HandBook - 2017 (V1.5)
Doing it right

Why this Handbook?

Our team is growing everyday.

And we have reached a point where we need a way to communicate our culture and structure more efficiently that jumping on a call with every new member on the team.

This handbook will also be helpful to current teammates who may need reference for any organizational issue or rule.

The rules and responsibilities mentioned in this handbook will be binding on all, so please ensure that you have read through it in detail. Feel free to leave comments if you have any questions!

Story of the founding

The Roots

VenturePact was initially founded to be a startup accelerator that helps startups with technology and software implementation. Check out the very first webpage.
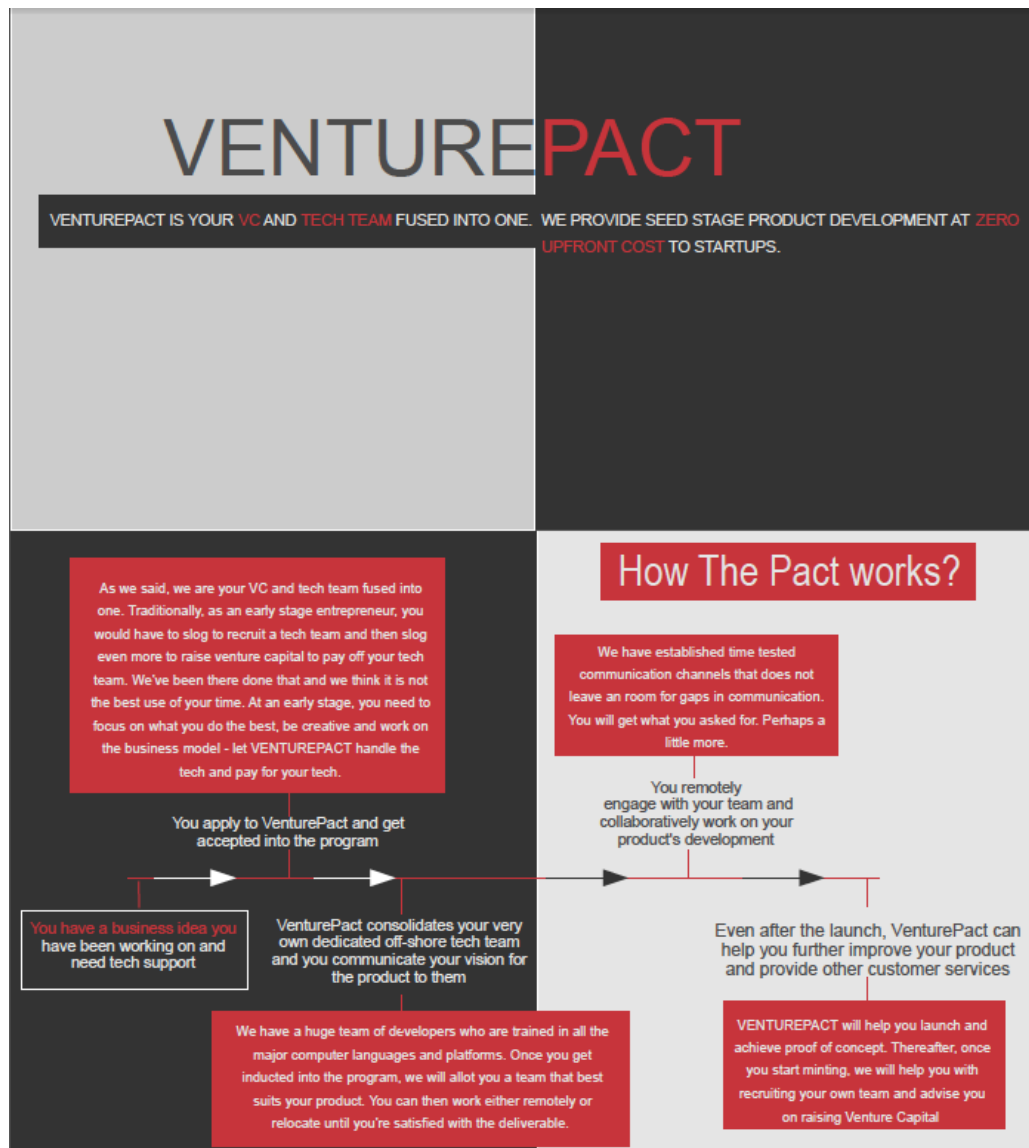
We worked with some really cool startups like Alice, Nooch, Aircare and helped them actually build their product. Initially, it was just the founders working with the startups, but slowly the team expanded and we hired our very first engineers.

Tarun, Sahil, Malkit, Ritesh joined the team during that stage.

The Epiphany

Whenever we did not have the capacity to take on new startups, we would refer them to other developers who we knew were good. Slowly, we realized that we can work with many more startups and even larger companies, if instead of actually developing every product ourselves, we helped them find the best software developers and show them the right direction. This clicked!

This finding led to the development of the marketplace that VenturePact is today. A marketplace where companies of all sizes can find vetted and verified software developers as well as guidance to help them build their applications and web projects.

Learning and Evolution

While creating VenturePact and successfully taking it to the next level, we had many many learnings. Like how to generate business in a completely new market and establish ourselves as a leader. How to get leads in a space that is already crowded? How to build an awesome product?

Since we had built a very cool team that was running VenturePact very well, we decided to start building a new product, one that incorporates all the learning that we had made in venturepact.

That's how outgrow was born.

On to the next step: Outgrow

While doing lead generation for VenturePact, one of the major sources of leads was our [mobile app cost calculator tool](). It asked you 8 questions and gave an estimate of how much it would cost to build a mobile app.

Pretty simple but **very very effective**. We saw leads come in at a rate we had never seen before. People shared it online with friends and new customers discovered the tool on search. We had had many content campaigns including many ebooks and blogs and online courses, but had never seen this level of traction before!

That said, to build the calculator, it took us a good 1-2 months of solid development effort. Overtime, we decided to build many more such calculators (web design calculator, wordpress calculator etc) and as we built new ones, it obviously took incrementally less time as we had the design templates ready to go and the basic architecture already figured out.

That's when we thought - hey this was pretty cool! These calculators are driving our business...they are interactive, personalized and give us a lot of data about the customer. So they must be able to do so for other customers as well!

That's when we decided to build a tool that lets anyone build these calculators with 0 code. Drag and drop. Simple.

The rest of the story has ever since been unfolding...now, you are a part of the story too..

Code of Culture

Building Cathedrals, Not Walls.

Here are the core VenturePact values. These are the traits that differentiate us from the normal company. Think of this as our DNA!

 We hire and reward who demonstrate these ten.

- We live the mission:
    - We are crazy about helping the world leverage technology.
    - If we see something that can be improved through the use of tech, we go ahead and make it happen.
    - Business or No Business. We just want to help!
- We are frugal, but creative:
    - We find creative ways of getting things done.
    - Nothing limits us.
    - We don't say "this can't be done" or "this is impossible", instead we say "we'll figure out a way to get this done".
- We go beyond the call of duty:
    - We do more than just our job
    - We believe if you're just doing your job, you're not really doing your job.
    - No matter what the title, VP, Manager, Developer, we all get our hands dirty with everything!
- We are infused with positivity:
    - We believe we can change the world!
    - And we smile a lot!
    - We know problems and roadblocks are part of the journey, but we will remain positive throughout the challenges.
- Company mission comes first :
    - We believe that the interests of the company drives decision making.
    - When we argue, we know we have the same common goal.
    - So, we don't let egos come into the picture. It does not matter the title or name of person who proposes an idea, what matters is whether or not the idea or strategy will help the business grow and better achieve the mission.
- We are responsible high performers
    - This is what a responsible person looks like
        - Self disciplined
        - Doesn't wait to be told what to do
        - Picks up the trash
        - Does high quality work - always
- We measure results

- - ○ We measure results, not where you do it
    - ○ We measure results, not when you do it
    - ○ We are crazy about productivity and quality and we automate when we can
  - Feedback: We value feedback
    - ○ We ask for feedback, on everything!
    - ○ And we don't hesitate in giving open feedback.
  - Learn and grow
    - ○ We invest in ourselves. We spend time learning and growing.
    - ○ If we don't grow, we don't live
  - We value customer service
    - ○ We build relationships with clients
    - ○ We provide Clients with a great experience
    - ○ We are always looking to improve how we work and innovate for our customer

Finally, we work hard but play hard and enjoy the journey!

Organizational Structure

We are a startup. That says a lot about the structure. We do not have a bureaucratic structure and have tried to keep things as efficient and simple as possible. We are flexible and open to feedback and happy to consider any improvements that you may have in mind.

Founders

We are extremely approachable. Talk to us anytime regarding anything. Get to know us and feel free to ask any questions that you might have about anything.

p@outgrow.co, randy@outgrow.co

Teams

The VenturePact team is divided into the following teams.
- Software Development:
- UI/UX
- Product
- Partner Relations
- Client Relations
- Marketing

Managers

When you join the company, you will be assigned a manager, who will be your go to for everything related to your job. He or she will be the one assigning you goals and judging your performance etc. In addition, the manager is responsible for:

- Providing monthly written feedback to his team
- Take care of the general well being of the team members

Coordination

Daily Use Platform

Since many people on the team are remote, we have to be ultra conscious of how we coordinate. Different teams coordinate in different ways and use different platforms suited to their needs. While you team manager will explain you how to use these platforms, know that anything that you do should be 'written' and 'recorded' in the platform that you use. That is critical and your work and progress will be judged as per the record in the relevant platform.

- ○ Software Development: Jira, Github
- ○ UI/UX: Jira, Google Drive
- ○ Product: Jira, UXPin
- ○ Partner Relations: Asana
- ○ Client Relations: Salesloft, Salesforce
- ○ `: Streak, Trello

Goals

Everyone has to set goals after discussion with their team managers. In some case goals may be set monthly (sales) or by weekly (software development) and in some case, they may be submitted as a team.

- ○ An sample Weekly Goals are: Finish up module 1-9, Write modules for the next iteration, Research on the security checker.
- ○ At the end of the goal cycle, we might diagnose your performance through weekly goals.

Team	Frequency	Team/Individual
Software	Every 2 weeks	Team
UI UX	Every 2 weeks	Team
Product	Every week	Individual
Marketing	Every week	Individual
Sales	Every month	Individual
Dev relations	Every Week	Individual

Daily Progress Report:

In addition to the goals, you have to fill out a brief Daily Progress Report (DPR) that you will get in email.

- ○ It also serves as the de facto "attendance". If you do not fill it, we will take that you didn't work that day!
- ○ The DPR is your way of letting your managers and founders stay updated. If there is anything that is bothering you, any suggestions that you have, this is the forum to talk to the founders about it. While answering the question, please do not say NA or something like that. ***Do not waste this chance to communicate on a daily basis with the founders.***
- ○ Some teams might be exempted from DPR. In that case, their daily activity on email, asana and other channels will be noted for their attendance.
- ○ As a part of the DPR, these three questions should be answered in list form and in some detail with specific numbers (approx. 200-500 characters is a good rule of thumb)
  - ○ **What did you do today?** Example: Finished module 1 and module 2, interacted with the new developer and helped her configure yii and database, developed the user stories with my manager.
  - ○ **Why are you happy today?** Example: Finished all that was required, the new developer is doing a good job
  - ○ **What's on your mind?** Example: Need a heater in the office, it's getting cold!

Meetings and Meeting Minutes

No point, having a meeting without meeting minutes. If the minutes are not recorded over a one-hour meeting, there is no way one can remember everything that was spoken, especially the tasks and follow ups that arose from it.

- ○ **Recording the minutes:** All meeting minutes have to be recorded in your daily use platform. Every task that comes out of the meeting should be assigned in sub tasks for that meeting, just like any other task.
- ○ **3 person rule:** Unless the situation really calls for it, a meeting should not have more than 3 people. In 90% of the situations, it should ideally be just 2 people.
- ○ **Hard stop rule:** Always have a hard stop for each meeting. Decide for it to never be more than 30 mins (or 1 hour in case the situation really calls for it)

Evaluation & Feedback:

Each employee will be evaluated and appraised every year unless mentioned otherwise in the agreement. If you join mid session, your performance will be evaluated in the following cycle, not the coming one. During this evaluation, the employee may be considered for increments, bonus or other privileges. The founders, in consultation with your manager, will judge you on the basis of your performance on 2 major criteria:

- ○ Your performance on our culture code (50%)
- ○ Your performance on your goals (50%)

It your responsibility to ask your manager to provide you with monthly feedback, in writing. This will be communicated over email. If you are also a manager, you will be providing written feedback to your reportees. Feedback must be provided on the last day of the month. The feedback must contain 2 distinct parts:

- ○ Things done well.
- ○ Things that can be improved.

Daily Work Policy

For In-station:

While it is recommended that you come to the office, you may be given the flexibility to work from home in case no meeting has been called at least 24 hours before. This privilege may be given to a select few only. If you have not been given this privilege yet, the following would apply.

1. You have to come to the office and spend at least 8 hours in any window between 9AM and 9PM. Biometric attendance and DPR attendance **will** be marked.

2. You may request to work from home in extreme circumstances and you may be allowed on a case by case basis by your manager.
    a. The decision regarding whether you're allowed or not, will be made taking into consideration your performance till date.
    b. On Wednesdays, you may work from home, only and only if you have sufficient resources at home to work comfortably.
        i. This privilege may be taken away from you in case any breach is found.

For Out-station:

You have the flexibility to work from home. In case an office is opened in your location, your location will become in-station. While we allow employees to work remotely, they have to be disciplined. Here are some regulations pertaining to remote work.

1. Have good Internet connection and a comfortable workspace without any distractions. Your location should not negatively affect your work ethic.
2. Be in time for all scheduled meetings.
3. Be online and available during the following hours
    a. India: 10AM - 4PM (6 hours)
    b. US: 10AM-4PM (6 hours)
    c. For the other 2 hours, you may work when you feel comfortable
4. While not enforced, we hope that each employee will work for a minimum of 8 **productive** hours every day. **Of course, we expect that you'll work a lot more than the minimum.**
    a. Just for some context, we (as in the founders) work probably 12-14 hours everyday. We don't expect you to kill yourself but we do expect that you are there when the time calls for it.
5. VenturePact retains the right to take this privilege away in case anyone is found to be in violation of any of the regulations.

6.

Delhi Office Attendance Policy:

1. You must work from the office everyday
2. You cannot work from home
3. You must use the biometric attendance system when entering and leaving the office (so you must punch in and punch out)
4. All of your shift should be done from the office regardless of shift timings. Minimum of 9.5 hours must be in office for the day to count. (30 minutes break, food)
5. If you have to request leave you must request leave here in advance
6. In the case of an emergency, then you must notify Randy and Akshay of the emergency, request leave and list out what obligations / commitments you have that day that need to be covered. If you have a medical emergency a signed doctor's note must be provided. Do not abuse this, an emergency is when you really cannot work due to an urgent situation.
7. Holiday policy will follow the holiday policy below

Holidays

We have a flexible holiday policy, whereby you may request a holiday at your discretion. This will be an experimental policy and may be discontinued at any time, if found to be misused. Here are the specifics:

1. **Each holiday has to be requested from one of the founders. You may fill out the Leave Request Form to request one. Unless told otherwise, please consider it approved.**
2. If you do not report your leave here and found in violation, your salary will be deducted for that day.
3. Each holiday must be requested at least 24 hours in advance. If you request same day leave, **your salary will be deducted** for that day.
4. Please note that the flexible holiday policy only extends to emergency and contingency cases. Beyond the 16 day PTO, if planned holidays are taken for more than 2 days in a row (multi day leaves), **the salary will be deducted for those days**
   a. For example, in case you have a wedding ceremony or a trip that requires you to take a holiday beyond 2 days in a row and you have already exhausted your 16 day PTO, **the salary will be deducted.**
   b. A single day holiday may be taken. Again, with 24 hours notice only.
5. Only days for which a DPR is filled properly will be counted as days attended. In case DPR is not filled, you will be deemed absent.
6. It should be insured that work is not hampered while these holidays are being availed. We trust the team members to use good judgement while availing holidays.

7. Flexibility does not apply when you are serving notice or trial period.
8. **Of course, more the holidays taken, more you fall behind on your increments and bonuses.**
9. **Maternity Leave Policy**
    a. 0-1 years of contract
        i. 3 month leave
    b. 1-2 years of contract
        i. 1 month paid, 2 months leave
    c. 2-5 years of contract
        i. 2 months paid, 1 month leave
    d. More than 5 years of contract
        i. 3 month paid
    e. NOTE: Policy will only apply in case person joins after leave and continues job for at least 1 more year/
10. Only nationally recognised public holidays will be counted. For People in India this includes:

Holiday	Date
Republic Day	26th January
Holi	6th March
Independence Day	15th August
Gandhi Jayanti	2nd October
Dussehra	22nd October
Diwali	11 November
Christmas	25th December

For people located in the US or people who work with US customers, National Holidays are Christmas, Thanksgiving, Labor day, and Independence day is a half day.

Housekeeping

Salary

In order to credit the salary, we will require you bank account details (account number, bank address, routing number etc). So please ensure that they are sent to pratham@venturepact.com before the end of your joining month.

The salary is credited on the 7th of each month. If 7th is a weekend, it will be processed the following working day. With some oback it usually takes a little longer, so it's natural to get the salary maybe 2-5 days late depending upon the bank. If you have one of these banks, salary can be credited with no delays.

- State Bank of Patiala
- Punjab National Bank
- Oriental Bank of Commerce
- Bank of India
- Karur Vysya Bank
- ICICI Bank

Email Etiquette

Teams that are not responsible for client or partner interface may refrain from emailing them, unless authorized by one of the founders. Two important things to remember.

1. **CC:** Always CC or BCC one of the cofounders on the emails sent out by you to partners, clients or any other outside party.
2. **Email signature**: Your email signature should be consistent. The format to be followed is as follows.

Pratham Mittal
CoFounder | Outgrow
t: 215.964.2332 | **e:** pratham@Outgrow.com <<optional>>
Linkedin | @prathammittal

Social Profiles

Your Linkedin profile reflects the company's professionalism. It is important that everyone's Linkedin profile be consistent. Please refer to either one of the founder's profiles to get the company descriptions.

 Questions?

Feel free to email pratham@venturepact.com or randy@venturepact.com in case there are any questions.