Environment and Community

We are not a charity or campaign group. We are an organisation designed to make a profit.

This does not prevent us from treading softly on the world around us or from being a good corporate citizen in the communities where we operate.

The best way for us to do this is by:

- Helping ensure that people have clean water and warm, energy efficient homes
- Encourage the uptake of low-carbon technologies
- Paying our taxes
- Be a responsible and considerate employer
- Investing in technologies and systems that are environmentally sustainable **and** commercially viable
- Making a profit so that we can sustain all the above

***We firmly believe that a successful business can be profitable at the same time as looking after the community and the environment.***

## Our organisational chart

### Our customers

are served by

### Our customer-facing teams

who are backed up by

### Our support teams

who are encouraged and led by

### Our senior leadership team

## Health, Safety and Wellbeing

We want everyone to go home in the same condition that they came to work.

We will spend as little time as possible on the box-ticking exercises that sometimes pass for Health and Safety policies.

We will cut no corners in the parts of our business that cause serious risks:

- Working and storage at height
- Fork lift trucks
- Vehicles
- Fire

We also work hard to minimise the non-fatal but potentially life-diminishing harm caused by:

- Manual handling
- Cuts, slips, trips and falls
- Work-related stress

***We look after ourselves and each other.***

The end.





[www.williams.uk.com](http://www.williams.uk.com)

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