

TALL

Culture



Read me. Read me. Read me.



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01. Getting started

'Sup?

Tall were created from hitting the reset button, a simple business with an aim of creating great work.

Unfortunately life isn't all that simple and business can be complicated, but that doesn't mean we have to lose sight of why Tall exists.

Our philosophy has been put together to explain what we are trying to achieve as a business, why our clients love us and why we all get along. It will help you begin to understand our values and the way we make decisions as a team and as a company.

Our core values.

Client first.

Our decisions should always put our clients first.

Stay humble.

Success is the aim, but never let it go to your head.

Do amazing work.

We only do "great", not just "good".

Collaborate.

Work with the best to achieve the best.

Be dependable.

Successful relationships and results are delivered through trust.

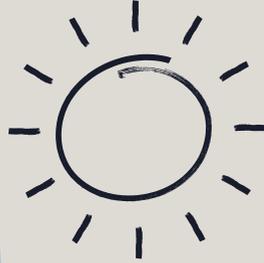
01. Getting started

What we stand by.

Digital? It's everyday life. We achieve real results in a digital world, for brands that want to conquer challenges. That want to outsmart their problems. And forge a new path. That are willing to take a chance. And do things differently. We think first. Then act. Whatever their mission, we help clients find their direction. And we lead with conviction. We keep questioning to understand. And we always ask, is there another way?

What we

stand by



We are real.

Our industry is full of over confident bull-shitters.
People who fill our lives with unnecessary jargon
and on-trend nonsense.



02. We are real

In it together.

We are a small team and being a leader may feel unnatural at first, but we expect everyone to step up and own part of the project. It's kind of like playing football: When someone passes you the ball, you're in charge of what to do with it next.

Talk like a human.

In an industry that requires a tonne of communication between clients, partners and your work mates, it's important not to let acronyms, jargon and buzzwords lead to time wasting and confusion. Sometimes you have to but, where possible, skip the jargon and speak in a language everyone can understand.

Here is what we mean:

Instead of saying

“leverage”, say **“use”**

Instead of saying

“action item”, say **“to-do”**

Instead of saying

“optimise”, say **“improve”**

02. We are real

To avoid robot speak, follow these three simple rules:

Pretend you're talking to your mum.

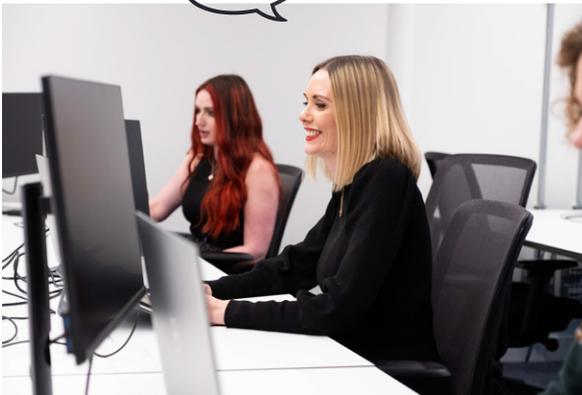
Your mum doesn't know what "CTA" or "Migration Planning" means and it's not because she's not a smart lady, she's just not wrapped up in industry jargon.

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.

Don't be afraid to ask.

Sometimes you need to stop and ask the room to define what exactly “responsive design” or “social business” means to them. It's OK.



02. We are real

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.”

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.

02. We are real

You're here.

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 got it. Let your work do the convincing.

How we hire.

We'll bring you on board if we think you're a good fit, regardless of whether we believe you can do absolutely everything we need you to do. Skills can be learned, processes can be introduced, but trust and the right personality need to be there from the start. We hire based on this because we need to work with you.

It's up to you.

We believe in hiring right and giving an incredible amount of freedom and autonomy. Whether you are a "Head of", or an "Apprentice", 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 catch: With freedom comes a tonne 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.

02. We are real

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.

If you see that the kitchen needs tidying, the washing up needs doing, a staff lunch needs arranging or the files on the server needs clearing out – go ahead. 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.

We are not 'resources'.

Human resources. What an awful phrase. We don't have a HR department. New hires are interviewed by the people who will actually be working with them. This ensures that we're hiring for the right team and the right reasons. So get ready to care a lot about the people you work with.

02. We are real

Truth #1:

We 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:

We have voices.

Yours is as valuable as anyone else's. Use it. Having an opinion is encouraged and it should happen often.

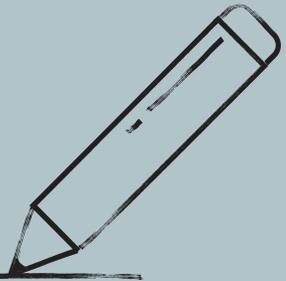
Truth #3:

We are unique.

Do you love Norwegian death metal? 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.

Working together.

You're surrounded by smart people from every discipline. Here is a little bit on how we should treat each other and the work place.



03. Working together

We ain't big on hierarchy.

Traditional hierarchy forms a bottleneck – the whole idea just isn't who we want to be. We work to have mentors and collaborators, not commanders. In other words, you may have a boss, but you shouldn't get bossed around. The folks who speak up regardless of their experience level, not the bossy ones, are the ones who thrive.

Play is important.

When you walk through our doors, you enter an environment where work and play are often intertwined. 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.

03. Working together

Take care of your team mates.

Much of the work we do is either creative or technical. But, there's another skill we all need to have which is the interpersonal kind. It isn't optional. This isn't Rambo 2; 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 Designer or a Strategist. 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.

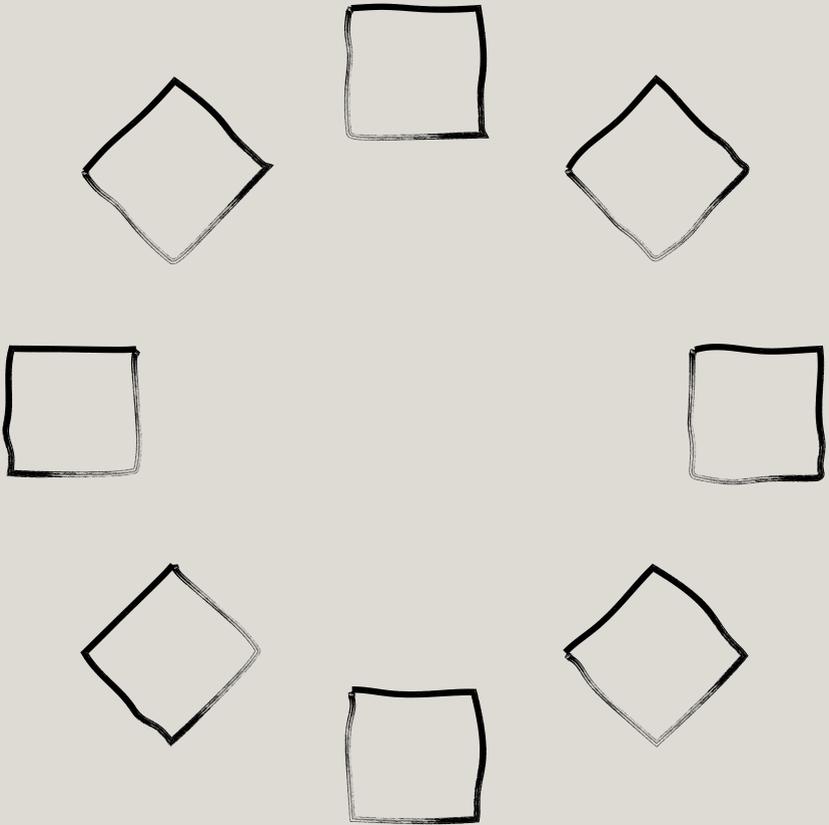
We are small by design.

We've kept our company small for nearly 10 years, which allows us all to sit in the same room and know each other intimately. It also means we've had to sacrifice the economies of scale that come with hundreds or thousands of employees. Sometimes things break or get dirty. We don't have a maintenance department, so it's up to you.

03. Working together

**Don't make a
company of 9
feel like 90.**

We're glad we don't work at a place where part of the team is on another floor or in another building. Try not to over-formalise communication. There's no need to send an email to the person sitting right next to you.



03. Working together

We all sit together.

Some companies operate across different floors (or even buildings). That terrifies us. And it's why we have an open floor plan. You're surrounded by smart people from every discipline. Talk to them. Learn from them.

Take care of the space.

We love our digs here in Leeds. We've made it comfortable and welcoming. We treat this place like a second home, and we take care of it accordingly. Do your bit.

The kitchen.

The kitchen is stocked with dishes, cups, tea and coffee. Feel free to use any of the items available, just be respectful of the rest of the team and remember to sort out your dirty dishes and keep the place clean. It only takes a minute.

03. Working together

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 ruthless about this, and soon you will be too. Our code should be clean. Our designs should be flawless. Our presentations should be elegant. Details are everything.

Be respectful, but don't be delicate.

We've found that the best creative break throughs 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.

03. Working together

Avoid meetings at all costs.

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 find yourself in a meeting about a meeting, start running. We get paid to make stuff, not to talk about making stuff.

03. Working together

Noise.

According to Science, the best noise level for a creative workspace is somewhere around that of a vacuum cleaner. Hence, tunes. But if you need some quiet time, don't feel guilty about finding a quiet corner in a coffee shop 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 Submotion Orchestra.

Internal projects.

Some of the favourite things we've done hasn't been client work at all. One of us had an idea, and they made it real. Gravity®. Tall 17. Tall's 80's Xmas.

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 clients – they make us who we are.

Our clients are part of the team so we need to make sure that we look after them in the right way. Here is a little bit about how we give a top notch service.



04. Clients first

Our vision.

We are customer focused – we'll work to understand our clients and their business and put them at the heart of everything we do, supporting them on their journey to digital success.

Customer pillars.

- Build trust.
- Listen.
- Always deliver.
- Be personable.
- Be helpful.
- Surprise and delight.

04. Clients first

**Principles to successful
client servicing.**

Make a good first impression.

Set a professional tone from the beginning to establish credibility and confidence. Remember to be yourself, but in a professional way. We want to be friendly but not over familiar too soon.

Build your knowledge and skills.

Invest the time it takes to be a real expert. And build the relationships that let you call on someone when you don't have the answer yourself. Help us build a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

04. Clients first

Build rapport.

Think like our clients and communicate on a personal level rather than always talking business. Find a common interest before talking about work.

Be enthusiastic.

Show passion for what you do and pride in your work.

Communicate.

Then communicate some more.

Make no mistake.

Quality, quality, quality. Make sure nothing leaves the door without it going through a rigorous quality check and get the team involved. But if you do...

Be honest.

Turn every error into a moment of magic. Show them just how good you are at what you do. Acknowledge the error, apologise, fix it, own it with no excuses and do it immediately.

04. Clients first

Surprise and delight.

Deliver ahead of schedule, exceed expectations whenever you can, offer useful marketing or competitor insight, send a welcome gift to the team. Wherever you can offer unexpected surprises that delight.

Make it personal.

Recognise special occasions with a handwritten card or note, remember how they like their coffee. Client not feeling well? Send them some flowers. Set the standard for service excellence by following the Golden Rule: Treat your clients as you would treat a friend.

Be consistent.

Sure, you know all these things. But do you do them every single time? Let your clients know that you not only deliver great service, but you do it in a predictable, consistent, sustainable way that will never leave them disappointed.

Not I but we.

We are a talented bunch, all working together to achieve the best for our clients. We are not a one man band, so use the team to get the best job done. And never say I, it's always we.

04. Clients first

Never assume.

Don't know or unsure? Don't go on gut or guesswork, make sure that you know exactly what the brief is by asking the right questions and if you still don't know, ask again. No one likes being made a fool.

Manage expectations.

Don't make clients ask you the status of projects or what is happening. Make sure you are ahead every step of the way by managing their expectations.

Push boundaries.

No one gets in trouble for pushing the boundaries...

Always room for improvement.

Always ask for client and team feedback, do project wash up meetings, pick holes in our process. Nothing is perfect, but we want to always seek out ways so we can try.

Never stand still.

What improvements can we make, where can we make a bigger impact? Don't always wait for the next brief, proactively create it and look for opportunities to help meet clients goals and help grow the agency.

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.



Love Ford.

A licence to design cool sh*t. A licence to design cool sh*t. A licence to design cool sh*t.

05. We change

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 ping pong. Meditate. Call your parents. Make a sandwich. Go for a walk. Climb a tree. Do yoga. Hit the gym. Get a haircut. Buy some new shoes. Sing a song. Get a snack.

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 plugged in.

05. We change

Socialising.

We're friends and co-workers 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 favourite things about Tall.

Every tradition at Tall was started by someone like you. Apex Night. After work beers. Deliveroo Friday. Each one exists because someone just decided to do it. Start your own ritual.



We're

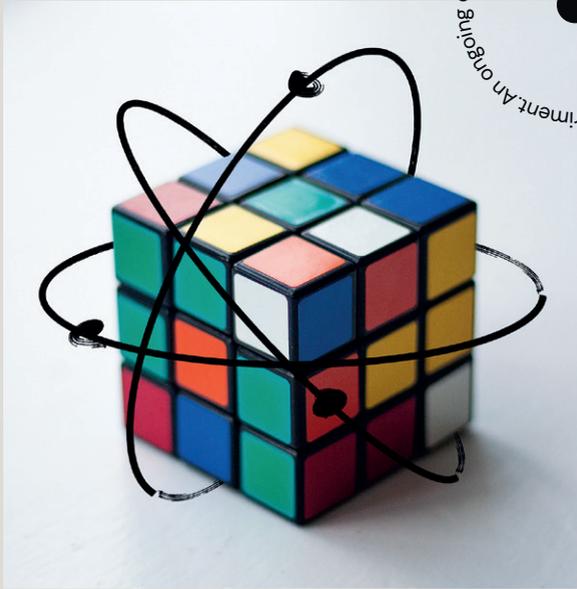
social



05. We change

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 company and it's why our team has a mix of new and seasoned people. With new blood comes new thinking – and so we continue the ongoing experiment that is Tall.



An ongoing experiment. An ongoing experiment. An ongoing experiment.

06. FAQs

Why do people say “bants” sometimes after a sentence?

If you say “bants” at the end of any statement or sentence then that means you can’t be called up on it.

Can I bring my Iguana to work?

Eh?

Where can I get a good sandwich?

Ask the person to your left.

Is this a “Digital Agency”?

People used the word “digital” as a prefix in the days before digital devices existed in every part of our lives. Now, saying “digital” is something our grandparents do. We solve business problems and because the things people use are often digital, the solution will likely be digital as well. We’re just a modern agency.

06. FAQs

Do I need to sit at my desk?

Not at all. You're free to move about as you please. If you work at a desktop machine, you're going to have a hard time taking it with you. This is why quite a few of us have notebooks.

I don't like this song, can I skip it?

Don't even think about it.

Is it cool to put headphones on?

Of course, sometimes you have to and we get that.

Can I use the Tall parking space?

Yes, just ask one of the Directors if it's free and grab a spare pass for your windscreen. Make sure you give it back though otherwise you'll be hunted down!

06. FAQs

Who has control of
the music?

We all do.

Can I get a package
delivered.

Sure.

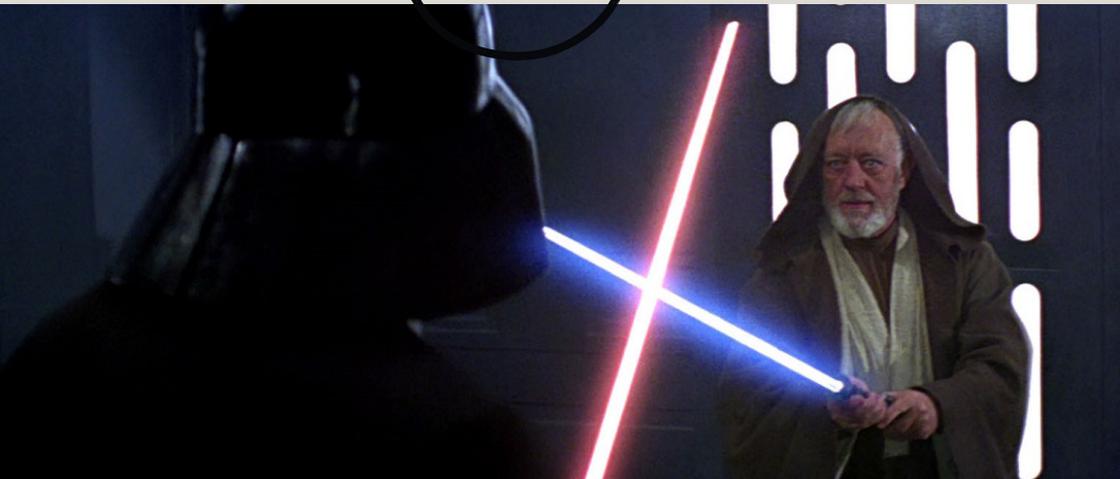
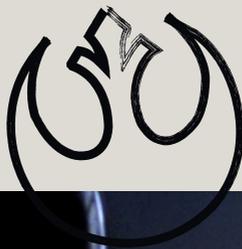
How do I know if
someone wants to play
video games with me?

Ask 'em.

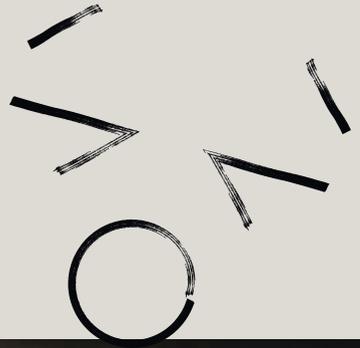
Why are we called Tall?

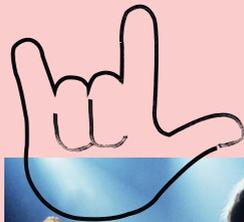
You've met our founder right?

"If you strike me down, I shall become more powerful than you can possibly imagine."



**“Be careful not
to choke on your
aspirations.”**





**Be excellent to
each other...**

and...

PARTY ON DUDES!

TALL