

# 10 Things We Don't Do That Make Working at Truffle Awesome

At Truffle we have an extremely tight-knit team. You'll see that at this year's TruffleCon, a conference for hundreds of attendees organized by only a handful of people. We often have more work than we can handle, yet we take it on because we love the work we're doing and we love the people we work with. In my history of hopping startups – I'm currently on number nine – I haven't seen this anywhere else, so I wanted to take the time to highlight some things that set Truffle apart from the rest. Here's a list of what we don't do that makes working at Truffle awesome:

1. We don't have an office.
2. This is the most important point, as it permeates the makeup and structure of our organization. We have members all over the US and Canada. I live in Yakima, WA, of all places, known more for apples and hops than for tech and blockchain. For communication efficiency we intentionally hired within US time zones, but we realize remote work means there's no office to clock into. We currently have team members working from China, Japan and Germany, following the path their family and personal lives have taken them, while still remaining valuable members of the team.
3. We don't clock in.
4. For most of our team, working remotely means working from home. Often our home life and work life are intertwined, and we know that on some days work wins (i.e., I'm writing this the morning of July 4th, a holiday in the United States), and on other days life wins. This means a flexible schedule is absolutely required. Often, I tell my team to add their life events to their work calendar, like taking their dog to the vet or their kids to school, to ensure work doesn't encroach on the needs of their home life.
5. We don't track vacation time.
6. Our vacation policy is unlimited: We take whatever time we need. This is important to our work/life balance, and it also ensures our team gets much-needed breaks. Over time we've perfected this policy by engaging work and life into a little quid pro quo: If you let your coworkers know about your time off in advance, and you ensure your work is completed and fully handed off to another team member while you're away, then the time is yours. (Emergencies, of course, aren't governed by this policy.) This has worked surprisingly well. Recently a coworker "sipped bevies" in the Bahamas for a week and a half, and his team happily held their own while he was on vacation. We all recognize that we're working extremely hard, so we all want to step in when others need a break.
7. We don't let people burn out.
8. Burn out can be a huge you-know-what. It comes on quick, often sneaking in at the tail end of an intense work effort where life lost out one too many times. It also comes when a striking life event seeps into our work life. It's an energy killer, and a turnover monster out to eat up all our employees. We don't let it eat us. After our first burn out event caused one of our best developers to leave, we created a company policy called the Get Out of Burn Out Free Card. When played, it gives the team member two weeks of vacation starting immediately, no questions asked. It's up to the rest of the team to pick up the slack, and find creative solutions in the team member's absence. It's not a card that gets played often, but it's been played a few times since and we've saved valuable team members from throwing in the towel. Even if the card never gets played, it's reassuring to know other members of the team have our backs in times of need.
9. We don't wear business attire.
10. We work from home, which means we wear the attire we'd normally wear at home. I'm known for wearing pajamas, often brightly colored ones, even during business calls. At the very least, professionalism only matters to the eye of the webcam, and anything out of frame is totally fair game. And heck, we're working hard, so we want to be comfortable.
11. We don't stay remote.
12. Though video calls and Slack messages are our main source of communication, we know nothing builds a relationship better than real human connection. That's why we plan full company retreats three to four times a year, to exciting places that help us all become closer. Our most recent retreat took us to the snowy mountains of Breckenridge, CO. Yes, it was super cold outside and the air was hard to breathe, but it was a new experience for all of us and we came out with some interesting stories to tell. My most memorable moment was when I commandeered a sled and careened right off the side of a hill. Lucky for me it was a false slope and I had no injuries, though my team certainly got a good laugh.
13. We don't try to be fully flat.
14. We love the egalitarian nature of flat organizations, but we also love the efficiency of explicit hierarchy. In our experience flat organizations push hierarchy under the surface, turning decision-making into a confusing game of personal politics and popularity contests. Instead, we take a hybrid approach. We accept that hierarchy exists in our organization, but we try to make it as flat as possible. We push decisions as far down in the hierarchy as they can go, so each team member feels empowered to do the best work possible, and we clearly define the decisions that each role can make. As the CEO of Truffle, I get to make decisions on money and resources, but I'm also the founder, which means I once touched every line of code. That's now Nick D'Andrea's job, our head of engineering, and the jobs of the engineers leading each of our individual engineering projects.
15. We don't leave people hanging.
16. Having a light hierarchy gives us the ability to appoint leads. Leads are sometimes a vehicle for accountability, like managers in traditional organizations, but most of the time they're there to serve the members of our team. Every team member gets a lead, and gets a weekly one-on-one that they can use any way they like. Often these one-on-ones are used as a regular place to vent: they help us catch issues early and provide team members a useful outlet so small

issues don't turn into something bigger. Leads go to bat for their team members when the team member doesn't feel comfortable raising an issue themselves.

17. We don't give in to perfect.
18. At least, not initially. In our organization, perfect is the enemy of the good. Had I not been writing this on Independence Day, I may have shot for ten items to round out the list instead of nine. Similarly, it's the same reason we release a new version of Truffle weekly: We like to bring value to users as quickly as possible, and then strive towards perfection iteratively over time. This idea governs all the work that we do, from software to sales to even our VC pitch decks, because we realize the feedback we get from users far outweighs our initial ideas at perfection. If you have thoughts on how we can better improve our blog or this blog post, please send me an email at [tim@trufflesuite.com](mailto:tim@trufflesuite.com).
19. See #9.

Working at Truffle has been an amazing journey. It's incredibly humbling to see a project I started from necessity turn into a company run by the heart and soul of a close, tight-knit group of professionals. Truffle would be nothing without this team, and without Truffle I'd likely not be excited to go to work every morning (I commute downstairs in my pajamas, but still). Thank you, Truffle team, for making this company awesome.