

Culture Manual



Dedicated to TextNow employees.

Thank you for helping us make
TextNow a great place to work.
You are our most valuable asset.

This is your step by step guide on the culture at TextNow.

We hope this will help you
understand how choices are made
and how your decisions contribute
to our fantastic culture.



Message from Our CEO – What is the TextNow Culture?

Values and Mission

TextNow Values

Mission Statement

Culture

Strong Culture – Strong Company

Our People

We Do Things Together

Trust

TextNow Offices

Owning a Piece of the Company!

Speak Up

What Happens if I Make a Mistake?

We Care About Our People

Phonies

Kudos

Honeymoon Program

Babymoon Program

Unlimited Vacation

Wellness

Fun

Referral Program

Communication

We're Not Email-Heavy

Meetings

Work Week

What We Believe

Who We Are

What Difference are We

Trying to Make in the World?

Our Product

We Do Great Work and are

Damn Proud of It

We Are Customer Obsessed

Taking Care of Customers

is the Reason We're Here!

How Are We making TextNow the Best Place to Work?



Welcome to the TextNow Culture Manual!

Ever since our humble beginnings in Waterloo in 2009, we've experienced rapid and continual growth. Now that we've entered our tenth year, we need to ensure people understand and, more importantly, embrace the TextNow culture.

Helping all of our employees embrace our culture is key to TextNow's success. By providing transparency and understanding through the following culture manual, we believe this will help us build a great product and brand.

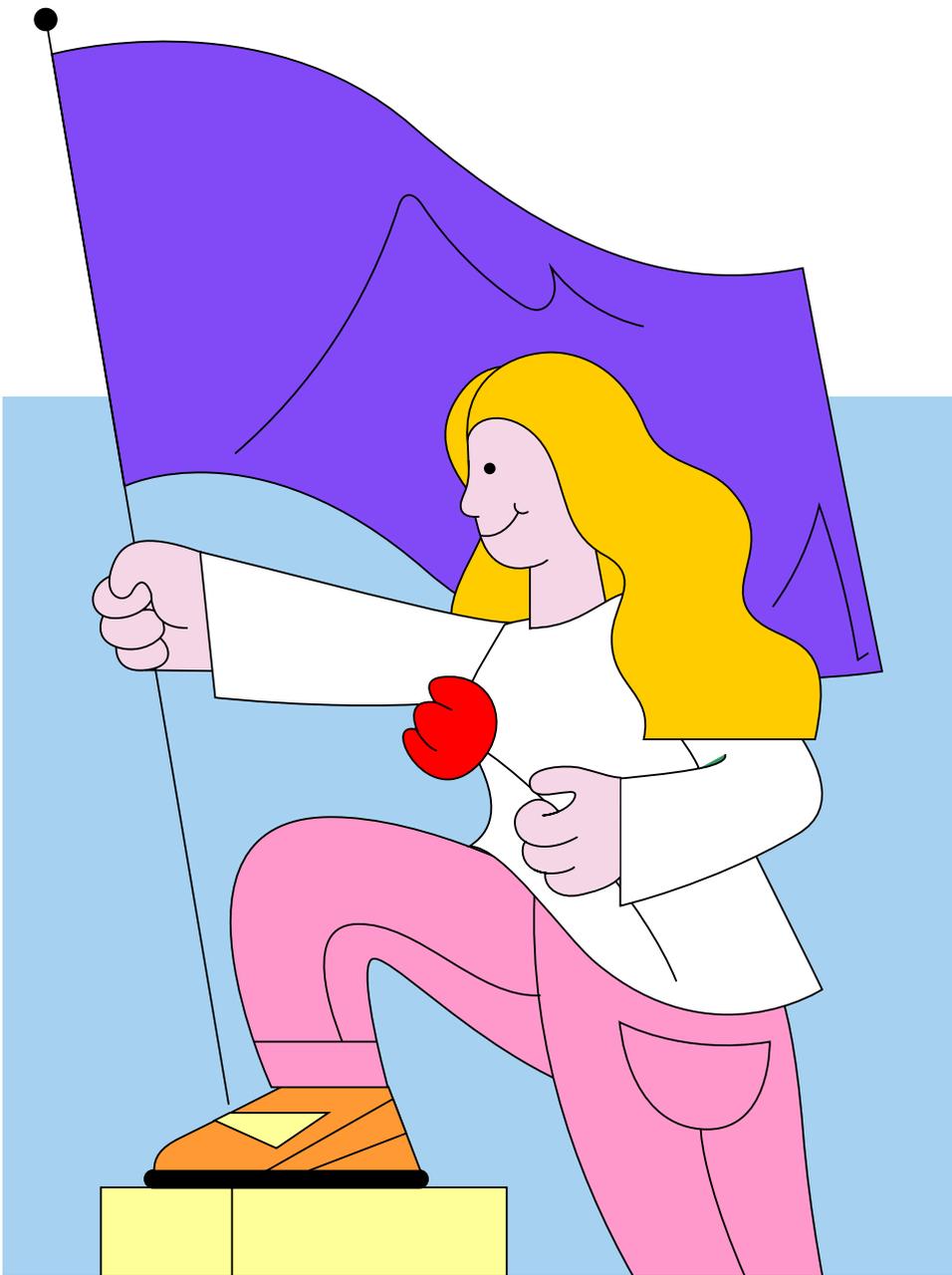
So... what is the TextNow culture, then?

The culture we create at TextNow is something we all contribute to, all day, every day. It is a group of shared beliefs and values within our company. It's about teamwork and having fun; it's about growth both personal and professional; it's about building what hasn't been made yet; it's about trying new things and learning from mistakes; it's about being bold and, sometimes, failing. It's about the hard work that goes into giving our customers the quality they deserve.

But most of all, our culture is our people, and the unshakable belief that if we work together and focus on the right things, then what we make together will be amazing



Values & Mission





Textnow Values

At TextNow, our values are everything. We live and breathe them, and we base our decisions around them. We expect our employees to keep them in mind (don't worry, there's no quiz) and to use them as a guide for your own decision-making.

The values don't stand alone. They should be used together to make the best decisions.

Sound good? Let's run through them now.



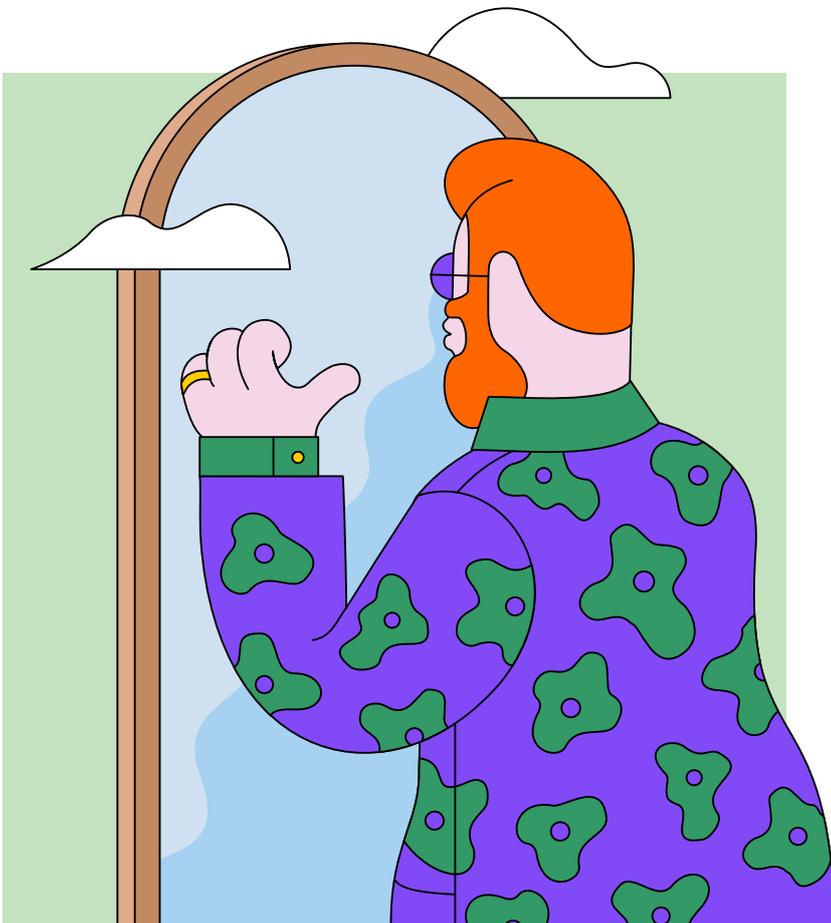
No Brilliant Jerks

We're cool with the brilliant part. The jerk part? Not so much. We work together and respect each other. You are egoless and think team first, respectful of all people and functions and always acting in the best interest of TextNow and your teammates.

So, what does brilliant jerk look like?

Meet Marko.

Marko is an amazing engineer and an expert in his field, which makes him believe he knows everything much better than everyone else. He interrupts others, ignores their opinions and input and believes he is the most important person in any room. Marko only works on projects that benefit him and will help to promote his work. He trash-talks other technologies, companies and people (behind their backs, of course). Marko enjoys talking about himself and refuses to change his behavior. He passes off feedback he receives by saying, "it's other people's concern" not his. Marko is a brilliant jerk.



"The opportunity is not to discover the perfect company for ourselves. The opportunity is to build the perfect company for each other."

- Simon Sinek



Take Action and Ownership

Crack the problem, engineer the solution, own the work, share the glory! When you see an opportunity, or issue you get involved or find the right person to involve. As a leader, it means taking ownership of your function and working cross-functionally to hit results.

So, what does taking action and ownership look like?

Meet Ashley.

Ashley works on the Android team and has for many years. She noticed that there was a re-occurring messaging issue that was showing up in App Store reviews that the team was too busy to look into. Ashley took the time to reach out to the customer support team and get more information from the customers experiencing the issue, and dug into a solution herself. She was able to get a fix for the problem into the next release and quickly resolved the issue before more customers could be affected. She also gave a kudos to her colleagues on the customers support team to say thank you for the help.

“Well done is better than well said.”

- Benjamin Franklin





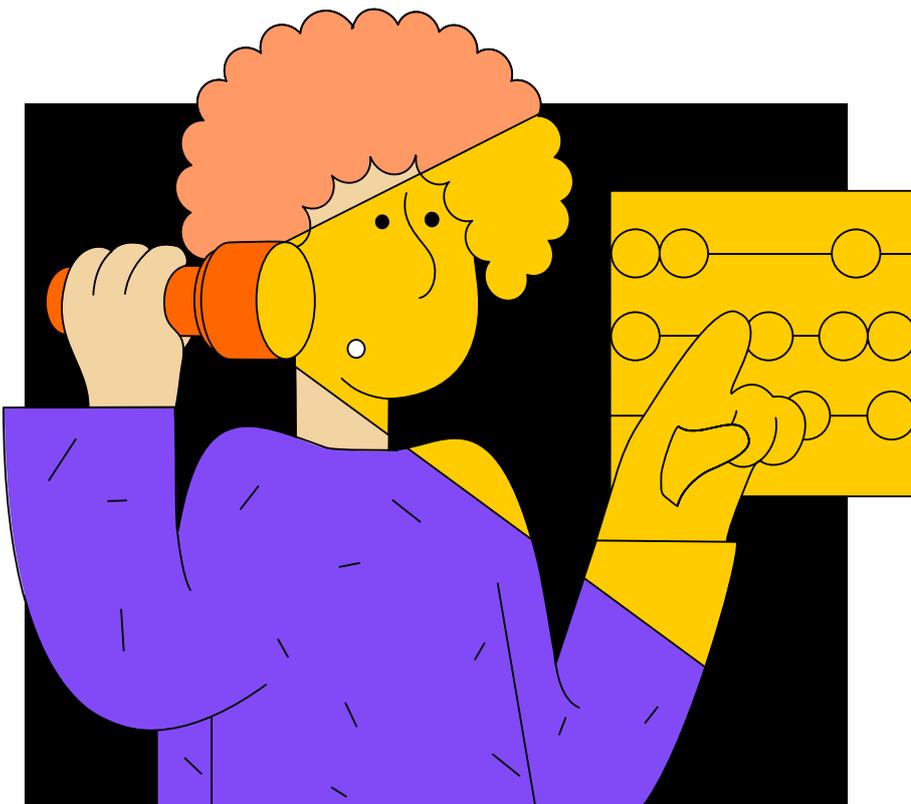
Be Bold and Take Risks

Learning comes from trying new things, taking risks and sometimes failing. Being bold and iterating on ideas favors TextNow. You are trusted to take thoughtful risks appropriate to your scope and function. Do things that others believe cannot be done. Trying and learning from new things is more important than the chance of failure.

So, what does being bold and taking risks look like?

Meet Adam.

Adam is an intern that was tasked with a problem – how do we ensure activations happen reliably for our customers? Instead of going down the typical route to solve this problem, Adam had a feeling there was a better way, and took a risk with a different solution—that we had not tried before. Knowing that there were no guarantees that this new solution would actually work out, and he may have to redo it, Adam still pushed forward to prove his assumption was correct and successfully completed the project.



“The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.”

– Steve Jobs



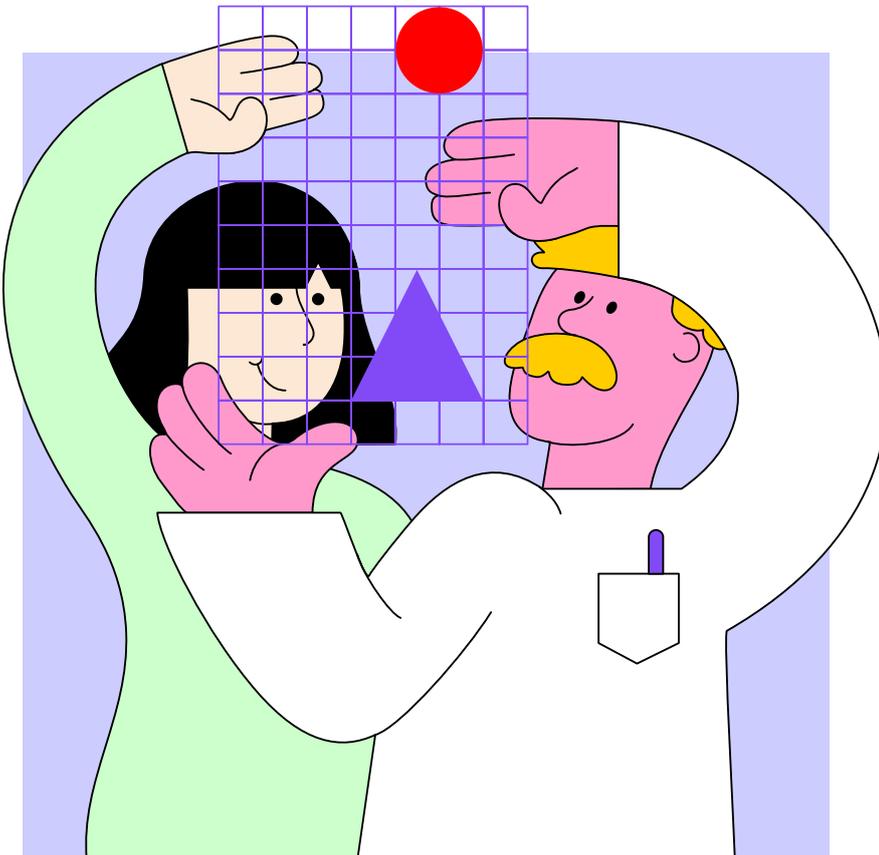
Create Cool Shit Together

We're not here to build what's already been built. We're here to build what hasn't. Everything we do is an opportunity to collaborate and create something exciting and innovative. "Cool" is often in the eye of the beholder – but we think creating together is pretty cool.

So, what does it look like to create cool shit together?

Meet TextNow Core Team.

The core team is a cross-functional group of employees that solve challenging problems like: what technology are we building next for our customers that can be offered for free or as close to free as possible? The launch of our Nationwide Talk and Text service – a first of its kind offering that provides customers free calling and texting without WiFi, is one example of how the TextNow Core team came together to create cool shit. Developers, product owners, customer care team members, designers, QA, and marketers all worked to bring this project to life. The ability to use the TextNow service outside of WiFi was the #1 request from our customer base, and this team was able to successfully deliver that to our customers.



*"To go fast, go alone.
To go far, go together."*

– African proverb



Be Respectfully Candid

We share our ideas and criticisms candidly and directly, without being political. Feedback is a gift and should be given and received with the same level of care.

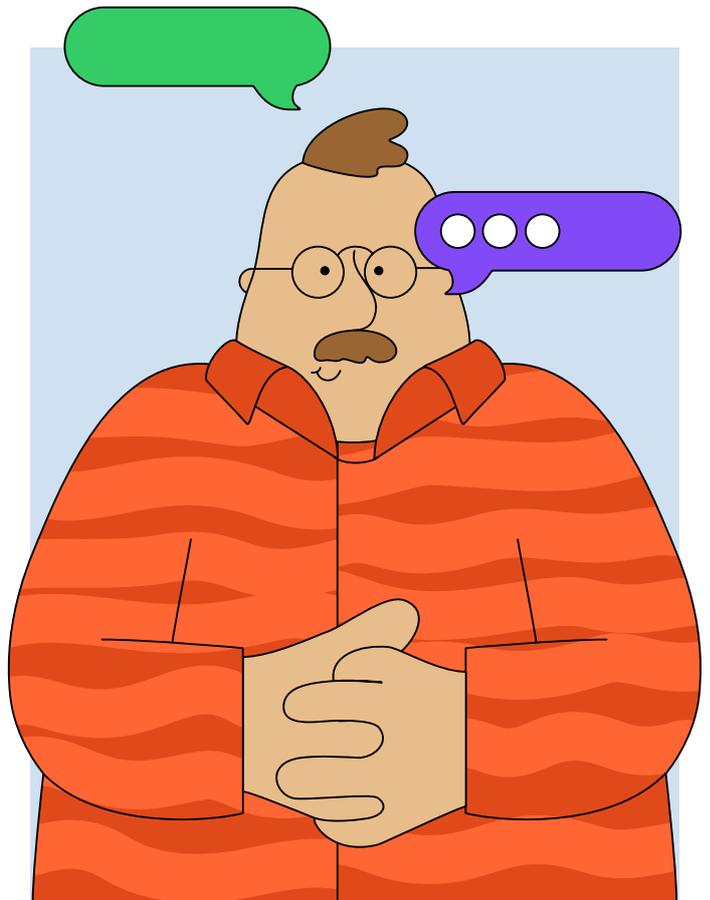
We love feedback. We love asking for it, and we love giving it. It helps us make better decisions, communicate clearly, and get shit done. Of course, how it's delivered makes all the difference. The best feedback is direct and comes from a good place. This doesn't mean you should only give positive feedback – ideally, you want to help others improve by giving challenging, clear feedback in the most caring way possible.

What does it mean to be respectfully candid?

Meet Bob.

Bob is a leader at TextNow and one of his team members didn't deliver a project on time. For Bob this is disappointing, there is not much he can do about it now. There is no point in getting mad, but Bob understands that he needs to find a solution and give his team member feedback to make sure this doesn't happen again. Here is Bob giving feedback:

The project wasn't delivered on time, let's talk about where you were blocked and how I could have helped? As you know, we're trying to get everything organized for launch, so if you're late on a project, it slows down the rest of the team. Next time, let's work together to ensure you have more time and resources to finish as planned and better communicate when you need additional help. I often find that when I schedule my work in advance, it helps me deliver promptly and ensures I am not overloaded towards the end, when everything is due.



“When we are closed to ideas, what we hear is criticism. When we are open to criticism, what we get is advice.”

– Simon Sinek



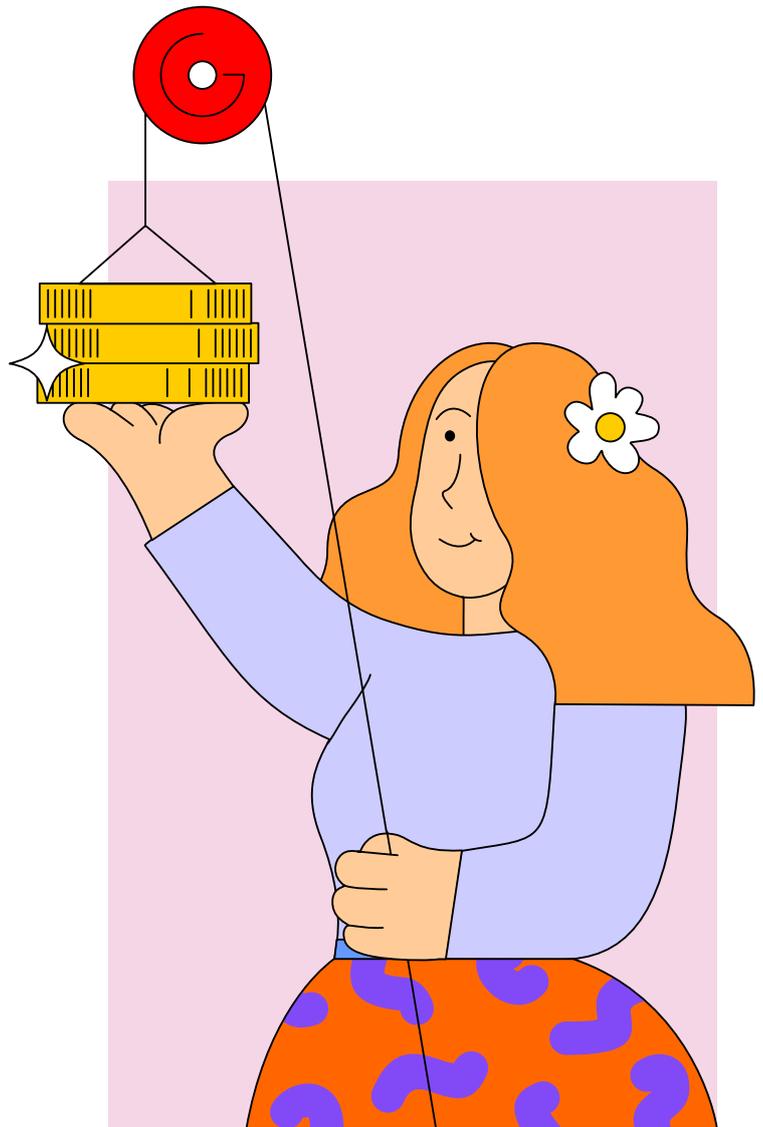
Be Resourceful and Scrappy

We work hard to charge our customers less, not more, and sometimes that means figuring out how to do more with less. This also relates to how we spend money and how we work. We are efficient with resources and money, we prove things out through testing, we spend money for the company like it's our own. We work smarter not harder.

So, what does it mean to be resourceful and scrappy?

Meet Jane.

Jane works for the marketing team at TextNow and needs access to a variety of different tools – analytics, email marketing platforms, and social media tools – to complete her work. She has a budget set out for the cost of these tools on a yearly basis, but depending on the time of year and her marketing plans, she isn't always leveraging them at the same time. Instead of paying the yearly subscription for the use of these platforms, Jane negotiates a discount for the times she will not be using the tools, and where possible, stops the payments all together so the business is not being charged for something that is not being used.



*Scrappy – Urban Dictionary defines this term as “one who is little but who can really kick some ass.” Our roots as a small startup were certainly scrappy. Things may have been small and messy, but some ass-kickin’ sure happened. So, while we’ve outgrown the definition of a startup, we’ve kept our resourceful approach to ideas and projects.



Mission Statement

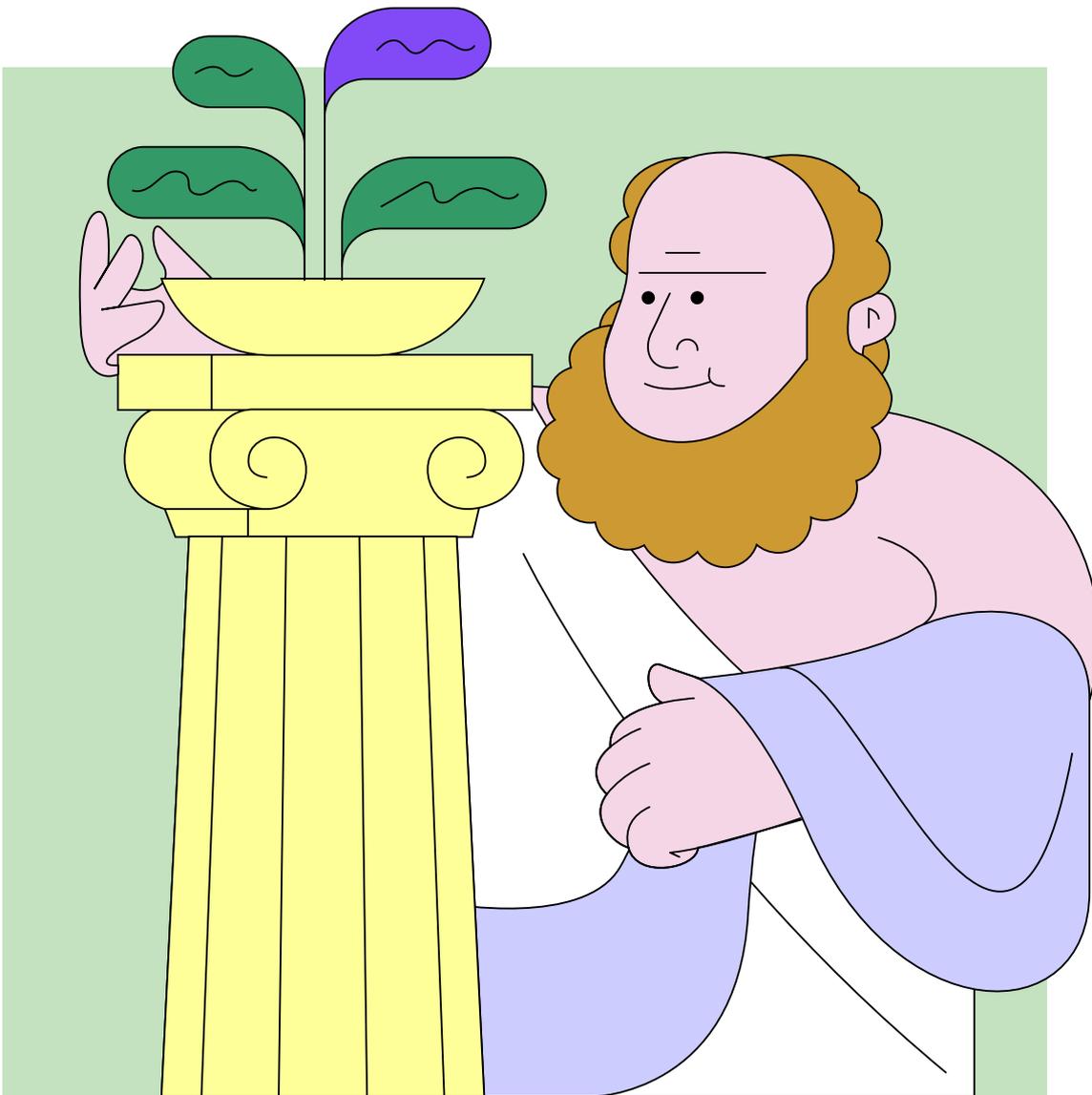
Join us in our mission to help people stay connected with technology that is free (or as close to free as possible.)

Our Purpose

To help people by creating new ways for them to connect using technology, for free or as close to free as possible.



Culture



Companies with strong healthy cultures have employees who like being challenged by their work, who get along well with their co-workers, and love their workplace.



Our People

TextNow is a motley crew of smart, funny, creative people - some are even two of those things - who are determined to bring communication to everyone by helping people connect for free.

Together we are determined to craft products that solve real - world problems. Products that make people's lives easier. We make decisions by setting clear goals for our products and technology. Inspired by our passion and determination we work strategically to simplify our products and services for our customers.

During your time at TextNow, you'll be expected to have fun and create some of the best work of your career.

TextNow isn't big on hierarchy, because teamwork is all that matters here. We want everyone here to grow with the company as professionals and individuals. Respect each other. Share and learn from one another. Create cool shit together without fear. We're all in this together.



We Work Together

Leave Your Ego at the Door

Teamwork is about we, not me. The work we create is crafted for our customers. Move past our prejudices and agendas. Design for the brief and be proud of the outcome.

Socialize and Get to Know People

Get to know the people you are working with. One of TextNow's traditions is that we all eat lunch together. It sounds like a little thing, but everybody eating together - engineers, communications, fulfilment, design, HR, everybody - is more than just a team-building exercise. It's central to who we are as a company, because when we all come together, conversations between departments, or between people who usually do not work together, happen spontaneously. Ideas flow from conversations, and innovation flow out of ideas.

So take the time to get to know your workmates. Ask them about what they're working on, or how their vacation went, or just shoot the breeze. You'll be surprised at what you find.

Trust Your Judgement

We're not big on micromanagement around here, because we believe in the old Hollywood adage that 90% of a movie is casting. We're careful to hire amazing people, and our goal is to unleash you to perform at your peak and stay out of your way. We don't have a lot of rules and procedures and policies here; instead, we trust our employees to get the job done, collaborate with your team and manager to set your priorities, and ask for help when you need it.



About Feedback and Vulnerability

TextNow culture is all about giving and receiving feedback. It helps us make better decisions, communicate clearly and get shit done. Of course, how it's delivered makes all the difference. "That looks great" isn't really a feedback but that looks great because of XY&Z is.

Make your feedback valuable.

Accepting Imperfection is building Workplace Value.

We encourage employees to ask for help, to take responsibility when a project goes awry, leaders who reaching out to an employee who are suffering a personal crisis are displays of vulnerability. Leaders and employees who are vulnerable and authentic with one another are more likely to feel connected increasing workplace productivity and employee engagement.

Collaboration

No matter what your role is, we expect you to contribute to the project. Great work requires collaboration. Don't let others down. Don't disappear in the middle of a project. Over-deliver on expectations. Over communicate. Trust is earned, not given.



Hours and Our Offices

As you probably have guessed, TextNow also isn't big on tracking hours. Time isn't the only way, or even the most important way, of assessing productivity; creating quality work is. While people will sometimes choose to push themselves to put in extra hours during crunch times, we also understand the need for work/life balance. We also realize that burnout is a real thing.

That's one of the reasons we've instituted unlimited vacation. If you want to take time off, and you're either caught up on work or you have people who can cover in your absence, and you've talked it over with your manager, then take some time off without having to worry about it coming out of your allotted vacation days.

Our offices are a shared space for all of us where we create together, work, play, laugh and enjoy the day. Visitors to the office for the first time can sometimes think our space is a little too good to be true, what with the free snacks, food, cold drinks, taps for both beer and water, and the truly impressive amount of coffee machines. "What's the catch?" they ask. No catch - just like our unlimited vacation policy, food and drink are here if you need them. Nobody's counting how many Coffee Crisps you've had today.

We have 2 locations: one in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, and the other in San Francisco, California. Friends and family are always welcome - invite them over for a lunch or to grab an after-work beer, or have them join us for events. We love showing off our spaces.

And one more awesome feature of the Waterloo office: the Living Wall, an impressive 3 storey green wall that features over 4,000 tropical plants and that welcomes you when you enter the Evolv1 building.

Here are some simple tips on how to work with us "international remotes": Work-life harmony has to exist for everyone. Be mindful of international time zones, holidays and unlimited vacation policy when connecting with colleagues from different time zones.



Owning a Piece of TextNow

Every full-time TextNow employee owns company shares. Shortly after joining TextNow, you'll be granted shares in the company.

WHY? The answer is simple – Because this is OUR company – we all have a hand in making it succeed and making it worth something.

Speak Up

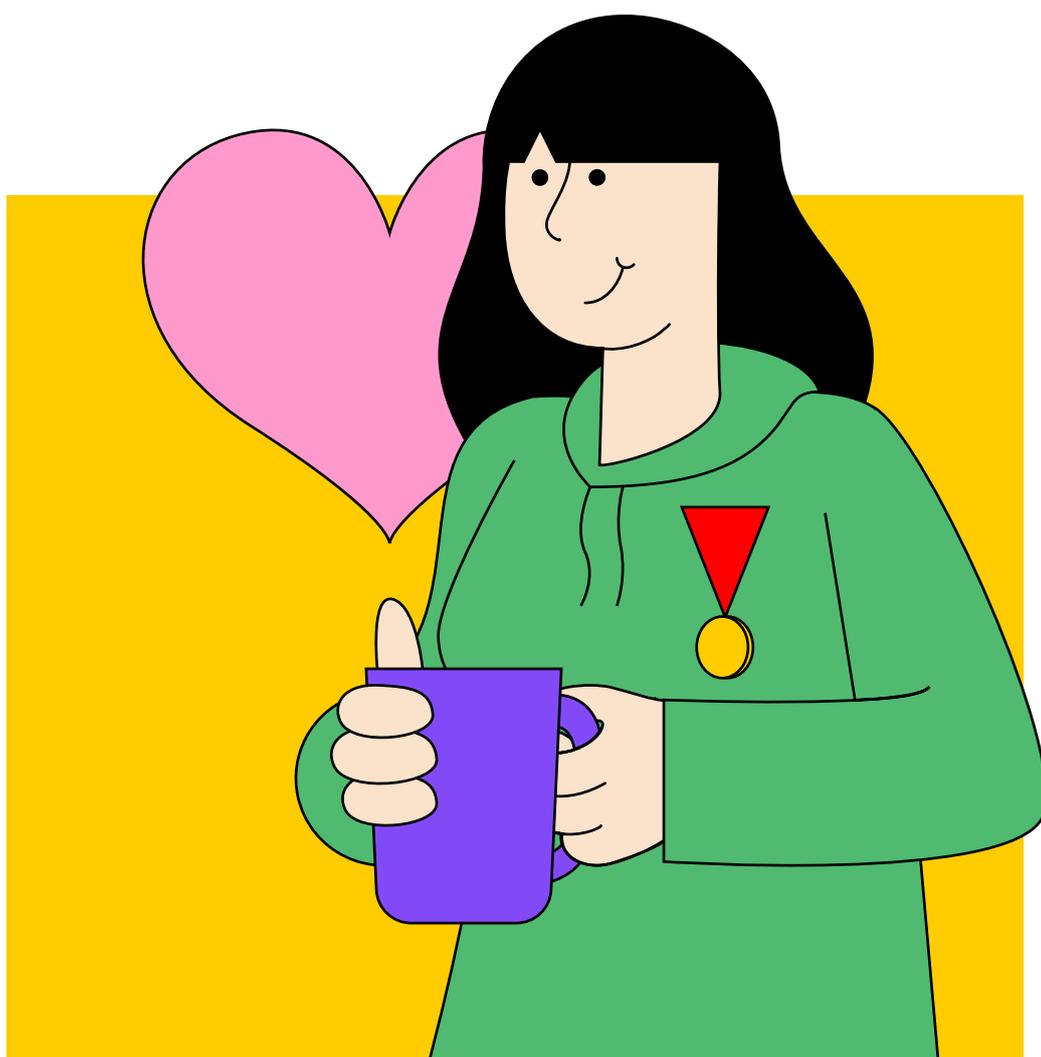
Don't be afraid to ask questions. How many times have you prefaced and inquiry with “sorry to bug you” or ended an email with a “sorry for all the questions” to laugh off the feeling of being annoying? Stop that. Asking questions shows you're engaged, curious, and trying to do things correctly. Whether you're new to a company or simply starting on a new project within your existing role, asking questions is actually crucial for building trust and gaining confidence

What Happens If I Make a Mistake

Here's a thing you might not know: People learn from mistakes. Providing the freedom to fail is very important for TextNow. After all, Be Bold and Take Risks is literally one of our values!



We Care About Our People





Phonies

At TextNow, we know our people are our greatest asset. Without the talent and dedication of our employees, we wouldn't be where we are today. Well, we might still be in Waterloo, but we wouldn't be where we are today in a metaphorical sense. Look, you get it.

We want to recognize individuals and teams who go way above and way beyond and make a difference in driving the company forward and who embody the company culture.

That is why we have the TextNow Phonies, an award-based program to thank our employees for their dedication to TextNow.

You're wondering what TextNow employees can win, I bet? The prizes are pretty sweet. You could win \$500 cash or \$500 gift card for any favorite restaurant, amazon, or anything else that you have in mind

Superstar Program

We know TextNow is filled with Superstars, so we've created a program to recognize people amazing contributions!

This program was created to bridge the gap between our Kudos and Phonie Program. Just like a Kudos you will be recognized for your great work, but it will come directly from your Manager - with the added bonus of a prize!

Manager is the one that nominate for this award. Unlike our Kudos and Phonie Awards this will not be made public to anyone. A gift card with a denomination up to \$100 (Examples: Restaurants, Stores, Gas, Best Buy etc.).



Kudos

Kudos are a peer-to-peer program we sent up to catch the little things: did somebody do you a solid, or help you with a particularly thorny problem, or did something you think the rest of the company should know about? Give 'em a kudos, a nice and public way of acknowledging the cool thing they did. They're not just empty word, though: you get \$1 TextNow buck for each kudos received. Use your Kudos \$ to cash in on a TextNow swag item from our TextNow swag store.

Honeymoon Program

TextNow will make contribution of \$500 for the happy couples.

Babymoon Program

Hey, that's great for the newlyweds, but what about the alreadymarrieds? Well, we thought a new baby should count, so parents of little bundles of joy also get \$500 to use.

Unlimited Vacation

Yep, this is still true. We explain it up under Hours and Our Office above in detail, but the skinny is: If you need to take time off, and you're caught up on work or have people that can cover you, then take it off. It won't count towards any vacation limit, because there isn't one.



Wellness

It's no surprise that employee health and wellness programs reduce overall medical costs for the company, with an increase in morale and on-the-job efficiency as a bonus. But the reason why TextNow offers health and wellness programs - everything from implementing standing desks for those that want to use them, to yoga and spin classes, to intensive "boot-camps" for the those truly dedicated to getting jacked - is because it's just the right thing to do. You shouldn't have to choose between your health and your work, and at TextNow you don't need to.

Fun

You know the old saying: "We work hard and play harder!" Well we like to think we work smart, and play smarter. We have loads of social events that relate to our values and help us celebrate company-wide achievements and the hard work of our employees. Every month has at least one fun activity - a BBQ, a wine tour, a learn-to-paint night, a family-friendly movie night, along with the occasional ad-hoc Game Night or after-hours Dungeons & Dragons.

Referral Program

Talent recognizes talent, and we consider our employees to be the best ambassadors for TextNow. If you're happy here and spread the word about what a great place TextNow is to work, naturally some of your friends might be interested too. Recruiting a friend that you know would fit in well at TextNow isn't just a good thing to do, but it's also lucrative for you as well - if we end up hiring the person you referred, you get a \$5,000 referral bonus. You get to help a friend and get a little extra in your pocket!



Communication





Slack vs. Email

Everybody has an official TextNow email address, of course, and there are still some company-wide communications that happen in email. But we're mostly Slack users around here! If you have an urgent need to talk to a specific person, Slack is the way to go.

Meetings

Meetings are booked through Outlook, and you can invite who you need and pick the room you want to meet in. The rooms also have consoles that will tell you who currently has the room booked. You can also book the room directly from the console as well.

You should also practice good meeting etiquette. Are you inviting the people that really need to be there? Is this a subject that requires a meeting that couldn't be covered in an email or Slack? Try to respect the time of your co-workers. Provide a clear agenda and what you plan on accomplishing.

Work Week

There's always a pile of work to do around here, as befits a small company trying to take on huge telecommunication companies, but that doesn't mean we work all the time. Different people have different needs and schedules, so it helps to stay flexible to help the other people on your team. By collaborating with your team and team leader, you can tailor your schedule to meet your personal and work demands to find the right balance for you.



What We Believe In





Who Are We?

We work together to help solve complex and interesting problems that have a positive impact on our customers lives. We value and invest in the growth of our employees – both professional and personal.

TextNow is based around a simple idea: Communication belongs to everyone. We work hard to help people stay connected for free.

What Makes Us Different?

“I love paying for my phone bill” – said no one ever

Our Culture and Values

Our culture is something we defined and built as a team and we contribute to every day. It's about teamwork and having fun; it's about growth and building what hasn't been built yet.

Our Work and Product

We solve unique and challenging problems together and use cutting edge technology to create products that impact millions

Our People

We care about each other as human beings – not just employees.



Our Commitment to Diversity and inclusion at TextNow, our mission is built around inclusion and offering a service for EVERYONE, in an industry that traditionally only catered to the select few who had the means to afford it. We aim to provide a service that is accessible, and to do that, we need a diverse and inclusive group to build it. We believe that diversity of thought and inclusion of others promotes a greater feeling of belonging and higher levels of engagement, which is why we've created a trusted environment for all of us to bring our whole self. We have an unshakable belief that if we work together, we can do amazing things. We know that our differences are what make our company and product great.

Founded in
2009

We have been putting technology that makes phone service free into the hands of customers for over a decade.

The TextNow app has been downloaded over

**200
million
times**

Funding

Raised \$1.4M seed funding, and boot strapped to almost \$60 of revenue and consistent profitability today

Investors

Freestyle Capital with participation by the Menlo Talent Fund, Menlo Ventures' Seed Program as well as prominent investors Troy Carter and Scooter Braun



What Difference are we Trying to Make in the World?

With over 16MM MAU's, we are helping our customers (who may not otherwise have access to) stay connected with a real phone number.

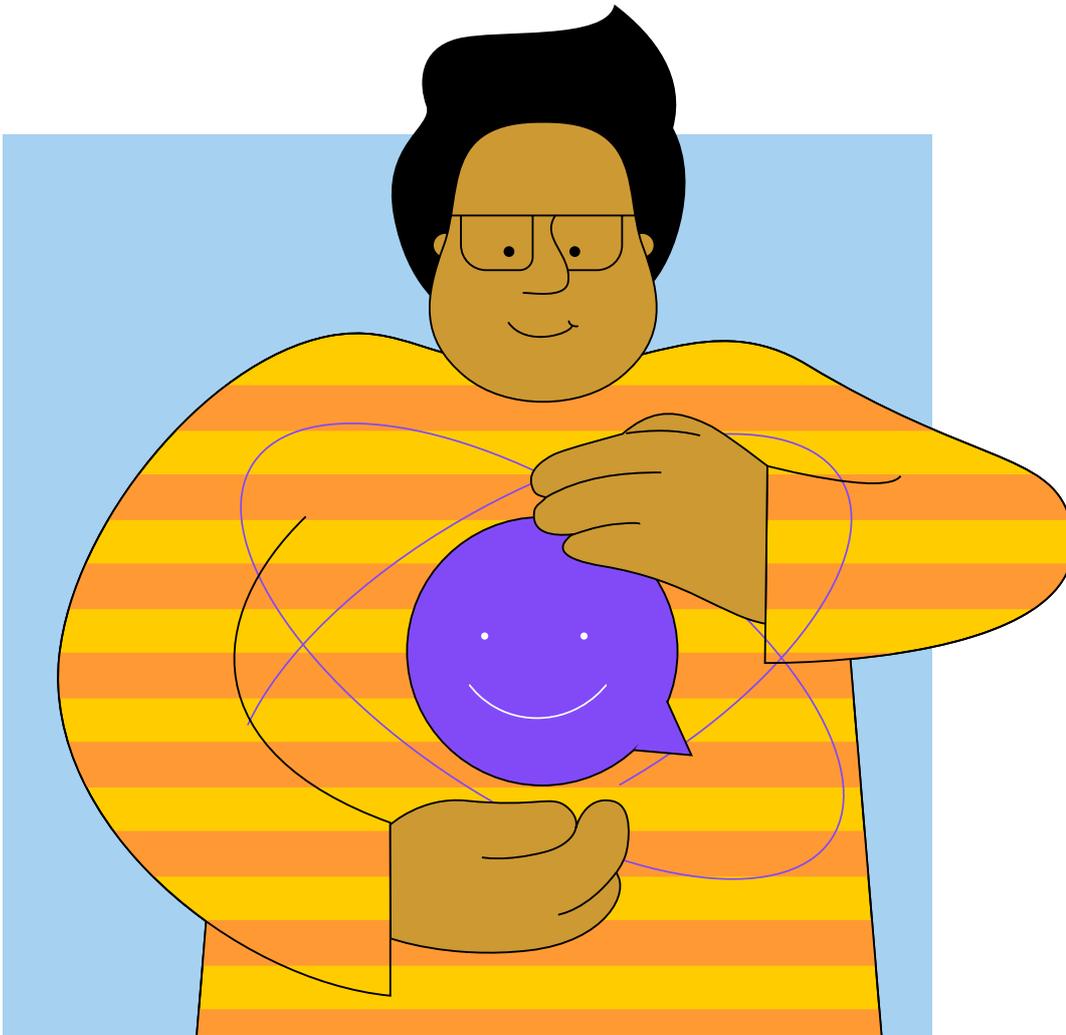
We work hard to charge our customers less and create products that they want, not that we think they need.

We move quickly – working in sprints with rapid feature release that go out to millions of customers.

Your connections with family and friends are priceless, but that doesn't mean you should pay a fortune to talk to them.



Our Product



We provide phone service without compromise for everyone and every budget – even \$0

TextNow is the largest provider of free phone service in the U.S., giving customers a free phone number and free unlimited calling and texting.

Customers can simply download the TextNow app on their existing phone, or a hand-me-down/recycled device to get started with TextNow today.

Use your existing phone, or a hand-me-down/recycled device to get started with TextNow today.



We're Customer Obsessed

From parents who need to stay connected with kids, to those who use TextNow number primarily as a second (business) number. 1 in 5 users are currently unemployed but looking for a job and TextNow helps them stay connected to potential employers. A large group of people use TextNow to make and receive international calls regularly, staying connected to family and friends abroad. We also see “The Traveller” segment, a group of young people who are looking to stay connected while seeing the world.



Taking care of customers is the reason we're here! Here are some recent testimonials from real people using TextNow:

Thank you again for your unbelievable free service. Its saved me from homelessness literally. 9 months ago i got a call back and got the job. Now I'm back on my feet again. You are a true blessing. Ty I don't know if you hear this enough I hope you all get this. For some struggling people. You and a free hotspot are the best thing that has come along in forever. The service has improved to the quality of any major providers. I got my food stamps. My job my apt. And now I make too much to be on food stamps. But I can't pay my phone bill till payday. And here you are again.

Corynna Ford

Excellent coverage and the price for text and data is the most affordable, also if you purchase a phone you cannot beat the price anywhere

Doreen Callen

I've had this for several months now. I really have no negatives at this point. I even receive business calls on this app overseas and my customers don't know I am out of the country. It delivers on all its promises and there's a little ad barely noticeable when I am texting...download it for a second line and don't look back.

Ehizodie Odiase

I love my text now service. Highly recommend. I have had textnow premium service now for 3 years and it is just as good as any of the big names. I pay 20\$ a month for high quality service. Plus, last year they gave me 3 months of unlimited service for my original 20\$ a month. And they have great phones available. I have purchased 3 phones from them and all of them are exactly what i ordered and got them super fast in the mail. Ill never switch services.

Richard Kleckner



How Are We Making TextNow the Best Place to Work?

We're dedicated to not just making the best product for the market, but also in having the best workplace in the world. The whole world. For real.

Making the best workplace in the world starts with hiring the right people. We strongly believe that culture comes out of the people who work here, and not from the top-down. Walk our halls and you'll hear people hard at work, or laughing, or collaborating on a project, or often all three at the same time. Our culture is what sustains us as a company, because nobody should have to feel bad about heading to work.





So you are probably wondering what current TextNowvians think about the TextNow Culture

To me the culture at TextNow is innovative and forward thinking. I feel lucky to work at a company where employees are valued and have incredible resources, flexibility, and support to be successful in their role. When the people you work with are awesome and the work is engaging you look forward to coming in each day. I feel proud to be a member of such a dynamic team.

Brooke R.

Making an impact is a way of life at TextNow. Whether it is building a new feature for our customers, fixing a bug that has annoyed you as a daily user of our product, or helping your peers grow through respectful feedback you know that when you come to work you're going to make someone's life better through the work you do.

Darren H.

Working at TextNow means never being satisfied at the status quo. If there is something that could be improved, the code, the tech, the business, the people, we work at improving it. There is nothing I can say I like that won't be out of date by the time you read it, things are always getting better

Robert R.

I will never forget my interview experience and initial tour at TextNow. I remember leaving the TextNow office, feeling energized. The individuals I met with and those I was introduced to, were all so upbeat positive, and friendly. You got a feeling that this was not a company but a family, who all shared the same goal. To be part of something great, something cool, something innovative. The drive balanced with their relaxed nature was infectious. I had to be part of this team! I wasn't looking for a new career; I was in fact a tenured leader who was recently promoted. But what I didn't have, was a culture that motivated me to want to do more, be part of something new, and take a leap of faith, a risk. That would have great pay off in how I felt about my professional contributions, and positive impact on my personal well being.

Tammy M.



On being TextNow Culture Ninja?





Meet Asad.

As he prepared to graduate from the University of Waterloo's computer science program, he set two conditions for his job search: he wanted to live in a new city, and he didn't want to work for a messaging company. Then he visited TextNow. We'll let him explain what happened next. "When I first came in to have lunch and tour the office, it felt different than any other workplace I had been in. I was being actively recruited at the time and was doing office tours every week. In most places, I would be paired with someone from recruiting to meet with one or two designated people, most of whom were trained beforehand. At TextNow, I just sat down for lunch with the rest of the team. I was joined by the Director of Client Engineering and the web team lead, and they talked to me what they were working on and how things were organized at the company. They answered all of my questions and it got me excited about the long-term vision. I was amazed at the openness and transparency of the culture. A company's culture is not defined by the ping pong tables or the catered lunches. It is about making sure that every hire is aligned with the company's core values. That's why we pass over some talented people: it only takes one "B" player to destroy the team. TextNow has given me the freedom and flexibility to do my best work. Teams are set up to maximize collaboration and accountability, so we avoid office politics and stay resourceful and scrappy. The company sets a high bar and then gives me the responsibility and ownership to drive excellence." Be like Asad. Let's get cool shit done together.



Glossary of Terms

#textnow – the hashtag use to share all the good things about TextNow

#textnowlife – hashtag to use to share culture and all amazing stuff about people at TextNow

TN – TextNow , short version

Slack – TextNow internal chat tool

TextNowU – Textnow internal learning and development tool

Confluence – TextNow internal database and archive where Textnovians soure informations

BambooHR – TextNow internal HR tool

TextNow101 – presentations to new employees from each team (IT 101, Marketing 101 etc) part of Onboarding

TextNovians – people who are TextNow employees

Killing it – someone who is doing and awesome job at something

TownHall – all hand monthly meeting to share updates, experiences with all Textnovians

Remote – Textnovians whose primary workspace is located outside of Textnow offices

AMA – Ask me Anything – often part of TownHall meetings where TextNovians have opportunity to ask anything senior leaders

SLT – Senior Leadership team



textnow.com