

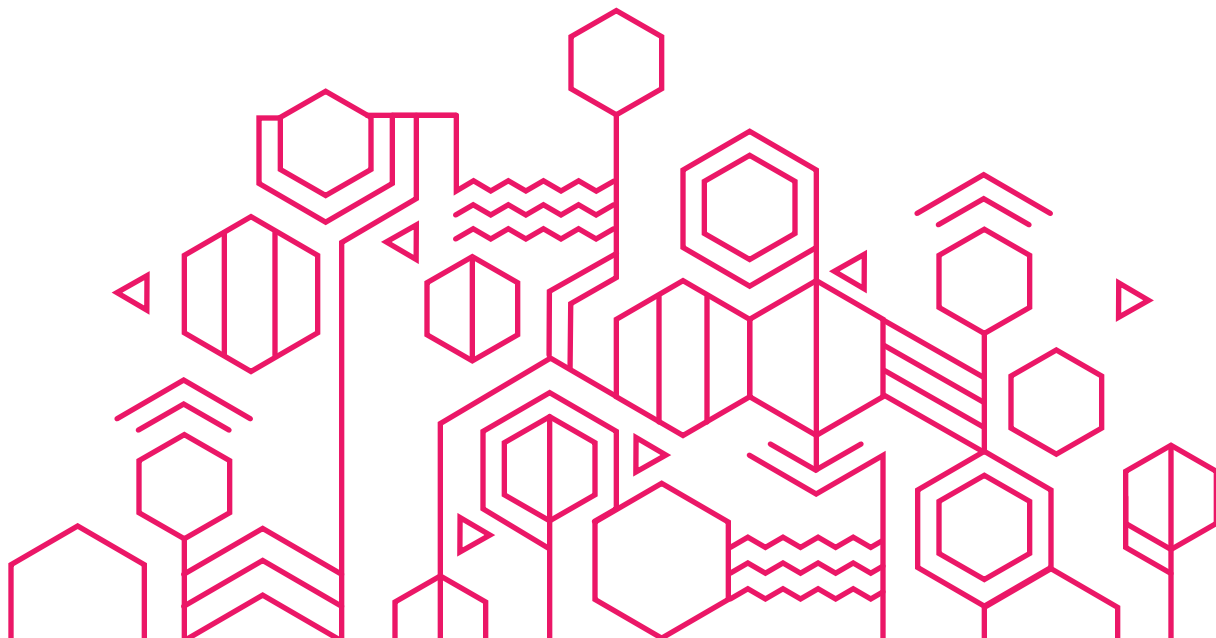


**SB**

culture.handbook



**a fearless adventure is  
knowing what to do  
when there's no one  
telling you what to do**



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## welcome to **SMASHING BOXES**

Your experience at Smashing Boxes will be unlike any other work experience you've had. Our culture is open and real. We don't enforce blind policies from the top down, we self-organize teams to solve problems as a team. It's fast, creative, and sometimes loud and untamed. You will learn from your coworkers, you will teach others, you will be pushed to create work well beyond what you thought was possible before starting here. Remember, there is no box.

This handbook is your guide to our culture, policies, beliefs, traditions and quirks. Every aspect of our work is iterative, and this handbook is no exception. You have been selected to work at Smashing Boxes because we believe you will bring a unique perspective and experiences to our company. We invite you to learn about our culture, dive into it, and then help us shape it.

## about



Smashing Boxes is more than an agency. We are a creative technology company. This means that our work is not limited to software development, branding, or design - our favorite projects are those that fuse creative and technology to create something entirely new.

The work we take on is reflected in the expertise and passion of the people we hire. We purposely hire people with non-traditional backgrounds because it helps us to think differently. We work in groups that integrate disciplines so that we're constantly challenging each other to see a problem or opportunity for different perspectives. Challenging ourselves in this way is what allows us to create something new and wonderful for our clients.

Smashing Boxes was formed in 2010. At that time, the company was just two dudes: Nick Jordan and Brian Fischer. Both had been dabbling in the entrepreneurial world since college. Nick and Brian caught their stride applying the lessons they'd learned to helping fellow entrepreneurs bring their startups to life.

Our first hire was a developer. Designers soon followed. Small websites and landing pages gave way to apps and branding projects as the company grew. By early 2014, our startup space in the American Underground was bursting at the seams. We used that space to co-found a code school and moved across the street to a larger space where we reside currently.

Now in 2015, at 60+ people, Smashing Boxes is known for building bold and innovative digital products for big brands and startups alike. We're also known as a major player in growing the tech industry in the Triangle and helping people from diverse backgrounds enter the field.

It's also worth noting that Smashing Boxes is self-funded. Nick and Brian have never pursued outside financing. Since our earliest days this has been incredibly important in providing freedom to shape the company and its business practices.

**our mission is to solve  
problems that transform  
businesses through the  
creative application of  
technology.**



Smashing Boxes is driven by a set of principles.  
Principles that have shaped the business from  
day one. These are true and constant and shape  
how we make decisions:

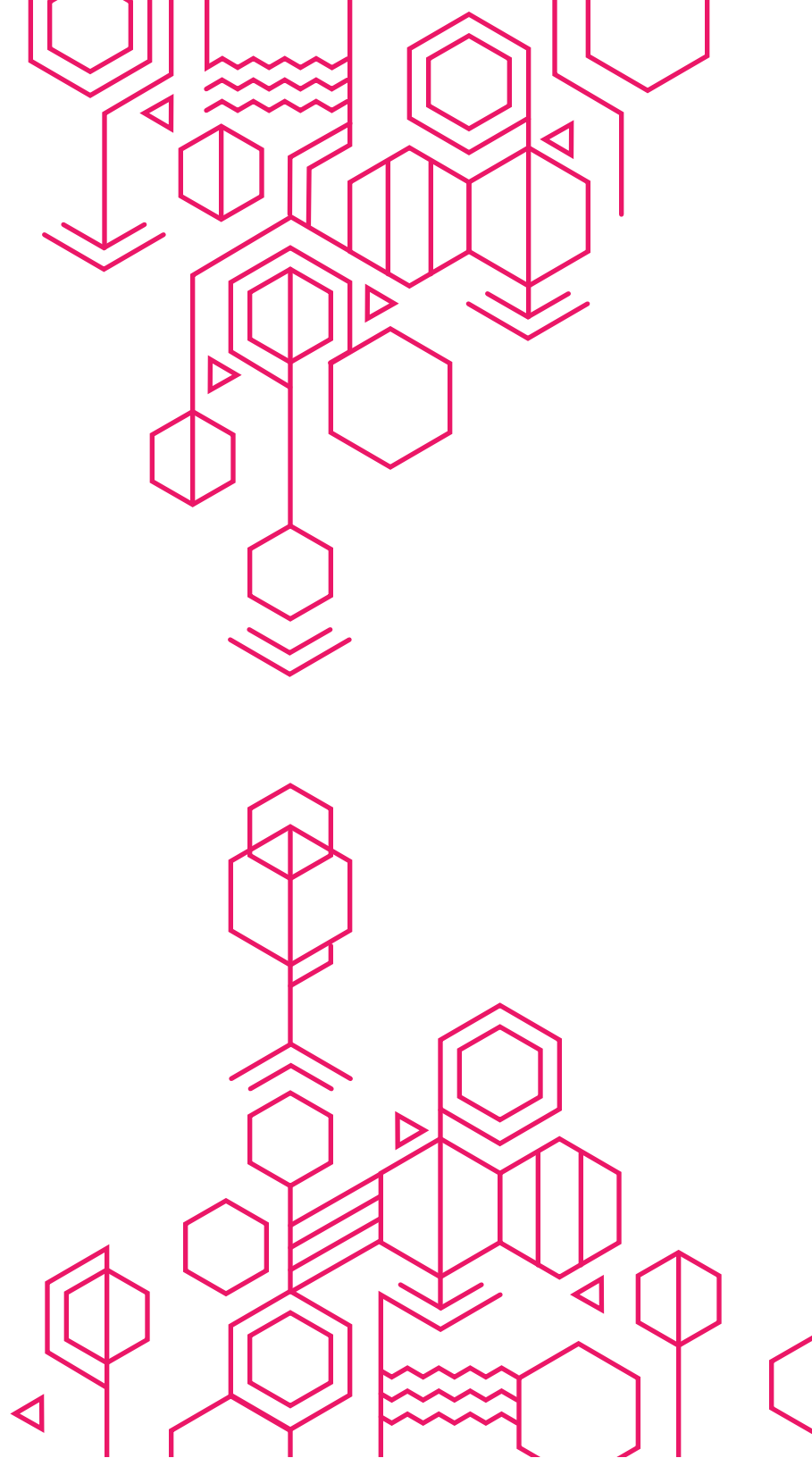
**we believe people matter**



**we believe in the entrepreneurial spirit**



**we believe quality + teamwork  
are of utmost importance**





**OUR VALUES EVOLVED OUT OF  
THESE GUIDING PRINCIPLES.**



You'll see mention of them  
throughout this book. But, in  
a nutshell here's what we ask  
of everyone in the SB family:

The SB logo, consisting of the letters 'S' and 'B' in a bold, sans-serif font, is centered within a dark gray hexagon. The hexagon is set against a dark background with diagonal lines and a faint, larger-scale geometric pattern.

**SB**





# Be Real

BE YOUR UNIQUE SELF

A grayscale photograph of a person sitting at a desk in a modern office, viewed from the side. The person is working on a laptop. The desk has various items on it, including a box labeled 'HIMMY JOHN'S CATERING'. The background features large windows with horizontal blinds.

# Stay Curious

EXPLORE, EXPERIMENT, LEARN + TEACH



# Speak Openly

SAY WHAT YOU THINK



# Push Limits

NEVER ACCEPT THE STATUS QUO



# Seek Results

SET GOALS AND PURSUE THEM FEARLESSLY



# Work together

BE A TEAM PLAYER



## OUR TEAM



No team or team member works in a silo - we work together. As a team, each person brings something new and unique to the table. When we combine ideas they grow and improve.

## SO WHAT DOES EVERYBODY DO?

+

### PRODUCT DIRECTORS



guide our clients through the creation of their product with focus on the vision

+

### PROJECT MANAGERS



keep our projects humming, on schedule and within budget

+

### UX DESIGNERS



are the experts on users and guide our work accordingly

+

### UI DESIGNERS



make our 1s and 0s look beautiful across devices

+

### GROWTH ENGINEERS



evaluate data to inform design and technology decisions

+

### DEVELOPERS



are the mobile, front end and back end coders who bring our ideas to life

+

### QA



protects the quality of our work, ensuring it looks and functions flawlessly

+

### GROWTH



are advocates for our brand and culture, growing our reputation and attracting new people and opportunities

+

### SALES



venture outside our walls to bring in new business opportunities and forger strategic partnerships

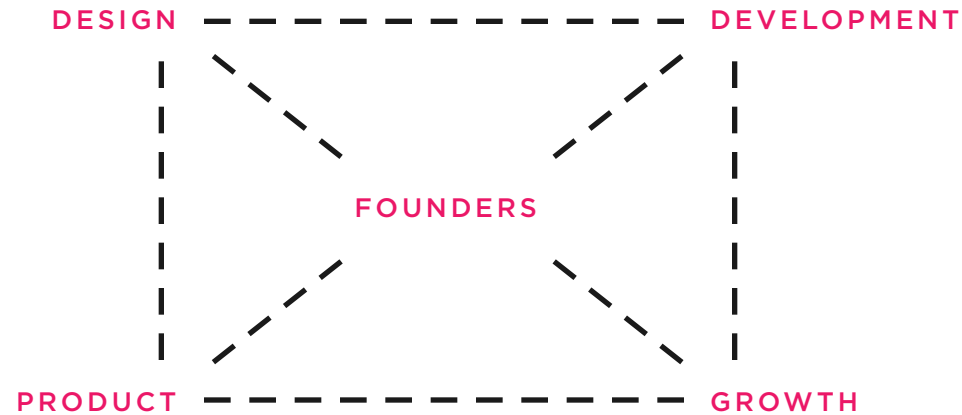
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### OPERATIONS [FINANCE/HR]



keep our office running tip-top and ensure the future growth of our team





**LEADERSHIP** / Our leadership team is comprised of leaders from each discipline as well as our founders, Nick and Brian. Together, they improve the quality of our services and the efficiency of our process. They track progress to ensure our continued success and put into place improvement plans where needed. They keep our team stay focused on our mission and align each discipline toward our common goal.

**ORG CHART** / We have an abnormal org chart - it's a circle rather than a traditional pyramid. This is because the way that we think and do things does not function as a traditional hierarchy. While each individual has a manager they report to, their job is to encourage you and foster your well-being, not boss you around.

We are all accountable to each other. This is to cultivate entrepreneurship and ownership of projects, work, and problem solving. We all make things happen 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. We believe the best leaders are those who empower their teams to express themselves, grow, and become leaders themselves.



>> WE BELIEVE THE BEST LEADERS ARE  
>> THOSE WHO EMPOWER THEIR TEAMS  
>> TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES, GROW,  
>> AND BECOME LEADERS THEMSELVES.





## FIRST, DO GREAT WORK

>

Come to work. Be present. Be dedicated. Be excited. Our space and our teammates are a big part of what makes Smashing Boxes a great place to work.

## HOURS

>

Core hours are from 10am to 4pm daily. Be here then. You must work 8 hours per day. Take an hour for lunch? Make that hour up. If you can make that happen, you're all good. But seriously...be here by 10 and put in a 8 full hours of work.

## PODS

>

PODS are a cross-functional integrated team representing each discipline. In full force, the PODS bring Design Thinking + Modern Engineering = Differentiated Value. In the short term, teams will sit next to each other meaning easier & faster communication, fewer meetings and quicker delivery. Working with the same people on the same projects together creates greater team and project stability. In the long term, we will be able to assign projects by PODS which would create more autonomy and ability to determine approach to the project as a team.

## ATTIRE

>

Remember when we said one of our values was Being Real? We mean that. Be you. Express yourself. Just remember we have clients coming in nearly every day. Dress like you want them to take you seriously.





## MUSIC

>

We love music almost as much we love food. We have a company Spotify playlist that functions through Slack, if you want to see the commands – type help in the channel. There are two separate playlists, one for daytime listening with no words. The other one is “after hours” which has radio edit songs with words. Participate – tastes vary widely in this office so don’t be shy about playing anything you’re in the mood for.

## DOGS

>

Dogs are cool. People love their dogs. We love people. So sometimes people bring their dogs into the office! This is meant to be a fun thing – sometimes two dogs in a room together is no longer fun. Especially if they bark at each other. Let the team know if you’d like to bring your dog in so we don’t double up. If your dog poops in the office they will be banned. If you are allergic to dogs, let us know. No cats in the office. Ever.

## COFFEE

>

How do you make coffee? Well first of all, everyone makes coffee! If you finish the pot, make a new one. The coffee maker always stays on. Open the canister, leave the spout inside. Make sure the pot is completely empty before you start brewing, it makes the perfect size. Pull the basket out and dump it if needed. Filters are in the drawer and the bags of coffee are in the doors underneath. After you put the filter in the basket, put one packet of coffee in. Click the button that says “Brew” – that’s it!

## SNACKS

>

We provide complimentary snacks and drinks so that you can keep focused on your work and re-fuel as needed. Help yourself whenever you need a little refreshment. Snacks are not meant to be your lunch. Seriously. Cheez-Its are not lunch, get some protein. Have a suggestion for snacks? Let our Team Coordinator know and we’ll consider your request for the next round.

## BEER

>

There's always beer on tap.  
Drink responsibly. Cheers!

## COLLABORATION AREAS

>

By nature our office is designed for collaboration. We encourage you to be as creative as you want with the space. For more formalized meetings, the "Big Conference Room" (the large, pink shipping container - you can't miss it!) and the "Small Conference Room" (the glass conference room next to the kitchen) can be booked for use through Google Calendar. The Nook is available on a first-come, first-serve basis for brainstorming and co-working sessions as well. You can also reserve rooms in the American Underground - go to <http://atc.roomzilla.net/> to book.

Please be mindful and respectful of your teammates when they are on calls or in meetings, as well as when they're looking for a space to meet. Share and be kind!

## GET OUT OF YOUR SEAT

>

It's unhealthy to stay seated in the same position for eight hours. It's also terrible for productivity. Move around. Grab some coffee. Make some toast. Go for a walk. Draw. Hit the gym. Get a snack. Skateboard across the office. The point is, you're not chained to your desk! Take breaks when you need them and stay healthy.





## COMMUNICATION



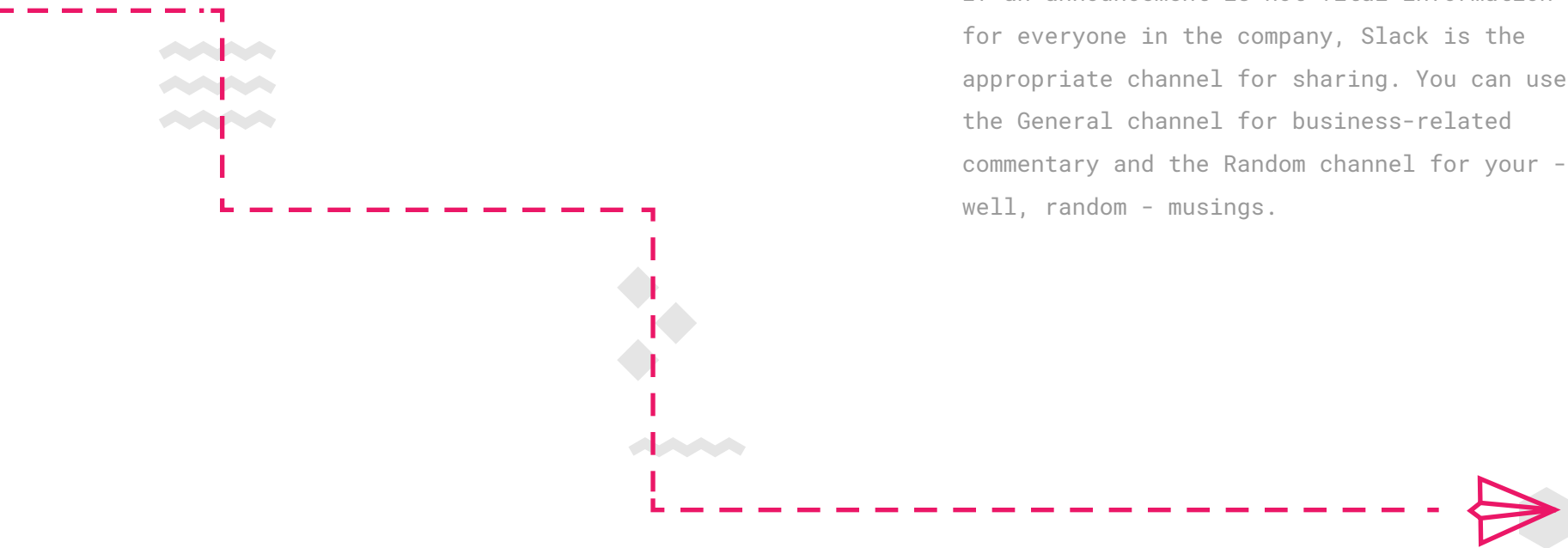
## ATTITUDE

We want to encourage, inspire, innovate, and build each other up. Smashing Boxes is a positive place where people have the freedom to be creative and think differently, to push the limits and dream big.

## TEAM EMAIL ETIQUETTE

If you send an email to the whole team ([team@smashingboxes.com](mailto:team@smashingboxes.com)) please think very carefully before you send it out. Is this email important information for everyone at Smashing Boxes? If so, send away. Please always bcc everyone as this discourages folks from replying back to all and cluttering inboxes.

If an announcement is not vital information for everyone in the company, Slack is the appropriate channel for sharing. You can use the General channel for business-related commentary and the Random channel for your - well, random - musings.





## TOOLS

### ZENEFITS

+



is our HR software that gives you total access to all of your HR info. You will easily be able to request PTO, update bank account info, print insurance cards, view insurance plans and pricing, request HR changes and more.

### SLACK

+



is our real-time messaging tool. You can chat directly with individuals, join a private group, or follow a channel. Sign in under our team's personalized domain: [smashingboxes.slack.com](https://smashingboxes.slack.com)

### THE WIKI

+



is a web application custom built by our dev team to serve as a place to host internal project information. The best way for you to learn about it is to check it out for yourself: [wiki.smashingboxes.com](https://wiki.smashingboxes.com).

### GOOGLE DRIVE

+



is where our team stores and shares documents for team collaboration. You login with your SB Google account.

### TRELLO

+



is used to keep track of everything, from the big picture to the minute details, with an agile workflow. Trello can be used for both client projects and internal projects and anyone can start a new board.

### BASECAMP

+



is our primary project management tool. No matter what your role is, it helps keep everyone assigned to project, and the client, on the same page.

### GITHUB

+



is the location where developers collaborate on code. It also serves as our main central storage point for all of our code.

## RESPECT THE FOCUS

In an open office floorplan like ours it's easy to get distracted. When someone is clearly focused on work (a good sign is that they have headphones on and are staring at their screen) send them a Slack message rather than interrupting them in person.

## OUT OF OFFICE

000@smashingboxes.com is how we communicate if team members will be out of the office. If you will be arriving after 10am or leaving before 4pm please send a note to 000 - we are a family and want to make sure everything is okay if you're not here. It's how we all stay accountable to each other.

Sick Days - you sometimes get sick! We are flexible - if you are sick, please do not come into the office. Keep your germs at bay and get some rest. If you can work from home, go for it. If you are unable to work, we have 2-days of sick time for you. This is separate from your Paid Vacation and you can take it if need be. This is just an overview of course - for in depth details in regards to all of the leave policies that SB offers, please see the HR/policy handbook.

## REPRESENT US WELL

By working at Smashing Boxes, you are an ambassador of Smashing Boxes. Have respect for yourself and for the company you work for. Represent Smashing Boxes in a positive manner in the office, out of the office, at an SB event, on social media, etc. Don't say something you wouldn't want repeated.



## HELP US GROW

One of the most valuable things you can do as a new employee is share SB with your friends and past co-workers. Assuming that you agree that Smashing Boxes is the very best place to work, spread the word! If you meet someone who you think would be a great fit for SB, or could become a future client, invite them to our office to meet our team and see how we work. P.S. If someone you recommend to SB becomes an employee, there's a \$2000 bonus in it for you!



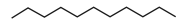
## SETTLING IN



You are not here by accident. We hired  
you for a reason. You fit our culture.  
Here's how we'll get you up to speed:

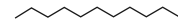


## YOUR FIRST DAY



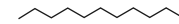
You will get some SB swag. You will have a spot. Please settle in and make yourself at home. Prepare to meet a lot of people. Directors. Team leads. Teammates. And even a buddy. They'll let you know what they do, how they impact projects and the growth of the company. People will be curious about you too so be ready to share your background and interests. Our HR Specialist will show you the ropes and make sure your paperwork is filled out properly.

## PROCESS



You will learn about the process on your first day. You will sit through a presentation which will include a detailed description of how we do things, the quality standards that we have, the reputation we are building. You will learn expectations being set up front, you will learn what you are doing here and how that fits into the bigger picture of Smashing Boxes. After getting the details in an overview you will meet with each discipline to understand how they work and how it fits into the process. Ask questions constantly. Don't ever be afraid to ask anything - we are all in it together and we are always looking for new ideas, ways to improve. We don't settle around here, we always want to do things better.

## PROFESSIONAL GROWTH



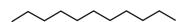
Your growth and happiness are important to us. We value curiosity and pushing limits - we want that to be part of your path here. You will work with your Director to put together a professional growth plan. We want to understand what excites you, what lights you up and where you want to be in 3 months, 1 year and 5 years from now. We want to help you get there. And we will.

## 30.60.90 DAY PLAN WHAT TO WORK ON



Your director will let you know where to get started. After you see our process and learn how our cross-disciplinary teams work together, things will start to make sense and you will understand how you fit. Together with your Director, we will build out a 30/60/90-Day Plan for you. This will serve as a guide for your launching your time here. We want your first 90 days of working here to be impactful, meaningful, and purposeful. We want you to feel at home, like you have a place, you play a vital role. This Plan should serve as a tool to get you fully integrated into all facets of your team and Smashing Boxes.

## PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

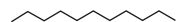


On the anniversary of your start date, we'll give you a review. The goal is to look at strengths, weaknesses, areas to improve, and to set goals. Things we look at when we evaluate your performance are:

- + Commitment to Quality of Work
- + Dedication
- + Knowledge of Job
- + Initiative
- + Productivity / Time Management
- + Attendance / Punctuality
- + Work Ethics and Innovation
- + Decision Making / Problem Solving
- + Quality of Interpersonal Relationship
- + Overall Evaluation

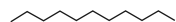
There are a few different outcomes of these reviews. If your performance has been stellar, ask for a raise. If your performance requires special attention, we'll work with you to create a Performance Improvement Plan to get back on track.

## PAY-DAY



The company pays two weeks in arrears and paydays are on the 15th and 30th of the month, unless that date falls on a weekend - then you will be paid the Friday prior. IF you want to access pay stubs just go to <http://www.paychexonline.com/> and click on Sign Up. You can find pay stubs and other important information.

## BENEFITS



You can get the full rundown of benefits on the SB Wiki. In excruciating detail. For the purpose of this handbook, we've done you a solid and pulled out the highlights:

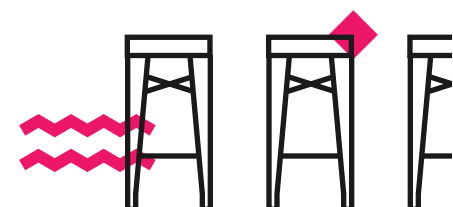
Everyone starts with 9 Company paid holidays, their birthday off and 15 vacation days. After 3 years with the company you earn 20 vacation days. After 5 years? 25 vacation days.

We provide full health and dental coverage, sick-time, short- and long-term disability insurance, life insurance and Simple IRA with 3% company match.

## YOU ARE MORE THAN YOUR TITLE



You're a human first and your title second. Be who you are. Be unpredictable and irreplaceable. Step into your role, apply your skills, work to your strengths and make this job work for you!





## CULTURE + GROWTH



We want to encourage, inspire, innovate, and build each other up. Smashing Boxes is a place where people have the freedom to be creative and think differently, to push limits, and dream big.



## NEVER STOP LEARNING

>

Each team has a plan and goals for professional development, conferences, speakers, and learning sessions. This looks different for each team and every team member but it is intended to equip you to do your best work. Is there a conference or class you'd like to attend? Share your ideas!

We also provide free Code-School.org and Lynda.com accounts as well as access to Smashing Magazine's Library. See our Team Coordinator for access.

## CONFERENCES

>

We encourage everyone on our team to speak at and/or attend conferences. We've set aside \$2000 and 4 days for each person to attend conferences each year. The catch? You gotta bring everything you learned back home. Pass that knowledge on. Ask your director for more information.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

>

Smashing Boxes is a community oriented company. We regularly host meetups in our space. We sponsor events. We extend our expertise and energy where needed. Get out there. Get involved. And let us know if you there's a group we should get involved with.



## SMASHING LABS

>

Smashing Boxes is a community oriented company. We regularly host meetups in our space. We sponsor events. We extend our expertise and energy where needed. Get out there. Get involved. And let us know if you there's a group we should get involved with.



## APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

>

So we used to run a code school. But we saw a disparity between learning to code and understanding the nuances of programming as a professional. So we've re-focused on workforce development. In our paid 12-week program, apprentices learn advanced programming concepts by working one-on-one with experienced developers.

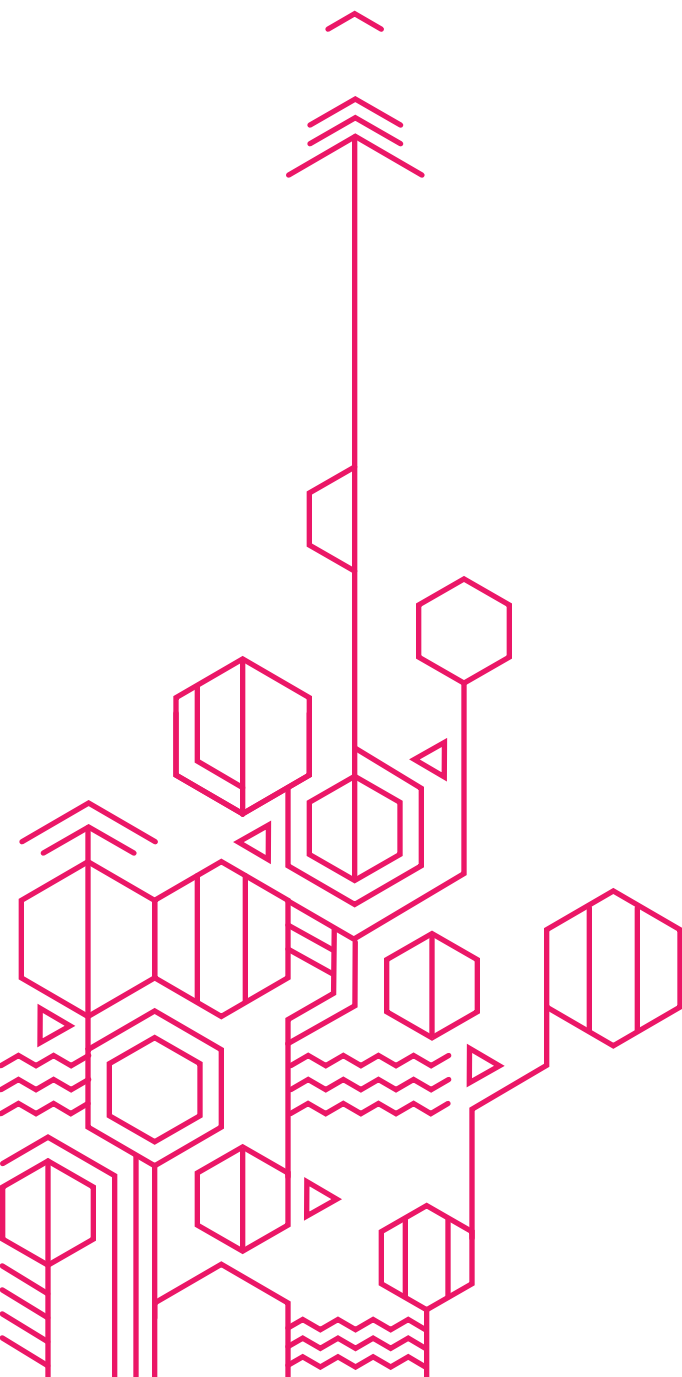


## TASK FORCES

>

Task Forces are time-limited groups dedicated to completing a policy and procedure based goal. Anyone can start and participate in one. Its how we shape our company, our culture, propose change and make things happen. You can read the full how-to on the Wiki.

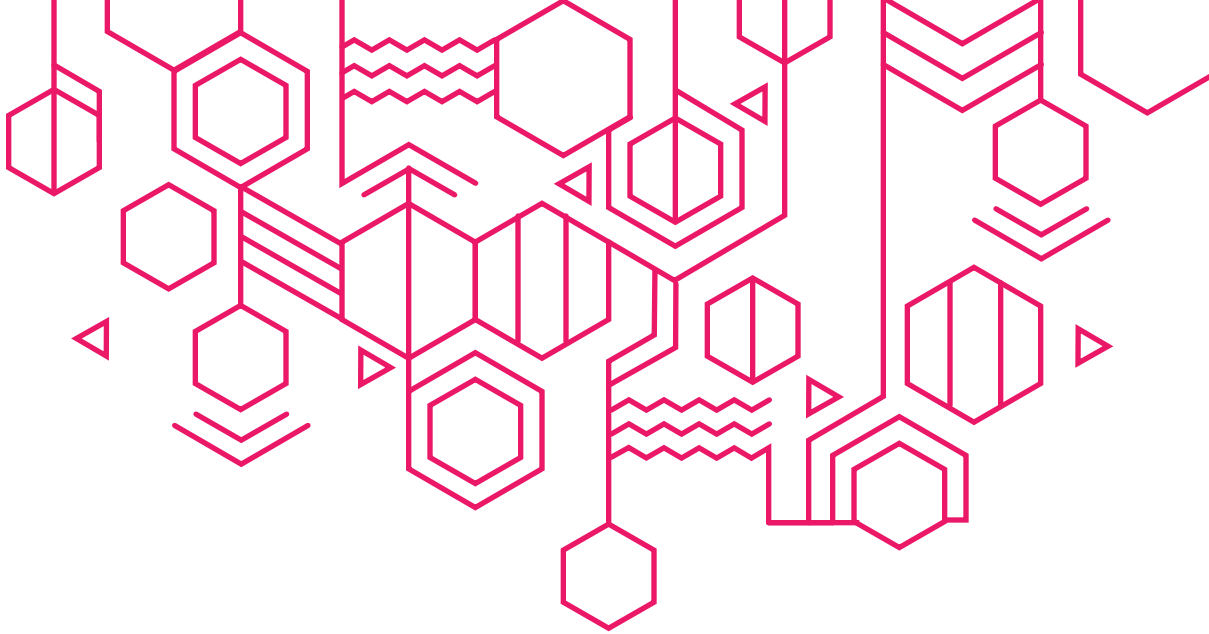




## where will you take us?



Smashing Boxes is constantly evolving because we hire changemakers like yourself. We can't wait to see where you take us. The products, features, and experiences that you decide to create for our clients are the things that will define us. Whether it's a new Labs project, a way to save client's money, a new typeface, or (more likely) something nobody's thought of yet—we can't wait to see what kind of future you choose to build at Smashing Boxes.



## final thought



There's work and there's your life's work. The kind of work that has your fingerprints all over it. The kind of work that you'd never compromise on. That you'd sacrifice a weekend for. You can do that kind of work at Smashing Boxes.

People don't come here to play it safe. They come here to swim in the deep end. They want their work to add up to something. Something big. Something that couldn't happen anywhere else. Welcome to Smashing Boxes.

