

**Great Expectations:  
We Get What We Seek**  
The MuvData Culture Code

## **Preface**

In 2009, we set out to make a great company. We achieved a lot. Ultimately though we fell short of our goals.

So we try again.

This time we know we must first create an environment that's designed to foster greatness. A place where incredibly talented people are empowered to work with very little in their way.

We're a team of winners, digital artists, doers, and thinkers. We look for others the same. Folks who are intelligent, passionate, and get it. This means maintaining an atmosphere where all that flourishes.

This document is an encapsulation of our guiding principles and expectations. It defines our culture. To help ensure we won't lose this ability as we grow and change, we have a few simple rules that everyone here follows. As MuvData matures, we hope it serves you and each new person joining our ranks.

Although the thoughts outlined here are important, it's really your ideas, talent, and enthusiasm that will keep us successful in the years to come. They benefit us all by making MuvData a better place to work, and our futures more secure.

Thanks for being here.

## About MuvData

Congratulations and welcome.

MuvData has a unique way of doing business. This will make it among the greatest professional experiences of your life, or one of the worst. We've been in your shoes. We want your time here to be as fulfilling as possible. This is a living document. Expect changes and updates from time-to-time. Please read it, and refer back when you have questions. To that end, we've assembled a few facts to help you understand what drives us.

### **MuvData is Self-Funded**

We've never brought in outside financing. Since our founding this has been incredibly important in providing us freedom to shape the company and its business practices.<sup>1</sup>

### **MuvData is a Product Company**

We weren't always. We started as an IT consultancy offering professional services around other people's technology. This gave us the means necessary to bootstrap the company.

### **MuvData Has Big Ambitions**

We have big ideas, an impressive product roadmap, paying customers, and the ability to move fast. Not all young companies can say that. We can.

### **MuvData is More Than a Technology Company**

We started our existence as a pretty traditional technology services provider. Today we're a software company. An ideas factory. A thought leader. But mostly, we're an organization respected for producing outstanding work for customers, and for providing a pleasant and rewarding environment for employees.

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<sup>1</sup> This is really hard to do.

<sup>2</sup> Leaders aren't mind readers.

<sup>3</sup> Or woman... Just say it. We need ground truth.

## Our Values

Unlike most companies, where corporate ideals are just a plaque on the wall, our core values guide how we hire, train, and develop our people.

It's important to remember that MuvData is a business. We're a team. A team must perform. It's why we aim to have **exceptional teammates** in each position. As such we reward, promote, and release people based on the "**BE SUPER**" attitude that underpins everything.

**Our culture is based on these 7 core values:**

### **Build More With Less**

Constraints breed resourcefulness, self-sufficiency, and creativity. There are no extra points for unnecessarily growing headcount, budget, or expenses. Exceptional teammates find a way to get it done with what they have.

### **Everyone Plays A Part**

Exceptional teammates own their position. The work they do makes a difference. They rely on each other to better serve customers, share information, reach goals and make our company an enjoyable place to be.

### **Ship Fast**

Fast is better than slow. Those who move quickly can improve quickly. And that means fast can learn from experience while slow can only theorize. Exceptional teammates know that fast doesn't just win the race. It gets a head start for the next one.

### **Understand What Drives Success**

Exceptional teammates know their business. They master the key inputs and outputs that make the company successful. They use data and metrics to measure growth. They understand our strategy, market, customers and competition.

### **Provide Value Whenever You Can**

Exceptional teammates operate at all levels, staying connected to the details. No task is beneath them. They never say, "That's not my job." They deliver with the right quality, in a timely manner. Despite setbacks, exceptional teammates rise to the occasion. They never settle for good enough.

### **Explore New Possibilities**

Exceptional teammates don't have all the answers nor pretend to. They never stop learning. They're relentless at mastering their craft. Exceptional teammates aren't afraid to ask questions or work outside their comfort zone.

### **Raise The Bar**

Exceptional teammates care intensely about the company's success. They're candid and direct. They're obligated to respectfully challenge decisions when they disagree, even when doing so is uncomfortable or exhausting. Exceptional teammates inspire others. They're transparent with decision-making. They correct mistakes even when no one else would notice.

Values connect us to likeminded people that work like we do.

## **Our Culture**

Company culture is our #1 priority. We believe that if we get the culture right, most of the other stuff – like delivering great customer experiences, or building a long-term enduring brand and business – will happen naturally on its own.

So what is the MuvData culture? It embodies many different elements. It's about always looking for new ways to wow everyone we come in contact with. It's about building relationships where we treat each other with respect. It's about teamwork, having fun, and not taking ourselves too seriously. It's about growth, both personal and professional. It's about achieving the impossible with fewer people. It's about openness, taking risks, and not being afraid to make mistakes. But most of all, it's about having faith that if we do the right thing, we'll succeed by building something great.

## How We Work

We try not to have too many rules. Yet some are necessary.

Employees are expected to accept certain responsibilities and exhibit certain behaviors. Follow acceptable business principles in matters of conduct. Maintain a high degree of integrity at all times. Sincerely respect others. Refrain from behavior that might be harmful to yourself, teammates, the company, or that might be viewed unfavorably by current or potential customers or by the public at large.

We aim to provide a safe workplace for employees. We try to afford a comfortable and secure atmosphere for customers and others with whom we do business. We have zero tolerance for violent acts or threats of violence.

### Compensation

We compensate fairly. We offer a competitive salary and benefits program to our full-time employees. It's expensive. It costs more than 130% of your annual salary to employ you. Benefits such as healthcare, and overhead costs such as office space, technology, federal and state taxes, insurance – even the coffee and snacks - all add up.

While we sometimes can't pay as much as others, we offer intangibles they don't. We realize compensation is just one reason why you work here. We aim to provide a healthy workplace and a culture that supports you financially, and is also one you enjoy. Tell your manager if you feel you're not being compensated fairly, or aren't happy with the work environment.<sup>2</sup>

When we win, the company makes more money. We want you to win, and make more money too.

### Customers

Our customers rock. They pay our bills, and your paycheck. Serve them to your best ability. Go above and beyond doing whatever it takes to make a customer happy.

Don't be afraid to ask customers for money. It's okay to push back when they ask for something new. Believe it or not, customers are happier paying for new work versus getting it for free. Customers don't appreciate free work like they do paid.

If you screw up, you're obligated to fix it. Communicate it to your customer. Then make it right, even if that means rework at no additional cost.

Talk to your manager if you're unsure of this.

### Loving Your Job

Love your job. Of course, it's difficult to love every part, all the time. That's okay. There are portions you'll like more than others. In order to succeed (and be happy), you need to love what you do.

You must head in the same direction as us. If you don't love what you do, let us know. We'll try to find a better fit – either at the company or outside of it. Remember, we want you to grow too.

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<sup>2</sup> Leaders aren't mind readers.

## **Attitude**

Attitude is everything. Be positive. Help others. Play to win. Don't be two-faced. If you have something to say, say it. Don't be a yes-man.<sup>3</sup> If you're stuck or are in a rut, tell us. Seek out help. Don't let it fester.

## **Hard Work**

You're here because you want to succeed. Success isn't easy. It requires hard work. Be the hardest working person you know. We don't have a place for those who don't pull their weight.<sup>4</sup> If you love what you do, then hard work comes naturally and effortlessly. Hard work is rewarded. And it feels good too.

## **Advancement**

Working at MuvData provides an opportunity for accelerated career growth. In particular, it provides an opportunity to broaden your skill set quickly. The easiest way to get ahead is to put more tools in your toolbox. Learn new things. Stretch. Help out in areas beyond your comfort zone. Grow.

## **The Office**

All employees are responsible for assuring that our workplace is free of aggravation, sexual harassment, or any kind of discrimination. Any employee may file a complaint regarding incidents experienced personally or observed around the office. We strive to maintain a lawful, pleasant work environment where all employees can effectively perform their job duties without interference of any type. We request the assistance of all employees in this effort.

## **Hours**

People occasionally choose to work extra hours at times when something big is happening. For the most part that's okay. But working overtime for extended periods indicates a fundamental failure in planning and/or communicating. If this happens repeatedly, it's a sign that something needs to be reevaluated and corrected.

We want you to stick around. We want you to have a good balance between work, family, and the rest of important life stuff. If you find yourself working long hours, or just generally feel like that balance is out of whack, be sure to let us know so we can help.

## **Work/Life Balance**

Family is important. Most of us work to support them and ourselves. Family must come first, and work a close second. You should treat work as the priority it is.

It's fine to occasionally leave early to pickup kids, go to class, visit a family member in the hospital, or have a night out. But you can't let these activities interfere with your work. Acknowledge that. Think about your teammates, customers, and the impact on the business. If you do these things regularly, try keeping them to a minimum within business hours. If you have to do something within working hours, make up that time later on.

Be sure to over-communicate your whereabouts. If you're out for whatever reason, make sure people know.

## **Being at the Office**

Face time and results matter. Both are noticed. Something magical happens when smart, passionate, humble people get together. Having said that, it's okay working from home

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<sup>3</sup> Or woman. Just say it. We need ground truth.

<sup>4</sup> Remember that Everyone Plays A Part company core value.

some of the time. Just communicate it to your manager before so. And make sure you get your work done. But primarily you need to be at the office, getting your work done.

### **Flextime**

We care about work/life balance. So we offer flextime scheduling to full-time employees. It's designed to make your life easier, and work a little more convenient.

Flextime means there's no time requirement at the office. No one should be working 7am-6pm because of traffic. If you come in early, leave early. Finish from home or someplace close to it. If you prefer coming in later, work into the evening.

### **What Flextime Scheduling is**

Flextime scheduling lets employees determine their own working hours. The goal is to provide balance between home and work life while maximizing job performance. While there aren't time requirements, we want you at the office primarily. So use your best judgment when to use it.

### **What Flextime Scheduling isn't**

Flextime scheduling is not a license to work from home everyday. It's also not a license to come in at 10, and leave at 3 to "miss traffic" every day of the week.

### **What's Expected of You**

- Generally be in the office
- Be in the office for internal meetings and company gatherings
- Make sure you're actually working when using flextime
- Be available via Hangouts or Slack during working hours when not in the office
- Don't let people wonder where you are. Over-communicate your whereabouts
- Be responsive
- Don't let your work slip

### **Time Off**

Time off is a result of your hard work and our collective success. When taking time off make sure your teammates and customers know about it in advance. Leave them in good hands. This allows you to enjoy your time away. Plan accordingly. Don't leave your teammates or customers in a bind by neglecting your commitments.

There's little worse than working while on vacation – it defeats the purpose of resting, relaxing, and renewing. Of course, there's always the possibility of an emergency. But with proper planning that can be lessened, and likely avoided. Planning and proactive communication effectively minimize this.

### **Paid Time Off**

We publish company holidays in our employee handbook. In addition to company holidays, you're provided paid time off (PTO). At the time of this writing, we offer 3 weeks of paid time off per year. PTO is accrued. You earn approximately .625 days off every pay period, or 1.25 days off per month. Like all time away from the office, plan for it accordingly.

Ask your manager if you have questions.

### **Out Sick**

At times of sickness the team will help to take up the slack. You should do the same for others when they're sick. Communication is vital to protect your customers and the



company. So be sure to let your manager know when you're not feeling well. Our aim is for you to get better quickly and return to work as soon as possible.

### **Risks**

What if you screw up? You live with it. So do we. Nobody has ever been fired at MuvData for making a mistake. It wouldn't make sense for us to operate that way. Providing the freedom to fail is an important company trait. We couldn't expect so much if we also penalized you for errors. Even expensive mistakes, or ones which result in a very public failure, are genuinely looked at as opportunities to learn. We can always repair the blunder or make up for it.

Screwing up is a great way to find out that your assumptions were wrong. In fact, it's part of our corporate values. As long as you change your perspective, you're doing it right. Look for ways to test your beliefs. Never be afraid to try something new or collect more data. But there's a flipside too. You must own your screw up.

Turns out there are bad ways to screw up. Repeating the same mistake over again is one. Not listening to customers or peers before or after an error is another. Not taking responsibility for it is yet another. Never ignore the evidence; particularly when it says you're wrong. And then own it. It feels good.

### **But what if we ALL screw up?**

How do we make sure MuvData is heading in the right direction if everyone's making his or her own decisions? When everyone's sharing the steering wheel, it seems natural to fear that one of us is going to crash.

And yet you won't.

Over time, we've learnt that our collective ability to meet challenges, take advantage of opportunities, and respond to threats is far greater when everyone's responsible for it. See why everyone plays a part is a core value?

We all own long-term relationships with each other and our customers. They (and you) watch us, sometimes very publicly, make mistakes. Sometimes they (and you) get angry with us. But because we always have their (and yours) best interests at heart, there's faith that we'll make things better. If we screw up, it's not because we're trying to take advantage of anyone.

### **Ownership**

Everyone plays a part.<sup>5</sup> We each have roles and responsibilities. We're trying to achieve the same set of goals.<sup>6</sup> You should own your job function, strive to do it right, and look to improve. You made commitments - both to teammates and customers. You should do your best to meet them. If you're unable to meet your obligations, for whatever reason, it's on you to communicate that in advance.

Ownership also means acknowledging when you fail at something. Failure's okay so long as you own it.

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<sup>5</sup> Everyone Plays A Part is another great company core value. It's a privilege not to be taken lightly.

<sup>6</sup> This is why Understand What Drives Success is such an important corporate value.

## **Failure**

The best way to learn is to fail. We encourage failure. It's what allows you to take risks. If you're unsure, ask someone. Try something new.<sup>7</sup> Learning from mistakes is important. Share the lesson. Not doing so is a failure in itself.

## **Strive to Improve**

Always look to improve. Sometimes you know what to do. In those cases just do it. Other times you may not. In those instances it's helpful to acknowledge guidance might be needed. Communicate it. That's why we have leaders – they're here to help. Together we can make our jobs, and ourselves better.

## **Scale**

We're a growing company. Yet our success isn't guaranteed. Neither is yours. Think about scale to ensure growth. One of the most effective ways to grow is task delegation. Doing so can be daunting. To help with this think to yourself, "If someone came down from Mars, what would they need from me to do my job?" Documentation is critical. Defining and refining processes are crucial. So is repeatability. All of these will grow you, and the company.

## **Trust**

Trust is paramount between teammates. We need it to achieve our goals. Trust means speaking your mind freely, without fear of offending. It means not intentionally letting your teammates or customers down. Trust means being truthful in what you say, and not hiding.<sup>8</sup> It means believing in your leadership team, even if you don't always agree with them. Trust means challenging decisions, no matter how difficult it may be to do so.<sup>9</sup> Trust, like respect, must be earned.

## **Disagreement**

Disagreement is fine. Not being heard isn't. It's important to speak up,<sup>10</sup> especially if you feel we can do better. Note, we may not always agree but we definitely hear you.

We get loud with each other – that's what passionate people do. It's not a bad thing.

Respect the decisions made by our leaders. Even if you don't agree with them, they're ultimately responsible for the decisions that impact the company.

## **Constructive Criticism**

Be open to constructive criticism. No one's perfect. We all make mistakes. Listening to constructive criticism allows for improvement. Providing it means doing so in a respectable way. Don't criticize for the sake of criticizing. People have feelings. Instead, provide ideas and ways to improve performance in a useful manner. Having an open mind and taking in both positive and negative feedback makes you better as an individual, and us as a team.

## **Celebration**

Celebrate wins. When someone does good work, share it with the team. Praise their accomplishments. Good work should be acknowledged and rewarded.

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<sup>7</sup> We even made it a company core value called Explore New Possibilities.

<sup>8</sup> Bad news doesn't get better with age.

<sup>9</sup> This is part of our Raise The Bar core value.

<sup>10</sup> We debated if the "S" was better suited for Speak Up, an original core value. We decided on Ship Fast because it's better to get things done or to fail and try again, if needed. Speak Up was then incorporated into our Raise The Bar core value instead.

## Helping Others

Sometimes your teammates need help. You should help others complete their job when assistance is needed.

## Smarts

We enjoy working with like-minded folks. They teach things that help us learn. Smart people come up with new ideas worth exploring. They improve the products and services we offer. Smart people also admit things they don't know,<sup>11</sup> so that others may teach them. There's always something new to learn – smart people know that, and strive to become smarter.

## Humility

We don't like big egos or braggadocios behavior. We know you're talented. You wouldn't be here otherwise.

We don't do well with entitlement. Earn your keep. You're not entitled to things. You earn them over time. You do what's right, and don't expect anything in return. You're selfless.

## Communication

Communication is good. Over-communication is better. And encouraged. People need to know so they can provide value<sup>12</sup> when needed. Proactively keeping teammates and customers informed on a regular basis is critical to your success. It helps you and us make better decisions. No one likes being left hanging. Proper communication removes any shadow of a doubt that something's being worked on or is broken.

You can never communicate enough.

### **Insider Tips:**

- *Respond to your email before and after office hours, and throughout the day.*
- *When communicating with clients and prospects, use their time zone instead of yours. Be sure to call it out. For instance, say "I'll speak to you at 2pm PST." or "Are you available to meet at 3:30pm EST?"*
- *Use email subject headers that get noticed. Include the discussion topic in the subject line. Something like "Request for meeting from Dean regarding TNO taxes" is a good example.*
- *Use call to action statements in the beginning and end of an email. Begin and close with statements like "I need your help with..." or "no action is needed at this time."*
- *Play it cool. But not too cool. Emails that are slightly positive or slightly negative are most likely to get responses.*
- *Asking questions is good, but more than three starts working against you.*
- *Keep it pithy. Studies show the optimum length for an email is 50 to 125 words.*
- *Mind your manners. For example, "Please let me know" instead of "Let me know."*
- *Emails work. But they're not the only way to communicate. Many times they get buried. If your client's not answering an important question or request, try calling him or her instead.*
- *Know your audience. Some people prefer written communication. Others verbal. Adjust your communication style based on the other person.*

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<sup>11</sup> Remember to Explore New Possibilities, the second "E" in our corporate core values.

<sup>12</sup> Provide Value Whenever You Can is a cherished company core value. Its importance should never be underestimated.

**Frustration**

If you're unsatisfied with your position or are frustrated with something, tell your manager. If you're unhappy with your teammates, tell him or her directly. Don't be passive aggressive. People are not mind readers. Nobody can help if they don't know how you feel. Speak up.

**Fit**

To be human means to be different. We come from dissimilar backgrounds and lifestyles. Like the weather each day, our perspectives are varied. They change all the time. Though your beliefs may be different, your goals must be similar. You must head in the same direction as us.

This document is an encapsulation of what we believe. These ideas and principles establish fit for everyone. It's important you agree with the statements made. You'll do well at MuvData if you do.

And if you don't, that's okay too. You should discuss your concerns with your manager because maybe something's misinterpreted. Or possibly this place isn't right for you, and we can help you find one that is.

Either way, we need to know.

**Deciding to Move On**

We all seek change. It's okay to move on. We won't be upset if you let us know ahead of time. The more notice, the better. Giving us enough time helps everyone, including you.

It may take a while for you to find another job. Instead of secretly looking for one, let your manager help. You'll find that we're very willing to do so.<sup>13</sup>

When you decide to leave, your role transitions to someone else - either inside or outside the company. Be mindful of that. Depending on current commitments, it may take several weeks to find a suitable replacement. Don't let your teammates or customers down by short-circuiting this process.

We ask for a minimum of two weeks notice - though three, four, or even more - is greatly appreciated. If you're doing your job effectively during this time, we pledge to let you finish your tenure here. No questions asked. We want you to be happy, even on the way out.

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<sup>13</sup> We've helped many former colleagues find jobs elsewhere. Remember, we've been in your shoes.

## **Where Will You Take Us?**

Things that don't stay relevant don't stick around. They disappear. MuvData will be a different company a few years from now because you're changing it for the better. We're excited for where you take us. The products, features, and experiences that you create are what will define us. If we don't make the thing that kills MuvData, someone else will.

We can't wait to see what kind of future you choose to make here.

Thank you. Let's build great things.