

Culture Book

How to be a Boss®

BOSS

Who?

Content

- **Intro**
- **Our mission**
- **Our vision**
- **Our values**

Take a step back, and look at our company. **BossData**.

Who are we? A performance agency... that's true. But does that really define who we are? Does being a performance agency make us unique? I don't think so. It's how we act, react and behave every day that makes us who we are.

Knowing who you are is essential to grow as a whole. So if our company wants to do better? We need to take our time for introspection. And that's exactly what we did. The result? **Six core values**. These core values go further than the basics we expect right of the bat. Those basics are our **minimum requirements for playing**.

**Culture eats
strategy for
breakfast.**

Peter Drucker

Our core values are in no way a code of law. **They're a guideline.** Six values that help us map out how our organisation works. It shows how we can expect each other to act and deal with everyday situations. It's who we are.

This book harnesses those values. **Take them to heart and as inspiration.** But be aware that a culture isn't set in stone. Our last culture deck was made almost three years ago. Values evolve, so stay aware of them.

That being said, let's keep them alive and kicking: don't let them be pretty words on a wall.

Before we introduce you to our values, minimum requirements, and more of BossData's ins and outs, let's have a look at our mission and vision. What do we want to achieve, and how are we planning to do just that?

Mission

Mission

“We want to make digital marketing so important that even the CEO wants to 'get it', while fostering an environment in which people become the best version of themselves.”

vision

BossData is a Digital Business Analyst and Advertising Expert.

Our goal is to create and implement **online marketing strategies** and to be a deciding part of the tactical execution of such strategies.

Any strategy BossData is involved in must be based on **clearly defined business goals** that can be transformed into KPI's. Strategic **decisions** are **based on facts** found in your business analysis.

Any business analysis BossData executes has a **practical purpose** or **decision making process** in mind. The outcome of an analysis always includes **strong recommendations** with **possible benefits and/or risks** and a **plan for implementation**.

Vision

Any **advertising channel** BossData touches must be **scalable, controllable and segment driven**. We believe that our approach works independently from each channel's specific set of features, tools, and patterns.

We recognise this is a hard task and think there is **no one-size-fits-all** approach. Each client will have a different optimum in their strategic decisions and tactical needs.

We believe these **7 principles** always to be true:

- Our key to success is the **strategic evaluation of business finance and digital advertising**.
- We must decide ahead of time what a client's **strategic goals** are and how we will **measure** them.
- We take active part in the execution of **business analytics and channel tactics** as expert operators.
- We are confident our **data-driven strategies** work for the use case at hand (channel and strategy of the client).
- We will not investigate or analyse without a **clear purpose or decision** in mind.
- We can control the advertising channels cost in detail and can **predict and leverage the results at scale**.
- We must have **time and budget to experiment** with tactics and strategies to find a winning approach.

Values

Minimum Requirements for Playing

Respect

- Treat others respectfully.
- Listen to what a colleague or client has to say, without interrupting.
- Don't treat others in a way you wouldn't want to be treated.

Integrity

- Make fair decisions. Don't make exceptions on things you deem important.
- Always act in the best interest of yourself and your partners.
- Communicate honestly and transparently.

Minimum Requirements for Playing

Authenticity

- Be congruent between what you say, what you do, what you think, what you feel, and what you mean.
- Communicate openly.

Ambition

- Strive for improvement and success, both of yourself, the clients you work for, and BossData as a whole.
- Set ambitious, but realistic goals.
- Learn and apply new and useful skills. Don't learn without application.

Minimum Requirements for Playing

Quality

- Deliver the best quality possible to yourself and others.
- Don't half-ass anything.

Commitment

- Take ownership of your work. Go the extra mile.
- Be willing to invest time and effort in the work you do.
- Care about the results of your work.

Bravery

Bravery

**The quality of
showing the strength
to face difficulty or
resistance.**

Challenge the status quo in everything we do:

We do what is best in our opinion, not what is accepted or agreeable.

- Dare to go against the stream.
- You don't have to agree with everything and everyone.
- Don't ever assume that a colleague or client is right. Dare to ask questions.

Put your head above the parapet:

Feel confident in proposing something new.

- Have the guts to stick to your position and to stand your ground.
- Don't unnecessarily strive for consensus.

We used to say automated bidding didn't work well.
We tested it and the first results were disappointing.
We even went on to advise prospects to switch back
to manual bidding.

When we gave automated bidding a second chance,
we saw that the results were actually really good!
Nowadays we wouldn't use anything else.

Stay curious and explore new things:

We don't stop at the border of our knowledge.

- Dare to try new things, even if you don't know what the outcome will be. If anything you'll gain experience and knowledge.
- Revisit previous ideas and conclusions, you never know if we might have missed something.
- Make time to research and try things and dare to tell others that you've cleared your schedule for these things.
- Have a good balance between daily, operational work, and time you dedicate for extracurricular stuff.

Candor

Candor

**The quality of being
frank, open, and
sincere in speech or
expression.**

Address the elephant in the room:

Elephants belong in the savanna or the rainforest, not in our office.

- You say what everyone thinks, but no one dares to say.
- Don't assume everyone knows (about) something.

No backroom politics:

Nor internally, nor externally.

- Everything is public by default (e.g. cash flow, client team discussions, ...). If something isn't, there should be a clear reason why it's not (e.g. pay raise discussions).
- Say things to someone's face, not behind their back or via someone else.
- You address the situation when you notice backroom politics or unaddressed issues.

Candor

Radical candor is a combination of caring personally and challenging directly. It's not just brutal honesty.

Caring personally means that you care about the other person, not about whether you are winning a popularity contest.

Challenging directly means that you share your perspective and invite the other person to do the same.

Provide and be open to positive and constructive feedback:

Feedback is indispensable. Period.

- Make time after a meeting to give feedback to your peers.
- Always keep feedback as a to-do in the back of your mind. You proactively prepare to collect and provide feedback.
- Dedicate time to follow-ups and one-on-one's.
- See feedback as an essential task and don't put it aside for other, operational tasks.
- Proactively plan feedback moments and invite multiple people.
- Give and receive feedback with the best intentions, not to spread negativity or say meaningless things. Feedback is a tool, not a goal in itself.
- Adjust your communication style to the receiver and situation, without minimizing the message.

Say it like it is:

Be assertive.

- Say what you mean, don't beat around the bush.
- If you want something, just ask for it.
- Have the guts to go against a more experienced colleague or client, to put them in their place or to challenge them.
- Voice your opinions in a direct, but respectful way.

Embrace vulnerability:

Let go of ego.

- Actively ask for feedback and listen attentively.
- Ask for feedback both about your insecurities or weaknesses, and your strengths.
- Accept feedback from others without feeling attacked or offended.

Mastery

Mastery

**Full command or
understanding
of a subject
or action.**

**Expert skill and
knowledge.**

Be the master of your own time and knowledge:

Don't make false promises.

- Make realistic promises to colleagues and clients.
- Communicate honestly and clearly about your knowledge and the time you need for a task.
- Have the guts to tell someone you won't be able to do something today, or this week anymore.
- Have the guts to tell a client that we don't offer certain services (within the scope).
- Ask about the expectations of others, so you can respond accordingly.

This doesn't mean you need to spend endless cycles perfecting something from the get go.

Instinctively we feel like we take a risk when putting forth any work that's not perfect. Because of this, we tend to invest a bunch of time and effort into preparing for 'What if?' scenarios. Don't do this.

Go for a 'low level of shame'. It requires you to combat that natural inclination to conceal your work until it's perfect, and instead celebrate the small changes.

Continuous improvement:

Get better everyday.

- See every moment as an opportunity to learn something new or to improve.
- Always look for improvements. Think about what you're doing and how you're doing it. Consider whether that's the best way to do it.
- Actively look for fresh knowledge and share it with your colleagues.
- If you don't understand something, look for extra information or ask for help. Don't rest in ignorance.

Never settle:

Stay critical of your own success.

- Always go for gold (or at least a medal). Participation isn't more important than winning.
- We don't half-ass anything.

Human

Human

**Having the qualities,
faults, and feelings
that people have,
as opposed to gods,
animals, or machines.**

We're not robots:

You can have good days and bad days, just like anyone else.

- If you have an off day (for whatever reason), cut yourself some slack, take a break. Try to come back fresh and fruity the next day.
- Accept the fact that anyone can have an off day and cut them some slack as well.
- Plan your calendar around busier or more difficult periods.
- Remember that you can always talk to a colleague, or a friend or family. You don't have to tell everyone about everything if you don't feel comfortable to.

Put your own oxygen mask on first.

When you're in a stressful period in your life, the best thing you can do is take care of yourself and give yourself room to breathe.

There's more to life than work:

Work to live, don't live to work.

- Remember to take time off every now and then. Remind others of this as well. It's not because we have unlimited holidays that you can get away with taking 0 days off.
- Take time for other things than work.
- Work on personal goals.

Put yourself first:

It's not selfish, it's necessary.

- If something goes against your grain, or you're just not feeling it, let us know.
- Don't bend over backwards for anyone. Unless you're really that flexible.
- Act according to our values and expect to be treated that way as well.

**Empowe
rment**

Empowerment

**The granting of
power, right, or
authority to
someone to perform
at their very best.**

Embrace and encourage the opinion of others:

Feel confident in proposing something new.

- Listen to the opinion of others and take it to heart.
- Voice your concerns and thoughts, whether you agree or disagree with what's being said, and no matter who is 'leading' the meeting. Encourage others to do the same.

Make time to help colleagues:

A group of people can achieve more together, than each of them separately.

- You prefer to make others shine, instead of taking all the credit yourself.
- Actively help colleagues when they have questions, or to improve on their skills. But never at your own expense.
- Pitch in to help colleagues with anything.
- Proactively propose to help someone out.

Empowerment

Put your own oxygen mask on first.

When you're in a stressful period in your life, the best thing you can do is take care of yourself and give yourself room to breathe.

The right person in the right place:

You can't excel at something you don't love to do.

- We leverage someone's strengths and talents, and work on their weaknesses if necessary.
- Your ambitions can be dynamic. It's okay to change your mind on where you want to go.
- If you don't enjoy working on an a certain project or client, we urge you to re-evaluate and speak up.

**Champion
ship**

Championship

**The vigorous
support and
advocacy of the
organisation and the
ideas
we stand for.**

Stick to your guns:

Challenge the organisation and your colleagues to stay true to themselves along the way.

- Advocate the vision that we stand for. Stand by that vision and never give up pushing it to clients and ourselves.
- Motivate your colleagues to stay committed to our vision.
- Use this culture book as a compass or means to guide us in the right direction.

Do your best in everything you do:

But don't overdeliver or exceed expectations consistently.

- Value your work. Our clients pay for a certain scope, so don't be afraid to upsell things that don't fit the current agreements.
- Celebrate your wins. Be proud if you over deliver and make sure people don't take it for granted.
- Be aware of the scope that's been defined for a client.

Championship

There are two kinds of people in an organisation:
rock stars and superstars.

Rock stars are solid as a rock. Think the Rock of Gibraltar, not Bruce Springsteen. They love their work. They have found their groove. They don't want the next job if it will take them away from their craft.

Superstars are always looking for the next big challenge. They need to be challenged and given new opportunities to grow constantly.

Be proactive and take action:

Just do it.

- Think ahead. Don't adopt a passive or reactive attitude. Ask for chapter and verse about planned to do's.
- Follow up on results, communicate about and act upon them. Don't wait around until someone asks about it.
- Propose a solution to a problem instead of asking someone else how to solve it.
- Escalate a difficult situation in time. Don't wait until it's too late.

Championship

Follow through:

Show commitment and ownership towards your own responsibilities.

- When you start something, make sure you take it to the finish. This doesn't mean you have to do everything yourself. Work together with the right people.
- Avoid loose ends. If you can't take something to the finish yet, make sure it doesn't get lost in space.

**Welcome
to BossData**

Content

- **When You Start**
- **Way Of Work**
- **To Work or Not**
- **When You Leave**

When You Start

We invest a phenomenal amount of time and energy in **training and development during the onboarding** of new employees - partly because we want you to **be the best in the world at your job**, but also because in the long-term an **investment in yourself** will have a better ROI (for both of us) than any other activity.

We developed a **state-of-the-art Young Potentials program**, if we do say so ourselves. During your first 6 months at BossData you'll be guided through the **most important things you have to know and the tools we use**. Every subject is explained thoroughly by a BossData sensei and we regularly test your skill and knowledge to make sure you're on track. We make sure to focus on the things you really need for the work you're doing.

After those 6 months you should be ready to take on most challenges that get thrown your way. But don't worry, you're not on your own. We don't expect you to know everything after half a year. We highly encourage asking questions and continuously learning new things.

Growth management:

How we see ambition.

Growth and development is a vital part of your professional career. As you could have suspected, there's no such thing as a 'corporate ladder' to climb at BossData. So how do we make sure people can grow and develop?

First of all, we acknowledge that there are two types of people: Rock Stars and Superstars.

To be honest, we shamelessly stole this one from Kim Scott (the author of Radical Candor), because we couldn't explain it better ourselves.

When it comes to actually fostering ambitions, we designed our own Career Progress Framework (CPF) - that's too extensive to include here in full.

When You Start

Rock Star:

Like the Rock of Gibraltar, not Bruce Springsteen.

People with rock-star tendencies are solid as a rock. They love their work. They have found their groove. They don't want the next job if it will take them away from their craft.

We honor and reward the rock stars, because they'll become the people we rely on most for our operations.

Superstar:

Like Elon Musk, not the Adidas shoe.

People in superstar mode, on the other hand, need to be challenged and given new opportunities to grow constantly.

They look for steep upward growth, they'll become the people that drive our innovation.

Way Of Work

There are some core concepts that define our way of work. We use them to provide the necessary amount of structure within our organisation without losing our flow.

We used to have a fully flat structure: no teams, no managers. Everybody kind of worked together with everybody, and every-one had a say in everything.

After a while, when we grew to about 25 people, we noticed this lack of structure wasn't working for us anymore. Knowledge wasn't flowing, decisions were being taken much slower, or not at all, and communication got a bit chaotic.

So, after a lot of research, deliberation and some hiccups we decided to form 'circles' and 'guilds'.

Circle:

Our version of a tribe.

Circles consist of 5 to 7 people that work on a client portfolio. One of the circle members takes on the role of the pacer. This pacer is responsible for people management and strategic support for members within the circle.

Every circle represents a mix of similar level of seniority and operates as a 'mini Bossdata'.

Pacer:

Chief of a circle, but better.

In sports, a pacer is someone who leads a long distance running event for the first section. They ensure a fast time and avoid excessive tactical racing. And most importantly: they run in front of teammates to make them waste less energy.

This is exactly what a pacer needs to do at BossData. They keep track of all long term strategic progress made for the clients their circle is responsible for, and watch over the personal development of their circle members.

Guild:

Exactly like Spotify does it.

Guilds are a group of people with a similar passion for a work-related topic: it doesn't matter what circle they come from. Guild members allocate a certain percentage of their time to guild-related activities. It's their goal to study their subject and push relevant information back into the organization.

Some examples are: an SEA Guild, an Analytics & Reporting Guild, a Social Guild, an SEO Guild, ...

Meet factory:

How we handle meetings.

Meetings can be very useful, if they're done right. We don't like to have meetings for the sole purpose to have a meeting. So first of all, you need to ask yourself "Do we really need to meet?".

If the answer is 'yes', then you need to determine who needs to be there, and if they need to be there for the whole meeting. It's better to have a meeting where people only join when they need to, and leave when they're no longer needed (you can call them "cameos", like in a movie). That's why it's important to have an agenda. Never send an invitation without one. If you don't know what you want to discuss and achieve, then don't bother.

Each meeting should have an owner. That owner should arrive with a set agenda, keep the group on track, and help them progress quickly towards the goal of the meeting.

Meeting tip:

formulate your topics in the form of a question

The goal of the meeting should be to get an answer to those questions.

Way Of Work

Async first:

Our preferred way of communication.

Synchronous communication is simple, old-school, real-time communication. For example, meetings & phone calls. Asynchronous communication, on the other hand, is when two (or more) people communicate without being “present” at the same time. For example, Slack, Whatsapp, video recordings (Loom for the win), etc.

Both have their place on the workflow, but we organised our company in a way that asynchronous communication is our weapon of choice.

Why? Because asynchronous communication lets colleagues be the master of their own schedule. It allows them to focus on their tasks at hand and answer messages only when they have time for it. This way, they can finally start working on ‘deep work’, instead of merely talking about work.

To Work or Not

Quality over quantity:

Be the master of your own time, remember.

As you might have noticed in our Mastery chapter, time management is an important skill to have.

With this comes that we focus on quality, not quantity. That's why we don't count, log or bill hours. Quite unconventional, but it works. If you can get your work done in 6 super efficient hours one day, or you put in an extra 2 hours to figure out a really tricky issue another day, you get paid exactly the same, and we bill our clients exactly the same amount.

We don't want time to put a constraint on what we can do.

By the way: as everyone works their own hours, never feel pressured to respond to any message outside of your working hours.

To Work or Not

Taco time:

No cheesy compliments, only cheesy tacos.

We see feedback as one of the main ingredients of a good place of work. And it shouldn't only come from your boss in a yearly one-on-one review. That's why we use tacos. We have a dedicated #recognition Slack channel, solely for handing out tacos.

You give someone a taco whenever you want to. Did someone help you out when you got stuck? Taco! Did someone finally fix that creaking front door? Taco!

To Work or Not

Lettuce pact:

Some vegetables to go with that cheesy taco.

Handing out compliments is not that difficult. Giving constructive feedback often proves to be more of a hurdle. That's when the Lettuce Pact comes in (Google it, it's real).

When you see that someone has a bit of lettuce stuck on their teeth, it's best to let them know. You'd appreciate it if you were them right?

To Work or Not

Work from [insert location] :

The office, your couch, the beach, ...

You can basically work wherever you want (once you're out of your onboarding stage). You can work from home, you can come to the office, you can work from the poolside of some cosy house in Spain.

But we do expect you to come to the office every once in a while. After some periods of lockdown we noticed how important it is to see each other in real life from time to time.

To Work or Not

Unlimited paid holidays:

Yes, unlimited.

You can take as many days off as you want. Because, if we don't log hours, why would we log your holidays?

The 'not logging your holidays' part is not entirely true though. We do keep an eye out for workaholics that just simply forget to take enough time off!

To Work or Not

How to take time off:

- Let us and your clients know in advance when you're taking time off. As a rule of thumb: if you're taking more than a week off, notify us and them a month in advance.
- You don't need a reason to take time off. Whether it's for fun, or serious business, all we need to know is that you won't be available.
- Check within your circle if there's enough room to take time off. Make sure you can hand over your work to your colleagues.
- Make sure your colleagues are up to speed with ongoing things if necessary.
- Turn 'out of office' on and turn off your phone ... relax, enjoy and recharge.

To Work or Not

Wages:

You get what you deserve.

Everyone at BossData gets paid a fair salary. If you think you deserve more, you ask for a raise. But you don't just get what you ask for.

When you want a raise, you get together with your direct peers to motivate why you deserve one. If the majority agrees on the raise, you'll get it.

Shares:

Sharing is caring.

When you work at BossData for three years, you have the possibility to buy a certain percentage of shares at a discount.

Whether you buy in or not is fully up to you. No obligation.

To Work or Not

Fringe benefits:

More than just money.

Next to your salary, you'll get some fringe benefits like health insurance and meal vouchers. There's also breakfast, lunch, fruit and snacks, everyday.

You can also get a nice deal on a fancy electric bike, a real racing bike or a unicycle if that's your thing.

If you have to go to external meetings, we make sure you get comfortable and effective transportation.

When You Leave

Exit strategy:

When it's time to move on.

Nothing lasts forever. So there will probably be a time for you to leave BossData. When that time comes, or when you feel like you're not in the right place anymore, we urge you to let us know in time.

Maybe actually leaving isn't the answer. You can always consider another position within BossData, we can help you out with a fixed position at another company, or perhaps you'll even be the head of the next venture BossData decides to invest in!

Whatever the eventual outcome may be, we're always there to help you figure things out.



Office View