

Our Manual

FIRST EDITION

Our Manual

A Taritas book

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This is not an original work & is inspired by some great companies out there. We are just trying to take a page out of their books to fit into ours, you can do the same.

Feel free to share it, modify it, change it the way you want, distribute it the way you like either via Internet or by using carrier pigeons.

Life is all about learning good stuff. If you learn something good, adopt it. : <http://bit.ly/2zWFgAQ>

What's in the book

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GETTING STARTED

Taritas is different. The weirdness makes it special, but it can be jarring if you're used to another way of working. We wrote this manual to give you everything you need to survive and thrive here, whether on day one or day thousand.

This book won't teach you how to file your PF, help you setup your email or Slack. It will help you understand our values and the way we make decisions as a team & as company.

Our manual belongs to you. Read it. Share it. Change it. Keep it close when you swim into the deep water.

THE 4 PRINCIPALS

1. TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER

2. COLLABORATE

3. PRODUCE AMAZING WORK

4. SPEAK UP



SECTION ONE

WE ARE HUMANS

We act like humans, we talk like humans, and we think like humans. And we call out anyone who does the opposite.

WE ARE HUMANS

YOU ARE NOT HERE BY ACCIDENT

We hired you for a reason. There's no need to prove yourself or worry about "fitting in." You're here. You made it. You get it. Let your work do the convincing.

WE HIRE DIFFERENTLY

Most companies operate under the premise that employees should be replaceable like parts of an assembly line. We choose our people more carefully. We bring them in if we think they're a great fit, regardless of whether we have work for them right away.

What that means: You are more than your title. Bring yourself (the true you) to work each day, not your "Developer" or "QA" costume.

GET AUTONOMOUS

You're given an incredible amount of freedom and autonomy at Taritas. That goes for everyone- from interns on up. It's up to you to figure out how to approach a problem. No one is going to make you do it their way. We know that sounds awesome, but here's the catch: With freedom comes tons of ownership & responsibility.

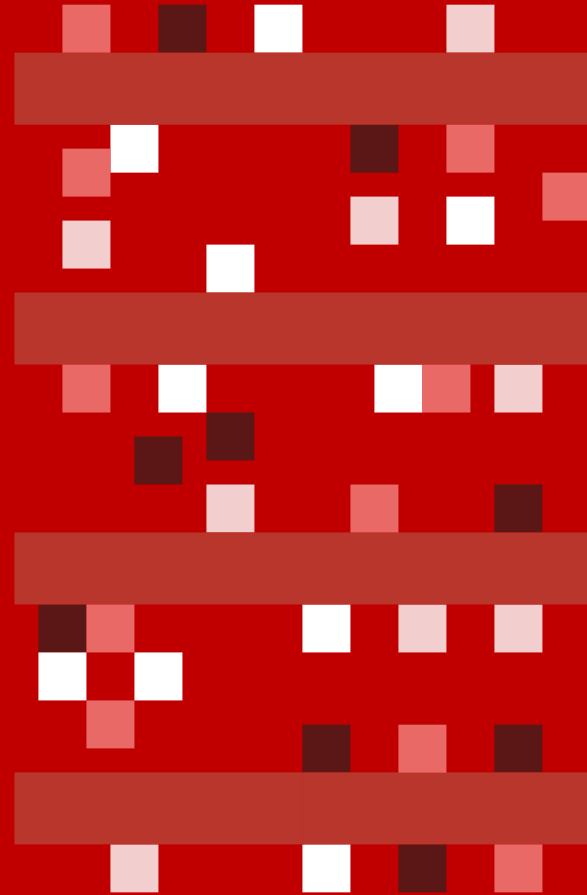
Life is easy when someone is telling you what to do. It's also boring, and it prevents you from being invested in what you're doing. Since you control your own destiny here, you'll likely be more emotional about your work. We believe that's better than the alternative. Can you imagine coming to work each day and not caring?

We can't.

WE ARE HUMANS

WORK TOGETHER

Our flat structure calls for it by necessity. Being a leader may feel unnatural at first, but we expect everyone to step up and own part of the project. It's kind of like playing basketball, when someone passes you the ball, you are in charge of what to do with it next.





TALK LIKE A HUMAN

There's a lot of bad work out there. One of the culprits is the way we talk to each other. In an industry that requires tons of communication between clients, agencies & vendors, it's important not to let acronyms, "proprietary processes" or buzzwords lead to confusion and time lost.

HERE'S WHAT WE MEAN:

- Instead of saying "leverage", say "use".
- Instead of saying "action item", say "to do".
- Instead of saying "empowering end users", just go home and try again in the morning. ;)

WE ARE HUMANS

TO AVOID ROBOT SPEAK, FOLLOW THESE THREE SIMPLE RULES:

1. PRETEND YOU ARE TALKING TO YOUR MOM.

Your mom doesn't know what "Burndown" or "Backlog grooming" mean. And it's not because she's not a smart lady. She's just not entrenched in industry jargon.

2. DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK.

Sometimes you need to stop and ask the room to define what exactly "responsive design" or "social business" means to them. It's OK.

3. GET ON THE SAME PAGE.

Sometimes the words don't matter as long as everyone's speaking the same language. Try to acknowledge when words are getting in the way & do something about it.

THINGS YOU SHOULD SAY

- "Why are we doing it this way?"
- "Is there a better alternative?"
- "_____ really worked very well last time. Can we do it even better on this project?"
- "Let's get a drink and discuss it."
- "Foosball anyone?"

THINGS YOU SHOULDN'T SAY

- Lipping "It is what it is." No, it's not. It is what you make it.
- "That's not my job." If you ever hear someone say this, start flipping desks. It's all your job.
- "Who cares?" Well, we do.

WE ARE HUMANS

YOU'RE MORE THAN YOUR TITLE

Most workplaces (Intentionally or not) train people out of normal human behaviours. They want you to be predictable. They want you to be replaceable. They don't want you to challenge the status quo.

But humans don't work that way.

Humans are unpredictable. You can't replace one person with another the same way you swap the tires of a car. Workplace that try to control human nature, become miserable fast.

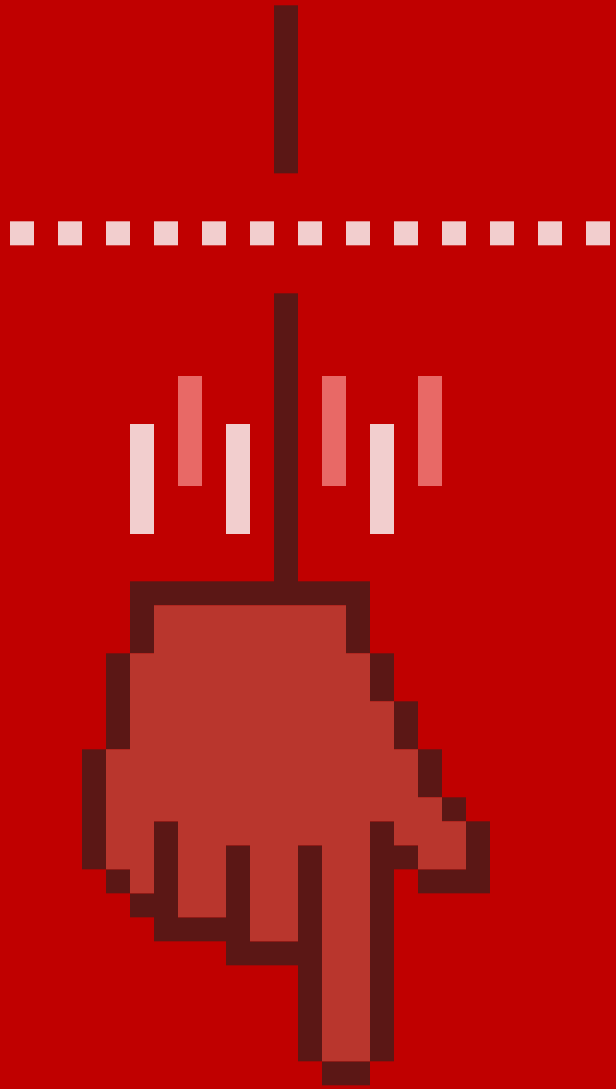
People who talk about themselves in terms of their title freaks us out: "I'm a designer, so I do things like this." No. You're a person first and a designer second. Show your true colours.

EVERYONE IS CREATIVE

But nobody is *a creative*. Creativity is a quality not a title. So don't ever say, "I'm not creative." We will find the creativity inside you & drag it out, kicking & screaming.

We don't put our energy into questions like, "Whose name goes on the award entry?" Instead, we ask questions like, "Is this project right for us?" and "How can we do something unique and innovative that works for our business."

Our target is not making tons of money. Our aspirations are to create a culture where you love to come to work every single morning. No matter what.



NOBODY'S GONNA HOLD YOUR HAND

This is a busy place, and you'll often be on your own to figure things out. Don't be afraid to ask for help, but don't rely on others to hold your hands.

You might be tempted to say something such as, "It would be nice if someone would organize the [server, kitchen, furniture]." At Taritas, you are that someone. If you want to update, change or fix something, go for it. Seriously. Every awesome thing you see is like that because someone like you decided to do it. Become that someone for the next awesome thing at Taritas.

We appreciate when you get up & change something for good. You don't need to ask anyone to do it. Just do it.

WE ARE HUMANS

HUMAN TRUTHS:

TRUTH #1: HUMANS ARE NOT PERFECT.

Don't be afraid to fail. And when you do, you might as well fail spectacularly. This is how we grow & learn. Fail fast, learn fast. Just one precaution; *never repeat the same mistakes.*

TRUTH #2: HUMANS HAVE VOICES.

Yours is as valuable as anyone else's. Use it. Singing out loud is encouraged & it happens more often than you think. Always speak up. Keeping mum costs lot of wasted time.

TRUTH #3: HUMANS ARE UNIQUE.

Do you love books? Games? Do you love your desk covered with your toys? There's no need to hide it. Be yourself. That's how you'll fit in here.

WE HAVE 4 DISCIPLINES

- DESIGN
- DEVELOPMENT
- BUSINESS & STRATEGY
- ACCOUNTS

We tried to write definition for each one, but we couldn't do it. Our disciplines aren't slots into which we can drop an identical replacement. All we know is that if you put them together, amazing shit happens. If you want to know more about what someone does, just ask them.

WE ARE HUMANS

HUMANS ARE NOT “RESOURCES”

We don't have a formal HR department. New hires are interviewed by the people who will actually be working with them. This ensures that we're hiring for the right team and for the right reasons.

So get ready to care a lot about the people you work with.



SECTION TWO

WE WORK TOGETHER

We insist on working collaboratively, No rockstars. No departments. The whole team owns the whole project, together.

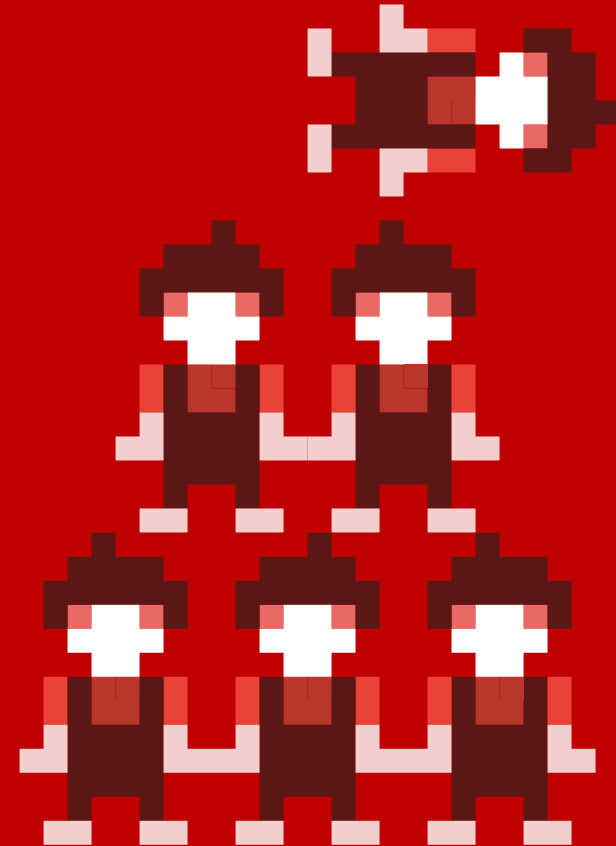
WE WORK TOGETHER

WE AREN'T BIG ON HIERARCHY

We don't have an internal "org chart". The reason is that a traditional hierarchy forms a bottleneck: one person has to ask someone else's permission to do something, and then that person has to ask someone else's permission, and so on. The whole process is just a waste of time and it prevents from building things quickly.

You have mentors and collaborators, not commanders. In other words, you may have a boss, but you'll never get bossed around.

And we all make things here. If you've come to climb a ladder, you're in the wrong place. Those who show up & tell people what to do, don't last long.



WE WORK TOGETHER

PLAY IS IMPORTANT

When you walk through our doors, you enter an environment where work and play often intertwine. But there's a difference between being childish and child-like. We are all adults. But that doesn't mean we can't have fun.

There's no reason to pretend you're busy. You don't need to hide the video you're watching if someone walks by your desk. No one is monitoring the websites you look at. We aren't going to report you for taking a long lunch. Just do great work.

WE DESIGN FOR PEOPLE, NOT AT THEM

We make things for people. Not for consumers. We always ask ourselves (and our clients) "Would I want to use this? Is this good enough?"

SHOW DON'T TELL

This is something we tell our clients all the time, and it's important that we live by these words as well. A better way to put it might be: *Don't talk about it. Do it.*

WE WORK TOGETHER

TAKE CARE OF YOUR CREW

Much of what we do is technical. But there's another skill we all need to have: the interpersonal kind. It isn't optional. Some people like to pretend that the technical work is all that matters. They're wrong. This isn't Rambo; there are no one man army here.

We know that sometimes it can be difficult to work with others. Our solution is simple: Get to know everyone. No one is just a designer or a developer or a QA. They are people with many dimensions. Understand who they are and it will be much easier. You are part of a team, and the health and harmony of your team is part of your job.

WE ARE SMALL BY DESIGN

Every decision about how to structure a company has some upsides and downsides. When you encounter something that's little frustrating about how we work, remember that it's likely the result of something else about this place that you love.

We have kept our company small for more than 5 years, which allows us all to sit in one room and know each other intimately. It also means we've had to sacrifice our economies of scale that comes with hundreds or thousands of employees. Sometimes things break or get dirty. We don't have a maintenance department, so it's up to you.

WE WORK TOGETHER

DON'T MAKE A 50-PERSON COMPANY FEEL LIKE 500

For most projects, we try to make the teams of people in the same city. Try not to over-formalize communication. There's no need to send an email to the person sitting one desk away.

WE ALL SIT TOGETHER

At some companies, they make you go to a different floor (of building) to talk to someone outside of your team. That terrifies us. And it's why we have open floor plan.

You're surrounded by smart people from every discipline. Talk to them. Learn from them.

TAKE CARE OF THE SPACE

We love our digs out here. We have foosball tables, bean bags, coffee machines. Pets are allowed. So are your near & dear ones. We treat our office as our second home, please feel free to make it yours. Take proud in bringing your parents/ relatives to your pad & show off. Please also do take care of it, just like you do for your home.

ASTHETICS ARE IMPORTANT

If you make something that doesn't look good or isn't usable, you're going to get called out on it. Don't worry – this is how we get better. We are ruthless about this, and soon you will be too.

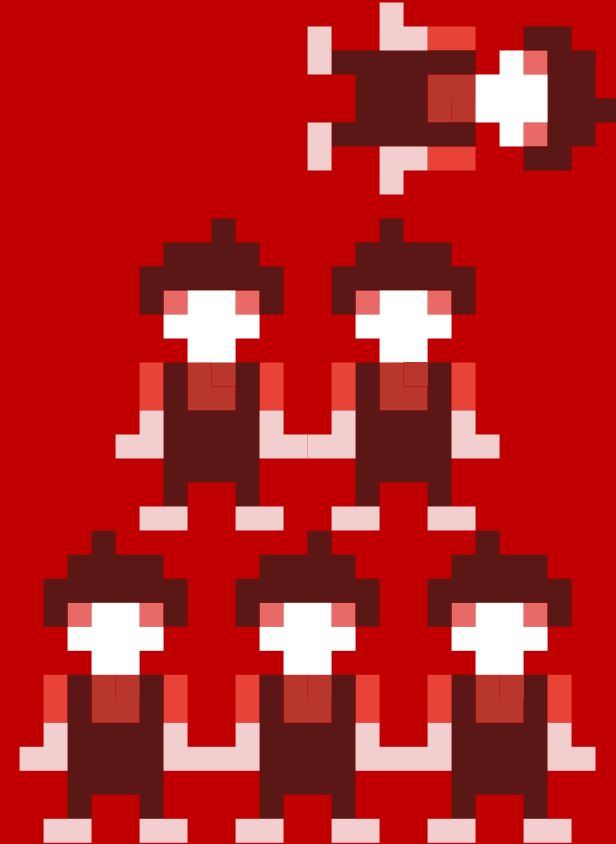
Our code should be clean. Our designs should be flawless. Our presentations should be elegant. Details are everything. Find one and make it awesome.

WE WORK TOGETHER

ALL ARE WELCOME

We have designed our space for us, not to impress our guests. We don't have a doorman and we like it that way. Anyone is allowed anywhere, anytime. Make yourself at home.

If someone drops by, they are going to see us working. That means it might be a bit messy. But that's real us.



WE WORK TOGETHER

THE KITCHEN

The Kitchen is stocked with flatware, dishes, snacks, drinks & fruit. Anything not labelled for personal use is up for grab. Feel free to use any of the items available, just be respectful of the crew & remember to put the dirty dishes in the sink.

WE ARE ALL STUDENTS; WE ARE ALL TEACHERS

There is no seniority level; we all share & learn from each other, daily.

While we do not expect you to hold anyone's hand, we do encourage you to mentor as much as possible. May be you will learn something too.

BE RESPECTFUL BUT DON'T BE DELICATE

We have found that the best creative breakthroughs happen when people can have a good, passionate argument about an idea, not when they spend weeks tiptoeing around each other. Don't be afraid to speak your mind. Just be honest & respectful.

WE WORK TOGETHER

OUR CLIENTS ARE THE PART OF THE TEAM

Just like we pay our dentists, our clients pay us to do things they can't do by themselves. Let's do them well. It won't always be fun and games when it comes to these relationships, but we should always work with our clients. Not for them & certainly not against them. They need us & we need them.

In fact, it's best to avoid the word "client" wherever possible. Use their real names. It'll remind you that we are all just human beings trying to do good work.

TAKE YOUR CLIENT BEYOND THEIR COMFORT ZONE

A FEW THINGS WE FREQUENTLY HEAR:

- "We didn't expect that at all"
- "That seems risky"
- "Wow! That's better than we expected"

No one gets in trouble for pushing the limits. It's your job, it's the reason people look at our work & say "that's the kind of work I'd like to do."

WE ARE PROFESSIONALS

But we hate professionalism. Professional means handling our business with respect.

Professionalism is when you are so buttoned-up that you stop being yourself. It sands all edges of your personality.

WE WORK TOGETHER

AVOID MEETINGS AT ALL COSTS

Meetings are the scourge of the modern workplace. A 2-hour meeting with 6 people doesn't waste 2 hours, it wastes 12 hours.

If all else fails and you absolutely must have a meeting, clearly state the purpose up front. If you can't think of one, you probably don't need a meeting at all.

We get paid to make stuff, not to talk about making stuff.

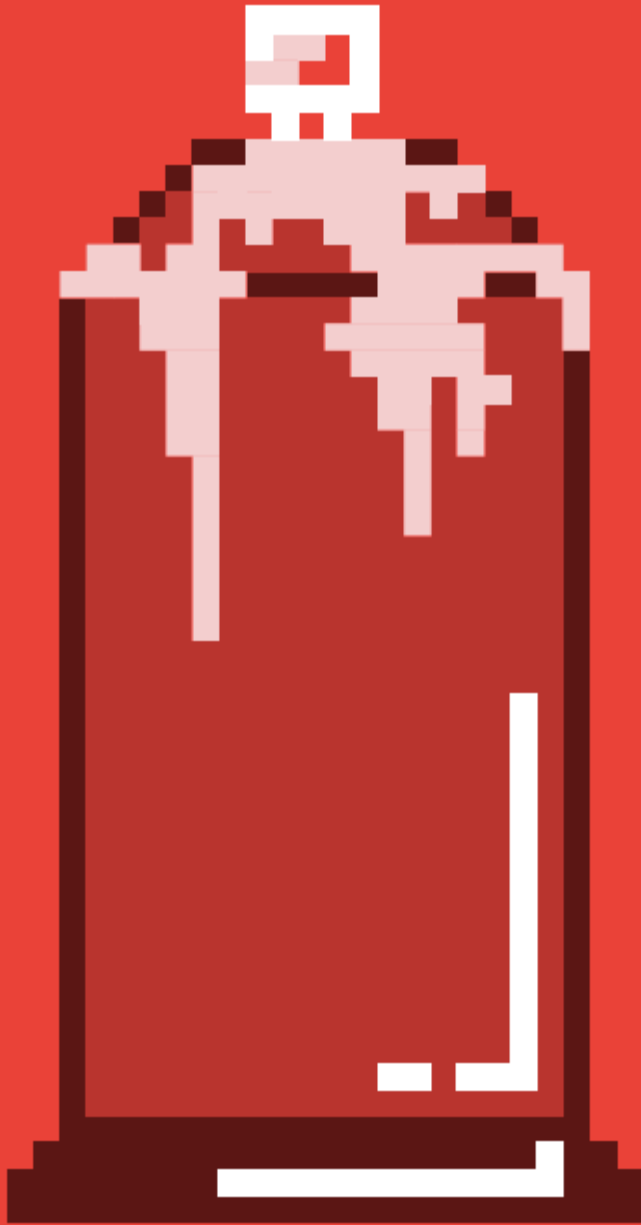
A NOTE ON MUSIC

The only thing we love as much as our work is Music. That's why we have an anonymous crowd sources office music playlist.

A few ground rules:

- Don't skip songs, that's not cool
- Don't kill the vibe, if it's a Bollywood 90s morning, don't make it Hollywood classics. If you know what we mean here.
- No more than 8 songs max at once.

Most importantly, participate. Tastes vary widely in this crew, so don't be shy about playing anything you're in mood for.



WRITE ON THE WALLS

Open spaces mean real-time conversations and solutions. That's why we have huge wall size blackboards. We chalk out our thoughts as they occur and we share them with the crew. We prefer to work this way; openly & transparently.

WE WORK TOGETHER

WE ARE A QUITE BUNCH

Let's not forget that we are not digital natives here, and many of us are stuck nose deep in code or are simply quite folks. Once someone is settled in and working, they often don't break their gaze to greet you as you pass by. They are not being rude, they are just plugged in.

NOISE

According to [Science](#), the best noise level for a creative Workplace is somewhere around that of a vacuum cleaner. Hence, music. But if you need some quiet time, don't feel guilty about finding a hideout or popping on some headphones. Sometimes, you need quiet not for your own peace of mind, but because we have a guest who doesn't want to talk into a meeting.

CLIENT CALL

If you need some quiet time for a client call, just let us know & we will put the music to sleep for until you are ready for it again 😊

WE WORK TOGETHER

DOGS: WE LOVE THEM

STUDIES HAVE SHOWN:

- When dogs are around, most people feel relaxed and happy.
- Being in the presence of a pet, for instance in the Workplace, lowers blood pressure and stress levels while heightening endorphins & oxytocin, the hormone linked to material bonding.
- It's healthy for a dog to be with it's owner throughout the day.

THINGS TO KNOW

- Dogs will be dogs, most are not afraid to steal your lunch so keep food away from the edge of your desk.
- It's not unheard of a dog to wander into a meeting & sit on your client's lap.



WE WORK TOGETHER

INTERNAL PROJECTS

Some of the favourite things we've ever made weren't client work at all. One of us had an idea and they made it real. "We connect", "Tar lack messenger for Alexa" "City" are a few of them. In fact this very manual began as an internal project when a few of us decided that it needed to exist.

Some companies assign a number for how much time you are allowed to spend on side projects. We know if it matters to you, you will make it happen.

OUR BLOG

We have an internal blog & social tools like Facebook for Work. Please feel free to share any content you would like to see in there & share with rest of the crew. We encourage you to submit your entries for our blog on the website.

WEAR A HELMET

We encourage you to get some fresh air and exercise by biking to work. You will also get a safe place to park your bike. If you need a quick ride around somewhere, feel free to borrow a bike from someone around you.

WE WORK TOGETHER

A NOTE ON INTERNS

The title “intern” isn’t a glamorous one, but at Taritas it’s one of the best jobs you can have.

Interns get to make all the fun mistakes.

We value our interns as contributors, not as task-rabbits. We give them real work and real responsibility. They’re on the team to help make things & solve problems. Show them the same respect you’d give anyone else. Besides, many of our senior employees started off here as interns.

WEEKENDS

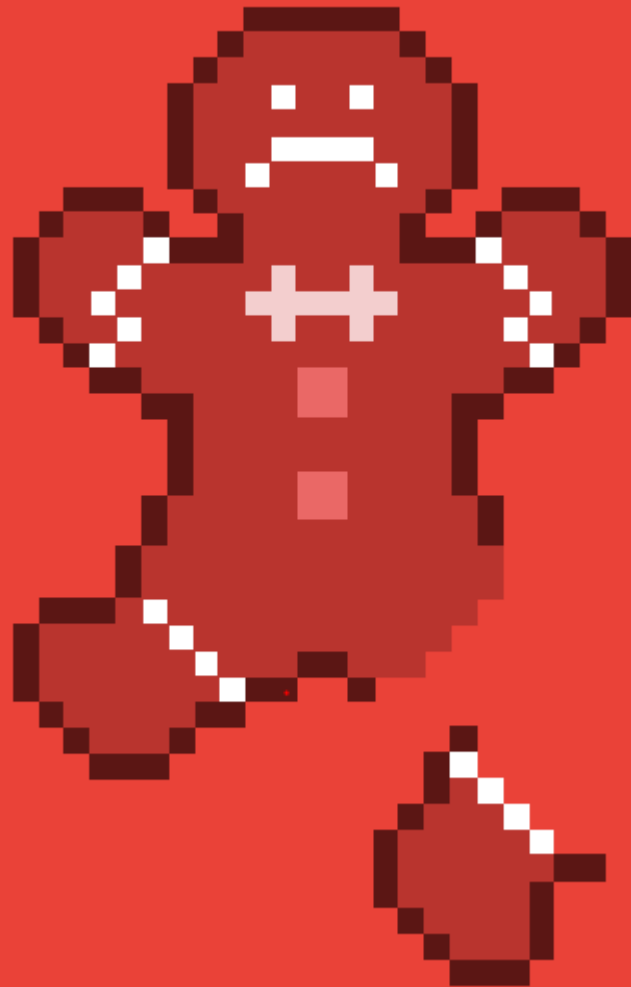
Our space belongs to all of us. You’re welcome to come by on the weekend. Just be responsible. Lock the doors. Turn off the lights. Take care of the environment, k?



SECTION THREE

WE CHANGE

Nothing is sacred. From our habits to our rituals to our environment. Change is natural part of human life, and we prefer to embrace it.



NO COOKIE CUTTERS

Every project we make is 100 percent unique, from the team to the brainstorming process to design to code. We're not about filling in blanks on templates with "best practices".

It's like baking bread. You can tell when a loaf of bread was made with love and when it was mass-produced. And it's not about the skill of the baker. It's about the attitude.

WE WORK TOGETHER

GET OUT OF YOUR SEAT

It's unhealthy to stay seated in the same position for eight hours. It's also terrible for productivity. You aren't chained to your desk. Move around. Grab some coffee. Play with the dog. Meditate. Call your parents. Make Maggie (share with others too). Play Foosball or Cricket (yep, we play cricket in our office too) Go for a walk. Draw on the walls. Climb a tree. Do yoga. Hit the gym. Get a haircut. Buy some new shoes. Sing a song. Dance. Write a poem. Create something new. Learn to juggle or just draw something.



WE WORK TOGETHER

HACKDAYS

The world was made to be hacked, and our hackday is one of the most beloved Taritas traditions. Every so often, we pause all our usual work and break into small teams. Then we spend all day (and all night) creating something that makes the world a better place. The next morning, everyone presents what they have made. It's something you will never forget.

SHOW AND TELL

We frequently invite interesting people from a variety of backgrounds to share their experience with us. These are extraordinary opportunities.

PHOTO MASHUPS

When you join the ship, you'll have your official headshot taken. Shortly after that, the fun begins. Folks will play with your official pic. Don't worry, it's just part of bringing you on board 😊
If everyone around you is tearing up with laughter, you should probably check the Workplace account. Odds are that the latest mashups are up & live.

CLAPPING

Sometimes we erupt in spontaneous applause, for no reason at all. Go Ahead & join in.

WE WORK TOGETHER

TEAR DOWN THE WALLS

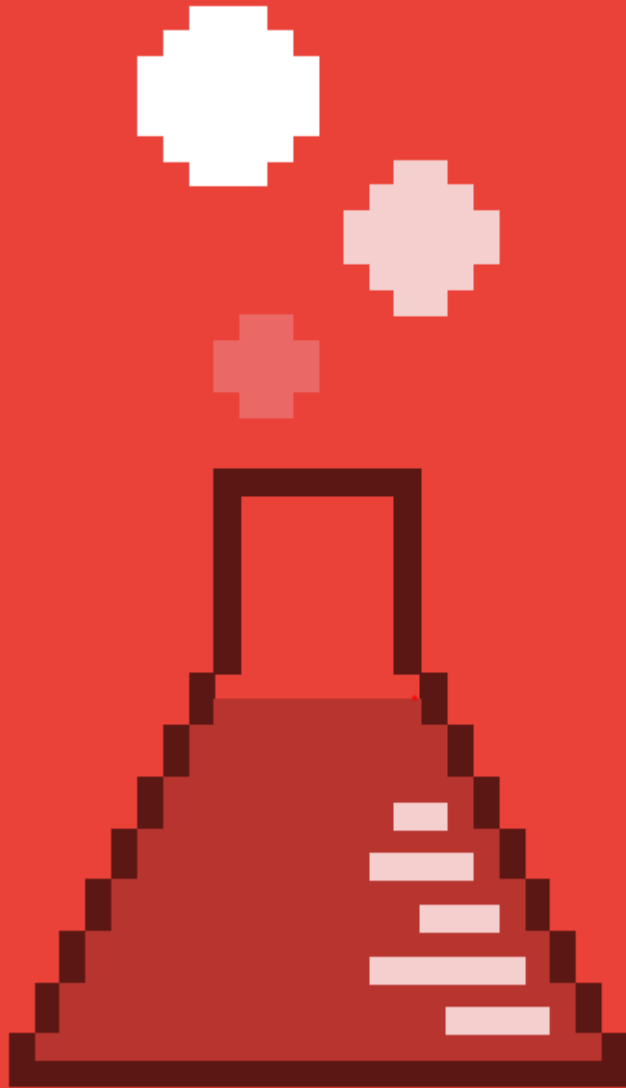
If you don't like something, change it. That goes for anything. Seriously.

SOCIALIZING

We're friends and coworkers here. We believe that it's much easier to work with someone once you get to know them on a personal level. We have many social rituals and they top the list of our favourite things about Taritas.

Every tradition at Taritas was started by someone like you. The Foosball championship, the carom Day, the ethnic dress competition or cubical decoration.

Each one exists because someone decided to do it. Start your own ritual.



AN ONGOING EXPERIMENT

This place is continuously changing. And change is something we humans resist more than anything else. It's nobody's fault. It's just biological.

Yet as much as we resist change, it's also how we grow & improve. It's the sign of a healthy company. And it's why each team here has a mix of new and seasoned folks. With new blood comes new thinking – and so we continue the ongoing experiment that is Taritas.



SECTION FOUR

FAQ

You've got questions. We've got answers.

WE WORK TOGETHER

WHY DID SOMEONE THROW A PING PONG BALL AT ME?

It's just their way of showing affection.

IT SEEMS LIKE EVERYONE IS READING EACH OTHER'S MINDS. HOW DO I DO THAT?

We use Slack a lot; you will see ;)

WHY DON'T WE HAVE A CHIEF INNOVATIVE OFFICER?

You already fill that role. If you are not innovating, you are not doing your job.

THAT DOG LOOKS HUNGRY, CAN I FEED IT?

No, unless it's yours. Then maybe.

WHAT IS TARITAS?

Well, good question. We too are still trying to find the answers to that. We are a bunch of like minded people who love building great stuff. At times we do it for others & at others we do it for ourselves.

Now it's your turn.

WHAT'S FAIR GAME TO EAT IN THE KITCHEN?

We get snacks delivered every Monday. If you want to keep some personal food in the kitchen, grab a marker and write your name all over it. Unmarked snacks = fair game. Anyone can have them

CAN I WRITE/ DRAW ON THE WALL?

Yes!

WE WORK TOGETHER

CAN I ERASE THAT WRITING ON THE WALL?

If it says "DON'T ERASE", leave it be.

CAN I TAKE A NAP?

Sure, get the work done too.

CAN I DECORATE MY DESK?

Yes, you are a unique individual & we encourage you to express yourself.

CAN I COME IN ON WEEKENDS?

Yep, just make sure to lock up when you leave.

I DON'T LIKE THIS SONG, CAN I SKIP IT?

Don't even think about it.

IS IT COOL IF I PUT ON THE HEADPHONES?

Yes, we encourage it.

WHO AM I?

You are a unique individual who is here to experiment & learn & build great stuff along the way. Don't miss out on having fun too & starting your own ritual ☺

WHO CONTROLS THE MUSIC?

We all do.

WE WORK TOGETHER

CAN I GET A PACKAGE DELIVERED HERE?

Sure.

CAN I WRITE SOMETHING FOR THE BLOG?

Yes, we encourage everyone to contribute.

WHERE CAN I GET A GOOD SANDWHICH?

Ask the person on your left :D

MY BOYFRIEND/ COUSIN/ MOM/ DAD/ LANDLORD WANTS TO COME, CAN I BRING THEM BY?

Didn't you read the section on how everyone is welcome?

IF ALL ELSE FAILS..

Just work hard and be nice to people. The rest will sort itself out.

WE WORK TOGETHER

TARITAS BUCKET LIST?

Want to really feel like you're a part of our band of misfits? Here's a good way to get started:

- Post on Taritas Workplace
- Steal someone's chair, don't get caught
- Spill something, get a round of applause.
- Get your face mashed up
- Create your Taritas avatar
- If you are feeling way too energetic, make tea for all ☺

