THE WHAT, WHY AND HOW OF OUR COMPANY CULTURE

Culture handbook 2.0

futurice

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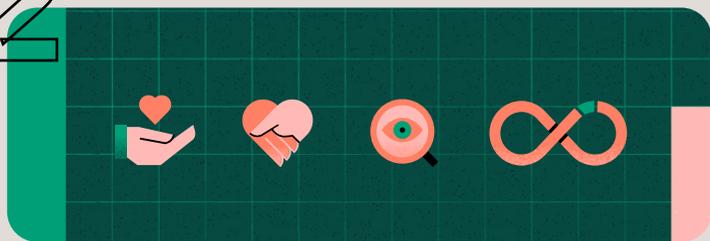Introduction

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Hey there, friend!

You're reading the Futurice culture handbook 2.0, an in-depth overview of our company culture.

This handbook takes a look at various different elements that together form our culture. We approach the topic from different points of view, and through both theory and practical examples like stories and personal accounts. It's not a guidebook, but rather an effort to give you the most authentic representation of who we really are and how we do things.

Whether it's your first day or third decade at Futurice, our culture is always relevant to your everyday work. If you're still new, don't stress out – once you've internalized its cornerstones and basic concepts, the rest is quite easy to figure out. And if you've been with us for a while, you'll probably already know how our culture sticks with you, stays at the back of your mind and follows you wherever you go, helping you navigate whatever situation life throws at you.

And if you don't work at Futurice at all, we're thrilled and flattered by your interest in how we work, and welcome you to take notes and adopt our practices into your organization. Feel free to quote this book and copy with pride – but please note the CC BY-SA 4.0 license under which the book is published, and mention the source when you spread the word.

This is not the first culture handbook we've published (hence the 2.0 in the name). We believe that our culture evolves constantly over time. There are of course certain fixed elements and fundamentals that form the groundwork – such as our values – but the rest of our culture is ultimately formed by the people, and as the people change, so does the culture. That's why we felt the need to update the book – to cover new aspects and explain them, but also gather and share new stories and examples.

Ready to get cultured?

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Why we exist

How to ensure that your everyday work is interesting and meaningful, and will constantly challenge the way it has been done so far?

How to ensure you are surrounded by people who love getting things done?

How to make sure that bosses are there to lift you up and not put you down?

These are some of the questions **Hanno**, **Markku**, **Mikko** and **Tuomas** were asking in the year 2000, and eventually the answer was quite simple – they'd need to found their own company and run it so well that Monday would feel like the best day of the week.

By the time the paperwork was ready and Futurice was founded, the global tech market had already overheated and was in sharp decline following the dot-com crash – but the company weathered the storm. Software projects were initially just a side hustle, and served to fund the development of our own messaging and photo sharing services.

The circumstances forced the new entrepreneurs to focus on listening to users and understanding their needs, trying things out early on, and getting things done in small cross-competence teams – a winning combination for digital consulting. Eventually the product business side was sold, and the focus shifted to multiplying our impact on the world through our clients.

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And when it comes to multiplying impact, sharing your knowledge is by far the best way to do it. We've never believed in keeping our learnings as our business secrets. If we learn something, we should share it. This has two kinds of impact:

1. If we share it in an inspiring way, our handprint on the world grows.

2. If others copy what we do, we need to stay ahead of the game by rethinking, inventing and continuously improving how and what we do. This doesn't only ensure our existence – it's also fun!

Looking at the future of humanity, it's clear that we need to move ahead in many fields, and digital is an essential part of those. The world needs more care, trust, and transparency – and there's a constant need for continuous improvement.

Today, Futurice's purpose is more relevant than ever. Futurice was founded with a belief in progress and people. In this complex world, it is everyone's personal responsibility to challenge the status quo, think, and do the right thing – together. We rethink, build, learn and then share. Our impact is exponential because we inspire countless people to join our Futurice journey – whether as employees, clients or partners, or as users of the products and services we co-create.

Our purpose
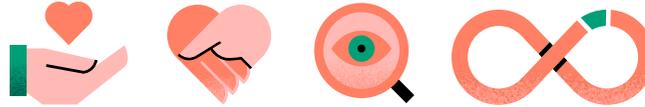Rethink. Build to learn. Share for impact.

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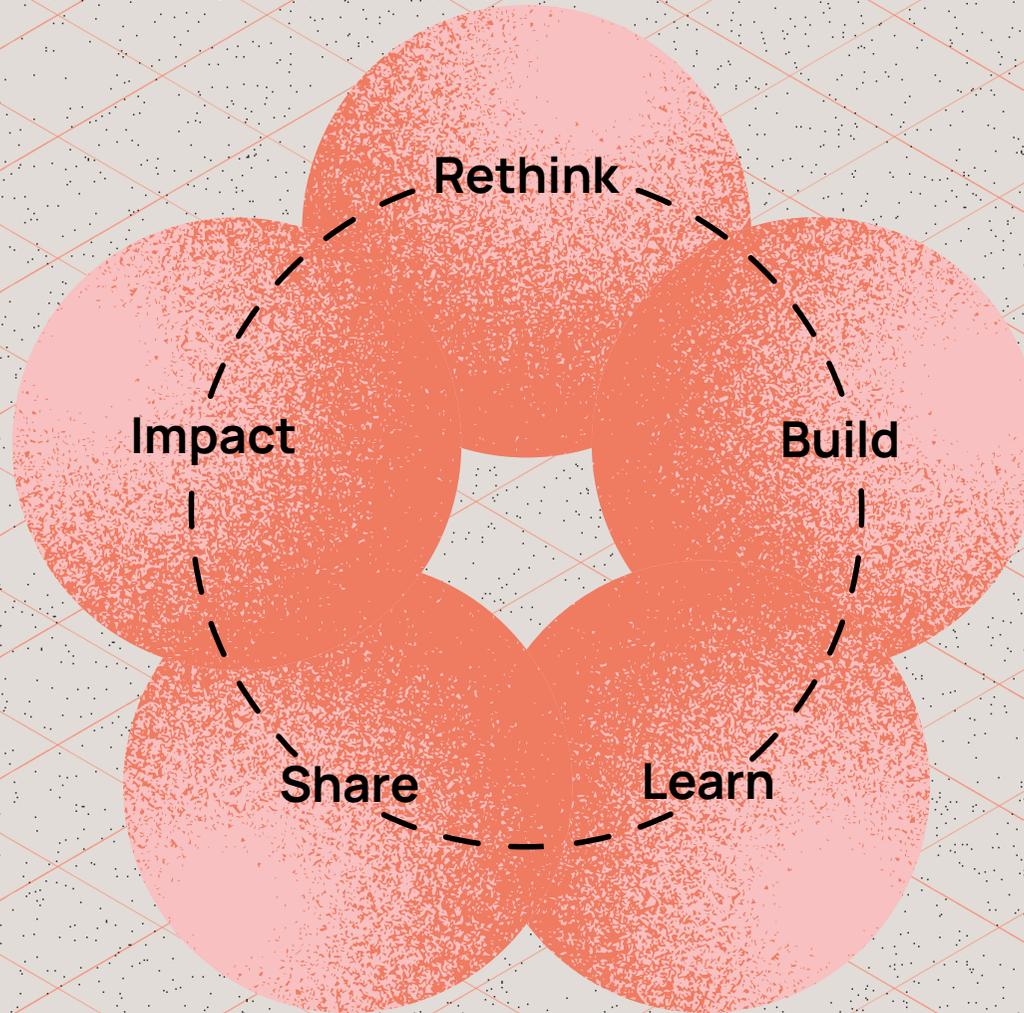
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Our values

Our values as a system

Our culture and leadership model are based on four values – care, trust, transparency, and continuous improvement. That's not a list of four independent values, but rather a connected system where all of them are needed to make it work.

So, when working at Futurice, we can't just go ahead and cherry-pick which of them we choose to follow at a specific moment – it's all four of them, all the time. Not one without the rest.

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We've chosen to believe that all people live their lives with best intentions, and that those affected by a decision are the most competent people to make that decision. We also believe in progression. We believe that by continuously aiming to improve, we'll end up with a better world.
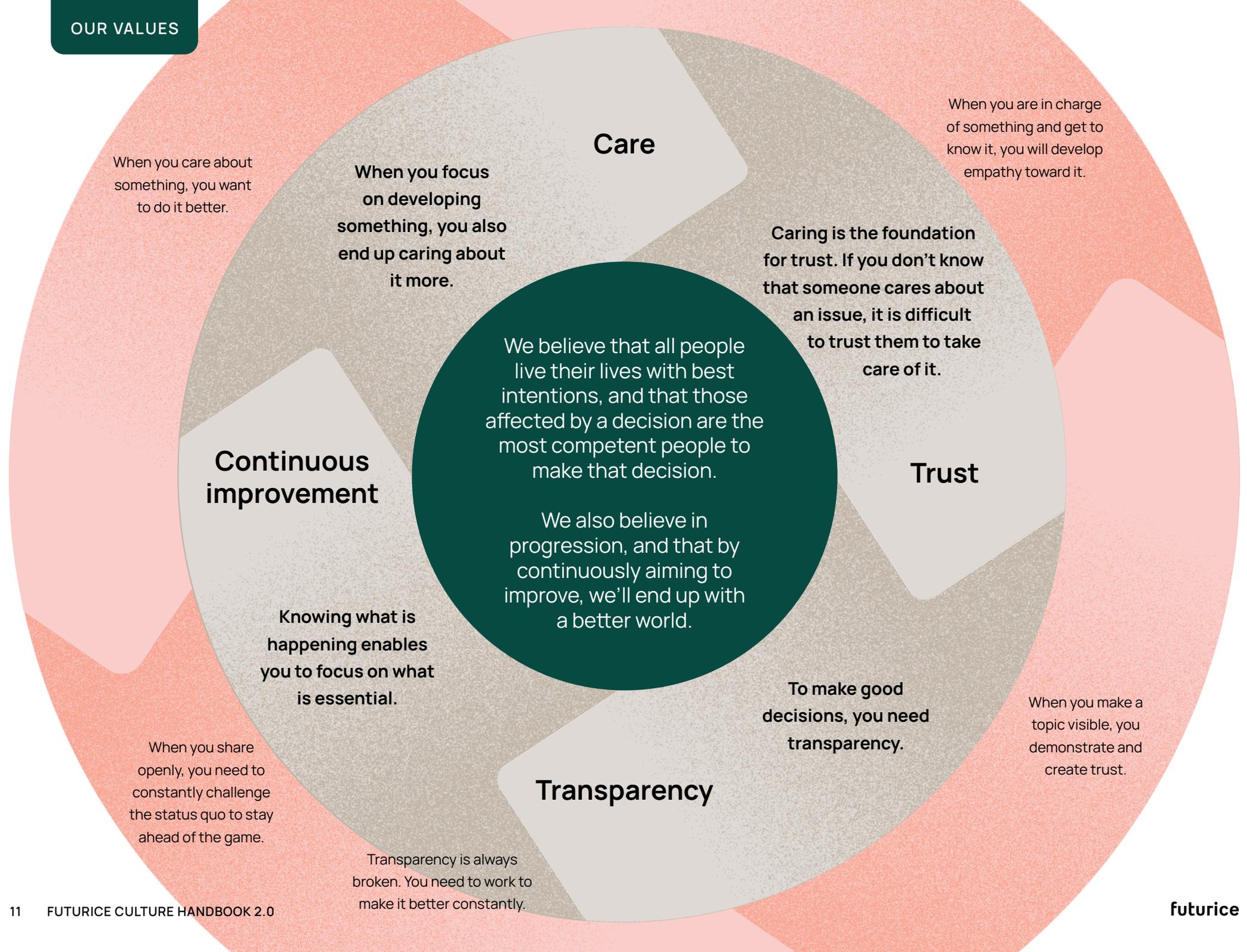
Here's a breakdown of how our system works and the logic behind it.

- By caring about a topic, we first aim to understand it and then want to make optimal decisions about it, which creates trust.
- When we truly feel trusted to make the best decisions, we end up doing our best to understand a topic.
- To make the best decisions, we need to have all the facts – and for that we need transparency.
- When we share openly, we also demonstrate trust and enable others to develop empathy for the topic and, again, care about it.

Knowing where we are and where we're trying to go is the basis for rethinking the present and aiming to constantly improve. The one thing that's constantly broken – both in the world at large, and at Futurice – is transparency. There is too much information, too many people, new people, we forget, we choose not to listen, we misunderstand, and so on.

That's why we need to focus on constantly improving transparency. What worked yesterday won't work today – at least not automatically. And yes, constantly finding better ways of getting information to flow does take a lot of energy. But it enables trust and low-hierarchy decision-making.

To tie it all together, when you improve something, you show that you care about it. And the deeper you dive into a topic, the more you'll learn to care about it. And when you care about something, you automatically want to make sure it will fare better in the future, and you end up improving it – continuously. That is because we are certain that believing in people and progression will make the world a better place.

Care

When you care about something, you want to do it better.

When you focus on developing something, you also end up caring about it more.

When you are in charge of something and get to know it, you will develop empathy toward it.

Caring is the foundation for trust. If you don't know that someone cares about an issue, it is difficult to trust them to take care of it.

We believe that all people live their lives with best intentions, and that those affected by a decision are the most competent people to make that decision.

We also believe in progression, and that by continuously aiming to improve, we'll end up with a better world.

Continuous improvement

Trust

Knowing what is happening enables you to focus on what is essential.

To make good decisions, you need transparency.

When you make a topic visible, you demonstrate and create trust.

When you share openly, you need to constantly challenge the status quo to stay ahead of the game.

Transparency

Transparency is always broken. You need to work to make it better constantly.

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Living our values is always an effort that requires time and energy. The reward comes later – sometimes much later – and on a systemic level. That's why they are values, not just a nice-to-have set of principles.

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Alex Kluwe

Business Director, Berlin

It's all in the culture –
a story from a returning
Futurice alum

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When I joined the Futurice Berlin office in 2011, I was one of the first German employees in the company. Back then, the headcount of the entire company was somewhere around 150 people or so.

By the time I left Futurice in early 2019, I had witnessed our international expansion, the founding of several Futurice Family companies, and growth to around 450 Futuriceans. It was an amazing journey. I left with a heavy heart – I had learned a million things, made great friends along the way, and worked with interesting clients far more than boring ones.

Why leave, then? I listened to that nagging voice in my head that told me it was time for something new after 8 years. I also had a certain curiosity about how green the grass would be somewhere else. The stars aligned, a recruiter hit all the right notes, and off I went.

And now, three years later, I am back.

Lessons learned in the meantime: culture doesn't just eat strategy, it devours it. And in reality, culture may also not necessarily align with what is written on the box – it only becomes apparent when nobody is looking. And it is of fundamental importance to me.

Funnily enough, I was not consciously aware of this until Futurice's first Germany MD **Sampo Hämäläinen** invited Futurice alumni to a get-together in the summer of 2022. We met at the office in Berlin and when I stepped in through the door, I felt right at home.

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Care
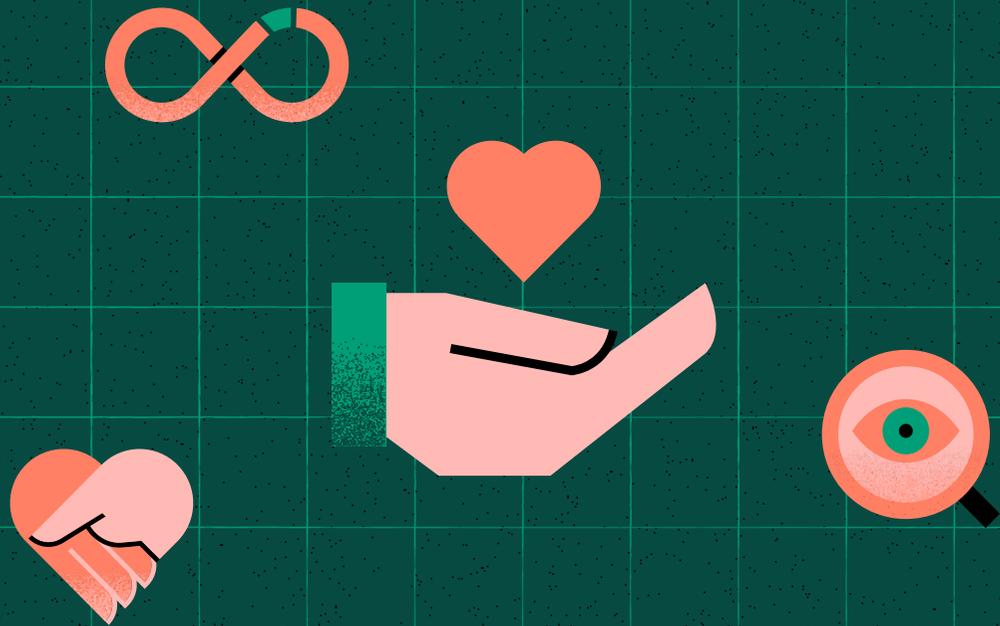
We look out for each other, our clients, and the world around us. When we're concerned about something, we speak up, open a respectful dialogue, and listen to others. Our caring mindset also extends to our work: we take pride in doing a damn good job.

Perhaps more than any of our other core values, the meaning of care in our lives at Futurice depends on the context at hand as well as relationships. The basic idea behind caring is simple, but in practice, it can sometimes be wonderfully complex.
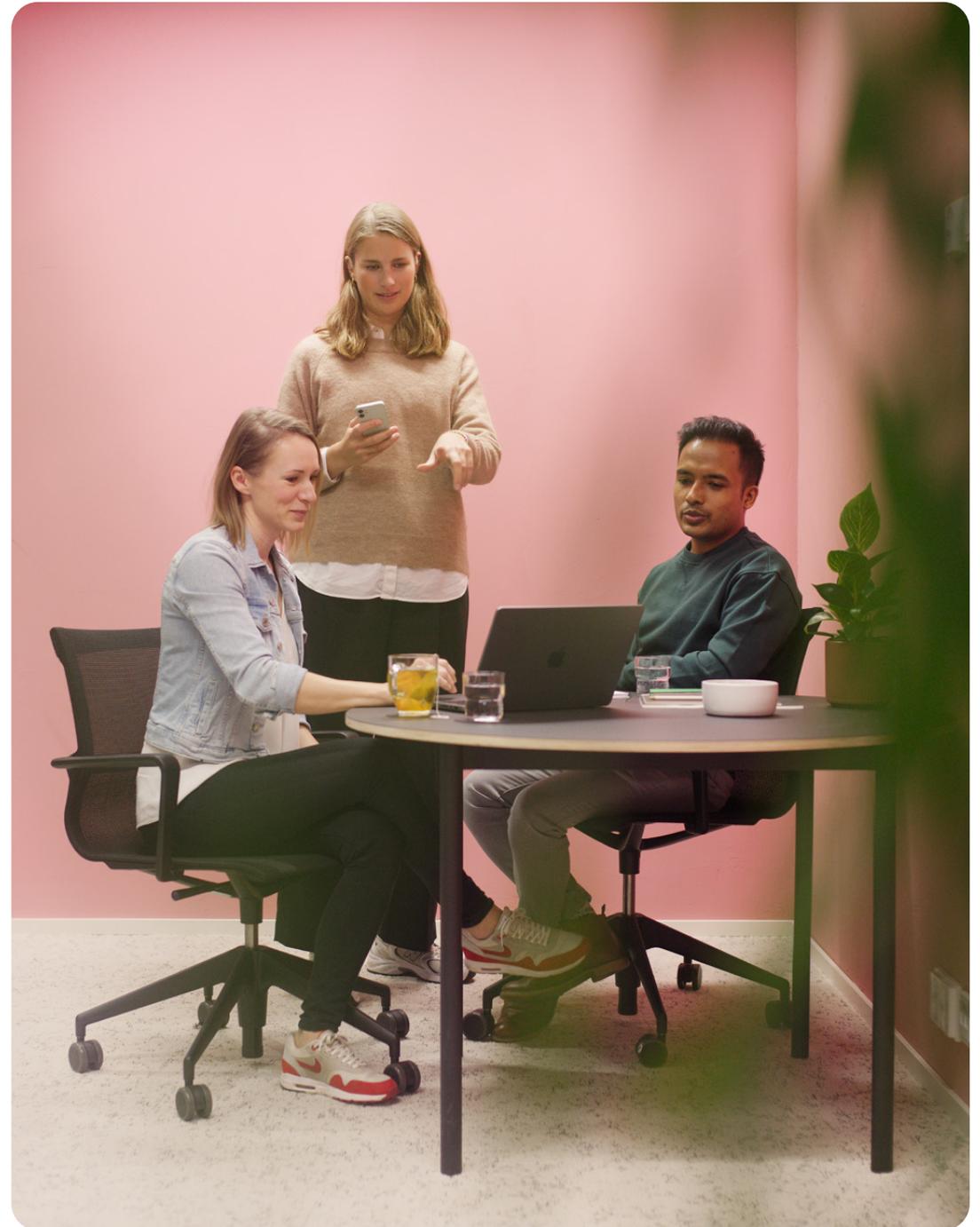
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To help you understand what care can mean and how it can manifest in different situations, here's a set of examples to bring it into perspective. In the following examples, Futuricean refers to a Futurice employee.

Futurice → Futuricean

We have a Human Care (HC) team instead of a Human Resources (HR) department. In this context, care means respect and a deep understanding that people are complex and individual beings with a rich life outside the office. At its very core, this means we as a company work to guarantee the wellbeing, and psychological safety of every Futuricean, and treat all our people with the greatest possible empathy.

Futuricean → Futuricean

Care translates into respect and constant support on both a professional and personal level. Caring is never transactional – you care for the sake of caring, not because you want something in return. Caring takes on many forms. If your supervisor or colleague gives you constructive feedback on your actions or behavior, you should accept it as an act of caring. Caring also manifests when you provide the gift of thoughtful feedback. Giving constructive feedback is always hard – but feedback is the best way to develop. That's why we always consider it a gift, and one we hope you get to give and receive often.

Futuricean → Futurice

We often use the phrase "it's your ship, too" to describe our shared responsibility as individuals toward the company.* As a Futuricean, it's your duty to show your caring by helping us have a bigger and better impact on our people, clients, numbers, and the world. You can help us improve by providing constructive feedback on the way we work and the things we do – when necessary. And telling us when we get something particularly right, so we can make sure we keep doing that. Showing care in the use of our shared resources is also important.

*) You might not expect to see references to military leadership techniques at Futurice, but "It's Your Ship" by U.S. Navy Captain D. Michael Abrashoff is one of the most popular and widely appreciated staples in our company library. Look for it in the bookshelf at your office, ask HC for a copy, or make a 4x2 decision to order one – and most importantly, give it a read.

Futurice → client

We care for our clients by making sure we discover their real needs. We never go for the "easy money" even if the client thinks they want us to. We put in the extra effort to make sure we can offer them the solutions they truly need. We care about the quality of the work we do for our clients, and strive to always deliver the best possible outcomes.

Futurice → world

All of us as individuals care for the world we live in and the societies we are a part of. As a company, we show caring by deeply considering the impact of our actions, and supporting our clients in doing the same whenever possible. We all work together to make the world a better place.

The beginning of the path that led us to this value was first discovered in the Futurice → client context. Our clients were the first to refer to our way of working and approach to solving their problems as caring.

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Based on my experience at Futurice from three different countries, I'd say that the cultural glue that holds us together comes from things like endless curiosity towards other Futuriceans and the various competencies represented within the company, as well as the drive to create new value for our clients and to society as a whole.

Wherever you are at Futurice, the people are down-to-earth and you won't bump into big egos. And whatever you do, you can do it while being truly yourself. The people around you will not try to correct your demeanor or the way you speak or present yourself. You're not forced into a mold or expected to dress in a specific way. Diversity is seen as a strength.

Nadia Karolainen
Strategy and Culture Consultant, Helsinki

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Working together as one Futurice – how we build our internal community

Over the years, we have invested a lot of time and effort in building a community that is psychologically safe and fosters a sense of belonging for our people. We believe it is important to get to know each other also on a personal level, and that's why there are plenty of opportunities to mingle with other Futuriceans – both those based in the same city and also across the whole organization.

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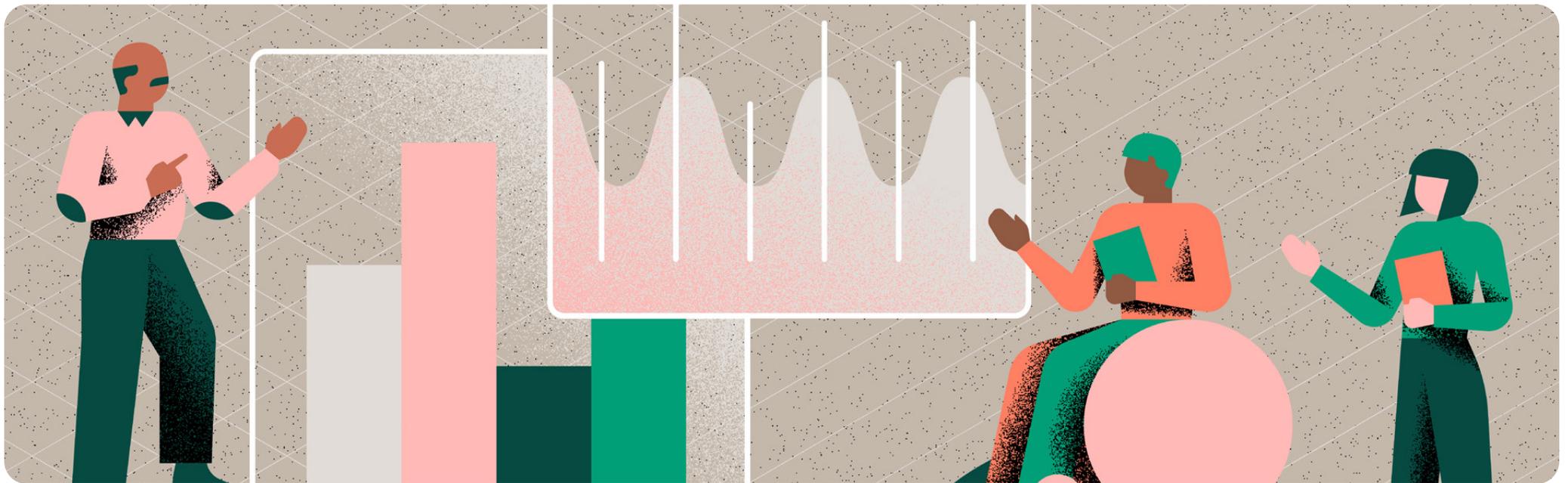
Here's a selection of examples in community-building, ranging from local efforts to ones that involve the entire company:

Competence weeklies

Our professional communities – including tech, design, data, strategy and culture, security and privacy, and DE&I (short for diversity, equity and inclusion) – host regular meetups for the purpose of sharing knowledge and learning from one another. For an in-depth look at competence weeklies, see page 62.

Onboarding camp

New joiners from all offices are invited to Onboarding camp, typically in a setting surrounded by beautiful Finnish nature such as a luxury forest cabin or an awesome island in the Sipoo archipelago near Helsinki – and we've even had an onboarding cruise. Onboarding camp is a chance to connect with other new Futuriceans, experience what the Futurice culture means firsthand, and discuss some of the fundamental concepts and principles we have as an organization.

Breakfast and coffee

Our offices offer weekly breakfasts to encourage people to sit around chatting over the most important meal of the day. We've also paid a lot of attention to socializing when designing our offices – perhaps the most notable example of this is how we've strived to place the café areas in a central location to facilitate random, impromptu encounters with other people.

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Activities and clubs

We also have a number of different hobby clubs that Futuriceans have established around shared interests. The selection is really varied and diverse – just like our people and their interests. The clubs focus on activities like yoga, meditation, board games, craft beer, tea, ice swimming, cycling, bouldering, video games, DJing, tinkering, knitting, gardening and arts – and believe it or not, that's just part of the entire selection!

FutuCamp

Our get-together for everyone at Futurice, where we usually spend a day in a conference-like setting, focusing on a certain theme and learning from each other as well as external speakers. The following day's program is all about enjoying each other's company while engaging in various activities, followed by an epic party in true Futurice style.

FutuHike

For people who like changing their scenery and meeting colleagues from other offices but rarely travel for business, we have something called FutuHike. It gives you the opportunity to meet Futuriceans from other sites and discover another city for a week, supporting cultural and knowledge exchange between sites.

Special remote office setups

Inspired by the FutuHike concept, we occasionally set up a temporary remote office in a destination compatible with extracurricular activities – such as downhill skiing. Operation Snowflake in Levi, Lapland has already become an annual tradition in its own right, and it never fails to attract a diverse mix of Futuriceans and even alumni. Another group of Futuriceans who enjoy warmer weather decided to organize Operation Sunray, a one-week remote work adventure by Lake Saimaa in the beautiful Finnish lake district.

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EXAMPLE

Caring for the client: a lesson in the use of positive influence

An eyewitness account of using soft methods to turn a conflict into a positive outcome for everyone involved

A Futurice employee in Helsinki was working on the critical business systems of a large Finnish client – one characterized by a lot of internal politics and firmly established silos throughout the organization.

Our goal in the project at hand was to renew one of their essential customer-facing systems. As scrum master and program manager, our employee's mission was to ensure things get done on this project, and at one point he was questioned by the client on why things were taking time, and why the quality of delivery was bad. To address these questions, he prepared a detailed presentation and gave it in front of a large audience from the client's side, upper management included. Now, it wasn't a fun topic to begin with and the entire setting was quite intimidating – the kind of situation where in a certain type of organization you might expect to get chewed out for your mistakes – but in a remarkably honest fashion, he laid everything out on the table and pointed out what wasn't working and what were, in his view, the root causes.

I was in that room on that day, and what I particularly liked about the presentation was that he didn't try to come across as the great savior who comes and tells how things should be done. Instead, he presented himself in a very genuine and humane way, complete with all his personal features and flaws.

Rather than get defensive, he had the courage to challenge the client in a gentle way, simply by sharing his educated opinion and sincere view as a professional. Even though he spoke directly and with brutal honesty, the presentation was warmly received and had a major impact on the client. Our partnership continued on a stronger foundation than ever, and the project was successfully completed. At the end of the day, the approach this Futurican took was a valuable lesson in two ways:

First of all, it was a skillful demonstration of authenticity, and showed an example of how being authentic can make it easier to work with people and deliver even difficult messages.

Secondly, and maybe even more importantly, it served as an example of the importance of showing care toward the client. Even when it's not the easiest path, it's our job to want the best for them – and as the example shows, caring can take many different forms.
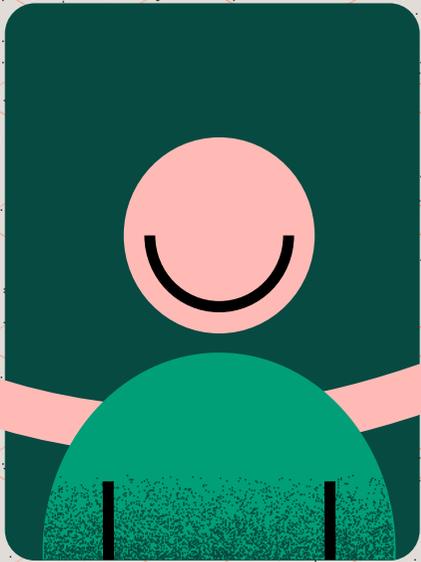
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An anonymous Futuricean

Tampere

Giving both friends and strangers a warm welcome

"*Being a newcomer* and coming from a very different workplace in IT, the culture at Futurice and especially in Tammerforce is embodied in "moro moro!" – a greeting with which everyone entering the office is met and acknowledged positively. Even if the guest is not known.

I noticed this already during my recruitment process when being interviewed at the office. At my previous workplace, people tended not to greet each other. When I stepped into the Futurice office for the first time for my interview, everyone said a cheerful hello even though they had no idea who I was. That made me feel welcome and accepted, and gave me the feeling that this was where I wanted to be.

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EXAMPLE

Smileys

Sooner or later you'll find yourself attending your first session of Smileys with the rest of your team. It is a concept that helps us get to know each other better and understand what we're going through and what is going on in our lives – in short, an example of caring on a very practical but personal level.

In a Smileys meeting, everyone attending takes a sticky note and draws a face (a "smiley") that describes their current emotion and state of mind – or in a remote setup, shares an animated GIF. Once everyone is ready, the participants take turns describing to the rest of the team what kind of a facial expression they drew on their smiley and why, and what is going on in their life. Despite the name, the smileys are not expected to smile – so if you're going through a rough patch, this is a great (and safe!) opportunity to share and let it show.

Smileys can reflect your current situation at work, your private life outside of work, or both. The purpose of having Smileys regularly is to really understand the current emotional state of your fellow team members so that we as a community can support each other when needed, be ourselves and interact with each on a genuinely human to human level. Many of our teams have Smileys on a weekly or monthly basis.

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EXAMPLE

Mental Health Week 2022

Mental wellbeing has gained more and more attention during the past few years – especially after the global pandemic started mixing things up in 2020. It has become a normal topic, and people who have struggled with their mental health (whether diagnosed illnesses or periods of extreme stress) are more open about it than ever before.

At Futurice, mental wellbeing is taken seriously and we try our best to be open about it in all its colors. Each country offers its own selection of benefits that focus on mental health through occupational healthcare systems and health insurances. Our most prominent mental wellbeing benefit available in all countries across the company is the mental health support service provided by Auntie.

In March 2022, we felt it was time to take the next step on our mental health journey, and organized our first ever Mental Health Week.

During this week we invited external speakers from Germany-based mental health agency Shitshow to discuss mental health at work and how each of us can support our colleagues who may at some point struggle with their mental health. Throughout the week we also set up smaller groups to help people try things like meditation and (remote) dog walks to see whether they might work as a way to relax and manage our stress levels.

It's important to remember that supporting mental wellbeing is not about instant gratification – it's a long process, and one we are committed to. The positive effects will accumulate over time. Based on the feedback we received, Mental Health Week was a particularly positive and welcome experiment.

"

What Futuriceans said about Mental Health Week 2022:

"It's always important to talk about mental health and how we can all stay healthier in times like these."

"I feel there's a need to spread the word about the importance of better understanding mental health."

"Thank you for doing this – this was very important to me!"

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Elizabeth Adegboju

Software Developer, Munich

Personal support

"I love the people at Futurice – and that really can't be overstated! Even when things got overwhelming with my move from Lagos to Munich for this job, and I had trouble fitting into a new system, people were always there to reassure me that it would be fine. My colleagues are awesome and they make being at work really nice. My supervisor is also really cool and they've emphasized that Futurice really does care about its people and our personal balance. It's really easy to work in this kind of environment, which makes me more productive as the pressure has been taken off.

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Emma-Leena Heikkinen

Client Lead, Helsinki

The unexpected benefits of clubs

> *I started a knitting club* here in Helsinki, and it also has people joining from other offices. Futurice is a really good place for finding like-minded people to get together with, and it can lead to greater collaboration in a work context too.

For example, during the pandemic we had our knitting club meetings online, and while talking we realized that we had many different competencies present. We started talking about our clients and projects, sharing how we were doing with them, and found a lot of similarities across client organizations. Without shared interest groups like these it's easy to get stuck in project or competency bubbles – my knitting group gave me the opportunity to network across the company and connect with people beyond my immediate team.

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EXAMPLE

Jolts – our way of saying **extra** thanks

Think your coworker has done an excellent job on a task you've worked on together? See someone perform an altruistic act of kindness, or volunteer their help when no one else had the time to do something important? Sounds like a great opportunity to go beyond just saying thanks – and as it happens, we have exactly what you need for that: a Jolt.

Giving someone a Jolt – or in other words, jolting them – is a concept we came up with in order to give positive feedback and extra recognition to our colleagues, and it's stuck around for well over a decade already!
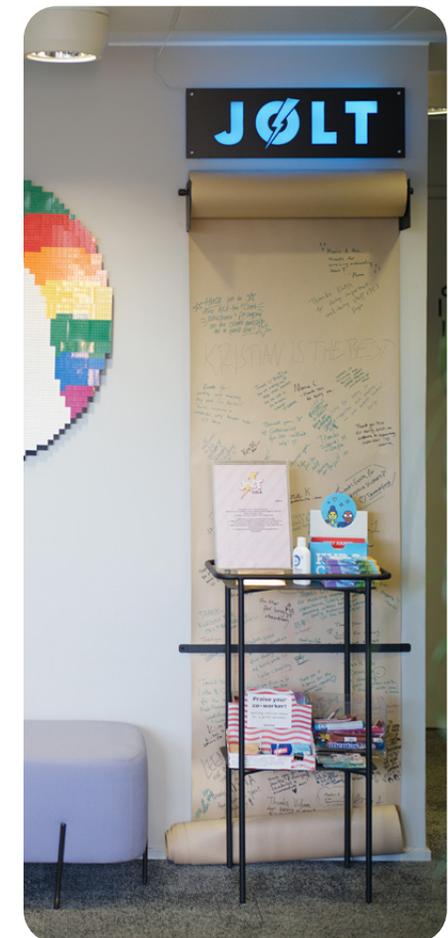
At Futurice, a Jolt means a specific type of recognition that consists of two elements: an expression of gratitude (either given personally or posted publicly on Slack or written on a dedicated Jolt wall at the office) and an inexpensive token of appreciation.

Here's how it works in practice, in two simple steps:

1. Your colleague is awesome in one or more ways, and does something you think deserves positive feedback and public applause.

2. You deliver them a small gift of your choice and thank them, preferably in person, and optionally announce your Jolt on our public channels.
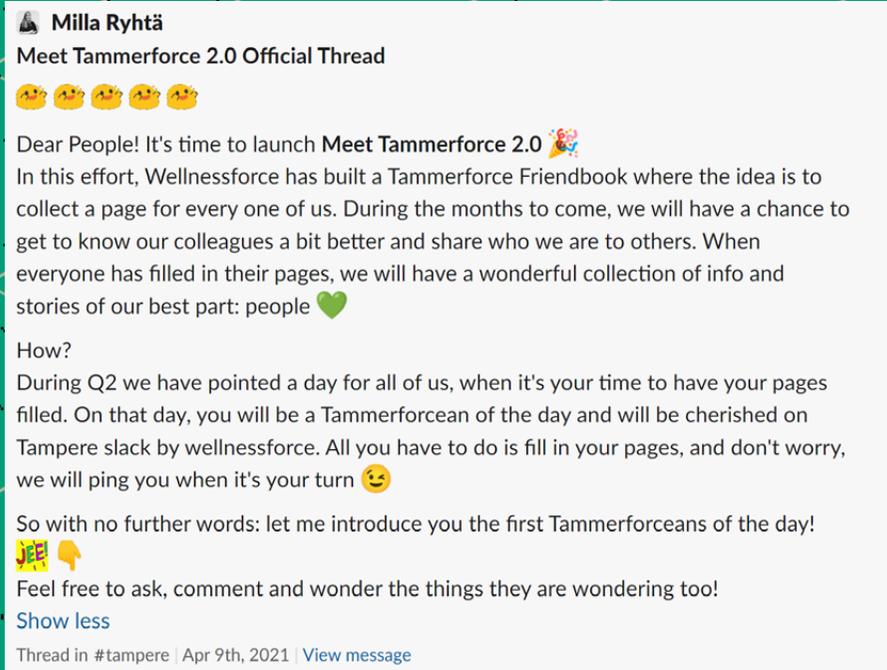
Our offices are equipped with physical Jolt stations that include a variety of small items that are meant to be gifted when jolting someone – chocolate bars, lollipops, stickers, fun notebooks and so on. The gifts are very small, it's the symbolism and thought that counts.

We also have a custom Jolt emoji at your disposal on Slack for remote jolting purposes. A remote Jolt can include for example a coupon that the recipient can redeem for an ice cream, or if you're based in different cities, you can ask another coworker to give the recipient something from their local Jolt station at the office.

EXAMPLE

Community-building during tough times – Meet Tammerforce 2.0

In 2020, the pandemic hit our community hard due to the sudden lack of face-to-face contact. A lot of new people joined the company during the era of remote work, and without the opportunity to have casual chats around the coffee machine, it was difficult to get to know each other.

The bright minds in Tampere came up with their own approach to overcome the situation. First, everyone based in Tampere answered a set of questions about their work as well as their personal life. Then, in a ritual called Meet Tammerforce 2.0, two people – an oldie and a newbie – were introduced every day on Slack based on the answers they gave.

The idea behind the effort was to help people find common ground and talk about their hobbies and experiences, and it really worked. The introductions inspired countless conversations, and they were eventually collected into an actual book known as the Tammerforce Friendbook.

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EXAMPLE

Never leave without a proper goodbye

When it's time to continue your journey somewhere else, saying goodbye to people is rarely a fun task. Although you have an exciting new opportunity outside Futurice ahead of you, it can be hard to let go of the amazing people you've had around you and who you've learned to care about over the past months and years.

That attachment and sense of community that many Futuriceans share plays a big part in why the people leaving our company have a habit of crafting uniquely elaborate and heartfelt goodbyes. Here are two examples from Futurice alumni, by **Carita Niskanen** and **Enbo Chen** – we'll let their words do the talking.

Dear all,

This is not only a goodbye letter to all of you, but also a love letter to Futurice, a memoir of the best time in life.

Looking back to the past 5 years and 3 months, I have been feeling so lucky and grateful that futurice has been with me as always: caring, empowering, inspiring and encouraging. They witnessed and guided me go through some of the biggest transitions in life, especially from a young-know-nothing student to an old-know-a-little-bit-of-everything professional developer.

I cannot appreciate more getting to know all the creative and beautiful souls when staying in Tammerforce and Helsinki, visiting London, Berlin, and Stuttgart. All the best, fun, emotional moments like a vivid memoir montage play in my brain with a delightful heartbeat.

Human beings have a nature of caraving for safety and stability, but at the same time, never stop seeking excitement and adventure. Standing at the end of the road of the last great journey, now I feel excited about the new adventure as same as 5 years ago. From next month, I will start working in a web3 game studio called [redacted]. At the same time, I decided to go for a four-day workweek arrangement to dedicate more time to create some art or whatever it is called(Instagram: @ [redacted]).

Thank you for being a dear home to me:)

See you in the future,
Enbo Chen
30.8.2022

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EXAMPLE

Never leave without a proper goodbye

Carita Niskanen 9:36 AM Thursday, November 10th, 2022

I have always known this day would be here someday, but I guess there is no way to be prepared for it. It is now my time to join the select group of people who are eligible for the coveted Back to the Futurice t-shirt. In December, just one month short of my twelfth Futurice anniversary I am taking a giant leap and abandoning our ship. I have tried to think of words to describe how important my time at Futurice has been for me but all of the things I want to say sound so sappy that I will try to keep it short and as anti-sappy as possible. 😬

When I joined Futurice I had worked at two IT companies for about three years each and I never could have imagined that I would work at any company for 12 years. But now that we are here and I am sitting here thinking back on the years, I feel the time flew by so fast. When I think of the person I was then and who I am now, I can't believe how much I have grown. Not just as a technical expert but also as a person and I know a lot of that growth has been enabled by Futurice.

I have met amazing people during all my years here and many of them I will also call my friends in the future. The list of people I want to thank is too long and I am sure I would forget somebody but I have tried to express my gratitude in our interactions together. I just want to thank all the people who have made my time at Futurice an amazing experience from the bottom of my heart. I will miss the people here and our culture and particularly our memes channel. I especially want thank my amazing supervisor Janetta for always believing in me and giving me courage and pushing me forward when I was lost.

So what are my next steps? After this week I will be having my holidays and in December I will be joining the team of an ex-Futuricean at AWS Finland as a Solutions Architect. So it is very likely our paths will still cross. 😊

Thank you for our shared years together and have the shirt ready. ❤️
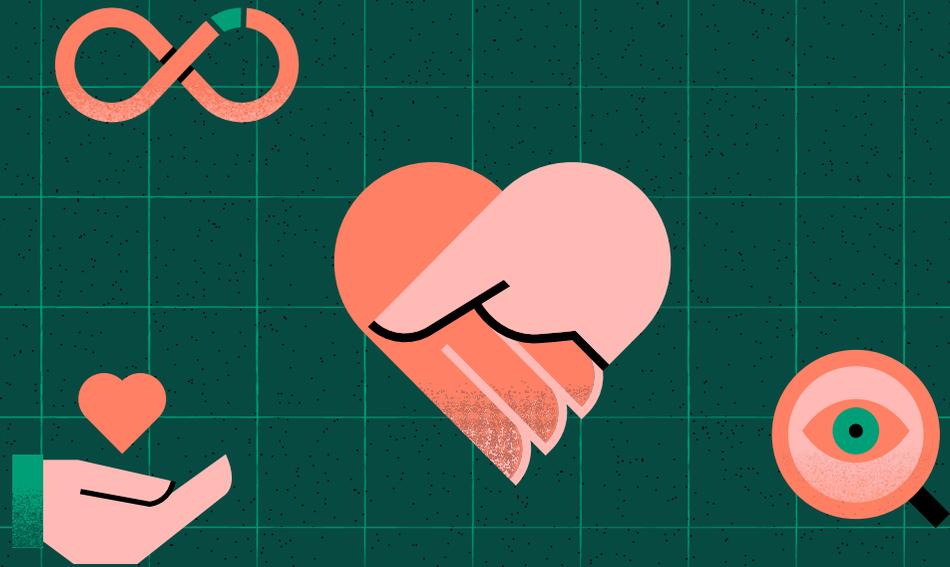
futurice

Trust

At Futurice, trust is given – not something you have to earn. We believe people are fundamentally good. We assume good intentions and trust each other to make validated decisions autonomously. We expect integrity, and offer plenty of freedom in return.

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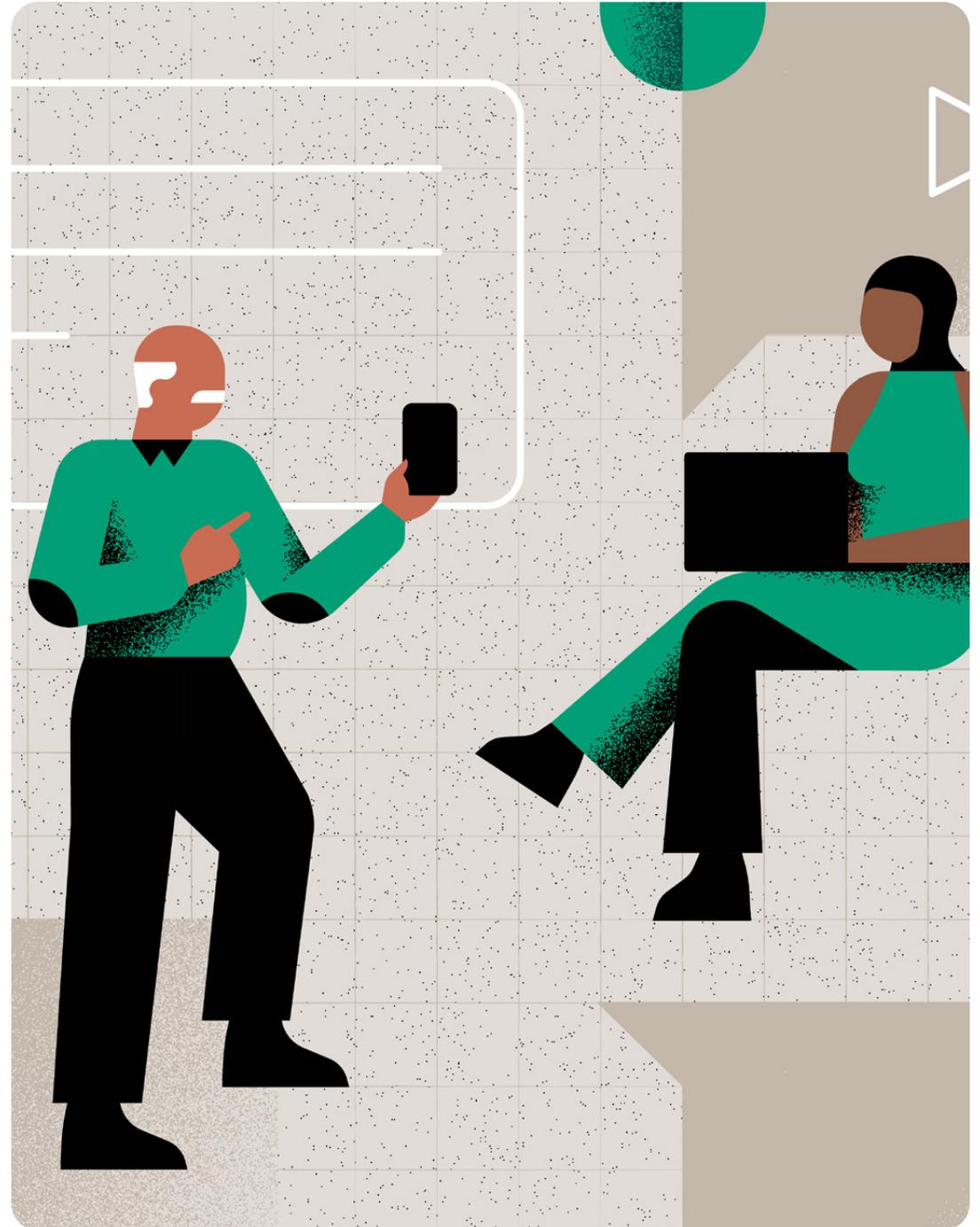Our founders **Hanno**, **Markku**, **Mikko** and **Tuomas** wanted to build a company that was based on trust and on the belief that deep down, people are fundamentally good. This may seem obvious, but it's not. Trust is often the one thing the corporate world traditionally lacks.

Trust is based on the assumption that people have good intentions. Trusting is a conscious decision; in other words, it's a matter of faith, belief and acting accordingly. "Assume good intentions" is a saying we like to repeat, and an idea we put great stock in. Trust is at the heart of this assumption.

Trust always breeds more trust. We trust every employee from day one – you don't have to impress us and earn our trust that way. You already have it. The autonomy to make independent decisions you have at Futurice is based on the fact that we trust you by default.

Here everyone has the power – that is, the trust of the organization – and the obligation to make good, transparent and fair decisions on any issues that have an impact on our people, our clients, our numbers and the world, both now and in the future.

Trust as a value at Futurice dates all the way back to the year 2000, to the very beginning of our story.

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4x2 – your guide to making great decisions

Whether you love 'em or hate 'em, decisions play a part in each Futuricean's life more or less every day. Thankfully, not all of them are life-changing, but because our choices have consequences, we owe it to our coworkers to take them seriously.

To help us make holistic decisions fast and without needing a ton of hierarchy, we've created our own system for making decisions and running the whole company. It may seem like a big deal, but it's simple and it's called 4x2 (that's either "four by two" or "four times two" – we're not too fussy about it).

When it comes to decisions, our thinking is built on a couple of beliefs:

- The person with the best knowledge of an issue should be the one to make the decision.
- In most cases, the person most affected by a decision is the best one to make the decision.
- The person who needs a decision made should be the one who carries the responsibility for it.
- People are good and trustworthy, and have good intentions.
- Low decision-making hierarchy leads to faster, more agile and more profitable end results – along with a higher degree of employee satisfaction.

We also believe it's only human to rush to a conclusion without a sufficiently broad view of the problem at hand. This is why (given our extensive freedom to decide for ourselves) we have deemed it necessary to implement the 4x2 decision-making model to be used in conjunction with every single decision. Its purpose is to give you the framework to approach decisions holistically.
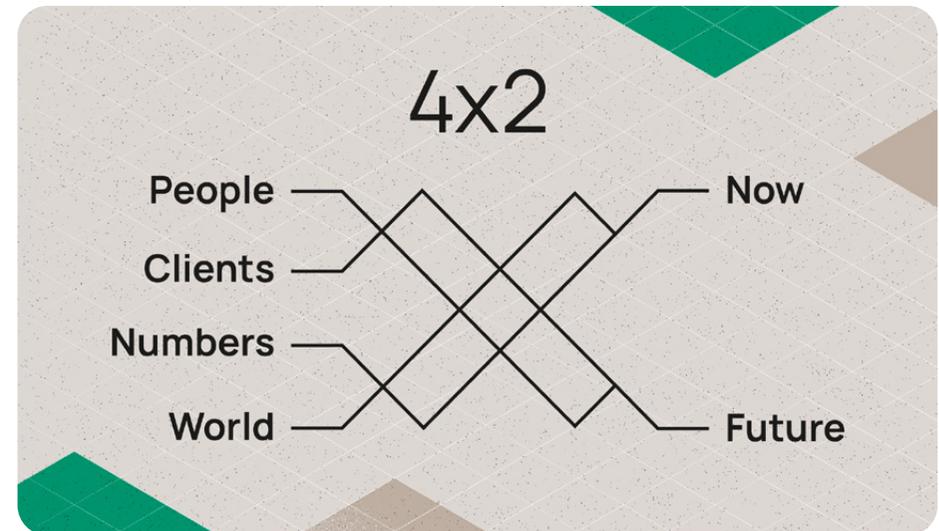
What does 4x2 mean in practice, and how does it work?

To put it simply, everyone at Futurice has the power to make decisions on pretty much anything. And yes, this includes you, too!

When making a decision – regardless of its magnitude – there are four (4) times two (2) aspects you are expected to consider. All decisions should be approached in terms of how they impact our people (i.e. Futuriceans), our clients, our numbers (i.e. finances), and the world around us – and in two different time frames: right now, and in the future.

4x2 is a guiding process that supports and advises you. It doesn't allow you to make decisions in isolation, as you rarely have the answers to cover all the dimensions on your own. Instead, it requires you to seek information and advice from people around you. The process isn't designed to limit your decision-making power – it's simply there to help make better decisions.

When you are new at Futurice, your scope of decision-making can be quite narrow. This is natural. It takes time to understand and accept the fact that you can make decisions. It also takes a while to establish the networks and find the data you need to back up your decisions. Nonetheless, we urge you to be active in decision-making from the start. Every decision we make will take us a little further, in some direction.

4x2 can be deceptively hard for at least two reasons.

- Having it as our decision-making system also means that you can't demand someone else to make decisions for you or step in and take over. You are the decision-maker.
- Once you've made a decision, you have to stand by it – even if it sometimes means admitting failure and owning it.

Even with 4x2, you may end up making decisions that turn out to be wrong over time. That's life. That's the exact reason why we also emphasize transparency and continuous improvement. Sometimes it's necessary to experiment, gather real-world data, and learn a lesson before you can arrive at the right conclusion.

Looking out for the world

Our current 4x2 model was previously called 3x2, and it was already adopted by quite many organizations in that form. We added the fourth dimension – the world – to make it more explicit that we (as well as other organizations) have to take the impact on society and the environment into account. Care, one of our values, has served the same purpose implicitly, but it's much easier to do the reasoning when it's said out loud.

Considering the world when making decisions isn't easy. In many cases, the benefit of society and the environment may contradict each other at least in the short term. Many decisions are investments. We want to spend time and money and consume environmental resources to make a positive impact. So decisions are about quantifying the positive and negative impacts and seeing whether they can be stacked so that a decision pays off.

There are many ways to move towards a sustainable future. At Futurice, we believe in progress through better use of technology and data, and improved ways of working, and this is also the point of view from which we make decisions. We focus on the handprint – our impact – and are mindful of our footprint, but we are not afraid to make investments.

The five fundamentals of 4x2

1. The key thing in 4x2 is that all eight aspects are considered equal. This eliminates the risks inherent in emphasizing any one aspect over the others, because pretty much anything under the sun can be justified by choosing the right angle and just ignoring the rest. A one-eyed outlook is the most common way to muddle your decision-making.

2. Sometimes it's enough if one or two aspects within the model improve with your decision – but only if the rest stay the same, i.e. don't get worse.

3. 4x2 was created to make experimentation easier and faster. It allows you to try things out. When experimenting, it's important to keep your eyes on the purpose. Why are we doing this experiment? What metrics are we evaluating it with? How do I communicate to others that this is an experiment?

4. The "bigger" the decision, the wider its impact on people. Buying a book for the project team is an easy decision to make on your own, but selecting a learning management system affects the whole company. Try to engage people, seek the best knowledge and find data to support your decision-making process. When asking for opinions and feedback, a binary yes/no is not enough for 4x2.

5. With great power comes great responsibility – and the obligation to make good, transparent and fair decisions.

EXAMPLE

Futurice goes Schwarzwald – a large-scale 4x2 experiment

At the time of writing this edition of our culture handbook, Freiburg – situated in the heart of Schwarzwald or the Black Forest in Germany – is the site of Futurice's newest office. Or satellite office, if we're being specific.

"A satellite office?" you might be wondering. "What's that supposed to mean?"

Well, let's rewind back to 2022, when we decided to try something different in Germany. We were operating on three assumptions:

1. Hybrid work is our new default working mode.

2. In order to grow, being close to the talent is more important than being close to our clients.

3. The Futurice culture remains our unique selling point to attract talent.

From this starting point, we set out to establish a smaller branch in Freiburg, a two-hour train ride away from its parent office in Stuttgart. The setup is decidedly lean: it consists of a six-desk office in a large coworking space in central Freiburg, with different areas for different working situations.

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EXAMPLE

Futurice goes Schwarzwald – a large-scale 4x2 experiment

The vision is to employ upwards of 12 people with remote contracts who work in the Freiburg area, and use the office as a hub to create cohesion, connect with each other, and live our Futurice culture while also embedded in a larger coworking community, Grünhof.

At the time, we were having some trouble finding new hires at our Stuttgart office, particularly tech people. Based on past experiences from other countries, we knew we'd need a local ambassador to connect with new talents. This played a large part in why we chose Freiburg as our location – two of our Stuttgart colleagues already lived there and had excellent connections locally. Additionally, we had a lead on a brand new coworking space which would be perfect for our purposes.

All the pieces of the puzzle were right there: we had a clear need, and an opportunity ripe for the taking. It was time to roll up our sleeves.

There were four distinct steps in the process of opening the Freiburg satellite office, and the entire decision-making phase took us less than two months:

1. Starting the discussion among our peers, and building a waterproof 4x2 case

2. Pitching the case to the German and global leadership teams, acquiring their initial buy-in and gathering 4x2 feedback

3. Iterating until we had a solid vision, an ultra-lean implementation strategy, and the necessary metrics to track our success

4. Getting started

When you look at the decision-making journey, the steps along the way had Futurice written all over them. Opening a new office is a big commitment – but in the end, it's just another 4x2 decision, and as Futuriceans, we're supposed to make 4x2 decisions.

Freiburg is a great example of what that can lead to. When you combine dedicated people who take the initiative to solve problems worth solving, a culture that encourages experimentation, and a concept like 4x2 that provides a structured way to make educated decisions, you have all the ingredients needed to go and try things out. Sometimes you succeed, sometimes you fail.

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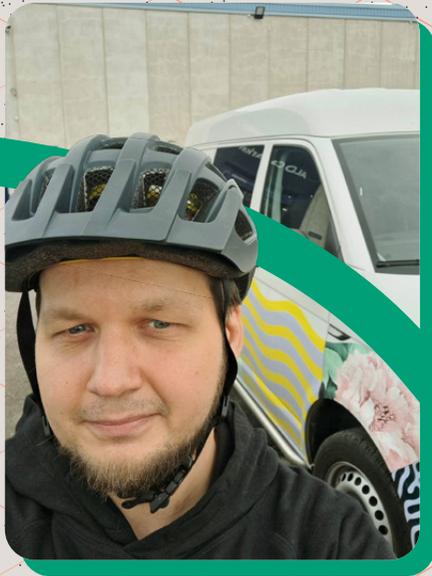
Tuomas Paasonen

FutuVan owner, Helsinki

FutuVan:
My five-year 4x2
journey

In addition to making decisions, 4x2 is also about taking responsibility for the decisions you make.

When I worked as a recruiter back in 2017, we were constantly organizing and attending various events. This involved lugging the Futurice fair booth around on a more or less constant basis, week after week. We used rental vans initially, but our constant need eventually raised the question of whether we should have our own.

To make the decision, I asked around if other people and teams in the company had a need for a van too. I requested offers for the van and a parking space to understand the cost structure. And after that, I consulted our finance department on what the expenses would mean in the big picture.

We also wanted employees to be able to rent the van for their own needs when it wasn't used for company business. To make this happen, I needed to contact the tax authorities and set up the necessary reporting.

At this point I had enough information to make the 4x2 decision: let's lease a van. And soon enough, our beloved FutuVan – complete with a hydraulic loading platform and amazing custom vinyl decals – was ready to take our gear wherever it was needed.

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Tuomas Paasonen

FutuVan owner, Helsinki

FutuVan:
My five-year 4x2
journey

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But doing the arrangements and leasing the van was only the first chapter on this journey. Keeping a van running comes with a list of maintenance tasks. While many Futurice employees took part in those over the years, the final responsibility was mine, as it was my 4x2 decision.

This meant that even when my role changed, I was still called in when the van had problems or the reporting process failed. And it was my responsibility to ensure tires were changed and yearly maintenance was booked in time.

When the end of the lease was coming closer, I once again gathered feedback and usage statistics to analyze, reviewed the different options we had, and started a Slack discussion on what we should do next.

All the evidence and feedback pointed out that the world had changed, and we decided not to lease another van. This meant a new set of checklist items to tackle: canceling our parking deal, informing people about the change, and ultimately, returning the van to the leasing company when the lease was over (pictured on the previous page).

And so, in October 2022, more than five years after the initial 4x2 decision, I fulfilled the last of my FutuVan-related duties.

← In early 2020 when the pandemic hit, a group of Futuriceans proactively self-organized and drove the FutuVan around the city, delivering office furniture to coworkers to support working from home.

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EXAMPLE

Trust from day one: "How do you think we should do this?"

At Futurice, you're likely to hear how "trust is given, not earned" – but if you're not given a concrete example, you might be left wondering what that means in practice.

Sure, you're supposed to get a company credit card to use at your discretion without applying or asking for one separately, but beyond that, how does trust manifest in the way we work every day?

One example is turning to new employees for ideas and advice with an open mind. After all, when we hire talented and capable people, we don't expect them to force all their skills and previous knowledge into a specific mold before they can be applied at Futurice.

When we surveyed and gathered stories and experiences from our employees during their time at Futurice, we came across a bunch of examples that boiled down to the same question: "How do you think we should do this?"

Shortly after joining Futurice, **Fransje Schoenmaker** was selling her first project to a client in Germany when she wanted to ask the head of the Berlin office **Gian Casanova** how to approach a problem she was facing.

"Instead of telling me what to do, he asked me, 'What would you do?' I told him my view, and he said then go and do it. To me, this is trust. I had only worked here for a short time, and yet during my 20 years of professional life, no boss had ever asked me this question," Fransje says.

← Fransje Schoenmaker

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EXAMPLE

Trust from day one: "How do you think we should do this?"

The beautiful part is that Fransje's story was not unique. **Timo Halonen** from the Stockholm office had a very similar experience from his early days.

"After starting at Futurice, I was often asking my supervisor how this or that was done here, and in response I would be met with a question: 'How do you see it should be done?' At first it was frustrating. Sure, I might have an idea of what should be done but why couldn't they just tell me what was the best way?"

Before long, hearing that simple question sparked a realization.

"I started going through that dialogue in my head whenever I felt like I should ask about something – and then it hit me. With one simple question, my supervisor had made me realize I can indeed make decisions as long as I do my best to make sure they make sense," Timo says.

↑ Timo Halonen

"The feeling of freedom and empowerment from that one question – supported by our 4x2 decision-making model – has unlocked a personal growth path I'm extremely grateful for."

Trust is also about assuming best intentions. As Office & Feel Good Manager **Theresa Glanzberg** from Berlin points out, mutual trust helps us focus on our own work and make decisions, knowing that other Futuriceans are also expected to share the same mindset and trust your judgment:

"While everything may not always be perfect, I can trust the people I work with to not judge me for my decisions or assume the worst of me without asking why I've made a certain decision. I can also trust that my work is appreciated, and if I need help, I can trust others to help me out. That's a big win, and it's not something to be taken for granted – which makes it even more valuable on a human level."

↑ Fransje (above) and Theresa

Pasi Huttunen

Futuricean from 2013 to 2020,
and from 2021 onward

Pulled back by trust – a story from a returning Futurice alum

"**Company culture** equals company values. By that, I mean the real values that the organization lives and breathes – not the ones written on their website, invented by some management consultant.

The same holds true for Futurice as well. But the unique thing about Futurice is that our real values and the values posted on our website are one and the same.

I experienced a huge culture shock when I first started at Futurice in 2013. I was stunned by how much the company trusted me. It was more than just rainbows and unicorns – Futurice actually trusted me to make good and informed decisions, steer the company like it was mine, and fix things that were broken. What a responsibility!

Trust is one cornerstone of our company culture. We can go above and beyond when having fun and doing silly things, because we trust that we don't have to have clear rules and boundaries to ensure that people behave. We also trust that if something bad happens, we have the tendency to speak out and flag any issues, and we also trust that we can discuss them and improve our behavior if needed. We trust that we have self-correcting mechanisms if (and when) something too stupid happens.

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Pasi Huttunen

Futuricean from 2013 to 2020,
and from 2021 to today

Pulled back by trust – a story from a returning Futurice alum

Futurice has this delicate balance between going bonkers whenever possible, and also knowing what is wrong and hurtful to our people, clients, numbers, and the world. And sure enough, one of the main reasons why I decided to come back to the Futurice was knowing there would be lots of fun and silliness! But not in a way that is only fun for a few people at the expense of others.

I also knew that there are lots of other companies with an "easier culture", meaning that it is more top-down and lets you just sit back and enjoy and let other people think about what is considered okay. But if I enjoyed that, I probably wouldn't have been recruited into Futurice in the first place.

This is my ship, and I want to get my hands dirty creating a super fun, trustful, caring, transparent and continuously improving culture. I am ready to be called out when I do something too stupid, and oh boy, I wouldn't want it any other way.

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Transparency

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We don't like working on a need-to-know basis. We share relevant information and disclose the thought process behind the decisions we make. Having access to all the facts enables us to make the right choices in our everyday work and focus on what's really important.

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Transparency brings shitloads of good. It feeds trust and enables better decisions, and it is a must in an organization where people act independently.

Transparency is a two-way street. Our people are expected to actively find the information they need by asking around and exploring different sources. All Futuriceans are also expected to push out information so that others can find it faster, and to make themselves available as a source. Communication cannot be delegated.

All Futuriceans have access to all the data in our company – all folders, online discussions and meetings are open and accessible to all. Armed with relevant information, people make better decisions.

We work to make everything as transparent as is realistically possible, but in the world we live in, transparency has limits: legal, ethical, and others. During our journey, we change – as does the environment we operate in. These changes can sometimes have an impact on the practical application of transparency, but as a value, it is a part of our core. We will always strive for maximum transparency.

Transparency was the last value we discovered on our journey, because we had it all along. We only found it because we momentarily lost it.

A tale of lost transparency

The year was 2009, and Futurice had grown to a company of 50 people. Our external advisors always talked about how things change fundamentally once you reach this magic number. We didn't believe them.

But lo and behold – once our headcount hit 50, it looked like our people had started making stupid decisions. We were dumbfounded and couldn't understand what was wrong.

At the same time, our advisors grew louder and more insistent about the need to take corrective action and start acting like a real, grown-up company. The journey towards corporate adulthood started when **Tuomas Syrjänen** ordered pretty much every book ever published on leadership and management. And boy howdy, there were many.

And so, at the insistence of others, we made the mistake of implementing traditional corporate structures. For the next six months, Futurice was led with ideals from an endless shelf of management handbooks. It didn't help, and things only got worse.

After giving the matter some thought and a good deal of serious discussion, we realized that the initial idea of "power to the people" wasn't broken. We figured out that the so-called "stupid decisions" weren't actually stupid at all from the perspective of the people making them – most of them were in fact quite logical.

The decisions were only stupid from the management perspective, because our management had all the relevant information needed to make wise decisions from the company perspective – unlike the rest of our employees.

On the day we had this revelation, we (re)discovered transparency as a value, learned a valuable lesson, and turned Futurice back into a transparent company.

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Our career path model

As you've likely noted, Futurice doesn't have much of a hierarchy when you compare our structure to the traditional corporate ladder. But the nature of consulting business nonetheless requires us to have some sort of model for career seniority.

We've chosen to approach the question by defining "seniority" at Futurice using our own career path model, and to determine someone's seniority, we have established a set of career levels. Our career path model consists of two parts:

First and foremost, for the sake of transparency, everyone's main career level is publicly shared within the company. This helps employees evaluate their own career levels as well as assess the fairness of our hiring practices and the way we treat our employees. Our salaries are tied to the career path levels, and we also share the salary ranges assigned for each career level openly.

Second, for the sake of alignment, we have divided our career path model into sublevels and outlined three dimensions – skills, responsibilities and impact – along with descriptions of what is expected on the next level. These three dimensions are first defined and evaluated separately, and then reviewed as an entity to determine your career path level.

Our salaries consist of a fixed monthly salary and a variable salary component which is tied to several factors related to the performance of our company. All Futuriceans are under the same variable salary model, known as FutuVariable, and follow the same company targets.

Additionally, all competence areas within Futurice follow the same descriptions for the three dimensions. This means that everyone is evaluated based on the exact same set of requirements, regardless of their title, role or area of expertise. In doing so, the company obligates itself to compensate and reward everyone equally.

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EXAMPLE

Employee ownership

As our values so clearly demonstrate, we believe that Futurice is our ship. Just like we strive to make sure we live our values in the most concrete way possible in our everyday lives at Futurice, we have also worked to make the idea of "our ship" something real.

One of the ways we have done this is by regularly developing and running various different programs that allow employees to buy Futurice shares. Owning a small stake in the company helps make our shared personal responsibility much more concrete, given that your everyday actions will play a part in determining how that investment will develop. In the spirit of continuous improvement, we try to regularly work to make the stock programs as accessible to all Futuriceans as possible. As a result of these programs, a sizable share of Futuriceans already own a stake in the company.

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Salary fairness at Futurice

As Futuriceans grow professionally, we want to do the right thing by recognizing and rewarding their growth. That's why we have built a salary fairness process that runs continuously throughout the year, instead of being tied to annual or semiannual reviews.

All of our business units as well as our internal teams organize meetings regularly throughout the year to handle possible career level raise suggestions. In most cases, the suggestions come from supervisors, but the employees may take the initiative and propose them as well. Regardless of where the suggestion originated, the evaluation focuses on the same criteria for assessing growth.

Everyone's career level is reviewed once per year regardless of whether they have been proposed for a raise or not. This is to make sure that no one is dropped out of the system and everyone's

level is on par with their skills, responsibilities and impact. When evaluating someone's career level and suggested raises, we focus on these three aspects – not titles or years of experience.

Statistics on approved raises are shared with the whole company. These include more detailed insights on certain aspects such as competence area, career level, gender and international background, which allows everyone to observe how raises are granted and whether we have delivered on our promises of internal fairness and inclusion. While the specific justification for each individual raise is not shared publicly, the mindset is that each and every raise decision is grounded on the same principles of fairness that we would stand behind, even if they were made public.

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EXAMPLE

FutuCortex, or how we reconnected the dots to gain more transparency

Over the years, Futurice has grown massively, and not just by headcount. As we've figured out how to solve the problems our clients are facing, we've added several new areas and layers of expertise into the mix, from service design to data.

But for companies, growth is not all fun and games. It can get messy, especially when it happens fast. With a steady stream of new people joining the company, it gets harder to stay connected and find the expertise your client or project needs at the right time.

We've done our best to grow in a smart and controlled way, but we, too, have experienced similar growing pains. As our collective knowledge broadened and spread out across different physical locations and digital tools, we no longer had a clear picture of who knew what. All the necessary information was technically there

and you could access it – but we had lost true transparency in practice, because everything was just too hard to find.

Our answer to this problem was to build FutuCortex, an automated knowledge platform. It automatically extracts knowledge from the various tools and platforms where it's activated, and analyzes the topics people are most frequently related to in their day-to-day work in order to deduce who knows about what.

With FutuCortex, Futuriceans now have one place to easily explore an overview of all our knowledge – without the need for anyone to do manual documentation, data entry or tagging for this purpose.

It's about creating real transparency, so we can all leverage our growing collective brain!
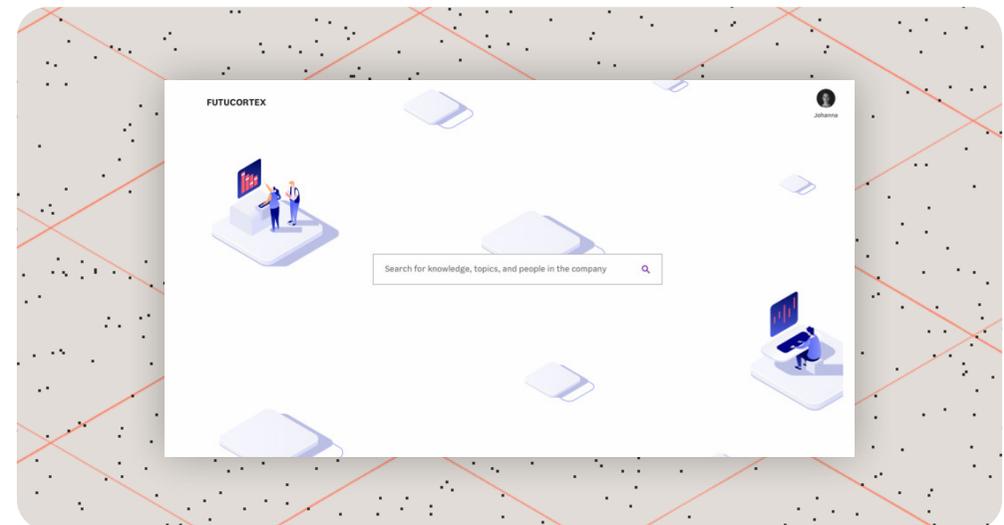
Joana Bernardino

Design Director, Stuttgart

Open communication with clients

"People really appreciate our caring working culture as well as our open and honest communication. I think all challenging situations can be solved by showing vulnerability in an honest one-to-one conversation – especially with a client. Despite the speed of business development, I am convinced that we should disconnect from unhealthy competitiveness and engage in honest communication instead.

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Continuous improvement

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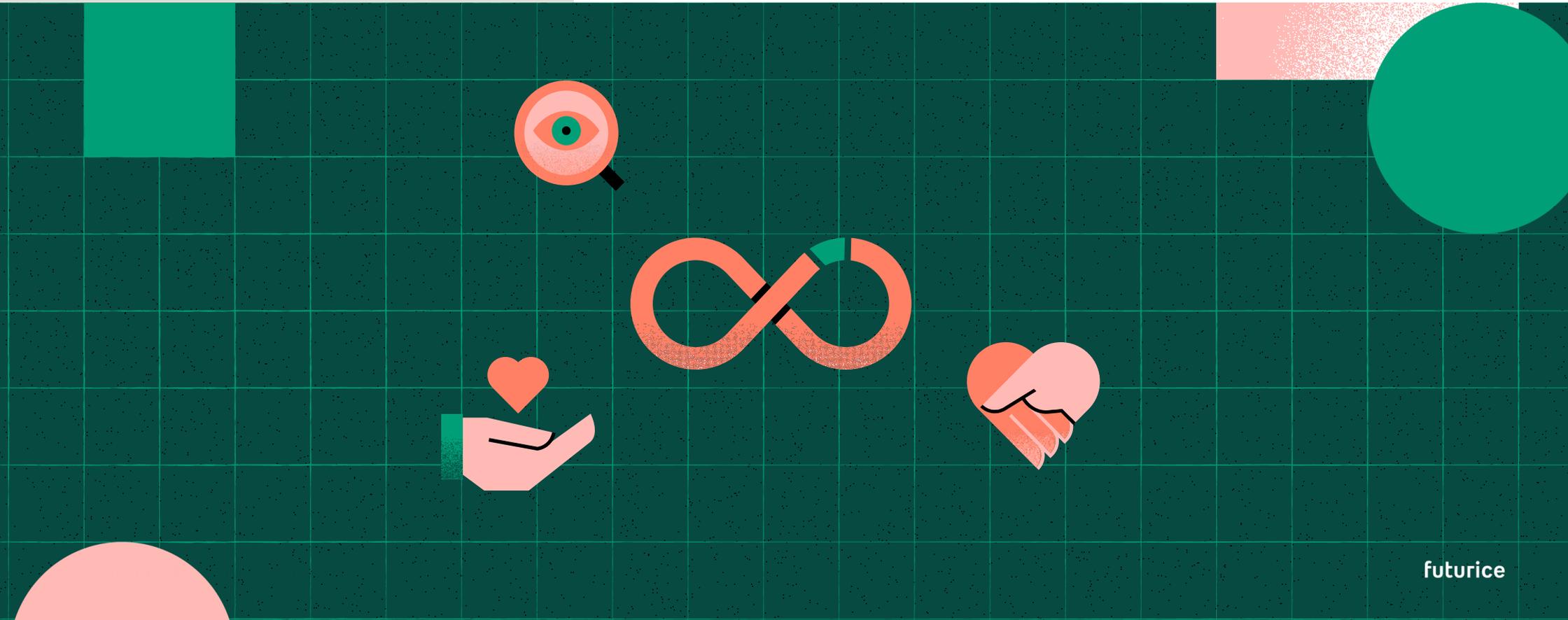
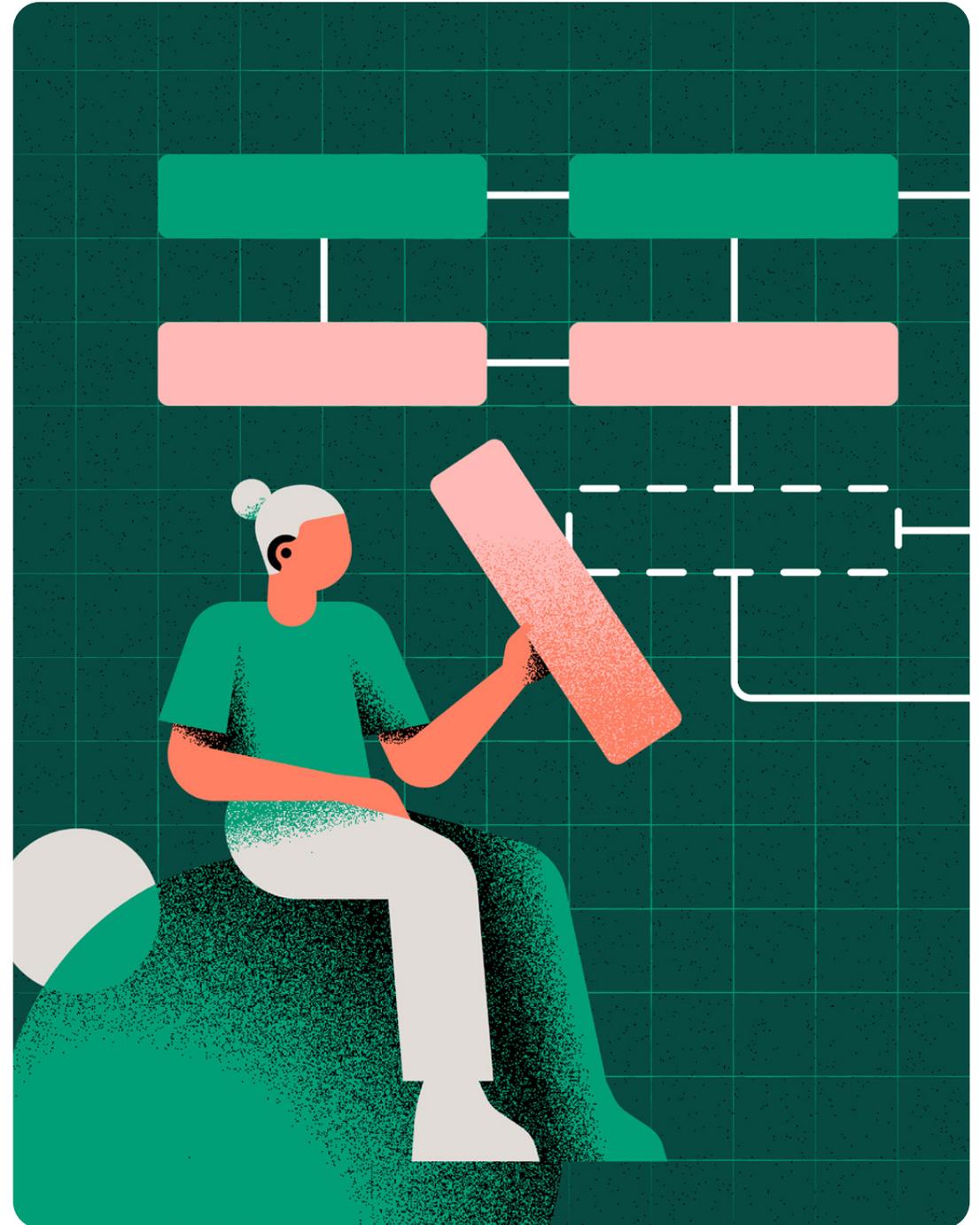We strive to be a career-defining workplace for our employees in order to grow the next generation of digital leaders. We value both successes and failures for what they can teach us. And because we care about our clients, we aspire to become better at what we do, little by little.

Continuous improvement is one of our most concrete values, and the most clearly rational. The gist of it is that small steps and incremental change are preferable to a big bang or messy revolution.

In practice, it means an aspiration to understand, learn, and adjust our behavior based on what has happened before. In other words, making ourselves and our work always a little bit better as we go along. Continuous improvement translates into not settling. It is a call for caring, constructive critique and feedback, and keeping our ambition level high – while also recognizing and taking pride in our achievements.

Continuous improvement is always fueled by learning, and learning is about curiosity and creativity. It allows us to try, fail, and then try again, and it probably allows us to learn a lot faster. And that's what we love: improving and learning, both as a company and as individuals. Learning is consistently one of the most important reasons why people choose to join our journey.

We came to continuous improvement as a concept through our intense engagement with lean thinking, but deep down, the desire to become a little better every day has been one of our driving forces from day one.

"Learning by doing is really satisfying, and I love the sense of accomplishment – I'm constantly learning new things and I always feel like I'm doing something meaningful. I enjoy problem solving and that feeling you get when you start out lost but end up knowing exactly what to do and ultimately receive great feedback! The principle of always leaving things better than you found them really resonates with me – that's what I want to do in my work, and in line with that I love helping others learn and grow. I also really like the way we co-create so closely between our clients and the Futurice team."

Maiju Kettunen
Culture Consultant, Service Designer, Helsinki

Your learning and professional development at Futurice

If you ask one of our recruitment experts, they are likely to tell you that most people join Futurice to learn something new. And in all likelihood, that was also the case for you, at least to some extent. After all, there's no better way to explore professional opportunities than to work with different clients and solve a variety of business problems.

Futurice wants to be a career-defining workplace – and because we really mean it, we are committed to supporting the professional development of our people both in projects and outside them.

Project work will form the bulk and backbone of your learning. When working on a client project, you'll solve practical problems and learn in-depth skills through everyday work. This is how you gain more experience in the areas where you already have expertise. But one of the biggest upsides that comes with this kind of learning is that it can benefit others, too.

By sharing our takeaways and the lessons we've learned in projects with others – for example in our competence weeklies, or in a post on the Futurice blog – we can scale our learning on the organizational level. Sharing what we've learned can also inspire others and enable them to rethink and innovate in their own work. When we surveyed our learning opportunities internally, many Futuriceans identified other Futuriceans as a great source for learning something new.

Attending online or in-person training courses, studying for certificates, reading, and other explicit learning activities are also encouraged as a way to help you acquire more theoretical skills and broaden your expertise into new areas. They are also great for extending your professional skills, for example in communication or conflict resolution.

Many classes and courses cost money to attend. That doesn't mean they're off limits – you'll just have to base your participation on a 4x2 decision. You can always consult our internal learning toolkit as well as your supervisor or colleagues for advice on using the company learning budget.

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Lisha Dai

Senior Designer, Helsinki

Steering your own growth

At Futurice I make my own decisions and I'm responsible for my personal growth and direction – with help and support, of course. This level of independence was weird at first, but when you get used to it, you feel empowered to make the best choices for yourself.

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MyRetro

To get the most out of learning at Futurice, you'll need to come up with a game plan, and then follow it. Intentionality is key to making learning in projects more tangible, and at the same time it also helps you find meaningful learning opportunities outside of project work. And even more importantly, intentionality is the bridge between learning and professional growth.

At Futurice, we have approached intentionality through MyRetro, which is both a planning tool as well as a discussion framework for outlining your career direction together with your supervisor or mentor. We highly recommend that you use the tool and have a MyRetro discussion at least every 12 months – but preferably every time something in your work is either changing or needs a change.

We call it MyRetro because it is a retrospective of your work, impact and learning. But it could just as well be called something like MyFuture, as two thirds of the tool actually focus on planning ahead rather than looking back, asking you where you are headed with your career and what would be the concrete next steps to get there.
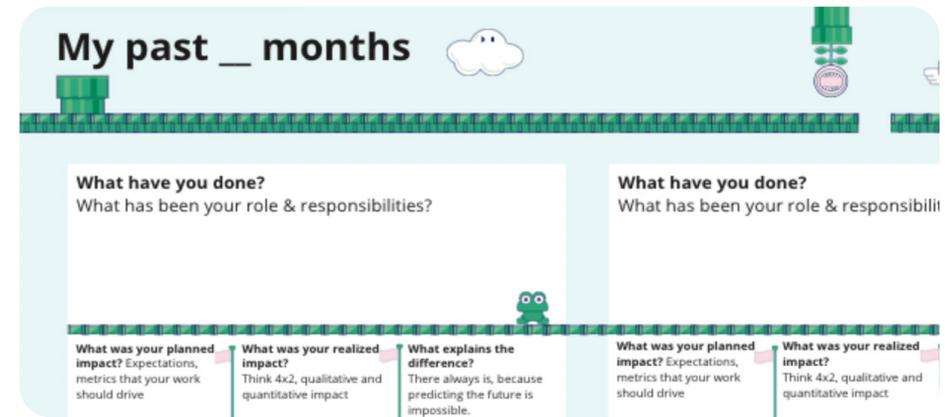
In addition to maximizing your learning and growth, we use MyRetro to find the sweet spot between your path and Futurice's path, and figure out how the two can align in an optimal way.

In short, MyRetro is the starting point of your Futurice journey, but it is also the gateway to your next career moves, both within and after Futurice.

Evelina Kamasheva

Strategic Designer, Berlin

Opportunities for personal growth from day one – a new joiner's perspective

"I joined Futurice right after finishing my studies. Because I did not have a client project to join immediately, I started out working on an internal project about capturing and management knowledge at Futurice.

It went really well, and my more experienced project partner **Hanna Fischer** promoted it to the whole company, especially highlighting my contribution. She made sure that as a new joiner, I was also seen. Three months after I started at Futurice, we were already presenting our results on FutuFriday and got soooo much support – it felt amazing and gave me so many opportunities!

When coming fresh out of university, you don't necessarily expect to have such an impact, and to be given a platform like that right away. But Futurice and the people made it possible for me. I will never forget that moment in my career.

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EXAMPLE

Competence weeklies

Learning comes in many different forms at Futurice – including sharing what we've learned with each other. Our competence weeklies are the most prominent setting for this. They are a type of weekly meetup hosted internally by our professional communities.

The communities within Futurice that host weeklies (or in some cases monthlies) include tech, design, data, strategy and culture, security and privacy, and DE&I (short for diversity, equity and inclusion). There's a lot to choose from, and something for pretty much everyone.

For a better idea of what our weeklies are all about, let's look at our longest-running weekly, Tech Weeklies. It is an hour-long tech-minded community gathering and knowledge sharing session where anyone is welcome to share tech-related content. The format can be anything: talks with or without slides, presenting lines of code

or high-level concepts, discussing the upsides and downsides of a certain tech stack used in a client project, coding workshops, and so on.

Tech Weeklies, for example, are designed to serve a couple of different purposes:

- **To share knowledge among other tech people at Futurice.** As consultants, we usually focus on one project and tech stack at a time, but as a group, we have a combined view of tons of different setups – and sharing what we've learned from them can be valuable to others.

- **To practice presentation skills.** Whether you want to become better at showcasing your work for the client, or start presenting in local meetups and conferences, Tech Weeklies is an open platform with a pretty much nonexistent barrier of entry, that enables you to practice your skills in a safe setting together with your colleagues.

- **To give you a platform.** We usually record our weeklies so that people can watch them later if they are unable to attend during the live stream. Many of our Tech Weeklies talks are also shared externally on our YouTube channel, assuming they do not contain confidential information about our clients or projects.

Caíque Peixoto

Tech Advisor, Stockholm

Continuous improvement in practice
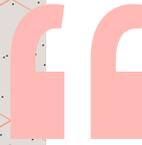
If there's one word that describes my journey at Futurice, that would be "learning". Even after more than 10 years of professional experience in my field, I can definitely say that I learn new things all the time.

I joined Futurice as a tech person and promptly discovered my additional interests in design, product, and sales. I took a deep dive into business and product management, and also explored different formal and informal leadership roles.

We constantly learn more about ourselves, and Futurice offers me the opportunity and support to experiment with new things as well as gain additional expertise in domains that I'm already familiar and comfortable with.

I also feel that my colleagues understand that our careers and passions are not linear or static. I am happy that I still have a lot to learn, and that Futurice is a place where I can reinvent myself and my role over time.

Futurice was the first place I worked that lived by the promise of a non-linear career. I can discover what I love to do, what I don't necessarily love but have to do, and what I don't need to do at all.

I believe the key that allows this to happen is that we truly care about each other. While I discover my path, my colleagues are my main stakeholders who help me understand which things make sense and which don't.

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Expat opportunities at Futurice

As part of the various professional development opportunities we offer, we have set up an expat system for people who are looking to develop their skills in a new setting, experience living and working abroad, and create even stronger bonds within the Futurice community.

As an expat, you will live and work in one of the cities with a Futurice office, either indefinitely or for a predetermined period of time. This gives you the opportunity to explore a new country and culture, and also get to know your colleagues from the other Futurice sites better. Additionally, this allows you to contribute your knowledge and skills to new client projects, and act as a cultural ambassador within the company.

Moreover, an expat assignment is meant to offer you new learning opportunities and foster your career development – for example by giving you a better understanding of the business environment in another country.

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Lena Wagner

Designer, Expat in Helsinki

An expat experience: Lena

Working abroad at some point in my career had always been one of my dreams and an experience I didn't want to miss out on. After working at our Munich office for four years, I decided to seize the opportunity and relocate to our Helsinki office as an expat.

Working and living abroad is a huge opportunity to experience different work cultures and learn new skills. For me, this is a learning journey where I can expand my professional knowledge and skill set, and also work with new clients and industries.

Besides project work, I have had the chance to get to know many new people and colleagues, and learn from them. The expat opportunity also enables knowledge exchange on a variety of topics, skills and competences – benefiting not just me but also the entire company.

Outside work I love to travel, visit new places and meet new people. I had never ventured so far north before, and witnessing the Finnish summer and winter has been very unique and exciting, not to mention experiencing the Nordic way of living firsthand. Besides visiting Finland, I have also had the chance to travel to many of the surrounding countries and see their beautiful nature.

All in all, my expat journey has been an opportunity I can only recommend others to try out as well!

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Petter Jakobsson

Senior Digital Product Designer, Expat in Berlin

An expat experience: Petter

Since September 2021, I have lived and worked as an expat in Berlin. I originally come from Sweden, where I also worked at the Futurice Stockholm office for a bit under two years.

I decided to become an expat for a variety of reasons. The main reason was that I wanted to explore a city and country in which I had never lived before, both for professional and personal motivations. Another reason was to move in together with my partner, who is German.

Interestingly, I never thought that my expatriate assignment would have the kind of immense impact on my design career as it did – and still has. That said, this impact is likely the result of multiple factors that influenced and collectively created it, and not all of it can be attributed to the expat assignment.

Even so, the role I have developed and the responsibilities that I have added to my work have had an incredible effect on my growth. Professionally, there have been so many learnings, opportunities and steps in the right direction on my career path that I don't have any intention of going back to my country of origin anytime soon.

My experience is that expat exchanges between Futurice sites are incredibly important for our culture. There are cultural differences between our countries – how could we possibly maintain a common and cohesive working culture across the entire company without promoting cultural exchange between our people in a hybrid working model?

Futurice has a modern and Nordic-rooted mindset. We are already known for it in the market, and our expat program is one way to help spread and popularize it in our other countries, such as Germany.

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Futurice Academy

At Futurice, we think of careers as personal journeys, fueled by inspiration and continuous learning. All those journeys have to start somewhere, so to offer people a way to kickstart their own journey, we launched Futurice Academy, a four-month paid training program aimed at students and everyone interested in a new career direction within software or data engineering. The Academy consists of project work either in one of our client projects, an internal development project, or both.

Learning at the Academy is a unique combination of hands-on work, theory and mentoring. All Academy participants get to work alongside an experienced cross-disciplinary team to learn the craft of modern software consulting.

On top of mentoring, learning, and interesting projects, the participants get to network with our active international community, attend onboarding events, and enjoy a variety of benefits. Many of our Academy alumni have continued their journey as permanent employees after the program.

"I'm a middle-aged woman with a different educational and professional background, raising a young family. Switching industries at this point in my career – especially into the tech industry – was not a walk in the park, but Futurice Academy gave me that life-changing opportunity."

May Salcedo
Software Developer, Helsinki

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With the Academy, we want to reach people who might not otherwise find their way into software or data engineering. It is important to expand the ways in which companies recruit talent, and to acknowledge that the road to becoming a tech professional is not always straightforward. For instance, there are career changers who have either studied coding on their own or participated in a coding bootcamp. With Futurice Academy, we want to give opportunities also to people with less work experience in the field.

Additionally, we don't require local language skills from the applicants, and this has helped us draw a lot of international talent into Futurice Academy. We see our diversity as a strength, and want the Academy to reflect this as well.

The tech community is in dire need of developers. Futurice strives to create social impact as well as foster new developers and give them the tools to succeed in tech. We make a point of investing in our trainees properly, because even if they end up taking their talents elsewhere, this is a way for us to improve the tech community as a whole. Our goal is to help launch them into greatness.

"The best thing about Futurice Academy was its format. It is perfectly balanced between learning and gaining experience. As part of learning, we had various technical lectures and did cloud certifications. To gain experience, we worked on real-world projects, learned how they work and contributed to them."

Irtaza Hashmi
Data Consultant, Helsinki

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EXAMPLE

A culture with career-defining potential

Maria Lumiaho worked at Futurice for six years, and her career has since led to amazing design leadership positions at Finnair and Zalando. We interviewed her to discuss how she views Futurice's culture in hindsight, and to reflect on what aspects of our culture have had the greatest impact on her career later on.

From designing UI/UX to co-designing the Lean Service Creation methodology and setting up shop in new markets, Maria has an impressive and varied track record while working at Futurice. We interviewed Maria to talk about her time here, how it paved the way for new challenges, and what aspects of our culture have stayed with her as a Futurice alum. Here's what she had to say.

What did you do at Futurice, and where has life taken you since?
I started working as a designer at Futurice in 2011, when there were only about 150 of us. I first did UX/UI design as one the first designers without a tech-oriented background, hailing from Uniarts Helsinki.

Growing into a Senior Designer and as part of my thesis work I was fortunate to contribute to the creation of Futurice's Lean Service Creation methodology. And finally, as Lead Designer, I got to apply these methods when building new customer relationships and going to market in Germany, Sweden, the UK, and other countries, as well as growing the Service Design Competence at Futurice.

In 2018, I started working at Finnair, taking responsibility for the user experience and design of their customer-facing portfolio. I crafted the airline's digital service strategy, worked with company-level strategic topics, initiatives and projects, and helped scale Finnair's design team and design competence development. Since 2020, I've been responsible for leading and scaling the design community at Zalando Helsinki as well as our customer acquisition and engagement experiences on the Fashion Store, among many other topics.

How would you describe your growth at Futurice?
That would be self-confidence in creating visions and leading projects and people, being a competence lead. Futurice gave me as much of responsibility as I dared to ask for. It was okay to be selective about what felt like the right fit or a growth opportunity for

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EXAMPLE

A culture with career-defining potential

me at that time. My mentors were always ready to help and support. Through dialogue and wonderful support, I gained understanding of what I was truly capable of.

What were the most important lessons you learned at Futurice?
I'd say seeing the growth of the company and especially its culture — what it really takes to build thriving teams. Seeing how people were always put first, not products or processes, a philosophy that started from day one has stayed with me. Finding the right balance between challenge and support is the force that unleashes people's and ultimately companies' full potential and competitiveness.

How did working at Futurice affect you or prepare you for what came afterward?
It helped me have a strong focus on culture, and to expect the same elsewhere. When you've experienced the kind of culture Futurice has, it will have a strong impact on you. It's something I also want to build around me.

At Zalando's tech hub, where we turn innovative ideas into new businesses with real potential through research, design, and full-stack engineering, my guiding principle is empowerment. Success and innovation really are all about the people.

Is there anything that you picked up at Futurice that still lives with you today — such as from our values, ways of working, or thinking?
Simple things, such as the decision-making framework, known as 3x2 at the time: taking the people, clients, and business into account now and in the future. In my current position, I want to ensure that everyone has the decision-making power, and the obligation to make good, transparent, and fair decisions.

We aim to be a career-defining workplace — the kind of experience that makes a big difference for your career afterward. Would you say this was true in your case, and in what way?
Yeah, it definitely was! Without the opportunities I was given at Futurice, I wouldn't be where I am today. Being exposed to such an inspiring environment is something that stays deep within you. I'll never forget the mentoring and support that helped me see the best in myself and others.

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Mia Muurimäki

Senior Service Designer, Helsinki

Lean Futures Creation – an unexpected consequence of continuous improvement

Back in 2019, my colleague **Ida Rainio** and I had been invited to a meeting with people I had originally interpreted as potential clients. Going into the meeting, we quickly realized this wasn't the case: the people we were meeting with were in fact from a local design community, and they were hoping we'd be willing to participate in International Futures Day by organizing a pro bono event.

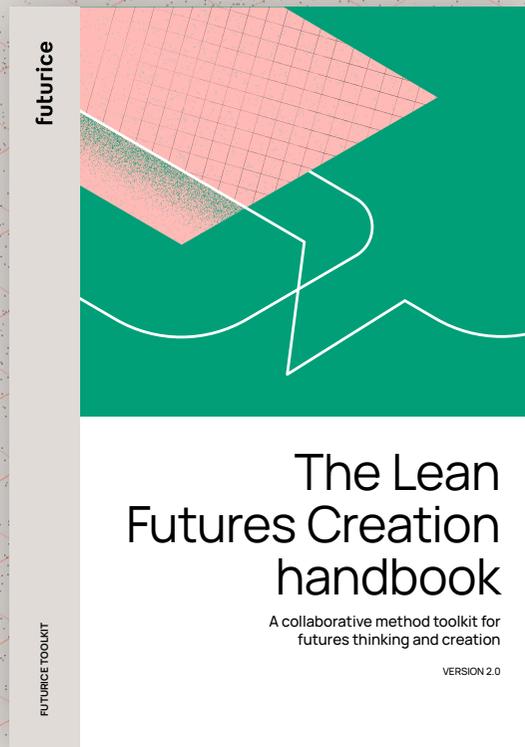Bummer. No new business after all.

But during the meeting, things clicked into place. We had already been exploring this particular area for a while, and by that time, had amassed quite a bit of expertise around the subject. While talking about it, Ida and I understood this could actually be the right time and opportunity to communicate our shared knowledge of futures research and design to larger audiences.

So we decided to go with it – after all, we're all about continuous improvement, and this would help us organize all this knowledge to better help the world, right? We agreed to create a small set of co-creation canvases to try out, and committed to hosting an opportunity to work with us for a couple of hours on the day before Futures Day.

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Mia Muurimäki

Senior Service Designer, Helsinki

Lean Futures Creation – an unexpected consequence of continuous improvement

The Lean Futures Creation handbook

A collaborative method toolkit for futures thinking and creation

VERSION 2.0

FUTURICE TOOLKIT

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In the end, that meeting had a more far-reaching impact than we could have ever guessed. The canvases and the work we did in preparation for the event ended up becoming the foundation for the Lean Futures Creation methodology, or LFC.

Since its inception, LFC has grown into a unique collection of tools, working methods and other assets for embracing change and co-creating desirable and sustainable visions for the future. Even if the first meeting showed little promise, seizing this opportunity gave birth to something we're known for in the market today. A happy accident indeed, and an unlikely outcome made possible only by a culture based on collaborative learning, sharing and transparency.

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3

Our impact

Now that we've gone over our values and how they support each other, it's time to look at one of the most important things we pursue in our daily work – impact.

According to our official description, **Futurice is an outcome-focused digital transformation company**. The focus on outcomes boils down to taking pride in doing a damn good job and making a lasting and measurable impact far beyond our own bottom line.

Impact comes in many forms. In the spirit of caring, we genuinely care about our clients and want them to prosper – which is why we want to deliver concrete outcomes that have a lasting positive impact on their business. Beyond that, it also covers our pursuit of doing good for the world and taking responsibility for the consequences of our work – which is exactly why we added the fourth dimension to our 4x2 decision-making model, probably our single most concrete tool for creating impact (see page 36 to learn more about this change).

This chapter will dig deeper into how we understand impact, what it means to be outcome-focused, and how we approach it in practice.

Riku Kokko

Senior Software Developer, Helsinki

Why impact matters

It's a great thing that we have found clients also in the health sector, which is a very meaningful industry. Although you might not think about it every day, not having to doubt the impact of your work really boosts your general mood.

I would like to believe that we have had a positive impact on the quality of software development at my client's organization. This has happened through the work of Futuriceans who have strived to improve the quality while also delivering strong results at the same time – for example, many wonderful colleagues have always been ready to spend time in code reviews for the sake of quality. Similarly, going through designs together has also proven a great practice, and one that has saved us a lot of time later on. In our line of business, being able to think about the bigger picture and not just the ticket at hand works wonders.

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What does being outcome-focused and data-enabled mean?

Futurice strives to be an outcome-focused digital agency, meaning that we always put emphasis on the impact of the work we do. When our clients work with us, they aren't just paying for our time and talent. We are instead selling them the measurable and sustainable business outcomes that we deliver.

Importantly, we want that impact to be two-fold – we want to generate business impact, and we want to generate responsible impact.

Our focus on outcomes is part of the company's DNA in the sense that regardless of what we are doing – whether it's client work or internal work – we always start by understanding what impact we are looking for. We want to define the problem worth solving, and what kind of change we want to see as a result of our actions.

When working with our clients, this translates to being willing to go the extra mile to deliver results for our clients. Additionally, it means that we never adopt the "I just work here" attitude but instead prioritize our time on the most impactful things.

Our focus on the impact of our work goes hand in hand with our love for insights based on data. How data is present in your everyday work will vary between different roles and responsibilities, but it all boils down to ensuring that we make decisions based on data, not based on who shouts loudest. We also measure the impact of our decisions and actions with data afterward to follow up on the change we have been able to make happen.

In practice, this same principle is followed when experimenting with 4x2 decision-making – we collect enough data to make an informed decision, and then keep collecting data to figure out whether our experiment was on the right track and had the outcome we wanted or expected.

Another example of our use of data comes from the way we manage our client relationships. For example for our salespeople, marketers, and account managers, data on client engagements and activities is essential to tracking how we engage with our clients, improving the quality of our client-related insights, and planning our sales and marketing efforts together.

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FutuWay – our tried and tested way of working

FutuWay is our very own way of working that describes how we all work together out in the world, when engaging with our clients. It helps us ensure we don't miss anything crucial in a complex world and helps us save our brain power for solving the problems that matter.

On the one hand, you should consider it a mindset based on our values and culture that guides what we do, how we act and what we think about other people. On the other hand, it's also a set of practices that we use in our client engagements – whenever our clients don't mandate their own.

The essential FutuWay practices define the most important parts of our client engagements and help us focus on the right topics in each of them. FutuWay emphasizes outcomes – not specific processes or tools. There is no "one" right way to do something, because we have many different kinds of engagements in varying kinds of environments. But the goal and high level elements are always the same: to create great outcomes together, plan ahead, and work iteratively step by step.

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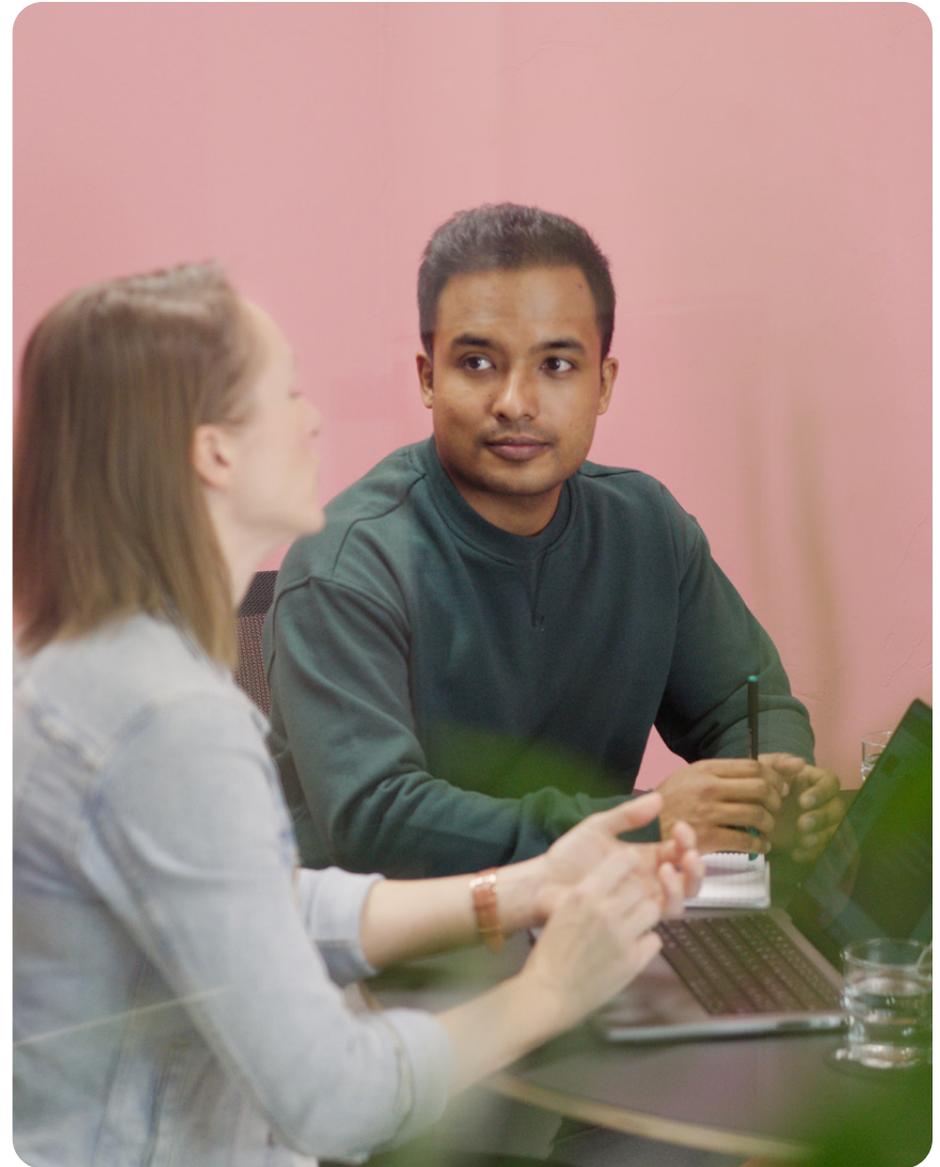
FutuWay is based on our values – care, trust, transparency and continuous improvement. Our values serve as a lighthouse, and FutuWay complements them by offering more concrete guidance without compromising autonomy. Having the values guide the practices helps us ensure that our culture – what we believe in and how we act – is truly based on our values.

The history of FutuWay goes back many years, and it has evolved a lot during that time. In 2013, it was labeled as the FutuWay of building solutions, and centered around "breaking silos and stopping waterfalls" – that is, tackling organizational barriers and suboptimal project management.

In 2015 FutuWay had evolved to highlight trust, quality and efficiency. Our values have always been the foundation of how we work together, and over the years, FutuWay has brought them even more into the core of it. Continuous improvement, in particular, has always been driving both us and FutuWay forward.

With FutuWay, we want to strike a balance between the high level and specifics, the technical details and the human connection, the big picture and local flavor. It develops constantly as we learn about ourselves, the world, and the system we form together. As a result, it's important to remember that FutuWay is not ready – and will never be.
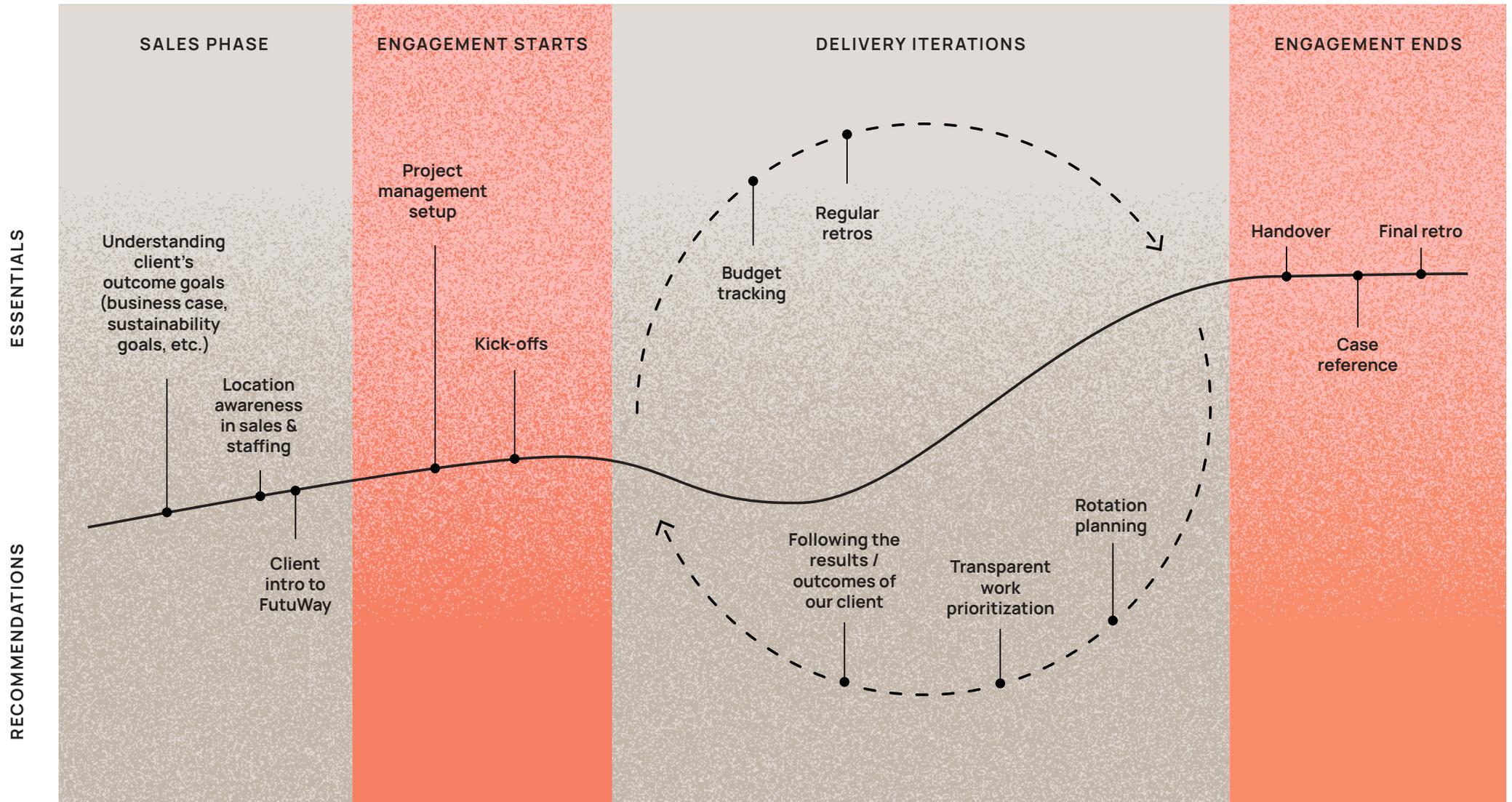
> It's really important for me to work on things that I enjoy, so before joining I made a point of checking that I'd be able to do this at Futurice. It's worked out really well; you have full freedom to pick and choose your projects here, and you can decide what interests you and how you want to develop your skills the way that's right for you. We're also free to choose projects based on our ethical principles – the only hard part is choosing between so many interesting ones!
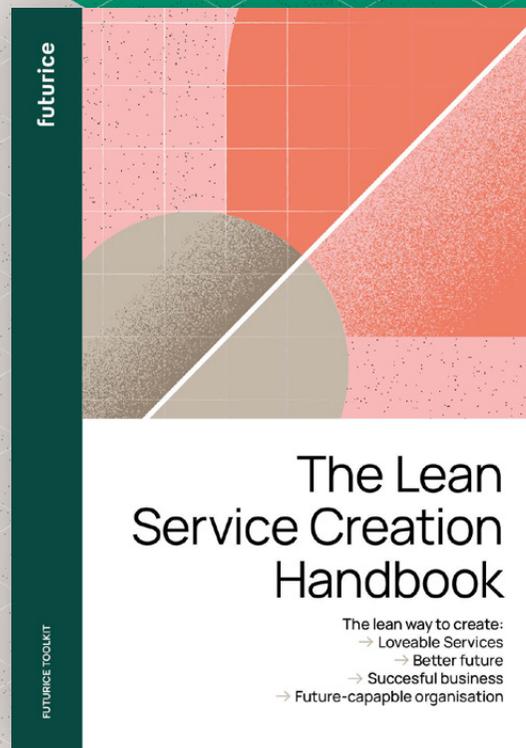
Phil Laszkowicz
Senior Tech Consultant, Helsinki

FutuWay

SALES PHASE

ENGAGEMENT STARTS

DELIVERY ITERATIONS

ENGAGEMENT ENDS

ESSENTIALS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Understanding client's outcome goals (business case, sustainability goals, etc.)

Location awareness in sales & staffing

Client intro to FutuWay

Project management setup

Kick-offs

Regular retros

Budget tracking

Following the results / outcomes of our client

Transparent work prioritization

Rotation planning

Handover

Case reference

Final retro

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EXAMPLE

Lean Service Creation – our gift to the service design community

When working to create amazing digital experiences, it helps to have structures to ensure you're focusing on the right thing. This is where Lean Service Creation, also known as LSC, comes in.

In short, LSC is a systematic and customizable way for multidisciplinary teams to co-create new products and services. It has been designed at Futurice, and it is rooted in our experience working on thousands of software products. It stands on the shoulders of Lean Startup, Agile methods and design thinking.

LSC is a bit more than just a service design process. In addition to providing structure for creating digital services, it uses a comprehensive set of canvases to guide you through the process in a manner that makes sure you're asking the right questions and solving the right problems.

And the best part? In the spirit of continuous improvement, it's open source and completely free for anyone to use. The canvases as well as all our supporting literature are available at **leanservicecreation.com**.

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Marion Couesnon

Designer, Berlin

Can international teams really have a tight bond?

At one point, the project team I worked in for a major client grew from five designers all located in Munich to an astounding twelve designers located in Munich, Berlin and Helsinki. At first I was worried that it would be more difficult to care about my remote teammates as much as the ones closer to me because of the distance, but before long, this turned out to be an unnecessary concern. This experience taught me that I can become friends and collaborate efficiently with people even if we do not sit next to each other the whole time.

The team still meets 3–4 times per year at one of our sites. And every time we do, it's always a celebration because we all know it's a very special moment. These bonding moments are very intense and filled with joy. Instead of distance weakening our team, it made us stronger.
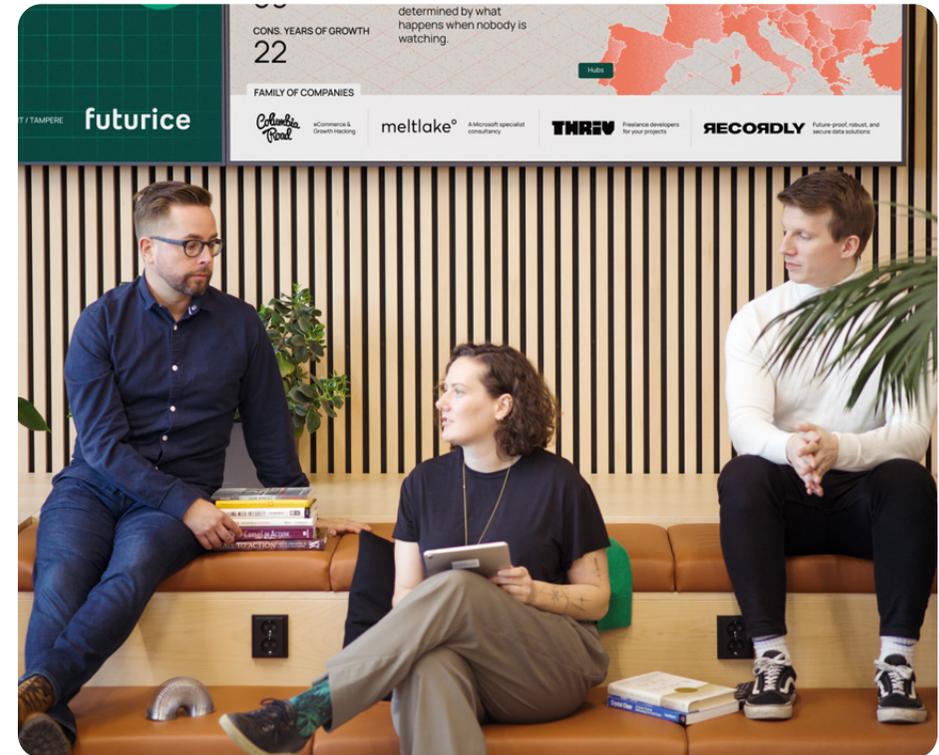
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The Futurice Family

The Futurice Family – or FutuFamily, as we sometimes like to shorten it – is a friendly community of autonomous companies, founded and accelerated by Futurice together with highly motivated founding teams. Family companies share the same people-centric foundations, while at the same time having their own distinct service offerings, and working towards their own unique visions.

The Family is also about connections. It is a network of ambitious, nice, skilled, and entrepreneurial people and teams – at the time of writing this, right around 1000 people, Futurice itself included – who create exceptional value to clients and help renew the market. Sometimes even jointly, working together for the same clients.

In consulting, big is not always beautiful. The Family concept has allowed us to create a consulting ecosystem of companies built and focused around specific client problems, technologies and areas of talent. This helps individual companies keep their focus clear and build their own identity. We don't need to be a huge monolith of a company, because we can work together and create a bigger impact as a network of smart-sized companies.

The Family has grown at a rapid pace since 2016 when we founded the digital sales consultancy **Columbia Road** as the first Futurice Family company. The Family also includes companies such as **Thriv**, **Meltlake** and **Recordly**, and new Family expansion opportunities are being explored pretty much continuously. Additionally, Futurice has investments in other digital companies that are not considered Family companies as such.

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What does the Futurice Family mean for you as a Futuricean, then?

First of all, during your time at Futurice, it's entirely possible that you'll find yourself teaming up with experts from our Family companies in the same project. This is a great way to share and exchange knowledge, and get introduced to completely new fields of expertise – so the Futurice Family also plays a part in our goal to be a career-defining workplace for our employees.

Additionally, the Family translates into unique career opportunities. In fact, most Family companies' founding teams consist of Futurice alumni who had entrepreneurial ambitions and wanted to set up their own business. But there's no need to go that far if that doesn't sound right for you. In addition to entrepreneurial career paths, companies in the Family have also provided career opportunities for example for people looking to start a freelance career through Thriv and people willing to specialize in ecommerce through Columbia Road – as well as Family employees looking to dive deeper into tech at Futurice.

This type of cross-family movement is encouraged, and the companies are hoping it will become increasingly popular. After all, if you're looking for a change or a new career path, leaving a company in the Family doesn't have to mean leaving the entire Family!

Eeva Nikkari

Data Engineer, Columbia Road
Futurice alum

Opportunities in the FutuFamily: Have you seen the alpacas?

Hi! I'm Eeva and I worked at Futurice for five years in the data and software development competence before making the switch to Columbia Road.

At Futurice I developed my technical skills, worked for plenty of interesting clients, and saw firsthand how we turned customer visions into actual products that brought value to their users. Or, in short, how to be a consultant.

By the way, have you seen the alpacas? During the Covid pandemic, I created and started to promote an unofficial brand identity around Futupacas, derived from materials originally designed for a code camp that was canceled, using my Spice Program hours. I also did my own social media content in my free time, and as the dancing alpacas raked in 127 million views on Giphy and my social media accounts took off, I started to think... how about growth hacking?

I knew about Columbia Road through my onboarding, and as my free-time interest shifted towards ecommerce and growth hacking, I decided to see whether I could also shift my work in that direction. And as it turns out, we clicked well: Columbia Road was growing its own data competence; and at the same time, I wanted to learn more about their side of the business.
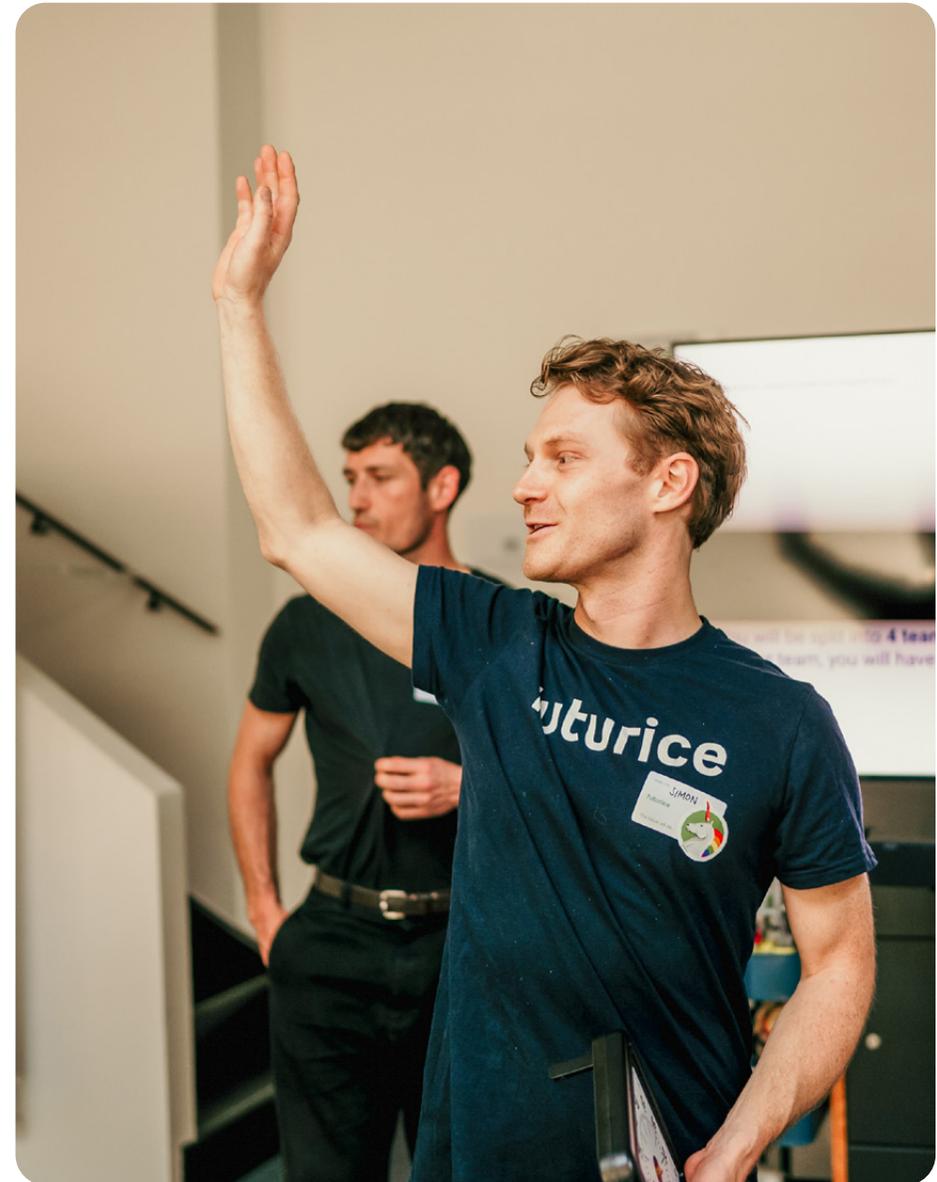
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Futurice and the world
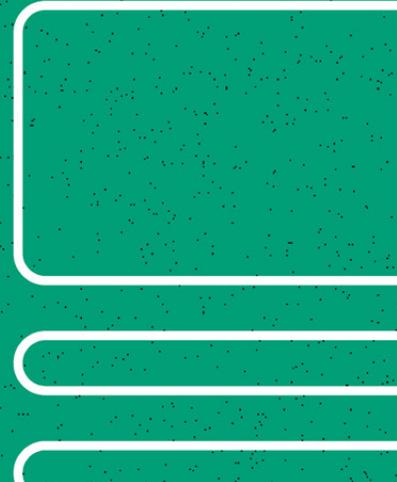
As a Futuricean, you'll always have the rest of our community there to support you. In addition to your supervisor, team and our wider professional community, there's always someone to talk to if you need to get something off your chest. Our goal is to make sure you're never left alone.

As a company, we are never alone either. We interact with the rest of the world out there on a daily basis, working together with our clients to solve their biggest problems, and teaming up with our network of partners to amplify the impact we create through our work. In many cases, we also work together with our direct competitors, because that's how our business tends to work.

We build trust toward our potential hires – your future colleagues – and maintain warm relationships with Futurice alumni as their paths may eventually lead back to us, one way or the other. We also actively highlight our people and promote the outcomes of our projects in order to generate publicity and get credit for the amazing work we've done.

And most importantly, we do everything in our power to have a positive impact on society and the world at large.

In this last chapter, we'll take a look at how we navigate the world around us and work together with the various stakeholders out there.

Our responsibility and role in society

At Futurice, we see business as a force for good – we act responsibly both in our own operations and in our client work, and aim to spread responsibility to the world around us.

When we think about responsibility, we look at the big picture – not just from the perspective of sustainability or environmental responsibility, but also social responsibility. This means that we are not only fighting for a more sustainable future, but also for one where people have the support and means to live balanced lives.

For the sake of making the greatest impact and avoiding any kind of greenwashing, our main focus is on our handprint – the positive impact we can have on the world through our client work. This is why we invest in developing our ability to both measure the impact of our clients' business on the world, and build the capability to measure the positive effect our project work can have on that overall impact.

We want to inspire and lead by example, which is why we are also putting continuous effort into our operations – even when counting only a fraction of the total impact we can have.

The most important way to help keep responsibility a part of our everyday lives is to use our 4x2 as our decision-making framework in all types of decisions, whether big or small. This way, we're directed to go beyond considering our people and business, and base our decisions on their impact on the world around us as well. So whether you are deciding what tools to use for project work, or what type of food to order for an event, the responsibility of your choice should be one factor in that consideration.

As a company, we believe it is possible to combine these different perspectives and create a positive net impact on the world while still remaining financially healthy. Moreover, growing our business profitably allows us to have an increasingly substantial positive handprint as long as we are mindful of how we make it happen.

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DE&I at Futurice – the key to a diverse workplace with a sense of belonging for everyone

At Futurice, diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) are not just buzzwords we throw around, but a concept we've painstakingly built into our strategy.

Our work in this area started with an internal DE&I audit which helped us identify and pinpoint gaps and areas for improvement. Based on the findings of that audit as well as our strategy, we have outlined our DE&I ambition:

"We celebrate diversity and commit to building an inclusive international culture with equitable opportunities and a sense of belonging to everyone."

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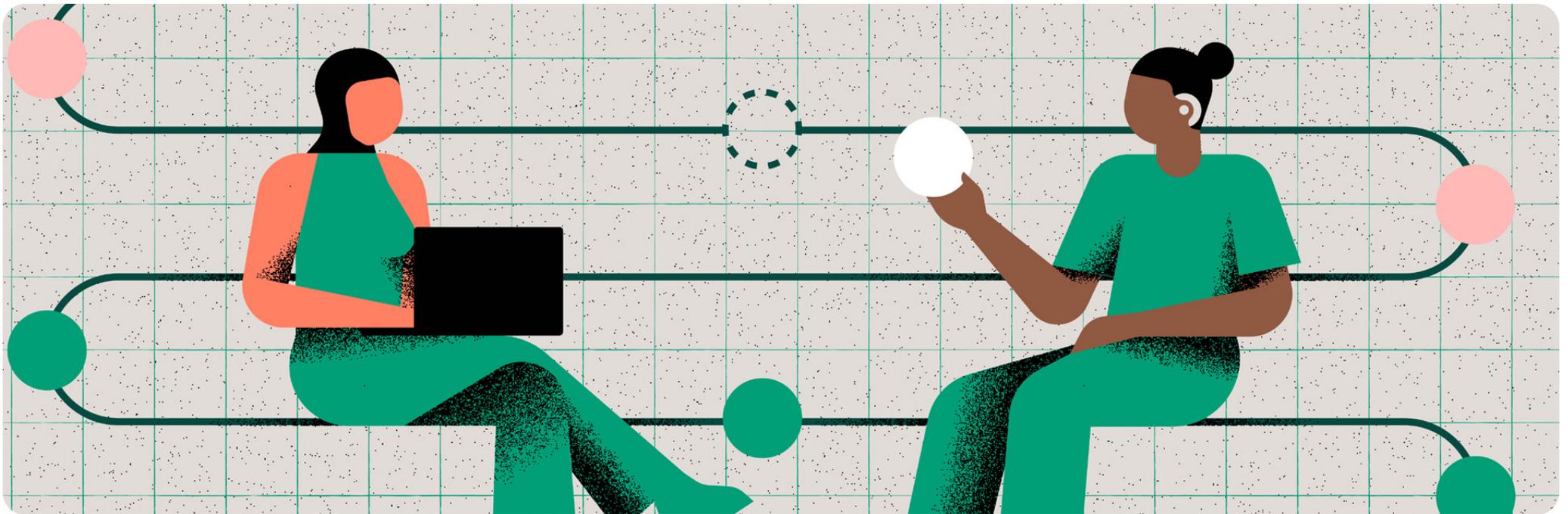
In order to get closer to this ambition and choose our concrete DE&I actions, we have defined a set of three clear and measurable DE&I goals to work toward.

Completely inclusive workplace
By 2024, we will have closed the fair treatment and inclusion gap between genders we had in 2020, and are in top 25% of our benchmark companies in inclusiveness and non-discrimination in all gender and nationality groups.

The first choice for women in tech
By 2024, we want to have increased our share of women and non-binary people within our tech competence to 33% across all career levels.

Our leadership mirrors the rest of Futurice
By 2024, we want our leadership teams to represent the gender and nationality diversity of Futurice as a company.

Our three goals work in sync to drive sustainable change in our culture, structures, processes, ways of working and representation throughout the organization. At this point, we have been working towards these goals for a couple of years. We have made progress on each one of them, but there is still a lot of work to do.

There are various reasons why we have taken a strong stance on DE&I.

From a business perspective, research shows that diverse teams are more creative and produce better financial outcomes than homogenous teams. This is especially relevant for us since we often create products or services for our clients' end users – i.e. a total of millions of people who represent numerous aspects of diversity. We can understand their needs better when we have some of that diversity in our own teams.

Additionally, emphasis on DE&I can help us differentiate from our competitors, just like our culture does. We want to be the best possible workplace for everyone, and to make that a reality, we believe we must be diverse and inclusive by default. There are also clear signals on the talent market that indicate this is emphasized and demanded more and more.

And finally, it is deeply embedded in our system of values – and quite simply the right thing to do.

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Caique Peixoto

Tech Advisor, Stockholm

What makes it special to be in a diverse team?

"

The people at Futurice are individuals that I genuinely enjoy spending time with, and who can teach me a lot about being a better person and a better professional.

I am truly inspired by the history and knowledge of my colleagues. Not only do we have diverse backgrounds but also diverse interests and skills – which gives me confidence that together, we can overcome any challenge that we face as a team.

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Johan Lauri

Tech Lead, Stockholm

Diversity through internationality

"

The best thing about Futurice? Definitely the people and the culture. Both here in Stockholm and at our other offices, you see like-minded people sharing a lot, and it's always a diverse crowd. There are a lot of nationalities at the Stockholm office, and even the locals share an international mindset. Our office is rather small, but we have a lot of cross-site collaboration, which I love, as well as a really organic way of sharing knowledge between sites.
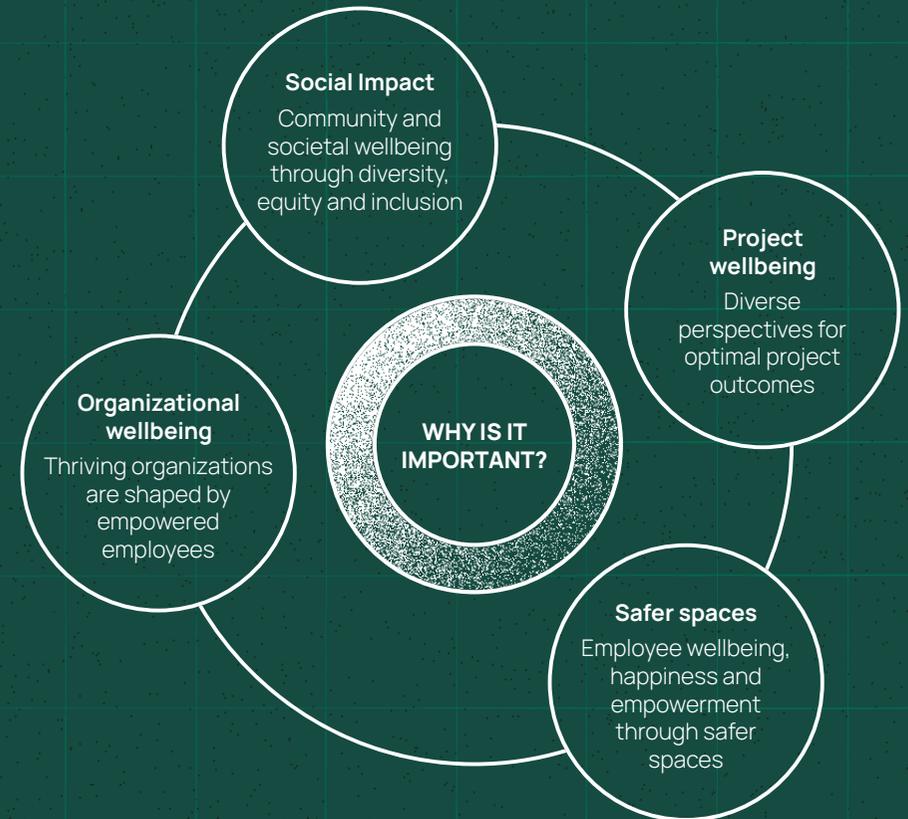
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FUTURICE CODE OF CONDUCT

What do we expect from each other?

We want to foster a friendly, safe and inclusive working environment, one that enables successful collaboration and a sense of belonging for everyone. Everyone has the right to have a say, to be heard and to contribute and participate in our work community as their whole self.

Our Code of Conduct outlines how we treat each other. It is based on our belief in respecting, celebrating and leveraging our unique differences to become a better company.

We believe that people are fundamentally good. However, we are still on a learning journey toward being more inclusive, which means that occasionally mistakes do happen. In line with our culture, it is important that we are supportive of one another, learn from our mistakes, and help each other improve.

Social Impact
Community and societal wellbeing through diversity, equity and inclusion

Project wellbeing
Diverse perspectives for optimal project outcomes

Organizational wellbeing
Thriving organizations are shaped by empowered employees

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Safer spaces
Employee wellbeing, happiness and empowerment through safer spaces

FUTURICE CODE OF CONDUCT

Our guidelines

Consideration

- We act gently and use language that is not intimidating, judgemental, or condescending.

- We spare our colleagues from unwelcome comments or questions about their personal lives.

- We refrain from initiating unwelcome sexual attention and sexualized comments or jokes.

Communication

- We are considerate and respectful in our speech and actions. We accept and welcome multiple viewpoints.

- We act, speak and joke in a mindful and inclusive way, particularly when gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, disability or age is concerned.

- We are careful when bringing up sensitive topics related to death, sex, violence, self-harm or discrimination of any kind. When we bring such topics up we make sure to use a trigger warning (TW).

Collaboration

- Mistakes happen and we don't expect anyone to be perfect. Communication is hard.

- If someone behaves in a non-inclusive way, we help them learn to be better and improve next time. We are all on a learning journey.

- We participate in an authentic and constructive way. We attempt collaboration and mutual understanding before conflict.

- We start by checking if our own behavior is inclusive. We don't resort to blaming others.

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Inclusion in the nick of time

– or how we pivoted an accidentally flawed mentoring program at the last minute

Mentoring can be incredibly beneficial when learning new professional skills. When organizing an all-new leadership mentoring program, we wanted to make it as inclusive as possible by giving both our current and aspiring leaders a chance to participate.

We decided to set up two separate tracks where our current leaders would get an external mentor, and act as mentors themselves for the aspiring leaders at the same time. Our initial intention was to have one-to-one mentoring pairs and base the number of pairs on the number of leaders (or mentors) participating.

The program had multiple goals: to increase our current leaders' skills in inclusive leadership, to give leadership capabilities to our aspiring future leaders, as well as to diversify the pool of people who are interested and have the skills for leadership roles. The program was open for anyone to apply to, but we marketed it heavily towards underrepresented groups.

The application period ended four days before the program's kick-off, and we were excited to start setting up the mentoring pairs. But to our surprise, we got three times the number of applications to the aspiring leader track compared to the number of mentors we had. Whoops – not quite as straightforward as we had hoped.

We had already for a while been contemplating how we could select the participants in a fair and equitable way, while we very much wanted to encourage everyone to apply and seize this opportunity. The application form included questions about the participants' motivations, career plans and learning goals – but how to value one person's answers over the next one's? How to choose who gets selected, and what could we offer to those who we'd have to turn down so they wouldn't feel bad?

Then, in the middle of trying to come up with a solution, it dawned on us – we were about to repeat the very mistake that the program was intended to correct! We had in fact managed to design an exclusive program when trying to support inclusive leadership.

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Once we realized this, we quickly pivoted the program concept. We decided that every individual who had applied deserved a spot in the program. This created a discrepancy in the ratio between mentors and mentees. In order not to place an excessive burden and workload on the mentors, we came up with the concept of mentoring groups.

The groups would be formed based on the participants' learning goals: those with similar goals would be placed in the same group, meaning they would benefit both from their mentor and from each other, as peer mentors. The mentors would mentor their groups rather than each person individually.

Pivoting from mentoring pairs to groups made the matchmaking far more complex, so the last-minute change resulted in some late nights. But finally, with two days to spare before the kick-off, we were able to finalize the mentoring groups and communicate them to the participants – along with a nice little story on how we had realized our oversight and improved the program on the fly.

It took a ton of effort to fix, but it was worth it, given that burying our heads in the sand would only have disappointed applicants and reinforced our harmful biases.

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The Spice Program – the Futurice way of giving back

Our work benefits massively from the creations of the open source community and society in general. The Spice Program was set up as a way to pay back to the community by supporting our employees who want to put in the time and effort for the common good.

Through the program, Futurice sponsors employees' personal open source contributions. This means that you can work on open source and other social impact projects on your own time and get paid for it. All of those contributions are sponsored by Futurice at 15 euros per hour – known as Spice hours – paid to you as a bonus on top of your regular salary.

The main requirements for eligibility are that:

- the contributions make use of your professional skills;
- they are done in your free time, not during company time; and
- the outcomes are shared as open source or using a suitable community-friendly license, such as certain Creative Commons license types.

Any project counts, meaning that the contribution opportunity is intended for everyone, not just developers. In order to help Futuriceans keep their life in balance and protect them from overloading themselves, no more than 30 Spice hours are eligible for compensation per month.

Open source contributions are not part of your work, and Futurice will make no intellectual property rights claims whatsoever on your contributions – on the contrary, we insist on you taking credit for your efforts.

As one Futuricean described it, "the Spice Program means being able to create what I believe should exist, and being rewarded for that."

← Our open source program's mascot is the Chilicorn – a unicorn, except with a chili… horn. You know, because the program is called the Spice Program. Get it? Spice! Funny!

This pixel art version was designed in an effort to replace an earlier MS Paint version with one we could actually show outside the company. Some of our offices also display wall-mounted versions built by hand out of Lego bricks.

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Vili Ketonen

Software Developer, Helsinki

Junaan.fi: open-source contribution in practice

"

The Spice Program was one of the factors I appreciated the most when I was considering joining Futurice. Within the program, I have been developing a web application called Junaan.fi which allows users to view information about passenger trains throughout the Finnish rail network, including their schedules and real-time locations.

The monetary bonus has been a great motivator to spend a part of my free time on open-source development. At the same time, the program has supported my learning of new technologies in my own time, and inspired me to contribute to existing open source projects.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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