



# MINDERA HANDBOOK



MINDERA

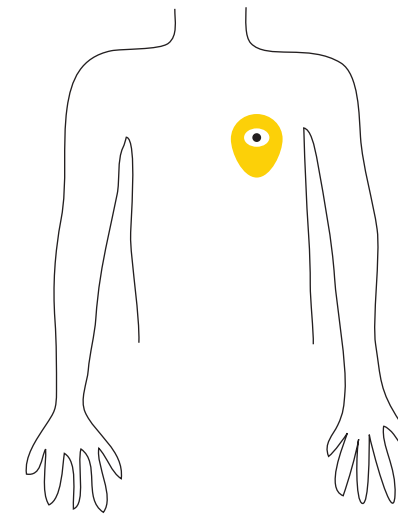
3rd Edition  
October 2018

This book\* won't provide details about your income tax, show you how to access the intranet, internal server, or help you setup your email account.

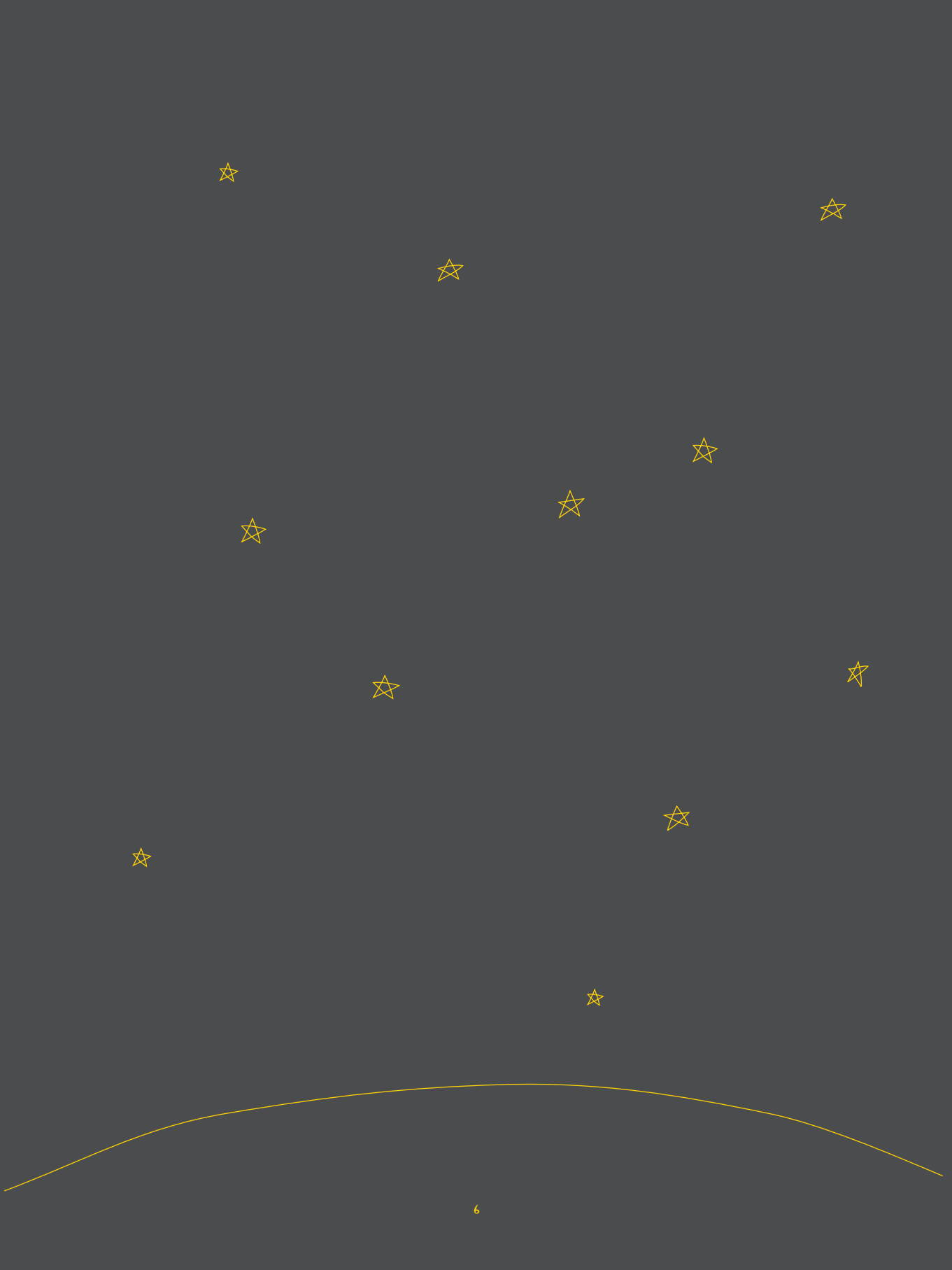
**It will help you begin to understand our values and the way we make decisions as a team and as a company. This manual\* belongs to you. Read it. Share it. Change it. Keep it close when you swim into the deep water.**

And they said it better when it comes to copyright and sharing: *"Some rights are reserved. Some reservations are right. Feel free to reproduce or transmit this document in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by an information storage and retrieval system. Just don't try to sell it. Information is meant to be free."*

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Mindera was born to be in people's hearts.  
We care, we listen, we make stuff happen.  
If you are used to another way of working,  
you are in for an interesting ride, take your  
time to let it all sink in.



"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."

Harriet Tubman

# Principles

Collaborate

Produce amazing work

Take care of each other

Speak up

What you will find here:

## 1. WE ARE HUMANS

We act like humans, we talk like humans, and we think like humans. And we call out anyone who does the opposite.

## 2. WE WORK TOGETHER

We insist on working collaboratively. No rockstars. No departments. The whole team owns the whole project, together.

## 3. WE CHANGE

Nothing is sacred. From our habits, to our rituals, to our environment. Change is a natural part of human life, and we prefer to embrace it.

## 4. FAQ

You've got questions. We've got some answers.



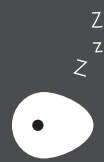
WE SAY  
"HELLO"



WE TALK TO  
EACH OTHER



WE SMILE

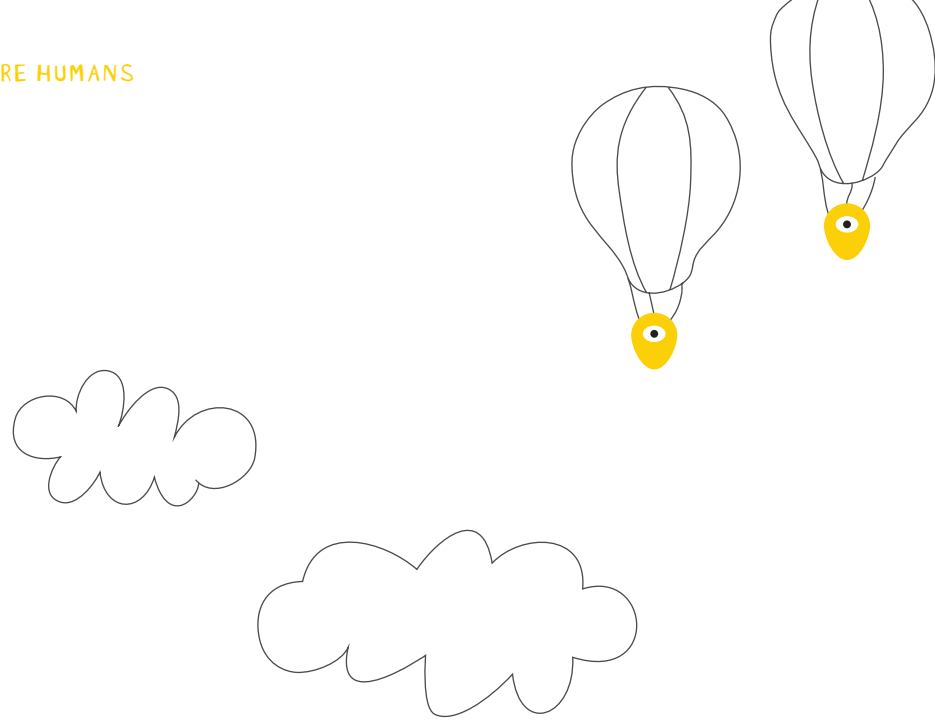


WE TAKE  
NAPS



## WE ARE HUMANS

We act like humans, we talk like humans, and we think like humans. And we call out anyone who does the opposite.



## YOU ARE NOT HERE BY ACCIDENT

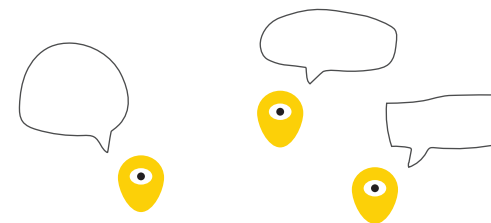
We hired you for a reason. There's no need to prove yourself or worry about "fitting in." You're here. You made it. You get it. Let your work do the convincing.

## WE HIRE DIFFERENTLY

Most companies operate under the premise that employees should be replaceable like parts of an assembly line. We choose our people more carefully. We bring them in if we think they're a good fit, regardless of whether we have work for them right away. What that means: You are more than your title. Bring yourself (rough edges and all) to work each day, not your "developer" or "designer" costume.

## WORK TOGETHER

Our network shaped structure calls for it by necessity. We expect everyone to step up and own part of the project. It's kind of like playing basketball: When someone passes you the ball, you're in charge of what to do with it next.



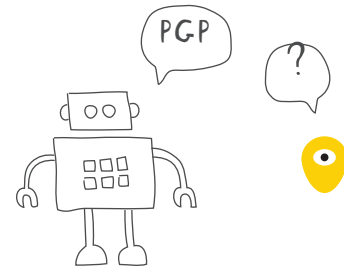
## GET AUTONOMOUS

You have an incredible amount of freedom and autonomy at Mindera. That goes for everyone. It's up to you to figure out how to approach a problem. No one is going to make you do it their way. We know that sounds awesome, but here's the rub: With freedom comes a ton of ownership and responsibility. Life is easy when someone is telling you what to do. It's also boring, and it prevents you from being invested in what you're doing. Since you control your own destiny here, you'll likely be more emotional about your work. We believe that's better than the alternative. Can you imagine coming to work each day and not caring? We can't.

## TALK LIKE A HUMAN

There's a lot of bad work out there. One of the culprits is the way we talk to each other. In an industry that requires a ton of communication between clients, teams, agencies and suppliers, it's important not to let acronyms, "proprietary processes," and buzzwords lead to confusion and time lost. Here's what we mean:

- Instead of saying "leverage," say "use."
- Instead of saying "action item," say "to do."
- Instead of saying "empowering users," just go home and try again in the morning.



## THINGS YOU SHOULD SAY

- "Why are we doing it this way?"
- "Is there a better alternative?"
- "\_\_\_\_\_ worked really well last time. Can we do it even better on this project?"
- "Let's get a drink and discuss it."
- "Foos?"

## THINGS YOU SHOULDN'T SAY

- "It is what it is." No, it's not. It is what you make it.
- "That's not my job." If you ever hear someone say this, start flipping desks. It's all your job.
- "Who cares?" Well, we do.

## TO AVOID ROBOT SPEAK, FOLLOW THESE THREE SIMPLE RULES:

1. Pretend you're talking to your mom. Your mom doesn't know what "PGP" or "release planning" mean. And it's not because she's not a smart lady. She's just not entrenched in industry jargon.
2. Don't be afraid to ask. Sometimes you need to stop and ask the room to define what exactly "responsive design" or "polymorphism" means to them.
3. Get on the same page. Sometimes the words don't matter as long as everyone's speaking the same language. Try to acknowledge when words are getting in the way and do something about it.

## YOU'RE MORE THAN YOUR TITLE

Humans are unpredictable. You can't replace one person with another the same way you swap tires on a car. Workplaces that try to control human nature become miserable fast. People who talk about themselves in terms of their title freak us out: "I'm a developer, so I do things like this." No. You're a person first and a developer second. Show your true colors.

## EVERYONE IS CREATIVE

But nobody is a creative. Creativity is a quality, not a title. So don't ever say "I'm not creative." We will find the creativity inside you and drag it out, kicking and screaming :). We don't put our energy into questions like "Whose name goes on the award entry?". Instead, we ask questions like, "Is this project right for us?" and "How can we do something unique and innovative that works for the business?".

## NOBODY'S GONNA HOLD YOUR HAND

This is a busy place, and you'll often be on your own to figure things out. Don't be afraid to ask for help, but don't rely on others to hold your hand. You might be tempted to say something such as "It would be nice if someone would organize the [server, kitchen, furniture]". At Mindera, you are that someone. If you want to update, change, or fix something, go for it. Seriously. Every awesome thing you see is like that because someone like you decided to do it.

## HUMANS ARE NOT "RESOURCES"

Human resources. What an awful phrase. We don't have an HR department. New hires are interviewed by people who do similar roles at mindera and, when possible, who will also be working in the same team. Get ready to care a lot about the people you work with.

## HUMAN TRUTHS

truth #1

Humans are not perfect. Don't be afraid to fail. And when you do, you might as well fail spectacularly. This is how we grow and learn.

truth #2

Humans have voices. Yours is as valuable as anyone else's. Use it. Singing out loud is encouraged.

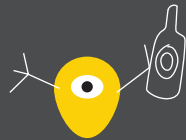
truth #3

Humans are unique. Do you love popular Pop Music? Do you prefer your desk covered with sunflowers? There's no need to hide it. Be yourself. That's how you'll fit in here.





WE LEARN FROM  
EACH OTHER



WE HAVE FUN



WE DO A  
GREAT JOB



WE LOVE  
TO PLAY

# 2.

## WE WORK TOGETHER

We insist on working collaboratively.  
No rockstars. No departments. The whole  
team owns the whole project, together.

## WE AREN'T BIG ON HIERARCHY

We don't have an internal "org chart." The reason is that a traditional hierarchy forms a bottleneck: One person has to ask someone else's permission to do something, and then that person has to ask someone else's permission, and so on. The whole process is just a waste of time and it prevents people from building things quickly. You can have mentors and collaborators, not commanders. And we all make things here. If you've come to climb a ladder, you're in the wrong place. Those who show up and tell other people what to do don't last long.

## DECISIONS

For something to move forward, decisions need to be made. Anyone can make any decision after seeking advice from everyone that will be meaningfully impacted, as well as from people with expertise in the matter.

When you want to make a decision, pause and ask: Am I the best person to make this decision? (That is, the person most closely linked to the decision, or the person with most energy, skill, and experience to make it?). If not, ask the person you think is better placed to take the initiative. If he/she doesn't want to, you might be best placed after all.

If you are the right person to make a decision, identify those from whom you should seek advice. Approach them and explain what you are doing. ("I'm playing by the advice process. Here is an opportunity I see. This is

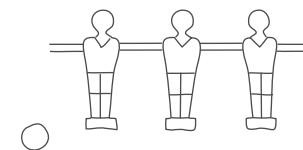
the decision I propose to take. Can you give me your advice?"). You can also share who else you are asking for advice. Once you've received advice and made your decision, inform those you consulted (and anyone else who should know).<sup>1</sup>

Also, don't be too quick to judge someone else's decisions/choices. There was surely valid reasons to make that decision, which doesn't mean it cannot be change. Learn and iterate.

## TAKE CARE OF YOUR CREW

Much of the work we do is technical. But there's another skill we all need to have: the interpersonal kind. It isn't optional. Some people like to pretend that the technical work is all that matters. They're wrong. This isn't Rambo<sup>2</sup>; there are no teams of one here. We know that sometimes it can be difficult to work with others. Our solution is simple: Get to know everyone. No one is just a developer or a systems engineer. They are people with many dimensions. Understand who they are and it'll be much easier. You are part of a team, and the health and harmony of your team is part of your job.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from : [http://www.reinventingorganization-swiki.com/Decision\\_Making](http://www.reinventingorganization-swiki.com/Decision_Making)



## PLAY IS IMPORTANT

When you walk through our doors, you enter an environment where work and play often intertwine. But there's a difference between being childish and child-like. We are adults. But that doesn't mean we can't have fun. There's no reason to pretend you're busy. You don't need to hide the video you're watching if someone walks by your desk. No one is monitoring the websites you look at. We aren't going to report you for taking a long lunch. Just do great work.

## WE CREATE TECHNOLOGY FOR PEOPLE, NOT AT THEM

We make things for people, not for consumers. We always ask ourselves (and our clients) "Would I want to use this?"

## SHOW, DON'T TELL

It's important that we live by these words as well. A better way to put it might be: Don't talk about it, do it.

## BE RESPECTFUL, BUT DON'T BE DELICATE

We've found that the best work happen when people can have a good, passionate argument about an idea, not when they spend weeks tiptoeing around each other. Don't be afraid to speak your mind. Just be honest and respectful.

## WE WANT TO FEEL LIKE A SMALL COMPANY

Every decision about how to structure a company has some upsides and some downsides. When you encounter something that's a little frustrating about how we work, remember that it's likely the result of something else about this place that you love. We want to keep our company feeling small, which allows us to sit in small room and know each other. Sometimes things break or get dirty. We don't have a maintenance department, so it's up to you.

## DON'T MAKE OUR COMPANY FEEL LIKE WE ARE 10,000 PEOPLE

Try not to over-formalize communication. There's no need to send an email to the person sitting one row away.

## WE ALL TALK TO EACH OTHER

We have an open floor plan and you can access every door and room. You're surrounded by smart people from every discipline. Talk to them. Learn from them.





## TAKE CARE OF THE SPACE

We love our space. We've fantastic offices and we treat them like our second home – take care of it accordingly.

## AESTHETICS ARE IMPORTANT

If you make something that doesn't look good or isn't usable, you're going to get called out on it. Don't worry – this is how we get better. We are strict about this, and soon you will be too. Our code should be clean. Our designs should be amazing. Details are everything. Find one and make it awesome.

## ALL ARE WELCOME

We've designed our space for us, not to impress our guests or clients. Anyone is allowed anywhere, anytime. Make yourself at home. If someone drops by, they're going to see us working. That means it might be a bit messy. But that's the real us.

## THE KITCHEN

The kitchen is stocked with cutlery, dishes, snacks, drinks, condiments, fruit... Anything not labeled for personal use is fair game. Feel free to use any of the items available, just be respectful of the people and remember to wash dirty dishes and whatever mess you make.

How to deal with your mess:

1. Clean your mess until it's as clean as it was, or even better!
2. Use water, dish soap and paper towels where needed.
3. ...No, wait. That's it.
4. Feel proud of your work.

## WE ARE ALL LEARNERS, WE ARE ALL TEACHERS

This has nothing to do with seniority. We all snatch the pebble from each other's hand. The idea of learner becoming teacher and teacher becoming learner is one of the greatest aspects of what we do. We share and learn from each other, daily. And while we don't expect you to hold anyone's hand, we encourage you to be a mentor as much as possible. You will most probably learn something too.

## WE ARE PROFESSIONALS

But we hate professionalism. Professional means handling your business with respect. Professionalism is when you're so buttoned-up that you stop being yourself. It sands all the edges off your personality.



## OUR CLIENTS ARE PART OF THE TEAM

Just like we pay our dentist, our clients pay us to do the things they can't do by themselves. Let's do them well. It won't always be fun and games when it comes to these relationships, but we should always work with our clients, not for them, and definitely not against them. They need us and we need them. In fact, it's best to avoid using the word "client" whenever possible, and instead use their real names. It'll remind you that we're all just human beings trying to do good work.

## TAKE YOUR CLIENT BEYOND THEIR COMFORT ZONE

A few things we frequently hear:

- "We didn't expect that at all."
- "That seems a bit risky."

No one gets in trouble for pushing the limit. It's your job. It's the reason people look at our work and say "That's the kind of work I want to do."

## WRITE ON THE WALLS

Open spaces mean real-time conversations and solutions. That's why we turned our walls into whiteboards. We sketch out our thoughts as they occur and we share them with the crew. We prefer to work this way: openly and transparently.

## AVOID MEETINGS AT ALL COST

Meetings are the scourge of the modern workplace. A two-hour meeting with six people doesn't waste two hours. It wastes twelve hours. If all else fails and you absolutely must have a meeting, clearly state the purpose up front. If you can't think of one, you probably don't need to have it. And if you ever – EVER – find yourself in a meeting about a meeting, lace up those sneakers and start running. We believe in making stuff, not talking about making stuff.

## INTERNAL PROJECTS

Some of our favorite things we make weren't client work at all. One of us had an idea, and they made it real - Statful. Some companies assign a number for how much time you're allowed to spend on side projects. We know if it matters to you, you'll make it happen.

## OUR BLOG

We have a blog. It can become your new best friend. Write, comment and get involved. Remember we are all learners and teachers.

## WEAR A HELMET

We encourage you to get some fresh air and exercise by biking to work. We have a shower room as well for convenience.

## WE ARE A QUIET BUNCH

Let's not forget that we're digital natives here, and many of us are stuck nose-deep in code or are simply quiet folks. Once someone's settled in and working, they often don't break their gaze to greet you as you pass by. They're not being rude, they're just focused. If you need some quiet time, don't feel guilty about finding a hideout or popping on some headphones. Sometimes, you need quiet not for your own peace of mind, but because we have a guest who doesn't want to walk into a meeting and have to shout over the sounds of Marco Paulo's "Taras e Manias".

## WEEKENDS

Our space belongs to all of us. You're welcome to come by on the weekend, maybe for a visit or to pick something from the office. Just be responsible. Lock the doors and windows. Turn off the lights. Take care of the environment, ok?



WE EMBRACE  
CHANGE

# 3.

## WE CHANGE

Nothing is sacred. From our habits to our rituals to our environment. Change is a natural part of human life, and we prefer to embrace it.



### NO COOKIE CUTTERS

Every project we make is 100% unique, from the team, to the architecture, to the solution. We're not about filling in blanks on templates with "best practices." It's like baking bread. You can tell when a loaf of bread was made with love and when it was mass-produced. And it's not about the skill of the baker. It's about the attitude.

### GET OUT OF YOUR SEAT

It's unhealthy to stay seated in the same position for eight hours. It's also terrible for productivity. You aren't chained to your desk. Move around. Grab some coffee. Play drums or guitar. Meditate. Call your parents. Make a sandwich. Play foosball. Go for a walk. Draw on the walls. Climb a tree. Do yoga. Hit the gym. Get a haircut. Buy some new shoes. Sing a song. Get a snack. Do your laundry. Go birdwatching. Dance. Try Board Games. Write a poem. Learn to juggle. Draw a picture.

### SHOW & TELL

We encourage you to present or invite interesting people from a variety of backgrounds to share your/their experience with us. These are extraordinary opportunities.

### TEAR DOWN THE WALLS

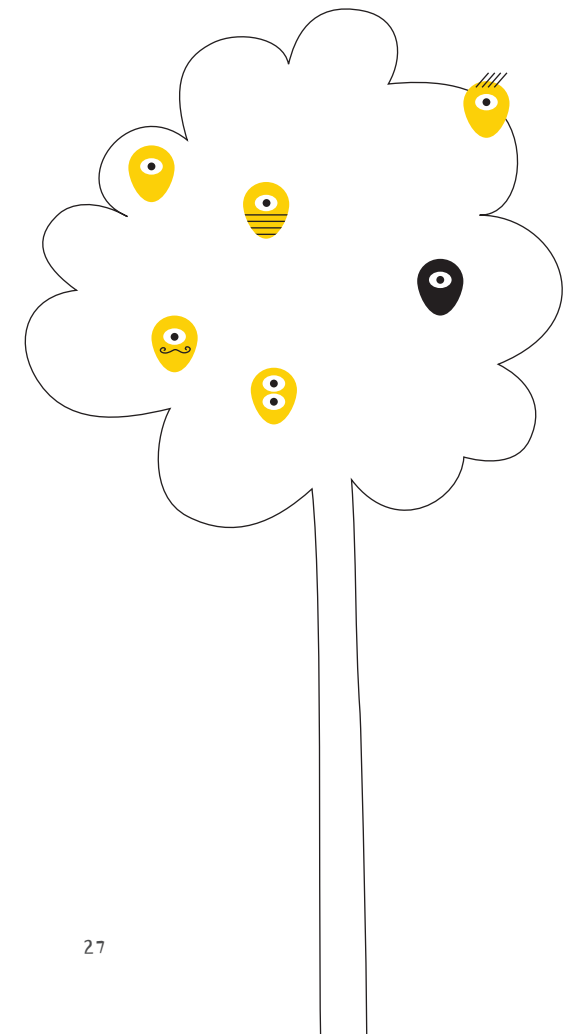
If you don't like something, change it. That goes for anything. Seriously. Our office space grows iteratively and it will definitely change over time, so if you want be a part of that evolution get you voice heard and roll out your sleeves.

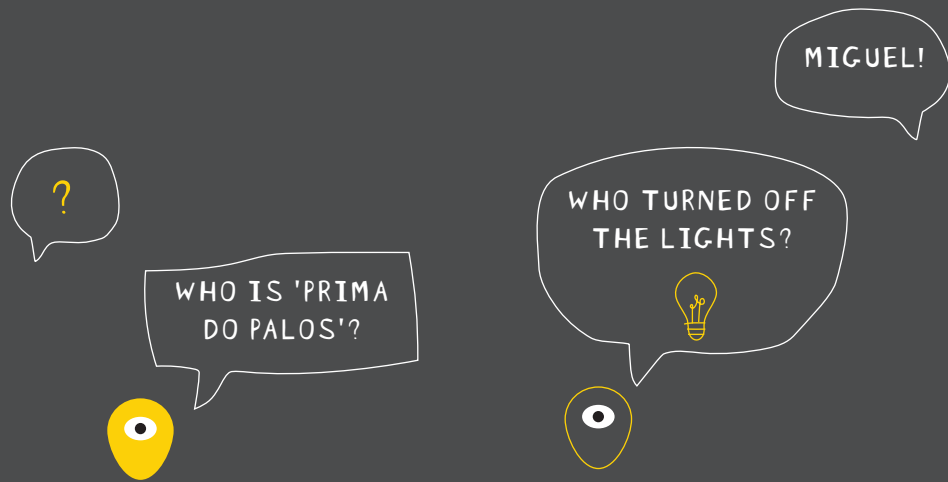
### SOCIALIZING

We're friends and coworkers here. We believe that it's much easier to work with someone once you get to know them on a personal level. We have many social rituals and they top the list of our favorite things about Mindera. Every tradition at Mindera was started by someone like you. Snow trip. Adventure Park trip. Surf trip. Poker tournament. The foosball games. Game night. Show & Tell. Each one exists because someone just decided to do it. Start your own!

### AN ONGOING EXPERIMENT

This place is constantly changing. And change is something we humans resist more than anything else. It's nobody's fault, it's just a biological remnant from our caveman days. Yet as much as we resist change, it's also how we grow and improve. It's the sign of a healthy organisation. With new blood comes new thinking – and so, we continue the ongoing experiment that is Mindera.





# 4.

## FAQ

You've got questions.  
We've got some answers.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHO IS 'PRIMA DO PALOS'?

It's just our way of showing affection. Slackbot also helps with this.



### IT SEEMS LIKE EVERYONE IS READING EACH OTHER'S MINDS. HOW DO I DO THAT?

We use Slackbot a lot. You'll see.

### WHY DON'T WE HAVE A CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER?

You already fill that role. If you're not innovating, you're not doing your job.

### DO I NEED TO CLEAN THE KITCHEN?

We aren't savages. People clean after themselves, and this seems to work quite well. Just make sure you leave everything clean and tidy after using the space. If you see dirty dishes and you have 5 minutes in your hands, just do it. Maybe someone was busy or forgot, and next time that can also happen to you!

### WHY'S IT CALLED MINDERA?

Other names were already taken, and this one had a nice sound to it. No, seriously.

### WHAT'S FAIR GAME TO EAT IN THE KITCHEN?

We get snacks delivered every few days. If you want to keep some personal food in the kitchen grab a marker and write your name all over it. Unmarked snacks = fair game.

### DO DOLPHINS SLEEP?

Yes, they are mammals and they sleep just like the rest of us, but they have to be conscious to breath. This means that they cannot go into a full deep sleep, because then they would suffocate. Dolphins have "solved" that by letting one half of their brain sleep at a time.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In [www.dolphinear.com/data/dolphins.htm](http://www.dolphinear.com/data/dolphins.htm)



### CAN I WRITE ON THE WALLS?

Most of 'em. Just make sure there is a shiny sticker where you are going to write and the marker is "white board" safe.

### CAN I ERASE THAT WRITING ON THE WALL?

If it says "DON'T ERASE," leave it be. If it's a scrum board, ask the team first. Other stuff, just go ahead!

### CAN I BRING MY CAT/DOG/PARROT WHATEVER?

Maybe for a few hours.

### DID SOMEONE SAY BEER?

Yes.



### DO I NEED TO SIT AT MY DESK?

Not at all. You're free to move about as your please. This is why we have laptops. You will probably find a monitor everywhere as well.

### CAN I TAKE A NAP?

Sure, whatever helps you get the work done.

### CAN I DECORATE MY DESK WITH MEMES?

Yes. You are a unique snowflake and we encourage you to express yourself.

### CAN I COME IN ON THE WEEKEND?

Yep. Just make sure to lock up and switch off the lights when you leave.

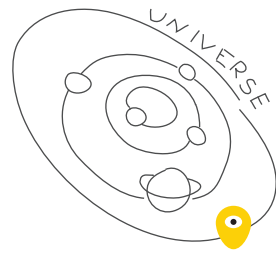
### HOW DO I SWITCH OFF THE OFFICE LIGHTS?

Ask in slackbot, someone will answer.

### IS IT COOL IF I PUT ON HEADPHONES?

Indeed.





**WHO AM I?**

You are the universe experiencing itself.

**CAN I GET A PACKAGE DELIVERED HERE?**

Sure. Remember to add your name to the address :)

**CAN I WRITE SOMETHING FOR THE BLOG?**

Yes. We encourage everyone to contribute.

**WHERE CAN I GET A GOOD SANDWICH?**

Ask the person to your left.

**IS THIS WHOLE THING JUST A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPERIMENT?**

There is no short answer for this, but yes.

**MY BOYFRIEND/COUSIN/MOM/ DAD/LANLORD IS COMING TO TOWN. CAN I BRING THEM BY?**

Didn't you read the section on how everyone is welcome?

**IS THIS REAL LIFE?**

Is this just fantasy?

**HOW DO I KNOW IF SOMEONE WANTS TO PLAY VIDEO GAMES WITH ME?**

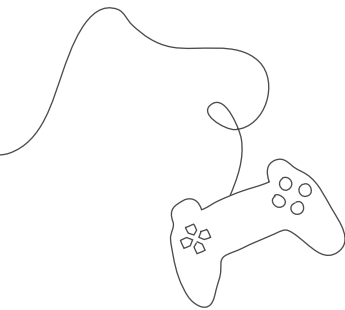
Ask 'em.

**WHO IS SLACKBOT?**

Wut?

**IF ALL ELSE FAILS:**

42, work hard and be nice to people. The rest will sort itself out.



**MINDERA BUCKET LIST**

WANT TO REALLY FEEL LIKE YOU'RE A PART OF OUR BAND OF MISFITS? HERE'S A GOOD WAY TO GET STARTED.

- Win a Foosball game
- Wear the mustache if you lose big time
- Hack someone's laptop. Don't get caught
- Post in our Blog
- Make someone laugh
- Spill something on your desk (careful with the laptop)
- Introduce yourself at #minders
- Ask someone how they are feeling
- + add more 
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Who Am I?



Do dolphins sleep?



Is this  
real life?

