

Articulating organizational culture – Culture handbook for a game industry start-up

Tuuli Maria Peltonen

Master's thesis
DP in Leading Business Transformation
2022



Author(s) Tuuli Maria Peltonen	
Specialisation Strategic Thinking and Management	
Thesis title Articulating organizational culture – Culture handbook for a game industry start-up	Number of pages + number of appendices 71 + 30
<p>The objective of this thesis was to create a culture handbook for the purposes of effectively onboarding new employees. The commissioning party for this thesis was a Finnish game industry start-up, Dazzle Rocks. The company is developing an ambitious social sandbox MMO game and is growing rapidly. Nurturing and developing its unique culture have been strategic focus areas for the company for many years and due to growth, onboarding new employees into the culture has become a priority.</p> <p>Whilst culture is formed in groups, everyone perceives it individually. The goal for the culture handbook was to help bridge the gaps between different interpretations of the company culture by conveying the company's core values, principles and desired behaviours in an easily digestible format. This thesis describes the journey of how the culture handbook was created.</p> <p>To gain an understanding of which components form organizational culture, the theoretical framework of this thesis examines Schein's organizational culture theory, Giftwork, and 9 dimensions of culture, a framework originally developed by the consultancy agency, Great Place to Work.</p> <p>The research itself was conducted in the form of action research. Process benchmarking was conducted on other publicly available culture handbooks from Smartly.io, Futurece, Virta and Hubspot to form an understanding of how successful companies communicate about their culture. Because culture is ultimately formed by people, two workshops were organized for the entire Dazzle Rocks team to discern the key unique components of the company's culture and gather content ideas for the final culture handbook.</p> <p>Theoretical framework and conclusions from action research were combined to create the product of this thesis, the Dazzle Rocks culture handbook. It serves as an effective culture onboarding tool for new employees of the company but can also potentially be utilized in other processes such as talent development, performance management, employer branding and leadership development. Culture evolves over time, so continuous development of the handbook is imperative.</p> <p>Finally, the theoretical framework and action research process were incorporated into a general framework for culture handbook development that can be utilized by other organizations to create their own culture handbooks.</p>	
Keywords Culture, Culture Handbook, Communication, Onboarding.	

Contents

Abbreviations.....	ii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Case company	1
1.2 Objective of the development project	2
1.3 Thesis scope.....	3
1.4 Research questions	3
1.5 Research philosophy.....	4
1.6 Thesis structure	4
2 Theoretical framework.....	7
2.1 Schein’s organizational culture theory.....	7
2.2 Giftwork and 9 dimensions of culture	9
3 Culture of Dazzle Rocks.....	15
3.1 Organizational structure & teams	15
3.2 Ways of working.....	17
3.3 Remote work.....	19
3.4 Core values of Dazzle Rocks	21
3.5 Team principles.....	25
4 Research methodologies & process	27
4.1 Benchmarking	27
4.2 Workshops.....	37
4.2.1 Workshop 1: “From values to behaviours”	39
4.2.2 Workshop 2: “Cross-function collaboration”	47
4.3 Conclusions about research methodologies.....	53
5 Project implementation.....	55
6 Framework for developing a culture handbook.....	59
7 Conclusions	61
7.1 Credibility, reliability, and ethics	61
7.2 Results and next steps.....	63
7.3 Additional research topics	64
References	65
Attachments.....	1
Appendix 1. From values to behaviours workshop: Presentation materials	1
Appendix 2. From values to behaviours workshop: Group work Lucidcharts	5
Appendix 3. Cross-function collaboration workshop: Presentation materials	8
Appendix 4. Cross-function collaboration workshop: Group work Lucidcharts	13
Appendix 5. Dazzle Rocks Culture Handbook.....	17

Abbreviations

MMO Massively Multiplayer Online game

UX User experience (käyttäjäkokemus)

1 Introduction

“Culture is your company’s only truly sustainable competitive advantage” (NOBL Academy 2016.)

Starting in a new job is always an exciting but nerve-racking moment. I should know, because in September of 2020 I started my journey in a new role as an HR Specialist at a Finnish game industry start up, Dazzle Rocks. Nurturing and developing organizational culture have been strategic focus points for the company for many years even before I joined them, and the topics are heavily intertwined with my own role in the team. Culture has also been a personal interest of mine throughout my time in the game industry. Dazzle Rocks has its own unique and pronounced culture that the team is very proud of. The company has been growing rapidly in recent years and to support sustainable growth, onboarding new team members into the company culture has become a strategic priority.

Recently so-called culture handbooks have become increasingly popular tools to communicate about company culture to new employees. This thesis will walk you through the journey of developing a framework for culture handbook development and ultimately a culture handbook for Dazzle Rocks.

1.1 Case company

Dazzle Rocks is a Finnish video game industry start up founded in 2014 by Stella Wang and co-founder Joonas Jokela, both of whom had previously amassed an impressive career at the research & development department at Rovio; another Finnish game studio most well known for their Angry Birds franchise. Dazzle Rocks is working on an ambitious multiplatform social sandbox massively multiplayer online game that was released as a beta version on both iOS and Android mobile platforms in December of 2021. The project will first be released on mobile platforms and later be ported to other platforms, such as PC and consoles. The vision of the company is to ultimately become the category leader in cross-platform social MMO games both in the East and West. While the headquarters are in Helsinki, in spring 2021 an entity was also established in the United Kingdom and expansion to other countries is possible in the future. (Dazzle Rocks 2021.)

In 2020 Dazzle Rocks raised an impressive 6,8 million dollars towards its pioneering project and to enable the growth of the team. Multiple notable investment funds from all around the world are involved, including Galaxy Interactive, byFounders, Spintop Ventures, MTG and Sisu Game Ventures. In addition, multiple private persons have also

invested in the company, including the Chairman of the Board, Ken Lamb, who is also a co-founder of Initial Capital. (Takahashi 5 May 2020.)

At the time of publishing this thesis the company employs 26 people from 11 nationalities, with plans to grow further in the next few years. Majority of the team is located in or around the metropolitan area of Helsinki, but six employees are working remotely from countries such as Spain, Romania and Germany. All in all, the team is very cross-functional and multidisciplinary consisting of client & backend engineers, artists, technical artists, product manager, designers, user acquisition, sound designer, data analysts and human resources.

1.2 Objective of the development project

Dazzle Rocks has an extremely ambitious project in its hands and in reaching for its vision and goals, the company faces a lot of pressure to grow. Just in the first half of 2022, the team's headcount has increased to 26 people from 14 in 2020 and the company will continue to grow rapidly at least for the next few years, reaching around 50-60 employees in 2023.

Whenever new employees are brought into the team it's vital to have clear principles, processes, and materials in place to be able to onboard people effectively. This enables new joiners to integrate into the team and culture of the company and become productive more quickly (Österberg 2014, 115-116). Dazzle Rocks already has an onboarding process in place that mostly addresses practical matters such as workflow, general guidelines, and employee objectives. However, what the company is currently lacking is high quality material that it can utilize to onboard newcomers effectively to its culture.

Dazzle Rocks has a very distinct and strong culture that's being driven by 7 values and additional team principles. The company's culture also differs majorly from other companies in the Finnish games industry and requires newcomers to normally learn a lot of new practices and ways of working. To grow rapidly but sustainably without jeopardising the strong culture Dazzle Rocks has built over the years, developing culture onboarding is very much a priority for the company. Whilst there is an existing value deck and an employee handbook focusing on processes in the company that have been used in onboarding new team members, the culture focused materials consist of a presentation that is not immediately understandable just by reading through it to someone who is unfamiliar with the company culture. The deck contains general descriptions of the company values but lacks in connecting the values into concrete behaviours in everyday working life.

The objective of the thesis project was to produce a culture handbook that conveyed the **core values, principles and desired behaviours** in an **easily digestible format** that can be utilized as an effective tool for culture onboarding. Whilst culture onboarding was the initial target for the culture handbook, it can also be used in other processes in the company such as talent development, performance management, employer branding and even leadership development further down the line.

As a secondary goal, this thesis aimed to create a general culture handbook development framework that could be used by other organizations to create their own handbooks.

1.3 Thesis scope

To focus the study into a suitable scope for a master's studies thesis, the following topics that have a link to the subject matter of organizational culture were scoped out.

Dazzle Rocks has a pronounced and strong culture. According to recent employee surveys and one-on-one discussions that have been conducted by management and HR with the entire team, show that employees feel strongly that the company's written culture and how culture is usually spoken about corresponds with reality. Hence an analysis of the underlying culture at Dazzle Rocks was not a part of this study.

Leadership is in a key role in developing and maintaining organizational culture. However, Dazzle Rocks is in the process of defining a leadership framework for the company separately from the culture handbook work, although they are closely linked together and will no doubt influence each other in many ways in the future.

In addition, this thesis mainly focused on the written contents of the culture handbook, since the visual formatting will be completed separately by the Dazzle Rocks art team at a later stage.

1.4 Research questions

The main research question of the thesis was:

- How to create a culture handbook for Dazzle Rocks that is easily digestible and yet conveys all essential elements of the company culture?

Sub questions for the thesis included:

- Which components form an organizational culture?
- Which components of organizational culture are found in successful companies' culture handbooks?

- How do successful organizations communicate about their culture in culture handbooks?
- What makes a good culture handbook?
- What is the process of creating a good culture handbook?
- What are the key components of Dazzle Rocks' culture that make it unique?

1.5 Research philosophy

This thesis is based on action research. Action research is often qualitative and aims to find pragmatic solutions to a real-life need or problem. This research requires participation from the people who are actively involved with the problem being solved (McNiff & Whitehead 2001, 204). Collaborative problem solving also often leads to better results compared to individual contribution. Another research framework that utilizes participation as its core research method is participatory research (Vaughn & Jacquez 2020). According to Metsämuuronen (2006, in Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 59) results of action research are often hard to replicate since they can often only be applied in the context of the problem that has been solved. For example, action research can be a great way to develop ways of working but the results from one study can seldom be applied directly in another context. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 58-61.)

Action research has 3 core phases that are repeated in a cyclical manner: planning, observing, and evaluating. Because the target of research is often subject to changes (such as ways of working), this cyclical manner of action research enables iteration of the final product to get to the best possible result. As mentioned above, action research is often qualitative but at times quantitative research methods can be applied. Due to action research being collaborative at its core, research methods reflect this nature as well. Typical action research methods include interviews and observing although methods will differ for example according to the size and of the organization and the research target. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 60-62.)

1.6 Thesis structure

The second chapter of this thesis focuses on the theoretical framework where I examine Schein's organizational culture theory, Giftwork and the 9 dimensions of culture to gain an understanding of which components form an organizational culture and what are the components observed specifically in successful companies. The theories chosen were deliberately very different, to gain a broader understanding of organizational culture as a subject.

The third chapter of this thesis focuses on explaining the Dazzle Rocks' company culture and the components that form it. This was done by examining the organizational structure, ways of working, values, and team principles.

The fourth chapter of the thesis consists of the action research process documentation. The action research was conducted utilising two methodologies: benchmarking and workshops. Benchmarking was conducted on four successful companies' culture handbooks which included Hubspot, Smartly.io, Virta, and Futurice. A three-point benchmarking process was conducted on all the chosen handbooks by analysing their table of contents, the written content itself and the complexity of the handbooks. The benchmarking process produced a clear picture of the common ways companies communicate about their culture in culture handbooks.

In addition to benchmarking, two culture related workshops were organized for the Dazzle Rocks team in spring of 2021. The goals of the workshops were to identify how Dazzle Rocks culture manifests in everyday working life in the company, what the team thought were the most important elements of the company culture and to crowdsource content ideas for the final culture handbook. The workshops were designed utilising specific methodologies and theories such as traditional facilitation literature, service design and workshop methodology libraries such as LAB8, a service design laboratory in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences.

After gaining an overall understanding of the research question themes of this thesis through examining theories and conducting action research, this understanding was put into use in creating the final product, the Dazzle Rocks culture handbook. This process is outlined in detail in chapter five.

Chapter six includes a general framework for culture handbook development that was created utilizing the theoretical framework and conclusions from the action research process. This framework can be utilized by other organizations to create their own culture handbooks.

Chapter seven includes the analysis of the Dazzle Rocks culture handbook development process and ideas for future research topics.

Additional documentation of the research process and the final culture handbook are included in the appendices section of this thesis.

The culture handbook development process is visualised in figure 1.

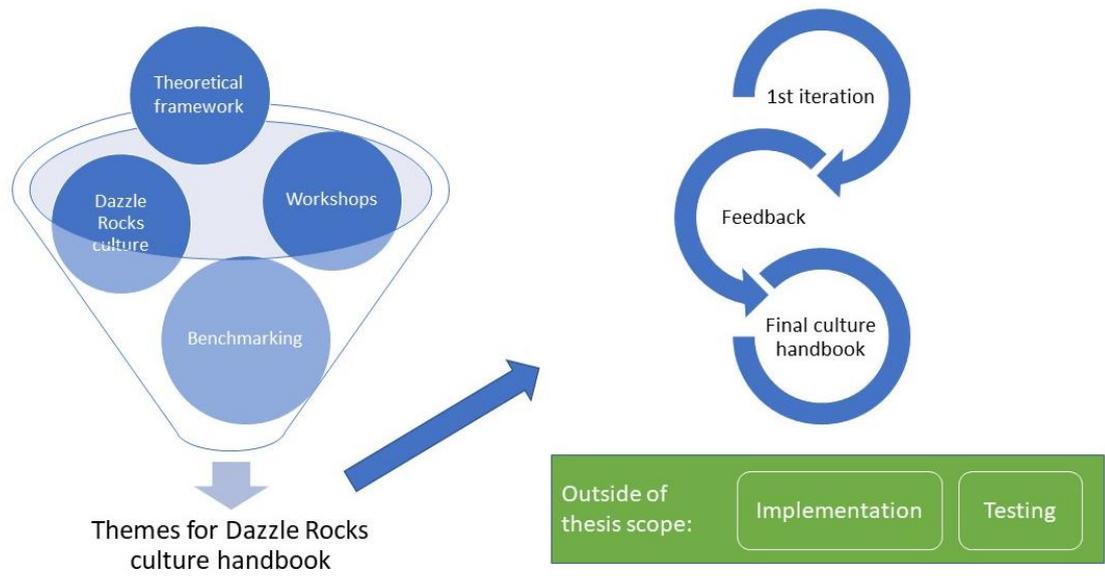


Figure 1. Culture handbook development process visualization

2 Theoretical framework

Culture is a framework that aligns people's behaviours to reach a common goal (Hakulinen & Hämäläinen 4 May 2020). Learning about a culture of a company often happens by experiencing it yourself, but in recent years many organizations have created culture handbooks to communicate about their culture more explicitly.

A great onboarding process introduces all relevant aspects of the organization to a new joiner and enables a new employee to feel like they're a part of a group (Österberg 2014, 115-116). Great onboarding also has an effect on the bottom line. According to a survey by Sapling, employee productivity went up over 70 % when an effective onboarding process was in place (Dewar 3 March 2022). Whilst many companies address practical topics in their onboarding process such as general guidelines, onboarding a new employee into the culture of a company is much more complex.

To recognize the key components that form an organizational culture and to get a comprehensive understanding of the topic from different viewpoints, I purposely examined distinctly different culture theories: Schein's organisational culture theory, Giftwork and 9 dimensions of culture.

2.1 Schein's organizational culture theory

Schein & Schein (2016, 6-9) define culture as shared norms, beliefs, and values that a group has accumulated and learned over time and that have become a part of standard daily life within the group. In addition, Schein & Schein (2016, 17-18) divide culture into three different levels visualised in figure 2.

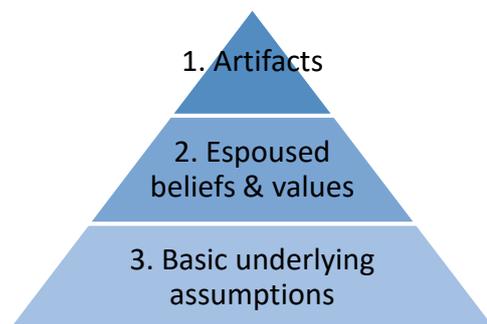


Figure 2. Schein's organizational culture model (adapted from Schein 2009, chapter 2).

Artifacts are the visible parts of culture that are easy for people to observe even if a person does not belong in the group. Examples of artifacts can include language, dress code or stories about the group. While artifacts are easy to observe, it is harder to gain a

deeper understanding of the culture just by observing what is on the surface. Interpreting organizational culture only through artifacts can be harmful and easily cause misunderstandings, because they don't answer to the question: "why are things done in a certain way?" (Burkus 2 December 2014; Schein & Schein 2016, 17-19.)

Espoused values and beliefs can be viewed as the ideologies, goals, and aspirations of a group, which guide them to navigate unforeseeable and complex situations. All groups consist of individuals, each with their own set of values and beliefs and when these groups work, learn and succeed together, they start to recognize certain *perceived values*. Over time with more experiences of success, these values are refined into *shared values* and ultimately *shared assumptions*. A shared value transforms into a shared assumption only when it can be empirically tested and trusted to work in solving the group's problems. Thus, not all values become shared assumptions, because many of them are impossible to test. For example, it can be difficult to prove the direct link between a company's written strategy and the performance of the organization. An excellent example of espoused values and beliefs are company's core values that are usually written down in documents and proclaimed in public events. It's also important to note that espoused values are not always reflective of the observed behaviour. For example, a company can declare on paper that they are customer oriented, while at the same time produce products that are not user friendly. (Burkus 2 December 2014; Schein & Schein 2016, 18-21; Schein 2009, chapter 2.)

The third and deepest level in Schein's organizational culture model are basic underlying assumptions; behaviours and solutions that are so ingrained in the group that they are often non-disputable and very difficult to change. Often there is also very little variation in underlying assumptions in established groups and any attempts to dispute or confront usually lead to defensiveness and anxiousness. Underlying assumptions are not always exhibited in a group's espoused values and beliefs and/or artifacts and this spells trouble. (Burkus 2 December 2014; Schein & Schein 2016, 21-25; Schein 2009, chapter 2.)

In July of 2021 Activision Blizzard Inc., a massive renowned video game maker was sued by the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing following a two-year investigation which concluded the company had fostered a "frat boy" culture of sexual harassment, unequal treatment of employees and other inappropriate behaviour. While the allegations themselves were appalling even without context, they were made even more glaring by some of the company's core values such as "play nice; play fair" and "lead responsibly", showcasing that the underlying assumptions were completely out of line with the company's espoused values and artifacts. Interestingly Activision Blizzard is

now facing another lawsuit from its investors, claiming that the company failed to disclose issues within its company culture. (Allsup 21 July 2021; Blizzard 2021; Dealessandri 4 August 2021.)

2.2 Giftwork and 9 dimensions of culture

For this thesis I wanted to not only examine the basic components of organizational culture but specifically also look at what components of organizational culture do successful companies have. Hence the I chose to examine the concepts of Giftwork and the 9 dimensions of culture that were initially developed by the consulting company, Great Place to Work and presented in Asta Rossi's 2015 book, Kulttuuristrategia 2.

Asta Rossi (2015, 32-40) determines successful companies to lead their culture from a Giftwork perspective rather than a trading culture perspective. In trading culture people are seen as impersonal resources and the sum of their interactions such as an encounter with a customer is never larger than $1+1=2$, whereas in Giftwork, interactions with people usually result in something larger than the sum of its parts (Rossi 2015, 32-33). Whilst trading culture is seen as minimizing, ordinary, impersonal, and detached, giftwork on the opposite hand is giving, special, personal, and holistic (Rossi 2015, 33). Giftwork aims to maximise the culture, potential and motivation of employees and ultimately leads to maximized results both for the organization and its customers (Rossi 2015, 35).

Giftwork culture is lead with 5 principles:

Diversity - Culture should be seen and lead in a multitude of diverse ways from communication to the physical work environment.

Uniqueness - Strong organizational cultures also have a uniqueness to them that cannot be experienced anywhere else.

All-encompassing - Culture should also not just be built by management or HR but everyone in the organization should be involved. Strong and pronounced cultures extend beyond the limits of the organization and effect customers and other surrounding communities.

Humanity – Giftwork cultures are created and nurtured by personal interactions and the human factor is always considered in decision making.

Comprehensiveness – Strong cultures are formed so that each piece such as vision and strategy fit together to form a comprehensive and working map of the culture.

(Rossi 2015, 38-40.)

Giftwork provides a lens through which to analyse organizational culture and evaluate where on the scale of trading culture and Giftwork does an organization position itself (Rossi 2015, 38-40). In order to evaluate culture, first we must recognize what are the different dimensions of culture. Great Place to Work is an organization with a mission to help everywhere to become a great place to work for all (Great Place to Work 2022). When researching organizations that were particularly successful in their own field, Great Place to Work identified 9 dimensions where leading culture was markedly distinct and different compared to other organizations (figure 3) (Rossi 2015, 36-37).

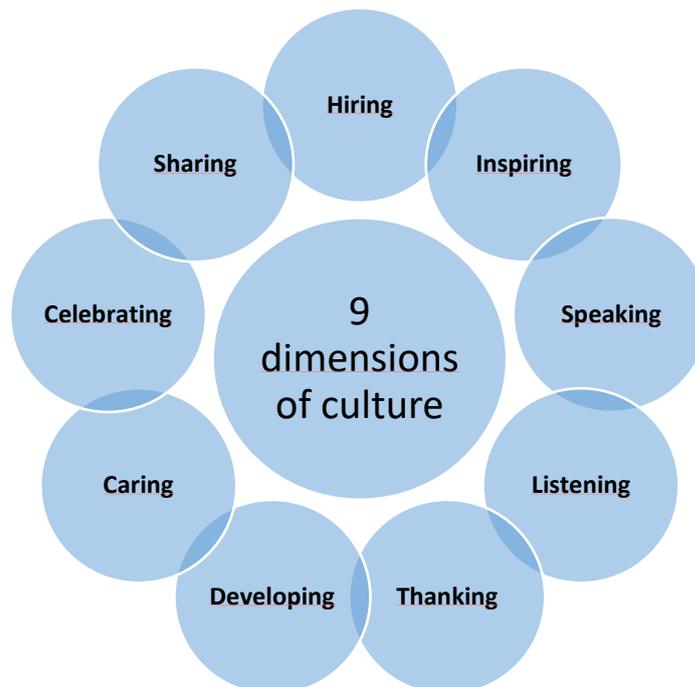


Figure 3. 9 dimensions of culture (Rossi 2015, 36-37)

The **hiring** process of successful organizations is designed to support and nurture the culture. In Giftwork culture, the best candidates are chosen not only according to their skills and abilities but even more so, their culture fit. Common values enable teams to collaborate more seamlessly with each other and leads to more engaged people and less employee turnover. Hiring for a culture fit requires the organization to be highly in tune with their own culture and recognize the cultural norms and how to assess them during a recruitment process. For example, the globally massively successful retail store, H&M, has a questionnaire on their careers website where you can test how well you fit into the H&M team even before applying. Organizations should also be highly aware that effective and culture affirming onboarding is a crucial part of the hiring process. (Bouton 17 July 2015 & Rossi 2015, 51-65.)

The key elements of work engagement are dedication, absorption, and vigour (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá & Bakker 2002, 75). Work engagement generally results in more wellbeing and better work results even when work is challenging (Hakanen 2011, 6-7). In order to utilize people's potential to its fullest, a work environment needs to be **inspiring**. Instead of only communicating top down about the vision and strategy of the organization, employees should be supported to recognize and understand their own purpose and encouraged to take ownership of their work to strengthen and validate the organization's goals and values. Organizations that have a clear and aspirational purpose or an inspirational story can make work meaningful but the prerequisite for an inspiring workplace is trust. Trusting employees to operate based on values and principles instead of only rules and guidelines often leads to more innovation and to the creation of added value. As an example of a best practice for inspiring employees, the software development consultancy company Vincit regularly has career dream discussions with their employees and work together with team leads on how to make those dreams transfer into reality. (Rossi 2015, 87-93.)

For employees to take ownership and have a clear understanding of what the organization is striving for, information should be openly and actively shared. Instead of only **speaking** whenever leadership needs to, communication in successful workplaces is proactive. Therefore, leadership is in a key role in creating a positive culture climate and aligning teams to work towards a common goal via communication (Thornton, Mansi, Carramenha & Cappellano 2019, 52). Arguably communication is one of the most important dimensions of organizational culture and according to Rossi (2015, 119) can be observed on three different levels in the most successful companies: speaking, listening and participation. Speaking enables information sharing and understanding whilst listening and face to face interactions for example in development discussions provide context to the work of an individual employee. Meanwhile participation allows for the workforce to give feedback and develop the organization. Whittington (2019, 220) defines the inclusion of stakeholders and greater transparency in company's strategic practices and processes as open strategy. A great example of open strategy in practice is Futurefuel, a program of workshops and knowledge sharing sessions lead by Futureplay to develop the company's culture collectively with its employees to reach company goals (Futureplay 15 December 2020).

Even though **listening** was already mentioned in the previous paragraph as a part of communication, the 9 culture dimensions includes it as a separate category of its own. By leadership listening to employees, they are given the chance to be heard, have an impact and in the end flourish. Feedback and ideas have much potential to steer organizational

focus to things that matter. In trading culture employee ideas and feedback are only asked for when the organization wants to become more productive. Questions from employees are often also left unanswered unless they are related directly to company goals. In a Giftwork culture however, leadership encourages teams to give feedback, ask questions and question the norms. This can lead to companies more easily recognizing the existence of untapped potential. Law firm Fondia demonstrated listening in practice in an organizational change situation and let teams choose their own managers for example. (Rossi 2015, 146-156.)

People who are engaged and feel like their work is meaningful and thus fulfilling often can adapt more easily and have qualities that are highly desirable to employers (Steger, Dik, & Duffy 2012, 2). A key tool to inspire meaningfulness in work according to the 9 dimensions of culture is **thanking**. And thanking really matters. In 2017 according to research done by OfficeTeam, 66 % of employees would consider leaving their current workplace if they would not receive recognition for their work (Half 13 April 2017). A typical way of thanking employees can include a gift after years of service but often in trading culture giving thanks for a job well done is not consistent or only reserved for a few key people. In giftwork accomplishments are not just written off with a simple thank you but recognized in a consistent and timely manner and often in a very personal way. Achievements are also at times celebrated in surprising ways like at Mandatum life, where the most successful team of the year gets a pair of framed wrestling pants as a badge of honour for a year. (Rossi 2015, 168-177.)

Continuous learning and **development** are key ingredients for companies to gain competitive advantage in the market and grow sustainably. Instead of seeing employees as only resources that complete tasks in the here and now, Giftwork culture values investing in learning and development both on an individual and collective level. Allowing people to develop not only in a professional context, successful organizations encourage personal development as well as seeing a combination of these as a recipe for future success. Companies that can harness the power of learning to develop and grow their business further are called learning organizations. These types of organizations often have similar traits that support the culture of learning such as a vision focused leadership that encourages learning, transparent and effective flow of information and practices that support learning. A great example of how a company encourages development is Boco IP where employees have a minimum of 30 min per day that they can utilize for self-learning. (Rossi 2015, 192-200 & Viitala 2014.)

Successful companies are also built on a culture based on **caring**, so not only is the organization committed to its mission but so are the employees. Said organizations tend to also demand more from their employees but at the same time create an environment where people are seen and respected as human beings rather than just resources. In Giftwork culture caring is not only seen as a competitive benefits package, but as a set of principles and practices weaved into multiple aspects of the business that support employees' worklife balance. An article by University of Massachusetts, "How a caring leader can create a culture of support" (21 December 2016.), talks about two types of working environments: In a "have to" environment where caring and empathy are low, employees often end up disengaged and only completing their work up to minimum required standards, whereas in a "want to" environment where caring is essential, employees are appreciative of their job, engaged and end up contributing above expectations. Caring not only creates a more healthier and productive work environment where employees can be themselves, but it also has a positive effect on concrete business metrics such as lower employee turnover and lower number of sick leaves (Otter 24 September 2020). Companies at times extend their caring culture outside of the business like the Finnish mobile gaming company, Supercell, who donated 1 million euros to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in order to provide humanitarian aid to war torn Ukraine (Ahmed 3 March 2022). (Rossi 2015, 221-228.)

The best workplaces nurture success by **celebrating** wins and achievements consistently. In trading culture it's more important for employees to be informed about the success of the organization rather than celebrating it in a meaningful way. Celebration rituals are also often based on customs such as the need to have a summer party every year. Whereas in Giftwork culture personal and culture affirming ways of celebrating success encourage employees to work towards even more positive experiences and recognition. When done well this can also promote a sense of community, togetherness, and teamwork. Leading with joy and focusing on success is especially important in crisis situations because it can foster faith and ownership in creating a better future. Instead of the crisis itself taking a stranglehold of the organization, employees have more trust in the fact that they can turn things around with good work because of previous positive experiences. During the global COVID-19 pandemic companies had to learn new ways of showing appreciation to their employees. For example, DailyPay, a wage software company organized online culinary classes for their employees where teams cooked a 3-course dinner with video instructions from a chef via Zoom video conferencing right from their homes (Wilkie 29 October 2020). (Rossi 2015, 249-255.)

Sharing wealth and successes is a general trait of successful organizations. Sharing can be divided into two categories: compensation and social responsibility. In trading culture compensation is determined by benchmarking what competitors and the market are offering and the selection of compensation methods is often small, mostly focused on monetary aspects and only available for selected few employees. In Giftwork culture shared successes result in shared wealth and instead of rewarding individuals, wealth is shared with as many people as possible and compensation methods and reasons for sharing are varied. More impactful than compensation, when employees feel like their work is meaningful and they are appreciated and rewarded fairly and generously, the more they are motivated to contribute to this positive cycle. In the other end of the spectrum if work has no meaning, money only acts as a “band aid on a broken leg”. Compensation as a sharing method is at its most effective when it supports company goals (Schwartz et al. 15 May 2020). Social responsibility on the other hand gives organizations the chance to share their success not only internally but externally as well. Where in trade culture companies participate in charity activities to boost their own brand and often make a simple monetary donation, in Giftwork culture companies tend to invest time and see their participation in bettering the society around them as important. For example, IKEA employees can use one day per year for charity work. (Rossi 2015, 272-285.)

3 Culture of Dazzle Rocks

To form a cohesive picture of the culture of Dazzle Rocks, it's important to first understand the organizational structure, ways of working and values of the company.

3.1 Organizational structure & teams

Making games requires a varied mix of skills and abilities from technology to art, sound, marketing and beyond. In addition to this, running a business demands its own expertise. At Dazzle Rocks the growing team of 26 people currently consists of the following disciplines:

- Technology (quality assurance, client, and backend)
- Art (2D and 3D art, animation, and technical art)
- Design
- Product management
- Business Intelligence
- Sound and music
- Marketing and community
- Human resources
- Business and strategy

Around half of the team are technology professionals with art coming in as a close second in terms of the number of experts. Other disciplines such as marketing and sounds are often being driven by 1-2 people in the team. The company is looking to grow the team on all fronts in the future and adding new functions such as quality assurance and live operations.

Most Dazzle Rocks team members are in Finland, but the company employs team members remotely in various other countries such as France, Germany, Spain, Romania, and Iceland as well.



Figure 4. Dazzle Rocks organizational structure and responsibilities

As is common for games industry companies, Dazzle Rocks has a very flat hierarchy. At the centre of operations is the leadership team, which consists of the CEO, COO, CTO, HR and Product Management. The leadership team is the vision holder and focuses on strategic decision making and determining the key focus areas and business objectives for the company (points 1 & 2 in figure 4). This includes decisions around topics such as product vision and how the company wants to develop its culture. The leadership team works tightly together with the product/roadmap and feature teams to establish and polish the operational strategy of the company (point 3 in figure 4). The purpose of operational strategy is to break up the strategic business objectives into smaller more manageable key initiatives and determine clear objectives for different functions in the company. In addition, the operational strategy drills down to how the company operates day to day, ways of working and how the team is organized.

Because the company is growing and there is more pressure on the leadership team to focus on the bigger picture, the responsibility for operational strategy is slowly being transferred to the product and feature teams. This requires the company to recruit, recognize and train up key talents who have proven themselves to have an affinity to strategic thinking. Open and transparent information sharing about strategic decisions and objectives becomes imperative for new people stepping into these types of roles. Leadership must spend time and effort to make sure everyone is aligned in terms of the vision of the company to confirm that everyone is moving in the same direction.

The product/roadmap team is mainly in charge of breaking down the operational strategy and vision into milestones that clearly lay out objectives for the product the company is working on. Milestones are then further broken down into a roadmap, which also serves as a type of schedule or map for when certain objectives are expected to be fulfilled during a specific time.

Contrary to many larger and established game studios where game development teams are often divided according to functions (i.e., technology team, design team etc.), the Dazzle Rocks team works in feature teams instead. A feature team is in charge of one part of a game project (i.e., a feature) and usually consists of a mix of people from many different functions in the company, such as programmers, artists and marketing. For example, a feature team working on adding a new playable character into the game might consist of a designer, artist, animator, and programmers. Employees can be part of multiple feature teams at any given time and the team compositions can change throughout feature development. Feature teams usually get a high-level overview of the objectives for the feature that they're working on from the product/roadmap team. Feature

teams then plan their work collaboratively and crystallize the scope, schedule, and deliverables for the feature. Each feature team also has a feature owner whose responsibility is to keep track of the development of said feature, align the team on the vision, proactively work to minimize blockers, recognize dependencies and share information proactively with other feature teams.

Dazzle Rocks has specifically decided to work in feature teams because of a few reasons. Because feature teams are inherently diverse and collaborative, it enables the team to gain a better overall understanding of the product from multiple different angles. This can help the team to make better decisions in the long run and ultimately learn and grow from each other. Working in feature teams also give more freedom for the team to take ownership of their work and have a great impact on the product. Whilst feature teams are not always the fastest way to work, Dazzle Rocks believes this way of working ultimately leads to an engaged and strategically smart team and supports the type of culture the company wants to cultivate in the long term.

3.2 Ways of working

Culture is intertwined in all actions and behaviours in the company and nowhere can it be seen in action better than in the everyday ways of working.

The ways of working philosophy of Dazzle Rocks is largely based on the Agile Manifesto, which was formulated by a group of software development and project management experts in 2001 (Highsmith 2001). Agile is a project management philosophy that is based on iterative approach to product development (Atlassian 2022). The Agile Manifesto outlines the 4 core principles for agile software development (figure 5).

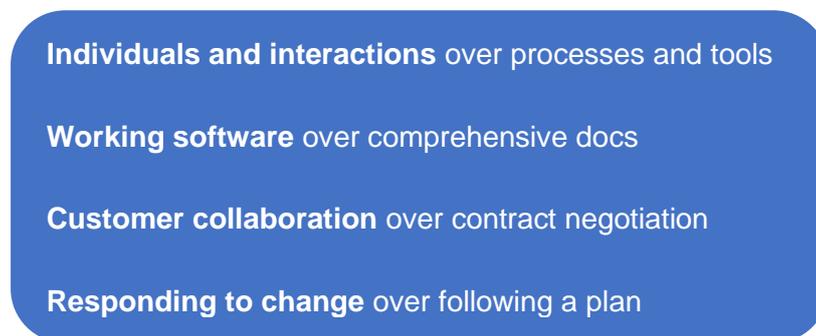


Figure 5. Agile manifesto (Beck et al. 2001)

It's significant to note that both sides of the agile manifesto are important and at Dazzle Rocks at times you need the right-hand side to fulfil the left-hand side of the list. Therefore, the agile manifesto is more used as a list of principles to help decision making, rather than as an absolute rule book with no exceptions or flexibility.

In addition to the agile manifesto, Dazzle Rocks has adapted many parts of Scrum. Scrum is a framework for teamwork that is based on lean thinking and empiricism. In lean thinking the aim is for the team to focus only on what is important whereas empiricism notes that knowledge is acquired through experience and observation. Where the Agile Manifesto provides the principles for work, Scrum contains concrete steps and ways for the team to work together. (Drumond 2022; Schwaber & Sutherland 2020.) Just as with the Agile principles, Dazzle Rocks doesn't follow a "by-the-book" version of Scrum, but rather sees it as a toolbox from which they can pick the most suitable tools for the job.

The whole team works in three-week sprints. Sprints are an essential part of Scrum and a way to break up the work into smaller intervals and the project into manageable chunks rather than developing everything at the same time (Rehkopf 2022; Schwaber & Sutherland 2020). Even before the next sprint starts the product/roadmap team gives a high-level brief to the feature teams about what they are expected to accomplish during the next sprint. Usually when a new sprint starts, the first few days are spent on planning, scoping, and determining the deliverables in feature teams.

In addition to sprints, regular meetings provide a framework for the weekly routine of the team. Workdays in the company always start with the **daily meeting**. This is where the whole team gathers to go through the project Jira board where the project tasks are added and tracked, and everyone can see the status of the features that are being worked on during that sprint. It's a way for everyone to relay important information about delays, dependencies, blockers, or any other updates that might be relevant to everyone. It's an efficient meeting that usually runs around 15-25 min. In case there are topics that require further discussion, usually separate sessions are booked for later in the day. The daily meetings are also a way for the team to get an efficient and energized start to the day and say hello to all their colleagues. Nearly every day these meetings are concluded in team members wishing everyone a good day, which fosters a positive mindset for the day.

Another significant session where usually the whole team is present is the **product review** is organised on the second and third weeks of the sprint. This is where the team gets to play the game together and see the status of the features that are in development. It's also one of the main opportunities for feature teams to gather feedback from others about features. In addition to product reviews there can sometimes be smaller playtest sessions throughout sprints which are mainly used as lightweight quality assurance sessions. Playing the game together regularly not only helps the team to observe the status of the project and bring forward new ideas but is also an opportunity to spark motivation and excitement via feedback and seeing what other teams have accomplished.

The final meeting of the week for the whole team is the **weekly meeting** that's usually organized on Friday afternoons. The start of the session is reserved for company updates such as announcing new team members or strategy updates. The bulk of the meeting however is used for a "Dazzle & Tell" session where each team member gets to present their highlight of the week and/or showcase something cool they did at work. The meeting is relaxed, laid back and fun. Whilst for outsiders the weekly meeting might look like a group of people just joking and having fun for an hour, the session serves an important purpose for the team. It's a way for the team to be able to showcase their learnings and ideas to each other and celebrate achievements together. In addition, people often share highlights from their personal lives making it an opportunity for the team to build relationships and get to know each other better. The end of the weekly meeting concludes the workweek, allowing for a soft landing into the weekend.

In addition, **function specific meetings** like art team and tech team meetings are organized weekly. This is where teams discuss longer term function goals and responsibilities together. These sessions are often used for knowledge sharing, with regular presentations about new technology or best practices being shared with everyone.

3.3 Remote work

On Thursday 12th March 2020, the Finnish government took its first steps to enact restrictions and recommendations to curb the COVID-19 pandemic in Finland (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 12 March 2020). Immediately the day after the Dazzle Rocks team transferred their workstations home and by Monday 16th March 2020 the entire team was fully operational remotely. Before this, team members had rarely, if ever, worked remotely. As of the writing of this thesis, most of the team continues to work remotely but there are plans to start returning to the office gradually in 2022.

Remote work changed many aspects of how the team operates. Since collaboration is essential for the company's success, the team had to apply new ways of working together in unprecedented circumstances. All meetings moved into video conferencing apps such as Zoom and Google Meet. Utilizing operational software such as Lucidchart & Quip that enable the team to collaborate in real time became increasingly important.

What most worried the team when the transfer happened was losing the team spirit and the ability to collaborate and communicate effectively. To make sure the team could communicate sufficiently, leadership established several Zoom channels to be used freely. A designated channel would be open throughout the entire workday and act as a virtual living room for the team. People were encouraged to stay on the channel

throughout the workday, not including time spent in meetings or work that required focus and no distractions. This virtual living room resulted in colleagues staying in regular contact and a sense of being a part of the team. From occasional banter to work-related discussion, the channel has essentially replaced some of the “coffee machine” chatter that would have otherwise happened if the team was on-site at the office. For new employees the channel has served as a great place to get to know their new colleagues and find help and answers to any questions they might have.

Interestingly, the company has not implemented new collaboration or communication software nor changed its ways of working drastically during the pandemic, but rather utilized existing solutions in a different way, adapting them to a new world. This may showcase that the propensity for remote work at Dazzle Rocks had always been there, but the COVID-19 pandemic just confirmed that the company really is able to make the most of it.

While remote work posed its own challenges, it was also an opportunity. Before the pandemic, all of Dazzle Rocks’ employees were living in or near Helsinki and commuted to work. After the pandemic started and since remote work had been successfully implemented in the company, the leadership team recognized a possibility, hiring regardless of location. The hunt for the best talent is relentless in the game industry and offering fully remote job opportunities could become a huge competitive advantage. Hence in September 2020, the company hired its first fully remote employee in Tampere and in April of 2021, the first international remote employees joined the team from the United Kingdom and Spain.

Onboarding of new team members during remote work has presented its own challenges. Whilst providing instructions for setting up laptops and software is simple, effectively conveying company culture with limited contact to colleagues is its own question. For Dazzle Rocks, onboarding begins already during the recruitment process.

Recruiting at Dazzle Rocks is always seen as a two-way street. Whilst it’s important for the company to find out as much as possible about candidates, it’s equally as important for candidates to be as informed as possible about the company. There is a limited amount of information available about the culture, team, and ways of working in the public domain but prospective candidates who are selected for interviews have more access to it. Candidates in interviews are for example given an opportunity to ask questions openly from their interviewers at each session and via email. In addition, each recruitment process includes a culture fit interview where company values and principles are shared openly.

3.4 Core values of Dazzle Rocks

Dazzle Rocks has determined seven core values that drive the behaviour of the team in everyday working life (figure 6). The company has a value deck that outlines these values and is utilized in onboarding new employees as an example. Stating that a company has a self-managing or inclusive culture can generate multiple interpretations, so it's vital to define more clearly what these values mean in the context of Dazzle Rocks.



Figure 6. Dazzle Rocks values

Merriam-Webster (2021) dictionary defines **self-management** as just that, managing oneself by oneself. Self-management at Dazzle Rocks is rooted in the idea of self-knowledge and how to utilize that knowledge to best work with the team. Because of the ambitious nature of the game project and the company's status as a pre-revenue start-up, everyone needs to be fully committed to "sail the ship with the team". This requires skills in time management, stress management and in recognizing how one's actions reflect on others. People also need awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses and actively work on them by setting goals to be an active part in ultimately executing company strategy. For example, it's very important to come to meetings on time and all team members play an active part in setting both short-term and long-term goals for themselves.

Self-management does not imply lack of leadership or manager roles at Dazzle Rocks. Instead, leadership in the company enables the team to be more self-managing through actively recognizing the potential of individuals, giving feedback and empowering people to develop themselves. This also requires leadership to know the team on a deeper level including people, their aspirations, personalities, and skills.

Innovation, the utilization of a new practice or idea, is a value very often seen in organizations such as Salesforce (Cambridge Dictionary 2021; Tallholm 2 September 2019). Most game companies usually take existing game concepts and innovate small changes around them. King, a massively successful mobile game company is known for

their breakthrough success project, Candy Crush Saga, and their strategy for a long time has been to replicate the game's core mechanics (i.e., how the player plays the game) but create new visuals and add some new and interesting elements to differentiate the new game from its predecessor, creating new titles such as the Candy Crush Soda Saga and Farm Heroes Super Saga (King 2021; Handley 6 January 2020). Innovation comes naturally to Dazzle Rocks. The game project the company is working on is groundbreaking in many ways and something that doesn't exist on the market yet. This requires the team to be able to work with completely new technology, such as the Data Oriented Technology Stack (DOTS) of the Unity game engine and solve never-before-seen complex problems.

Dazzle Rocks encourages employees to tackle the unknown, to courageously bring out new ideas and creatively problem solve. Innovation as an intrinsic value usually does not lead to results either, so it's imperative that team members understand the context and end goal of problems they're trying to solve. Because the team is compact, resources such as time are limited. Due to the project being very complex and enormous, the team cannot afford further complications. Hence the phrase: "The best solutions are often simple", is often uttered in meetings. This also incentivises an open-minded approach and looking at problems from new perspectives. Change is not a concept the team fears, but rather they embrace it.

Innovation at Dazzle Rocks doesn't just extend to the project and technologies but also into other aspects of running the company, such as ways of working. As previously mentioned, the team's ways of working are heavily based on the agile manifesto and scrum but none of them are followed "by the book" but have rather been adapted to best fit the vision and needs of the project, team, and company. During early 2022 the company launched a new feature team 2.0 ways of working model that provides clearer document templates and definitions for the feature owner role.

Change doesn't happen without conscious effort. At Dazzle Rocks **proactiveness** is an essential behaviour that powers the efficiency of teamwork, pushes people to be curious to learn from each other and always stay several steps ahead of the rest of the industry. Even though the team consists of various, often seasoned professionals, everyone is encouraged to have a "glass half full" -attitude at work, implying the need for continuous learning. This is demonstrated whenever new people are welcomed into the company, since the existing team sees this as another opportunity to learn from new co-workers. At the same time newcomers are encouraged be humble and actively ask questions to get to the truth and put their own assumptions aside. As an employer Dazzle Rocks is not just

building a product, but a trailblazing team where people take ownership of their own career paths, wherever they may lead. This requires everyone to actively develop themselves and strive to contribute to the success of the company.

Integrity is one, if not the most important foundations of the culture at Dazzle Rocks. Everyone in the team is expected to abide by certain unified moral cornerstones such as having respect and empathy towards others. Egoism is not tolerated. Instead, having an open mind, consciously recognizing and putting aside personal biases leads to a working environment where differences of opinion can be fruitfully discussed rather than argued. In recruiting new talent, the company does pay significant attention to the candidates' backgrounds. Instead of a new person's previous achievements, their work in the team should speak for itself enabling them to quickly earn the trust of others around them. Failure is part and parcel of working life but instead of punishing, the team is told to embrace and learn from it so as to avoid the same mistakes.

Everyone is encouraged to care greatly not only about their own but the team's wellbeing. Therefore, the team often tends to rally around anyone needing help, even in their personal lives. Additionally, the company has invested significant resources into occupational healthcare, providing an extensive package including specialist services such as physiotherapy, mental health care and other wellbeing services to the team. In 2020 the company gifted everyone in the team an activity band for employees to better monitor their own wellbeing and a weekly neck & shoulder stretching session has become a staple activity for the team during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Inherently, game development is a collaborative effort requiring effective **communication**. As previously mentioned, the team is very diverse. Decidedly this presents challenges to communication and employees need to be very aware of that not everyone might understand the nuances of their expertise in the company. Whilst the use of jargon is prevalent in the game industry and the company has also formed its unique lingo, technical people are very language conscious when discussing technical issues with non-technical colleagues. The company has made a very deliberate decision that it has one common language that all employees understand, English. Even when two Finnish speaking people are discussing amongst themselves at the office, they usually speak in English, so it's easier for anyone to join the conversation.

Transparent and open communication enables the flow of information and feedback across the whole team. Because the feature team compositions change from time to time and people can be part of multiple teams at once, effective communication is central to the success of the progression of the game project. The company has two main channels

of communication: Slack for written communication and Zoom for verbal communication. Everyone is encouraged to discuss topics on open Slack channels that can be accessed by anyone in the team.

Dazzle Rocks' ambition is not only to build a ground-breaking project and a company but a trailblazing team. Whilst self-management and individual development is incredibly important, what is even more crucial for collaboration's sake is **inclusion**. Regardless of people's backgrounds, culture, and skills, it's in the company's ethos to create an environment where everyone feels like they're a part of a team and they have the same opportunities to be productive members of it. Whenever there are new people joining the team, the onus is on the rest of the group to make sure they feel welcomed. This happens through proactively sharing information, being genuinely curious to learn from others, answering questions and by being open, and approachable. Employees at times refer to the company as a second family of sorts and in some cases create very strong bonds even outside of work with their co-workers; playing games together during their free time and even helping a colleague move house.

Naturally, everyone in the team has their own opinions. By being open to learning from others and actively recognizing biases in themselves, people are more prone to embracing new perspectives and make well-informed decisions, which ultimately makes the team stronger and project more successful. Everyone is also told to be very candid with each other. This empowers people to give honest feedback thus enabling everyone's opinions and thoughts to be heard. Because the team is also very international and is comprised of many different nationalities, respecting and understanding cultural differences makes people feel more at home.

Everyone strives to be a trusted and **accountable** team player at Dazzle Rocks. Taking true ownership of your tasks and conscientiously aligning your job with the company goals, quickly gains the respect of the team. Even though there is a lot of freedom for team members to take ownership, the responsibility to deliver is also taken very seriously. Making games is a joint effort and with your behaviour, you share in that effort. Mistakes of course happen at times but at Dazzle Rocks it's how you deal with them what's more important. Openly admitting to mistakes and actively learning from them is seen as commendable rather than punishable. It also makes team members more human in each other's eyes and ultimately can be a teachable moment for the team rather than just for the individual.

Even though Dazzle Rocks has 7 values, many of them are closely interconnected. The team often uses "collaboration" as an umbrella term that encompasses proactiveness,

integrity, communication, inclusion, and accountability. Another overarching theory outlined in figure 7 that relates closely to many of the values is the theory of fixed and growth mindsets by Carol Dweck, an American Psychology professor at Stanford University (Stanford University 2021a; Stanford University 2021b).

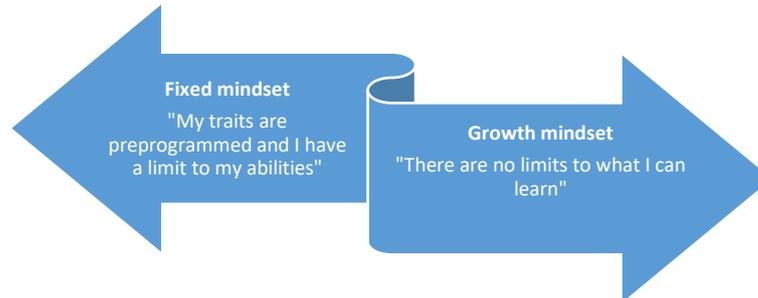


Figure 7. Fixed and growth mindset (adapted from Dweck 4 November 2015, min. 2-3)

A person with a fixed mindset sees traits such as intelligence as static and predetermined. This leads to fear of learning and failure and ultimately can affect a person's motivation negatively if they face new challenges. On the other end of the spectrum, someone with a growth mindset sees failures as an opportunity to learn and grow. This creates resilience to face the unknown and persevere in difficult circumstances, ultimately leading to learning more. (Dweck 4 November 2015, min 2-4; Hoxie 22 March 2021; Whitener 6 January 2021)

Dazzle Rocks' culture could partly be portrayed through the lens of a growth mindset, especially when it comes to the values of integrity, innovation, and self-management. The team is expected to be curious to learn and challenge themselves fearlessly due to the nature of the project and the ways of working in the company. Heavy focus is also placed on evaluating self-management skills and inner motivation to learn and grow not just within the team but also in the recruitment process of the company.

3.5 Team principles

In addition to core values, the company also has a list of team principles that provide a further layer to the culture:

Reach for the stars, land on the moon. The team is expected to be ambitious but realistic. Ambition pushes them to think big and beyond perceived limits to make better games.

T-shaped skills. Dazzle Rocks is still a relatively small company compared to big studios such as Supercell and Rovio. To be as efficient as possible, every team member has wide

horizontal skills (the top of the T) and is able to wear multiple hats during the game development process. For example, artists in the team are also able to work in the game engine Unity to implement their art assets in game without necessarily needing the help of client programmers to do so. In addition to having horizontal skills, everyone in the team has 1-2 expertise areas that they are experts in (this represents the leg of the T).

Sailing in the same direction. The team needs to share the same vision and actively try to understand and work towards getting closer to it. The team is very diverse and despite everyone having very different backgrounds, skills, and abilities, a common goal is what unites them all.

No assholes rule. This is one of the cardinal rules of the team and it's simple but effective. Rude, irritating and selfish behaviour is not tolerated in the team. The company does also have general guidelines against inappropriate behaviour such as sexual harassment and bullying but the "no assholes" -rule encompasses a wider range of unacceptable behaviours that don't necessarily always fall directly under the definition of the guidelines. For example, it's unacceptable if you blame your own mistakes on others or take credit for someone else's work.

Stay hungry & stay foolish. This is another principle showcasing the ambitions of the team, referring to wanting to learn and grow and do things unconventionally. Being a pioneering company, Dazzle Rocks often faces questions and doubt over their operations because they're playing in uncharted waters. In order to move forward, you need courage to try new things and keep learning.

Enjoy the moment. Ultimately Dazzle Rocks is a video game company making entertaining experiences for its users and creating entertainment should be fun. The company tries to keep a spirit of fun in everyday work. Jokes and humour are an everyday occurrence in the team and the weekly Friday meeting is a perfect example of how the company encourages everyone to have fun together while working.

4 Research methodologies & process

The action research methodologies utilized in this thesis were benchmarking and workshops. Benchmarking provided a useful way to examine and learn what kind of culture handbooks other organizations have created and draw conclusions for what kind of elements the Dazzle Rocks culture handbook should include. Because culture is formed by people, it was incredibly important to involve the entire Dazzle Rocks team in this development project. Collaborative workshops provided a useful way to identify key components of the Dazzle Rocks culture whilst giving the whole team a way to participate in the process of creating the culture handbook.

4.1 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a research method where the aim is to learn and adopt ways that have made organizations successful. In order to benchmark entities effectively, most often a clearly defined development subject must be established first. Next the target organizations for benchmarking are selected. Because the aim is to learn from organizations that are performing better in a certain area, reputation and success rate are often deciding factors in choosing which entities to benchmark. At its best benchmarking can lead to innovation and gaining competitive advantage over competitors. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 186; Vuorinen 2013, 158-159, 164-165.)

There are various types of benchmarking:

In **Internal benchmarking** organizations observe and compare their own operations. As an example, this can be a way to research which factors effect productivity when comparing different teams with each other.

Competitor benchmarking can be a valuable tool to gather information about successful competitors in the market. Whilst it is possible to gather information through public documents such as annual reports and financial statements, often to truly benchmark another company and get access to information that is underneath the public numbers, a symbiotic, mutually beneficial relationship is required.

Process/function benchmarking gives insight to how organizations succeed in a specific process or task, such as customer service. Often process benchmarking is done by researching companies outside of the respective industry.

Industry benchmarking is a way to share and learn about best practices of the industry. This can lessen the risk for competitor conflict when other operators are involved in the process.

(Vuorinen 2013, 159-160.)

The reason to choose benchmarking as one of the research methods for developing a culture handbook was to gain a better understanding of:

- What kind of culture handbooks have successful companies created?
- What are reoccurring themes in said handbooks?
- How do successful companies communicate about their culture in culture handbooks?
- What makes a good culture handbook?

It's important to note that in this case benchmarking was not focused on analysing the actual culture of any organizations being benchmarked but rather the themes, style of communication and presentation of the content found in the culture handbooks.

In the case of this thesis, the natural option for benchmarking was process/function benchmarking. This was due to the subject under development being a culture handbook. Whilst it could be justified to research what competitors of Dazzle Rocks and/or the game industry had created in this field, it could have limited the possibility to learn where other industries have succeeded and stifle innovation. Furthermore, there was little publicly available information about culture handbooks in the game industry at the time of writing. Accessing relevant information would have therefore required establishing relationships with companies. Due to Dazzle Rocks' status as a growing company, it was not able to benchmark the topic in question internally. The benchmarking process followed a structure adapted from Vuorinen (figure 8) (2013, 160-161).

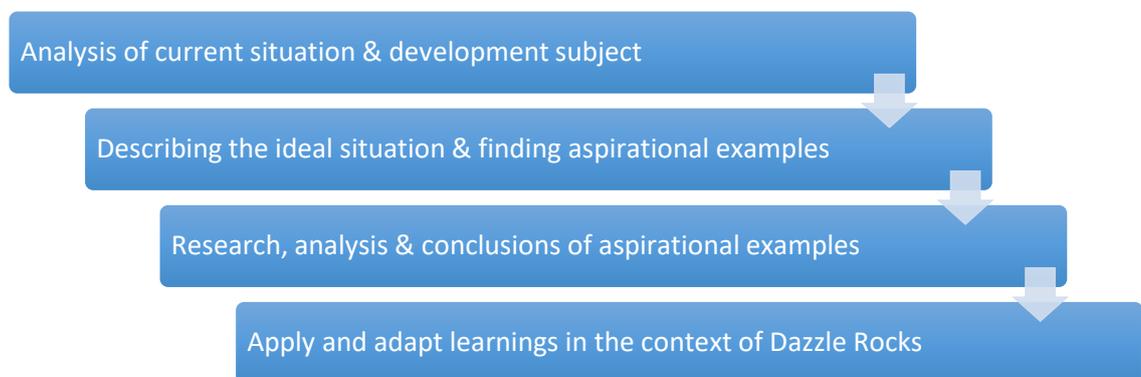


Figure 8. Benchmarking process (adapted from Vuorinen 2013, 160-161)

As mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, Dazzle Rocks lacks high quality materials for onboarding new team members to its unique culture. A culture handbook is a way for the company to communicate about its culture to new team members in an easily shareable and consistent format. Ideally the culture handbook would act as a useful onboarding tool alongside other actions such as presentations that convey the company culture to new joiners. The handbook should convey the **core values, principles and desired behaviours** in an **easily digestible format** that could ultimately be used also for talent development, performance management, employer branding and leadership development in addition to onboarding.

Searching for the organizations for benchmarking was mainly done by conducting a wide Google search online by utilizing various keywords:

- (Famous/best/creative) culture handbook
- (Famous/best/creative) culture manual
- (Famous/best/creative) culture guide
- (Famous/best/creative) culture deck
- (Famous/best/creative) culture book
- (Famous/best/creative) employee handbook
- Famous/best/creative) employee manual
- (Famous/best/creative) employee guide

Early on it became apparent that many searches using the keywords “employee” turned up results that did not directly fit the purposes of this thesis. The majority of them did not contain culture specific topics but rather focused on general guidelines for topics such as absences or equipment. By utilising “culture” as a keyword, the search results narrowed into content that would be more relevant to this thesis. Many results also tended to contain similar content. For example, the culture handbooks for Zappos, Netflix and Hubspot were mentioned in various search results. In addition to online searches, I had previous knowledge through several master’s degree program courses of other companies that had made publicly available culture handbooks. These companies included Smartly.io and Futurice.

Ultimately the search and initial screening of the handbooks resulted in a shortlist of the following:

- Smartly.io: Culture Handbook (2022)
- Valve: Handbook for new employees (2012)
- Hubspot: Culture code (2021)
- Zappos: Culture Book (2019)
- Netflix: Culture Handbook (2009)
- Futurice: Futurice Culture Handbook (2018)
- IDEO: The little book of IDEO (2014)

- Virta: Culture Handbook (2021)

After the initial search it was important to go back and look at the objective of the ideal version of a culture handbook: The handbook should convey the **core values, principles and desired behaviours** of the company in an **easily digestible format**. This in turn would help whittle down the shortlist to the most relevant candidates.

Whilst Valve's handbook did convey parts of the company's culture with a look back to its history and desired behaviours, it was focused more on processes and company guidelines rather than culture. Because Dazzle Rocks already has an employee handbook covering processes and general rules, Valve's handbook ultimately ended up being rejected from the shortlist for having too much overlap with what Dazzle Rocks already has in its toolbox. The little book of IDEO was initially chosen for the shortlist because of its simplicity, with it being only 18 pages long. However, it turned out to be too simplistic in its themes and content for the purposes of benchmarking. Whilst conveying IDEO's values in a very straightforward format visualized in the style of a children's book, in some cases it also left too much room for interpretation and unclarity. This led to it being rejected from the final list.

The handbooks of Hubspot and Netflix were very similar in that they focused on simplistic statements that were direct and to the point. Netflix has updated their culture materials and is no longer using the original culture deck from 2009 and has instead added their culture statements to their careers website. Due to the similarity between the two handbooks and the Netflix handbook no longer being in use, Hubspot was chosen into the final benchmarking list.

The Zappos culture book has garnered an almost cult like status. The initial screening observed significant differences from other handbooks on the shortlist. It leaned heavily into showcasing the Zappos employees, events, and important causes for the company, such as charity work and company parties. Notably it was not focusing on "traditional" organizational culture topics such as values but rather emphasised storytelling greatly. One could call it the "dark horse" of the shortlist. Zappos' culture handbook was fantastic at creating enthusiasm by showcasing fun company activities. On the other hand, it was also too light in other aspects and failed to explicitly explain some core elements of the culture that in turn are very important to Dazzle Rocks, such as values. Hence it was dropped from the list.

Even though the Valve, IDEO and Zappos handbooks were rejected from the final list, there was still some elements of inspiration that were used in the final Dazzle Rocks culture handbook. Valve's handbook utilizes a lot of humour that is also present in some of Dazzle Rock's existing documentation and as such is very appropriate in terms of its communication style. IDEO's simplicity made me very aware that sometimes less is more and Zappos spurred thoughts of how to make the handbook spark enthusiasm and excitement.

The finalist companies chosen for benchmarking were Hubspot, Smartly.io, Futurice and Virta.

The final list of companies offered a variety of culture handbooks to examine from multiple industries. Interestingly, three of the companies on the list (Hubspot, Smartly.io and Futurice) operate in the software development industry. It could also be observed in the initial Google searches that most companies appearing in the search results for culture handbooks were working in the software development field. Three of the companies were originally founded in Finland (Smartly.io, Futurice & Virta), although all of them have since expanded internationally and now have operations in multiple different countries. All the companies are also very successful in their own fields:

In 2013 a digital media advertising company **Smartly.io** was born out of a prototype which enabled brands to launch automated advertising campaigns on Facebook (Smartly.io 2022a). Ever since then the company has been on a fast upwards trajectory, reaching over 70 million euros in sales in 2020 and employing over 650 people in 2021 (Iittala & Ranta 10 November 2021; Kauppalehti 2022). The company culture has also been rated very highly by its employees on the Glassdoor website with the company reaching an overall star rating of 4.8 (Glassdoor 2022).

Virta is a Finnish founded company developing an electric vehicle charging platform that is already operating in over 30 countries worldwide. They have received multiple honours for innovation and growth and were declared Europe's fastest growing company two years in a row in 2020 and 2021. In April of 2022 Virta announced a new partnership with a Finnish electric charging station manufacturer, Kempower. (Kainulainen 22 April 2022 & Virta 2022.)

Hubspot is a CRM software development company that was founded by MIT students in 2004. Since then, they have grown their customer base to over 143 000 and are known for their numerous awards for workplace culture, innovative products and more. In 2022 Hubspot was voted as the 2nd best workplace in the United States in the Glassdoor Best

Places to Work ranking list. Hubspot has an average score of 4,6/5 stars on Glassdoor. (Hubspot 2022 & Glassdoor 2022a.)

Futurice is a software development company focusing on digital innovation and futureproofing companies by providing services to elevate their businesses to the next level. In 2012 Futurice was awarded the title of Europe's Best Workplace by Great Place to Work and the company is known for its transparent culture. (Futurice 2022a; Taloussanommat 20 June 2012.)

An analysis of the finalist handbooks was conducted in three parts: Table of contents analysis, content themes analysis and complexity analysis. An overview analysis of the table of contents of each handbook helped to establish a baseline for the most common themes usually seen in culture handbooks. Afterwards a deeper content theme analysis of the handbooks was done by methodically going through each of them page by page and identifying more themes, subthemes, similarities, and differences. The product of this analysis would become a list of common themes found in culture handbooks. To gain an understanding of the handbooks' degree of complexity and readability, I carried out a comparison of the contents. The final theme and observation lists would be then used as a basis for the Dazzle Rocks culture handbook and adapted in the context of the company's goal for the final product.

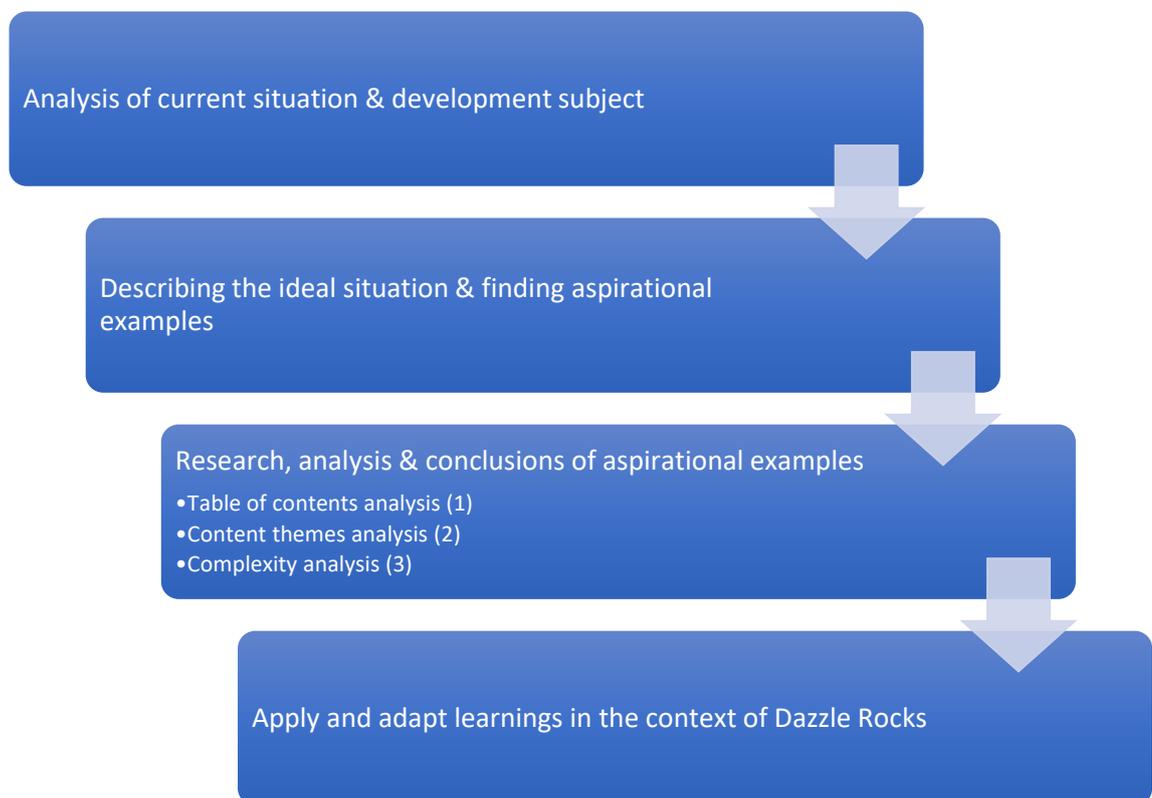


Figure 9. Benchmarking process (adapted from Vuorinen 2013, 160-161)

Firstly, the table of contents for each of the handbooks was read through and any key differences and similarities observed (point 1 in figure 9). Interestingly, the Hubspot culture handbook lacked a clear table of contents, so it was left out of this initial analysis, although it was included in the more in-depth analysis of the content themes later on.

The image displays three tables of contents from culture handbooks. The first table (left) is for Smartly.io, featuring nine sections with page numbers: 04 Our Purpose and Vision, 07 Our Values, 15 Our Team, 19 How We Work With Our Customers, 22 How We Build Our Product, 26 How We Hire and Reward Our People, 29 How We Want to Lead and Be Led, 33 How We Uphold Transparency and Feedback, and 38 Scale Sustainably. The second table (middle) is for Futurice, titled 'CONTENTS', listing sections like Prologue, Why we exist?, Who are we?, The values we believe in, How to make 3x2 decisions, How do we work?, and What do we promise? with page numbers 01 through 07. The third table (right) is for Virta, listing nine sections: 1 Who we are, 2 Our values, 3 How we work, 4 How we develop, 5 How we lead, 6 How we recruit, 7 How we care, 8 Why we work here, and 9 The future of Virta.

Picture 1. Tables of content from the culture handbooks of Smartly.io, Futurice and Virta (Smartly.io 2022b, 3; Futurice 2018, contents; Virta 2021, 3)

Upon inspecting the tables of contents, there were clear similarities in each of them (picture 1). For example, each of the handbooks had a separate section for values, team (referred to as “who we are” in the cases of Futurice and Virta) and ways of working. How the companies value their employees was also present in all the handbooks in titles such as “How we hire and reward our people” (Smartly.io), “What do we promise?” (Futurice) and “How we care” (Virta).

The second most popular themes included leadership, focus on future and hiring. All three of the themes were present in the Smartly.io and Virta handbooks but not present in at least the table of contents of the Futurice handbook. Because each company is different, they have varying team principles that they have deemed especially important, and these were reflected in the handbooks in titles such as “How we uphold transparency and feedback” (Smartly.io) and “How to make 3x2 decisions” (Futurice). No such principles could be immediately determined from the Virta handbook. Interestingly purpose and vision were only present in the Futurice and Smartly.io table of contents. Smartly.io was curiously the only one to feature customer focus in their table of contents.

The analysis resulted in a content theme pyramid in figure 10 where the most popular themes are located at the top. “How we develop” headline from the Virta handbook and

the “Prologue” from Futurice were left out of the analysis and pyramid altogether due to lack of context at first glance. “How we develop” could refer to developing as a company, a team, or products. The content would however be analysed in more depth during the next step in the benchmarking process.

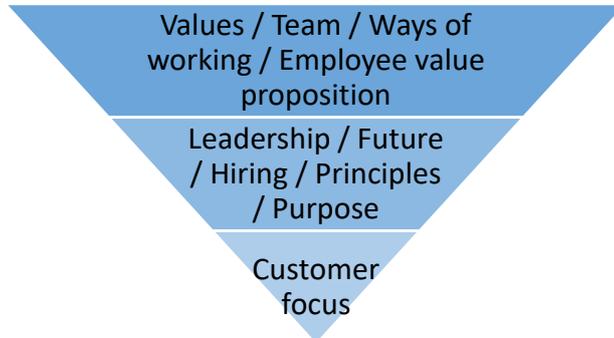


Figure 10. Results of the table of contents analysis

The initial analysis of the table of contents formed an overview of common culture handbook themes. To enrich the list of themes further and compare each of the handbooks with each other, a deeper analysis of the contents was done by methodically going through each handbook page by page. As expected, the themes that were discovered in the table of contents analysis were all present in the content analysis. However, many new themes also arose from this deeper content analysis.

The content themes analysis (point 2 in figure 9) was conducted by reading all the handbooks and based on the analysis, a comparison matrix was formed (table 1).

Theme	Smartly.io	Futurice	Hubspot	Virta
Mission, vision, purpose	x	x	x	x
Values	x	x	x	x
Team	x	x	x	x
Customer focus	x	x	x	x
Employee value proposition	x	x	x	x

Theme	Smartly.io	Futurice	Hubspot	Virta
Ways of working	x	x	x	x
Employee testimonials	x	x		x
Hiring process	x			x
Principles		x	x	
Leadership	x			x
Future focus	x			x

Table 1. Results of the content themes analysis

It was noted during benchmarking that each handbook had a separate “foreword” about why company culture was important, and it laid out the purpose for the culture handbook for each company. Hubspot’s handbook was notably different from the others because it has been laid out in a presentation format rather than as a booklet compared to the others. I also noted that Hubspot was the only benchmarked organization where the handbook was not only picturing the current culture of the company but was literally stated to be aspirational. This meant not all parts of the culture described in the handbook were true but something the company aspires to, stating: “It’s part who we are and part who we aspire to be” (Shah 24 June 2021, 16). I observed that only Futurice’s handbook contained a company history section with a clear story of how and why the organization was formed, whilst other companies focused on the here and now.

Because the aim for the Dazzle Rocks culture handbook is to present the company culture in an easily digestible format, I cross-compared the handbooks in terms of their complexity (point 3 in figure 9). The level of complexity was determined by how easy and quick the content was to read and understand on a scale of 1-5, 1 meaning the content was presented in a very simple and understandable way and 5 meaning the content took more effort and time to understand and digest. Even though the benchmarking process focused mainly on the written content of the handbooks, visuals and the layout of the handbooks plays a big part in how complex they are. Hence the visual presentation was also considered in this particular evaluation. The results of the analysis were compiled into figure 11.

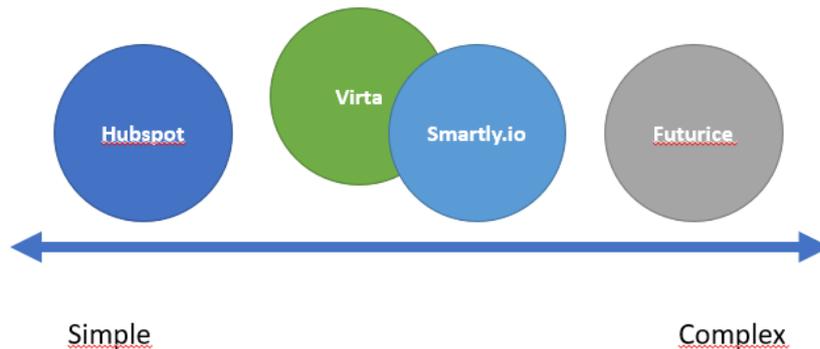


Figure 11. Results of the complexity analysis

As mentioned before, Hubspot’s handbook is markedly different from the others in that it is laid out like a presentation instead of a booklet. The language used in the Hubspot handbook mainly consists of easy, often convivial, and fast to read sentences which are laid out often only one sentence by page. The written content is adorned with graphics that support the message being conveyed. This also makes the Hubspot handbook by far the longest by page count going up to 128 pages. Remarkably despite its length, I determined this handbook to be the simplest one to digest and was given a number 1 in the evaluation.

The Virta and Smartly.io handbooks by complexity comparison are fairly similar to each other. Both are presented in a booklet style and the text is in moderately short paragraphs that are quick to read but take more time to understand compared to the Hubspot handbook. Graphics of both handbooks support and highlight important content such as employee testimonies. Both handbooks utilize language that can be universally understood. Even terms that could be considered company jargon, such as talking about Smartly.io’s employees as Smartlies, could be easily deduced from the text. Both handbooks were given a number 3 in the evaluation.

Futurice’s handbook follows a similar format to Virta and Smartly.io but the chapters in the book are more in depth and longer. The Futurice handbook differs from the others in having interactive elements, such as an assignment to draw a picture of the Futurice culture. The handbook is also much more descriptive compared to the others in its content, providing multiple real-life examples and context to the company culture. Even though most of the content is fairly similar to the handbooks of Virta and Smartly.io, the layout of the book was much more colourful, varied and thus at times confusing and hard

to follow. I determined the book to require multiple days to truly digest for a new Futurice employee for example. For the above reasons, I determined the complexity level of the Futurice handbook to be at level 5, the most complex.

4.2 Workshops

According to Hamilton (2016, chapter 1), a workshop is a session where a team works together to achieve a common goal. Workshops differ from regular meetings in that they are often highly interactive, playful, and creative. Meetings are often run by managers or chairpersons, but workshops require a different type of a role to lead the team to a desired outcome, often referred to as the facilitator. (Gottesdiener 2002, chapter 1; Hamilton 2016, chapter 1,7.)

A facilitator's role in a workshop is to enable and assist the workshop participants to reach the set goal in a productive, encouraging, and equal manner. Everyone's ideas and thoughts should be heard, but at the same time the facilitator should be impartial to the outcomes of the workshop. Otherwise, this can create a conflict of interest and lead the facilitator to drive the outcome of the workshop to a certain direction thus distorting the results. The facilitator keeps the group focused on the topic and on time. (Summa & Tuominen 2009, 8-10; Turku 7 December 2021).

In February 2021 the Dazzle Rocks team set aside one entire week for workshops around various topics such as product development, company vision and culture. As a part of the workshop week, it was agreed by the Dazzle Rocks management team in early January 2021 that two culture focused workshops were to be organized by me for the entire company. The total number of participants in the workshops was 17. I would act as the facilitator of both workshops.

The goals of the workshops for thesis purposes were to:

- Identify how the Dazzle Rocks values manifest in everyday behaviours of the team
- Identify the most impactful and important elements of the Dazzle Rocks culture
- Crowdfund content ideas for the culture handbook

Secondary goals that were not directly related to developing the culture handbook included:

- Remind the team about the Dazzle Rocks values & team principles
- Strengthen and develop the company culture by collaborating on it together
- Strengthen cross-function collaboration in the team

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, both workshops were conducted remotely. Remote video conferencing tools such as Zoom and Google Meet and an online whiteboard tool, Lucidchart, were utilized for real-time collaboration. A polling tool called Mentimeter was also utilized shortly in one of the sessions. Links to presentation materials, workshop schedules, Lucidchart whiteboards, video calls and all other relevant materials were shared to the team on Slack, an online messaging application. All the tools above were already in regular use in the company before the workshops, so no separate training or introductions on how to use them was needed.

Both workshops followed a similar structure outlined in figure 12 that was designed to answer to the goals specified at the start of this chapter:

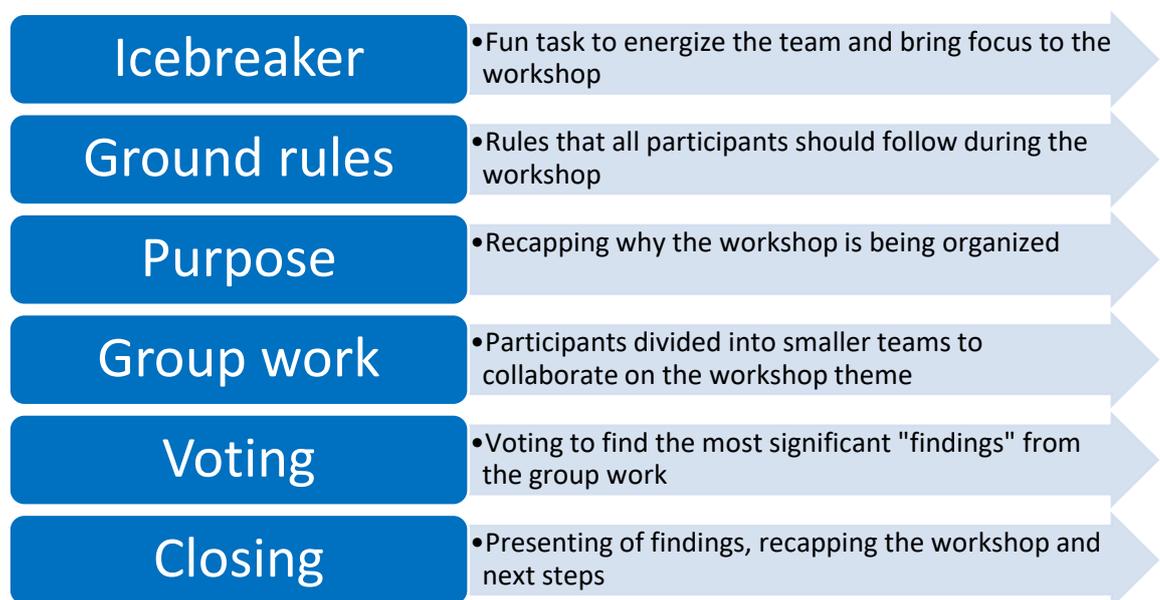


Figure 12. Workshop structure

Starting workshops with an icebreaker exercise focuses the participants on the workshop itself by giving them a fun and engaging task to complete. As the name implies, it breaks the ice, setting the mood and allowing the team to relax in each other's company before diving deeper into the subject at hand. (Stevens 2022.)

To collaborate effectively together, workshop ground rules are meant to set certain boundaries and expectations for behaviour, allow everyone to play on the same playing field and respect each other throughout the process (Deloitte 2022, 3). It's important for all participants to agree on the rules and to keep everyone accountable throughout the sessions (Deloitte 2022, 3; Gottesdiener 2002, chapter 6). Once the team's focus is on the workshop and the rules have been agreed to, it's imperative to crystallize the purpose of

the session for everyone. This helps participants understand why the session is being organized and what is expected from them (Gottesdiener 2002, chapter 4).

As mentioned earlier workshops are at their nature social and collaborative events and many types of different group work exercises can be conducted to solve problems or to ideate something new. Most times in workshops countless ideas and solutions are invented so determining which one's are the most impactful and important was in this case done by voting.

Closing of a workshop enables the workshop facilitator to recap the purpose, goal, and the findings to the participants. Often giving and receiving feedback about the workshop is a part of closing and it gives an opportunity to the facilitator and participants to evaluate how well the workshop goal was reached (Summa & Tuominen 2009, 40). Workshops rarely solve everything at once, so the facilitator's job is also to give information about the next steps in the process.

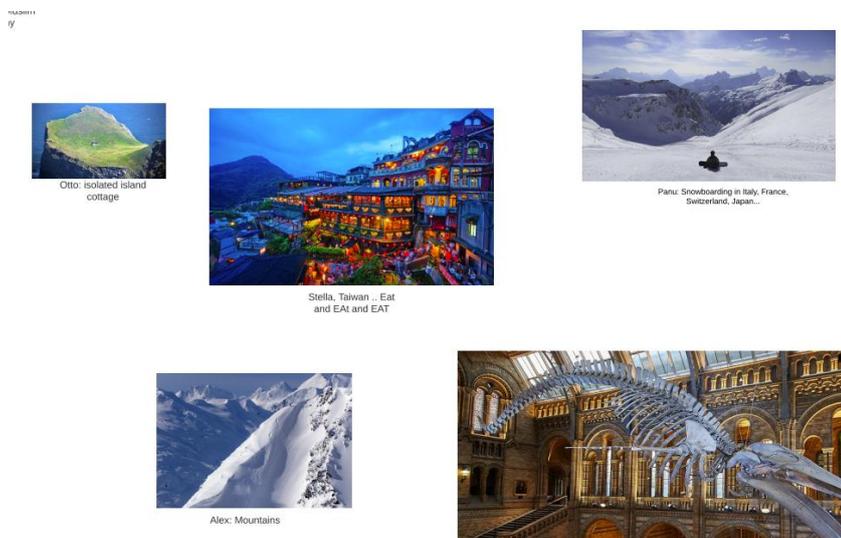
It's also worth noting that the facilitator i.e., myself was a participant in all other parts of the workshops but the group work. This decision was made so that the facilitator could act as a role model and an example for other participants. During group work however, I was solely in a facilitation role helping the team with any questions and keeping track of time but did not participate in the ideation of the content nor in defining of conclusions created in the group work.

4.2.1 Workshop 1: “From values to behaviours”

The first workshop named “From values to behaviours” was held on 2nd February 2021 via Zoom video call. All participants had received an invitation the week before that included the name, the general description and purpose of the session. It was decided that no pre-reading or other pre-work material would be distributed before the session. This decision was made because other workshops throughout the week contained a vast number of documents for the team to read. In total two hours was allotted for the duration of the workshop. The workshop was scheduled in the following way:

- Icebreaker exercise (10 min)
- Ground rules (5 min)
- Workshop purpose (5 min)
- Instructions for group work (5 min)
- Group work (45 min)
- Break (15 min)
- Presentations (5 min per group, 15 min in total)
- Dot voting (10 min)
- Closing and feedback (10 min)

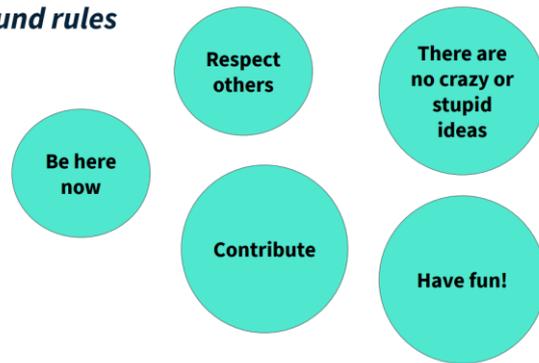
The workshop started with an icebreaker assignment that was meant to set the mood for the workshop, let the team have fun and learn something about each other. The instructions and all other workshop presentation materials were compiled into a Google Sheets presentation for easy sharing during the Zoom call (appendix 1). The team is very multicultural and due to the COVID-19 pandemic has been unable to all convene since March 2020. Thus, I chose the theme of “dream destination” for the icebreaker assignment for the team. The team was asked to upload a picture of their dream destination to the online whiteboard tool, Lucidchart, and describe what they would like to do there (picture 2). It was a pleasant way for people to familiarize themselves with each other and start the workshop off on a positive note.



Picture 2. Screenshot of the dream destination icebreaker results

After the icebreaker, workshop rules were introduced to the team. The ground rules were developed utilizing the Dazzle Rocks values and other sources detailed below. Company values such as innovation, accountability and collaboration can clearly be seen in rules such as respect others, not limiting ideas just because they sound crazy and contributing to a common cause. It was also important for the team to have fun, which reflects one of the team principles: enjoy the moment. IDEO.org, a non-profit design studio has developed a toolkit where they have included their 7 brainstorm rules that contain mentions of similar themes such as respect, contribution, and presence in the here and now (IDEO.org 2022). Gottesdiener (2002, chapter 6) in her book “Requirements by Collaboration: Workshops for Defining Needs” defines a list of workshop ground rule examples that also includes similar themes such as respect, contribution. Combining the materials above a simple and specific rule set of five was determined (picture 3).

Ground rules



Picture 3. Workshop ground rules presentation slide

Be here now → Focus on the task at hand and give your full concentration to the team

Respect others → Be kind even if you disagree with someone, don't interrupt others, let others speak when they have something to say

Contribute → Everyone's contribution is important because we are in this together. Don't take a back seat.

There are no crazy or stupid ideas → Everyone's ideas are valuable. Sometimes even crazy ideas are what enable us to innovate.

Have fun! → Give yourself permission to enjoy spending time with the people around you. Maybe you'll learn something new.

After the rules were presented to the team, everyone was asked to agree to them. This was done over on the Zoom call by asking everyone to raise their hands as a sign of agreement. The ground rules enabled the group to understand what was expected of them in terms of their behaviour for the duration of the session.

After the ground rules were agreed to, it was time to recap the purpose of the workshop to centre everyone's attention to the reason why the session was being organized. This was done by recapping the values of the company and their meaning to Dazzle Rocks.

(Picture 4.)

Why do we have values?

Our values reflect what we feel is important as a company. Values are the guiding principles for our behaviors in our everyday working life.

Especially now since we're going to get more people into the team, it's more important than ever that everyone has an understanding of our culture and values so we're all able to be on the same page. In this workshop, let's define how we translate our values into everyday behaviors.



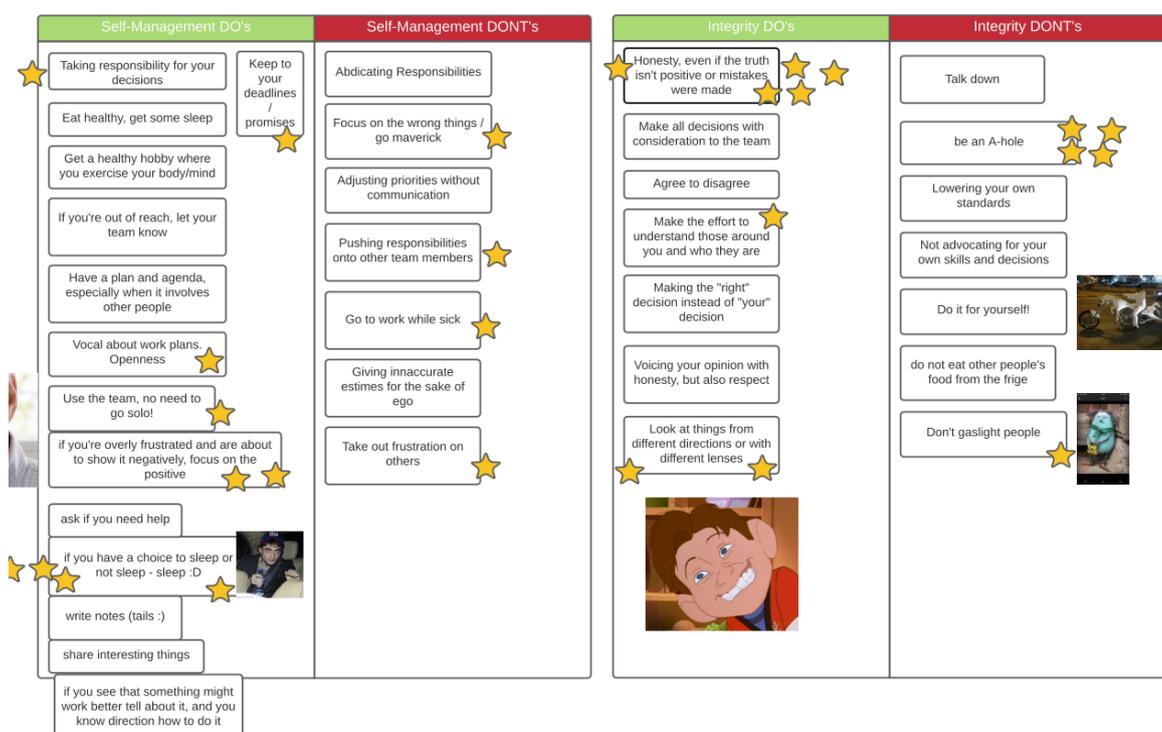
Picture 4. Workshop purpose presentation slide

Then it was time to start the collaborative part of the workshop itself. The team was divided into three smaller groups which each had their own Zoom room and Lucidchart whiteboard to work in. The groups were asked to think of concrete examples of how specific Dazzle Rocks values were presented in everyday behaviours at work (picture 5). Group 1 tackled self-management and integrity, group 2 discussed proactiveness and communication and group 3 accountability, innovation, and inclusion. Creativity was encouraged by not providing an exact framework for the task and encouraging people to use different ways of presenting their ideas such as videos or photos. It was only suggested as an option that teams could think about a dos and don'ts list for behaviours but the final decision on how to complete the task was left to the teams themselves. Every worksheet included screenshots of the values from the Dazzle Rocks value deck so teams could refer to them easily throughout the exercise. 45 min in total was given to the teams to complete the task.

- You have 45 min for this exercise.
- How do we demonstrate these values in our everyday working life? Come up with concrete examples and write them into this Lucidchart sheet.
- If it helps, you can also create a do/don't list of behaviors. Sometimes thinking what you shouldn't do is easier.
- Feel free to do this in your own way and get creative. If you want, you can use photos, music etc.
- There are no right or wrong answers so be open minded to other people's thoughts and ideas. Let everyone have a say.
- The value deck slides are included in the sheet if you want to use them as inspiration.
- Pick one "presenter" from your group to present your findings to everyone else

Picture 5. Screenshot of group work instructions

During the 45 min group work, the facilitator toured around the different Zoom rooms to check if the teams had any questions, difficulties and observe how the discussion was progressing. Generally, the teams felt the instructions were clear and only had one question related to how the findings should be presented. Because of the earlier agreement about ground rules, everyone felt like the group work started in a positive way and everyone was engaged. As a result of the group work, two of the teams (group 1 and group 2) decided to use the dos and don'ts method to complete their task whilst group 3 decided to create a mindmap/flowchart instead (picture 6 & appendix 2). After the group work, the team took a 15 min break to refresh.



Picture 6. Example of group work results from group 1

After the break all participants returned to the same Zoom room where each group presented their main findings to everyone. Even though the groups were working on different values, there was a significant amount of overlap in many of the findings that were brought up. One of the Dazzle Rocks principles "no assholes rule" was highlighted both when talking about integrity and inclusion for example. Not being afraid of asking questions was also brought up in multiple of the Lucidcharts. The most significant overlap in the results of the workshop was in the values that were closely linked to collaboration. This was to be expected however, since in chapter three it was already observed that many of the values are intertwined and linked together.

To get more information about which of the behaviours the team felt were especially impactful and important, a star voting was conducted. Each participant had one star per value that they could put next to the behaviour they felt most resonated with them. The team spent about 5 minutes casting their votes, after which the facilitator asked the team whether it had been difficult to decide which ones to choose. Most participants affirmed voting to be difficult since many points made in group work discussions were important and not necessarily easy to rank by priority. Therefore, there was deviation in the votes on some values but for most, clear favourites could be determined. Finally, the facilitator verbally presented the behaviours that had received the most votes to conclude the group work part of the workshop. Table 2 compiles the most voted behaviours from the group work that received at least one star during voting:

Group 1	<p>Self-management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having a good balance in your life by exercising and sleeping well is sometimes just as important as self-management at work - Don't go to work sick - Take responsibility for your own decisions and work - Keep promises/deadlines - Don't focus on the wrong things - Understand how your emotions and behaviours affect others - Communicate and don't go off on your own track <p>Integrity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Honesty is the best policy, even when you make mistakes - Don't be an asshole - Make decisions that are for the good of the team and company and not just for you - Try to understand things and people from multiple perspectives - Don't gaslight people
Group 2	<p>Proactiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't be afraid to ask for help, opinions, and feedback - Challenge yourself - "Do something, don't do nothing" - Be open to learning new things and share your insights with others - Don't wait for people to hand ready solutions for you and recognize when your team needs your knowledge <p>Communication</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't be afraid of sounding stupid - Listen and try to understand others and where they're coming from - Be mindful of how you communicate (tone, emotions) - Speak up when you notice bad behaviour
Group 3	<p>Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be brave and ask questions and for help if you need it - Be mindful of dependencies and schedule, plan together and not in silos - Follow up and follow through on your promises - Build trust with transparent communication → overcommunicate <p>Innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cross discipline knowledge sharing sessions and sharing of industry knowledge is important - Encourage people to give feedback and ideas to come up with something unconventional and new <p>Inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Embrace different points of view and learn to compromise - Don't be an a**hole - Treat other like you want to be treated and encourage others positively - Actively ask for cross -functional feedback - Make sure all relevant people are involved

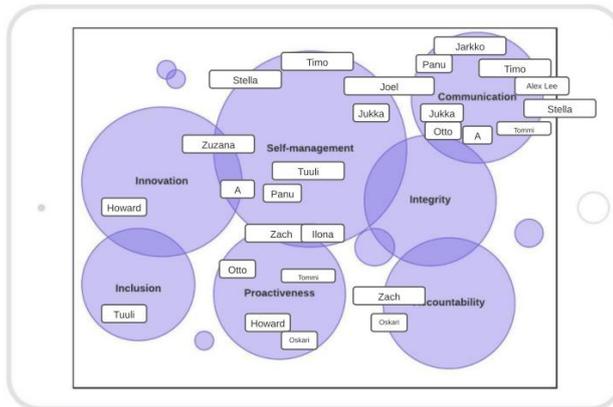
Table 2. Results of star voting

The results from the group work would be used as inspiration to demonstrate the values in the form of desired behaviours in the Dazzle Rocks culture handbook.

After a deep dive into the values of the company and collectively agreeing on impactful and desired behaviours, participants were asked to choose 1-2 values on Lucidchart that they themselves wanted to become better at in the future (picture 7). Participants were encouraged to utilize these revelations in the future when thinking about their personal development objectives.

Name

Where do I still need to do better?



Where do I still need to do better?

Choose 1-2 values that you would like to develop in or where you think you could do better. Remember these when you think about your development objectives.



Picture 7. Voting of values that team members still need to develop in

The workshop was closed by the facilitator by recapping what was achieved in the session and going over the next steps in the process of translating values into behaviours. In closing, the team collaborated very well together, and conversation was lively throughout the entire session. The common guidelines helped to focus everyone, and the initial goals of the workshop were ultimately attained (identify how the Dazzle Rocks values manifest in everyday behaviours of the team, identify the most impactful and important elements of the Dazzle Rocks culture & crowdsourcing content ideas for the culture handbook). It was important for the team to understand what would happen next in the process and how the information would be utilized further. Hence it was explained that the workshop findings would be used in multiple applications such as in job interviews when presenting the company culture to candidates, onboarding of new team members (i.e., the culture handbook), leadership development and more. Additionally, I reminded participants that the topic of culture would be revisited regularly in the future through presentations and other actions.

At the end of the workshop the facilitator held a mini feedback session for the team by asking what the team thought about the workshop and was there something they wished would have been done differently. Most people felt like the session was very useful and fun. Especially for new people who had started in the company in the past six months felt like it was a great way to get to know the company culture. It was appreciated that the session had run on time and on schedule, but some people would have wished for more time for discussions during the group work.

4.2.2 Workshop 2: “Cross-function collaboration”

The second workshop held on 5th February 2021 was named “Cross-function collaboration” and was also conducted on a Zoom call. As with the previous session, no prereading or prework material was included in the workshop. As mentioned in chapter three, collaboration is at the heart of how Dazzle Rocks operates and many of the values such as proactiveness, integrity, communication, inclusion, and accountability relate to it very closely. Therefore, it was imperative to dive deeper into the theme of collaboration despite it being touched upon in the previous workshop related to values. A total of two hours was allotted for the workshop. The workshop was scheduled as follows:

- Icebreaker exercise (10 min)
- Ground rules (5 min)
- Workshop purpose (5 min)
- Instructions for group work (5 min)
- Group work (45 min)
- Break (15 min)
- Presentations (5 min per group, 15 min in total)
- Dot voting (10 min)
- Closing and feedback (10 min)

The full workshop presentation materials are included in appendix 3. To introduce the theme of the day in a light-hearted way, participants were tasked to compete in a virtual three-legged race (picture 8). Typically, in a three-legged race, two people tie one of each of their legs to form “one leg” and run as fast as they can to cross a finish line. I had previously experienced a real-life three-legged race at another workshop where collaboration was also a theme and wanted to transfer this into a virtual format.

Three legged race

Imagine you are participating in a three-legged race. The goal is to arrive first to finishing line with your team.

But things are not as simple as they seem! This is not a “standard” three-legged race!
Your team has three (3) people;

1. Two of you are tied together as “leg-buddies”
2. The third person is not tied at all
3. You will be carrying 2 very heavy bags. You cannot get rid of them.

The winner of the game is the first team to cross the finishing line. All team members have to cross the line at same time. Teams who fail to do this are disqualified.

Your task as the team, is to come up with a bullet proof strategy to win the game. What is it??

Picture 8. Presentation slide of the three-legged race icebreaker exercise

Instead of competing physically, the teams' task was to invent a fool proof strategy to win the game. It was a chance to spark some creativity and out of the box thinking in the team by adding several non-conventional rules to the game, such as having three people in the team instead of two and having the teams to carry two heavy bags during the race. Participants invented very creative and unconventional ways to win the race such as stuffing the smallest team member into one of the bags to help carry them across the finish line.

After the icebreaker exercise it was time to recap and agree to the ground rules for the workshop. The rules were the same used in the previous session about values of which the team had already gained a common understanding. The facilitator then presented the purpose of the session which was to develop ways for the team to collaborate better cross-functionally. For the culture handbook development this workshop presented an opportunity to gather more content ideas and once again identify elements in the company culture that are important to the team.

Before the group work started, participants were asked to log into an online presentation tool, Mentimeter, which enables various interactive methods such as polling, questionnaires and more (Mentimeter 2022). People are easily able to participate in the Mentimeter presentations via their phone or browser (Mentimeter 2022). The tool has previously been used at Dazzle Rocks for example to ask for feedback in product reviews or to hold a quiz at a remote Christmas party. This time Mentimeter was used as a quick warm up before the group work assignment. Everyone was asked to describe what was good collaboration to them and send their answers to the Mentimeter tool. The replies would then be shown in real-time to the participants on the Zoom call via screen sharing. The answers from this quick poll could then be used as inspiration for the group work discussion. Participants were then divided into three teams for the group work. The group work in this session would be a modified format of a workshop tool called brainwriting which is a tool often used in service design (Haaga-Helia 2022).

In brainwriting the group usually has several topics that they're asked to generate ideas for. Each group of person starts with one of the topics and once idea generation for the said topic is done, they move on to the next one. At the same time, they can also see what previous groups/individuals have ideated and either add new ideas or enrich the ones that have already been written out. Brainwriting is different from traditional brainstorming in that the group doing the ideation does not discuss the ideas amongst themselves, but the idea generation is done individually. In this way participants usually have less anxiety in "voicing out" their ideas and thus the method also works with groups

that are unfamiliar with each other. Brainwriting is also a very fast way to generate new and more diverse ideas because of the lack of social hierarchies that form in people interacting with each other. (Haaga-Helia 2022; Lucidchart 2022.)

Because the Dazzle Rocks team is used to working with each other and the theme of the workshop was cross-function collaboration, I decided to modify the brainwriting format and include discussion as a part of the ideation phase. The workshop ground rules also helped to set the tone for ideation since everyone was asked to respect each other and that every idea was encouraged, no matter how outrageous. The Dazzle Rocks team was divided into three groups of five people for the brainwriting exercise, each one with their own Zoom room to work in, and each group tackled three different sub-themes of collaboration: communication, collaboration during remote work and giving and receiving feedback. The group compositions were deliberately chosen to make sure each one had participants from multiple functions in the company such as tech and art, thus promoting diversity. This would also ensure that ideas generated during the workshop could be as diverse and represent as many different points of view as possible.

With the help and collaboration of the management team, I chose the sub-themes due to their importance to the company. As mentioned before, communication is one of the values of Dazzle Rocks and is an integral part of collaboration. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the team being distributed all around Europe, collaborating effectively during remote work was also a key theme to discuss. Feedback is a tool for learning and development and for the individuals and team to know where they stand. Diversity and especially cross-cultural communication were also initially discussed as potential sub-themes for the brainwriting but were ultimately left out because of time constraints and their close links to the communication sub-theme.

The three groups were tasked to generate ideas with the following questions in mind:

- How should we communicate in order for us to work better together?
- How could we be able to collaborate better when we're working remotely?
- How could we make giving & receiving feedback easier and more regular for everyone?

(Picture 9.)

Instructions

- Think about cross-function collaboration specifically (for example art <> tech)
- Together with your group, think about **how** should we communicate in order for us to work better together?
- Remember that there are multiple types of communication: Verbal, non-verbal, visual & written
- Use your imagination. Add pictures or other means to communicate your message.
- There are no right or wrong answers so be open minded to other people's thoughts and ideas. Let everyone have a say.
- **If another group has filled this sheet before yours, you can either: 1. Add to the ideas that are already here AND/OR 2. Come up with new ideas**
- **You have 15 minutes to complete this sheet**

Picture 9. Example of the instructions given for brainwriting

As with the previous workshop, the ideation was done utilizing an online whiteboard tool, Lucidchart. Because of the addition of discussion in the exercise, each team was given 15 minutes to complete one topic at a time before moving on to the next one. Group 1 started with communication, group 2 with remote work and group 3 with feedback. Creativity and originality were once again encouraged by using pictures and other mediums to express ideas. During the first brainwriting round, I toured each of the groups making sure everyone understood the brief of the assignment and addressing any questions. Once the groups had completed the first sub-theme, they moved on to the next one until each group had toured each sub-theme. The groups had two options when working on a sub-theme where ideation had already been done by a previous group. They could either add new ideas and/or add to the ideas that had been written down before. In just 45 minutes the team was able to generate almost 200 ideas combined! The completed brainwriting Lucidchart boards can be found in Appendix 4. After brainwriting the participants took a 15-minute break. (Picture 10.)

The results from the voting were compiled into figure 13.

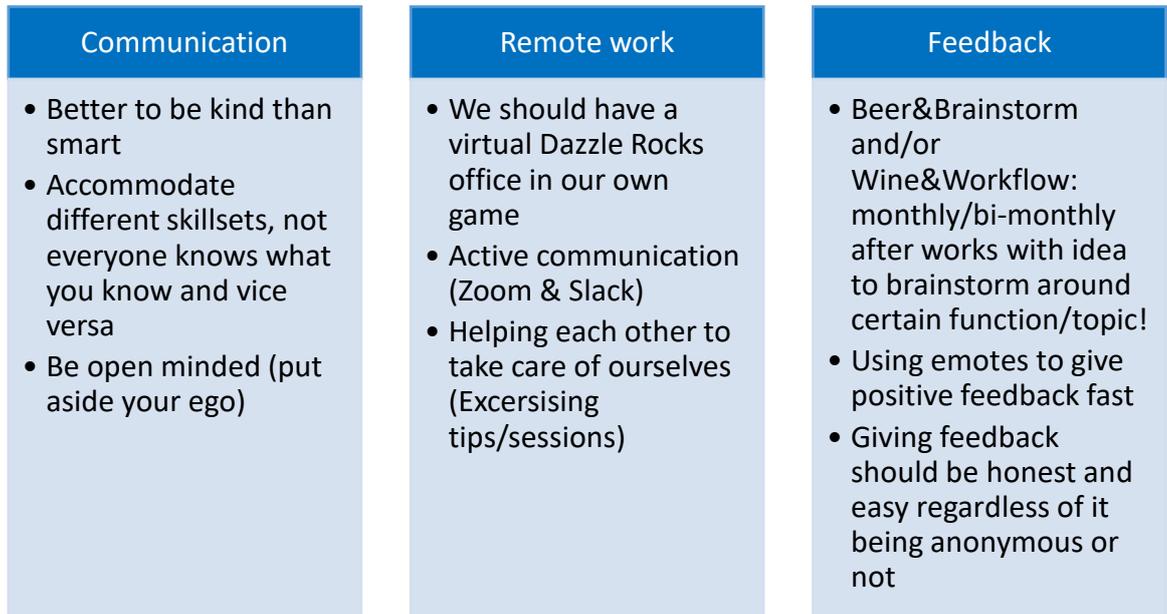


Figure 13. Results of the voting

After groups had presented their findings, I asked the participants what their thoughts were about the workshop overall. Majority of people felt like it was a useful exercise and that it was nice to be able to work in very cross functional teams for the ideation phase. There was also a question about how the findings from the workshop could be utilized by the team going forward.

To close the workshop, I recapped why collaboration is important especially at Dazzle Rocks (picture 11).

Why is collaboration important?

- ***We can learn from others***
- ***It saves time***
- ***We can come up with unique, innovative solutions and ideas***
- ***Working with different kinds of people makes us more open minded and considerate***
- ***At its best it creates trust and empathy towards others***
- ***Networking***
- ***Etc...***



Picture 11. Workshop presentation slide about collaboration

It was also explained to participants that the ideas and thoughts from the workshop would be further investigated by HR and the management team and discussed in more detail in upcoming team meetings where workflow development was on the agenda. As a final parting thought before ending the session, I posed one final question to the participants: What would make it easier for you to collaborate better with others? This would be something the participants could think about in their own time.

4.3 Conclusions about research methodologies

Many elements of the culture handbook development project can be compared to the service design process.

Service design is a way for organizations to develop their offering from the point of view of the customer. It's a cross-functional creative process that draws information from multiple sources involved to develop a well-rounded and multidisciplinary understanding to develop better services and products. There are multiple service design process models that tend to follow a similar format. (Stickdorn, Hormess, Lawrence & Schneider 2018, 18-19; Moritz 2005, 39.)

In Moritz's 2005 (123) model he defines 6 steps to the service design process (figure 14).

SD (Service Design) Understanding

- A learning process to gain more knowledge about all the parties involved like customers and the service provider. Examples of methods used include interviews and **benchmarking**.

SD Thinking

- Data collected in the understanding phase is used to scope and strategize a direction for the service design process. Examples of methods used include mindmaps and LEGO Serious Play.

SD Generating

- Creative ideas are generated that fit the strategy and direction chosen and that answer to the needs of the customer. Examples of methods used include **brainwriting** and brainstorming.

SD Filtering

- The best ideas that fit the criteria and goals are chosen and assessed. Examples of methods used include **voting** and SWOT analysis.

SD Explaining

- Bringing chosen ideas together to form a cohesive structure. Examples of methods used include prototyping and moodboards.

SD Realising

- Implementation of the developed solution. Examples of methods used include writing of a business plan or guidelines.

Figure 14. Service Design process (adapted from Moritz 2005, 123-147)

Stickdorn, Hormess, Lawrence & Schneider (2018, 90) define the TISDD service design framework in four steps: research, ideation, prototyping and implementation. Comparing to Moritz's process many of the elements are the same. The TISDD framework combines certain steps together from the Moritz model such as Generating and filtering whilst the Moritz's model is more granular and detailed in its description. Both models do however state that the process is iterative because each service design project is different and that there is no mandate to follow a certain order. (Moritz 2005, 149; Stickdorn, Hormess, Lawrence & Schneider 2018, 90)

Benchmarking of publicly available culture handbooks can be equated to research/understanding because the goal was to gain a better understanding of the content of such handbooks. The workshops held to the team were used as both research/understanding and generating/ideation tools. For myself it gave valuable insight into understanding the Dazzle Rocks team and culture whilst at the same time acting as a way to crowdsource content for the final product. Filtering of ideas and content was also present through voting in the workshops. The culture handbook itself combined all the knowledge gained previously into the final product. The only aspect of the service design process left out of the scope of this thesis was the final implementation of the handbook into practical use in the company.

5 Project implementation

The timeline of the Dazzle Rocks culture handbook development is outlined in table 3.

January 2021	Project kick off and setting of objectives together with case company leadership	Research of theoretical framework & writing of thesis
January 2021	Creation of workshop frameworks and materials	
February 2021	Workshops, gathering of key findings	
June 2021	Final approval of thesis plan	
March-April 2022	Benchmarking	
April-May 2022	Creation and iteration of the Dazzle Rocks culture handbook	
May 2022	Finalizing of Dazzle Rocks culture handbook, thesis conclusions and creation of framework for culture handbook development	

Table 3. Thesis schedule

The development project started in January of 2021 with the outlining of goals for the project together with Dazzle Rocks leadership team. This is also when research for the theoretical framework kicked off in order to gain an understanding of organizational culture and start preparations for the workshops held in February 2021. By this time, not all action research methodologies had been decided on, but research continued until the final thesis plan was approved by the thesis teacher in June 2021.

The writing of the thesis kicked off in August of 2021. Due a focus on other priorities at Dazzle Rocks, the benchmarking process was conducted only in spring of 2022. During March-May 2022 writing, research, benchmarking, and the creation of the final handbook were running on parallel tracks. The thesis was ultimately completed in late May 2022.

The culture handbook itself was first written in text format on Microsoft Word in early May but was ultimately transferred into a Google Slides format later in the same month. This

decision was made due to a few key reasons. The Dazzle Rocks team is familiar with Google slides, and because the software operates in the cloud, the handbook could be easily accessed by anyone at any time. One key goal for the thesis was for the culture handbook to be in an easily digestible format and Google Slides allowed for a more visually appealing and clear presentation format compared to Microsoft Word. The complete Dazzle Rocks culture handbook can be found from Appendix 5.

The culture handbook themes that were discovered through the theoretical framework, benchmarking, and workshops were condensed into the following table of contents for the Dazzle Rocks culture handbook:

- Prologue
- Our story
- Our values and principles
- Our team
- Our ways of working
- Our future

Because the target audience for the culture handbook is mainly new and existing Dazzle Rocks employees, themes that were related to employer branding for an external audience such as hiring were left out for now. If the company chooses to publish the handbook externally in the future, these themes could be included in future iterations.

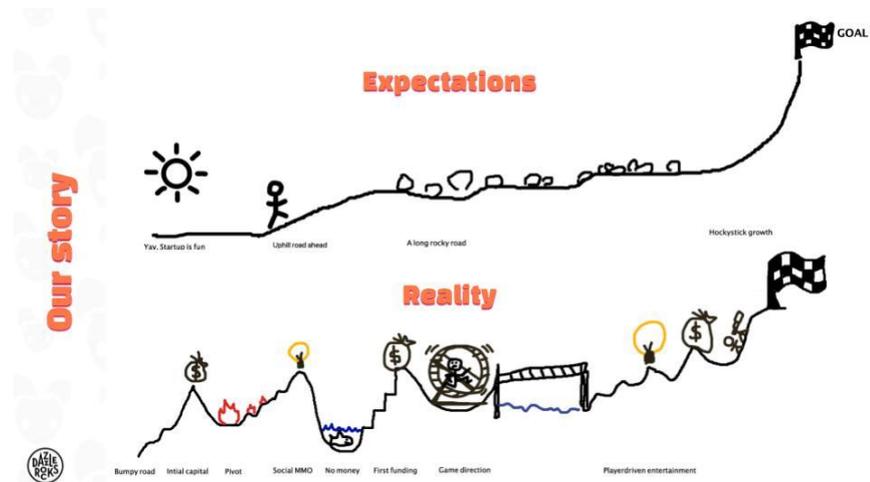
The prologue of the culture handbook tells the reader the purpose of the document and why culture is important for Dazzle Rocks (picture 12).



Picture 12. Dazzle Rocks culture handbook, prologue

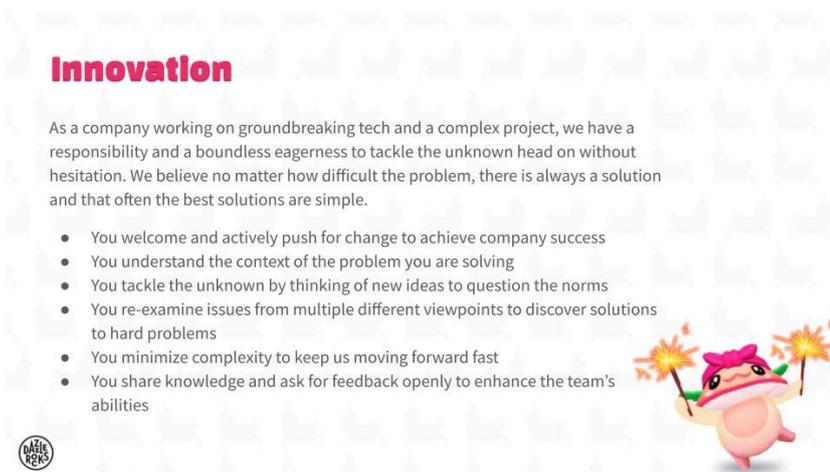
The first section of the culture handbook tells the story and vision of Dazzle Rocks. Vision was one of the most common themes found in the culture handbook benchmarking process and stories can be equated to artefacts mentioned in Schein's organizational

culture theory in chapter two. The story of the company is communicated through an illustration that recaps the key moments in the company's story (picture 13).



Picture 13. Dazzle Rocks culture handbook, our story

The second chapter of the handbook is the longest. It describes the values and principles of Dazzle Rocks in detail. Written values are great examples of espoused values according to Schein's organizational culture theory mentioned in chapter two. Values were also present in all benchmarked culture handbooks. Describing the values of the company on a behavioural level with the help from the workshop results could also be construed as a way to shine light on the underlying assumptions in the culture of Dazzle Rocks (picture 14). Whilst comparing the content of this handbook section to the 9 dimensions of culture (also mentioned in chapter two), it corresponds with the concepts of inspiring and speaking.



Picture 14. Dazzle Rocks culture handbook, innovation

During the benchmarking process it became apparent that all companies had included descriptions of their team and ways of working into their culture handbooks. Naturally these were two of the core themes for the Dazzle Rocks handbook as well. The themes of developing, caring, and celebrating from the 9 dimensions of culture were also present in this chapter. Many behavioural examples from the workshops were used as inspiration for the content. Individual employee testimonials were also included (picture 15).



Picture 15. Dazzle Rocks culture handbook, employee testimonial

The last chapter of the culture handbook is focused on painting a positive and inspiring picture of the company's future (picture 16).



Picture 16. Dazzle Rocks culture handbook, our future

6 Framework for developing a culture handbook

The secondary goal of this thesis was to create a general framework for culture handbook development that could be utilized by other organizations regardless of industry. The framework was created utilizing the theoretical framework and conclusions from the action research process (figure 15).

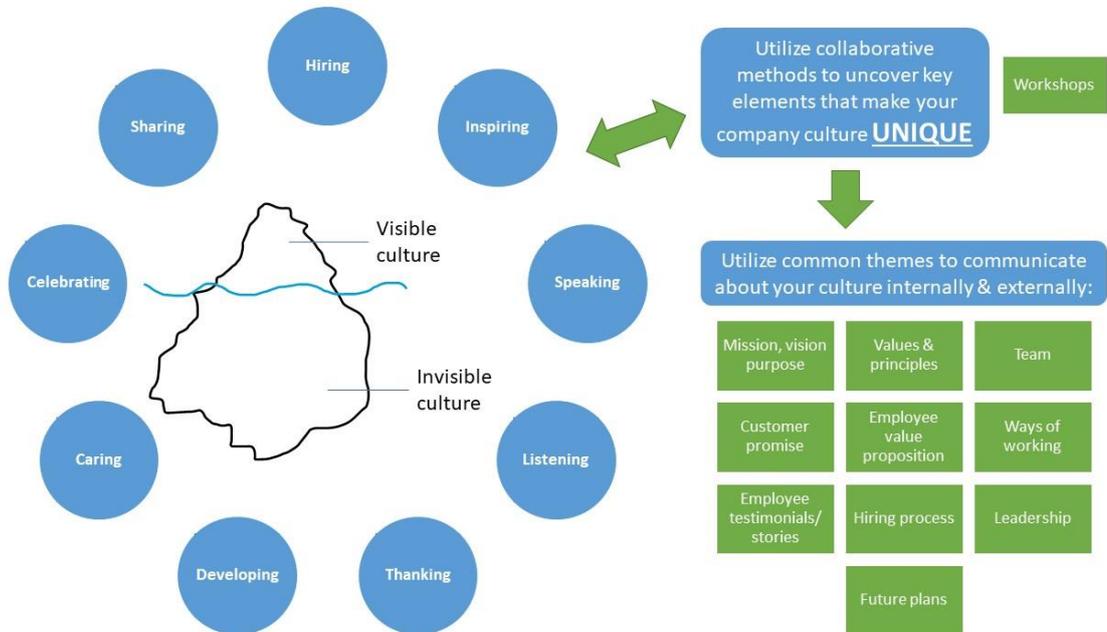


Figure 15. Framework for culture handbook development (adapted from Schein 2009, chapter 2; Rossi 2015, 46)

The first part of this framework provides an outline for organizations to recognize key elements that make their specific organizational culture unique. By utilizing the theoretical knowledge about what components form a successful culture, companies can discern what parts of these components make their culture unique. It's also important to recognize that many parts of culture are "invisible". It's often easy to say **how** things are done in a company but it is much harder to explain **why**. By utilizing collaborative and participatory methods such as workshopping, organizations can tap into this knowledge and get a more comprehensive understanding of their culture. Once the key components of company culture have been recognized, the second challenge is to find clear ways to communicate about the uniqueness of them both internally and externally.

The second part of the framework provides themes that organizations can utilize to communicate about their culture in the context of a culture handbook. The list of themes includes topics like values, ways of working and leadership. This theme list can be

customized and modified depending on the audience of the handbook, company culture and general strategic focus areas of the organization.

Whilst this framework focuses mainly on how culture is communicated about in culture handbooks, it can also be utilized in a broader context. Many of the communication themes listed in the framework are visible in many other areas and operations of organizations. For example, values and employee testimonials can often be found on company websites. Thus, this framework can also provide inspiration for how to communicate about culture through individual themes as well.

7 Conclusions

Organisational culture and its development are at the heart of my role as an HR Specialist at Dazzle Rocks. Ever since joining the company in September 2020 it has been apparent to me that nurturing and developing culture is also at the forefront of our strategic goals. We see our unique culture as a clear competitive advantage and as something that will enable us to grow a trailblazing team in the long run. Few start-ups end up hiring an HR professional at such an early stage of growth and I'm humbled to have been given the trust to be a part of that journey. This trust and a clear mandate from leadership was instrumental in me being able to involve the entire Dazzle Rocks team in this development project.

Culture has always been an interest of mine throughout my career in the game industry and I was glad to have been given the opportunity to lead this project. Personally, the culture handbook development project has enabled me to form a more comprehensive understanding of organizational culture and apply theoretical knowledge and research into practice. I specifically feel that I've gained a deep understanding of the organizational culture at Dazzle Rocks which in turn enables me to perform better in my own work. Overall, I feel the degree program in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences has empowered me to develop as a strategic thinker and professional and become a versatile asset to my current and any potential future employers.

7.1 Credibility, reliability, and ethics

Good qualitative research should uphold the characteristics of credibility, reliability, and ethics. In order for research to be deemed as credible by the wider public, research has to be conducted and its results analysed meticulously before accepted as valid and true. Reliability refers to the researcher themselves having the professional aptitude to choose and apply suitable methodologies to find answers to the posed research questions. Ethics in turn means that the researcher has held themselves up to high ethical standards throughout the process. The methodologies and analysis practices should be replicable in other studies, and research should never cause harm to the people it targets. On the contrary, the aim is to improve people's lives. Even though objectivity in research is desired, qualitative research can never truly be objective. For example, interacting directly with the research subjects always has the potential for misinterpretations. Thus, it is important for the researcher to recognize and bring forth their own subjectivity when evaluating the research process and results. (Puusa, Juuti & Aaltio 2020, chapter 5 & loppusanat.)

In my opinion this thesis project can be deemed as credible, reliable, and ethical.

The project was started in January 2021 and was initially scheduled to be concluded by December 2021. Due to a strong focus on hiring and other development topics in my role during the latter half of 2021, the original timeline was shifted by 6 months and the final version of the thesis, and the culture handbook were returned in May 2022.

The theoretical framework of the thesis mainly encompasses two very different theories about culture and thus enables examining organizational culture through a wide lens. Due to time constraints and being mindful about maintaining a reasonable scope for the thesis, no additional theories were chosen for review. Looking back, it would have been interesting and useful to examine culture onboarding and organizational communication as separate topics to enrich the theoretical framework, although they were briefly touched upon in chapter two.

The research process itself was meticulously documented from benchmarking to the workshops. Through the benchmarking process it could be ascertained that culture handbooks are still few and far between and mostly created by very successful companies that are the frontrunners in their fields. It could be argued that the lack of accessible culture handbooks leads to a sample size that is too small to make any meaningful conclusions from. At the same time this makes culture handbooks a novel and very interesting research topic. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to gather information about the effectiveness of the handbooks in the organisations they were created for. This would have required forming relationships with the companies in question.

In the benchmarking process I opted to utilize a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods to form a realistic picture of the content themes. The complexity analysis however was fully based on my own interpretations of complexity and how I felt the Dazzle Rocks team would classify the benchmarked handbooks. I recognize that in another organization the results of this analysis might look completely different based on how complexity is defined.

Because of the delayed timeline of the thesis, the workshops were held over a year before the thesis was finished. Many new people have joined the team since then and with growth, culture also evolves. This poses a question of whether the results from the workshops are true to this day. Whilst Dazzle Rocks lives in a hyper dynamic industry, changes in culture are much more gradual. Even with new people joining, the team has consistently felt that that the company lives by its values and principles. The workshops

were also well documented through Google Sheets presentations, Lucidcharts and Slack messages making the writing process for the thesis easier. Thus, it can be concluded that the workshop results are reliable even to this day.

Since I acted as the facilitator of the workshops, I also had to be very aware of my own behaviours throughout the sessions. In my role as an HR Specialist, I have certain social authority in the team, and I recognize that what I say and do has influence on others. Whilst I did act as a role model and participated in some parts of the workshops, I was extremely careful to only stay in an observer and facilitator role during group work. I also recognized that the workshops were a great opportunity professionally for me to observe and learn about how the team itself interprets our values and culture.

Even though the team hierarchy is very low, social hierarchies exist in every group and this often becomes apparent in collaborative situations like workshops. This could cause some people to be more domineering in social situations and silence voices that aren't as loud. The workshop ground rules enabled the whole team to participate wholeheartedly throughout the process and everyone felt like they were heard and respected. This was apparent in the participant's oral feedback after both workshops. Overall, the workshops were very successful in that they enabled the entire Dazzle Rocks team to participate in the culture handbook creation process and the sessions succeeded in clarifying the behaviours behind our values to the team. The workshops could very well also be conducted in another organization by utilizing their values and principles as the basis for determining behaviours related to them.

The final product of the thesis encompasses all the learnings that were gathered throughout the development process from the theoretical framework all the way to the methodologies utilized. The Dazzle Rocks culture handbook serves an important purpose in the company's quest to grow and will surely make the lives of its users easier.

7.2 Results and next steps

The development project was very successful in that it met the goal of the thesis which was to produce a culture handbook that conveyed the core values, principles and desired behaviours in an easily digestible format that can be utilized as an effective tool for culture onboarding. Because the company is growing rapidly, the handbook will no doubt be a useful tool in the onboarding process of the company. Discussions about publishing the handbook on the company website as a tool for employer branding are ongoing as well. Whilst culture is formed in groups, everyone perceives it individually and the ultimate goal for culture onboarding at Dazzle Rocks is to bridge the gaps between different

interpretations of the company culture. The culture handbook is a great start but should absolutely not be the only tool in the toolbox. The handbook acts as an introduction to the company culture but it does not replace team interactions and discourse.

Not only was the thesis project successful in providing a concrete product for its target organisation, but the conclusions can also be utilised on a larger scale as well. Despite action research often producing results that are difficult to replicate in other contexts, this thesis provides a general framework for culture handbook development that can be utilized by other organizations regardless of their industry, size, or culture. This element provides another layer of credibility and reliability to the thesis project.

My favourite motto is: “the only constant is change”. Even though culture changes and develops gradually, it will never be completely static. The Dazzle Rocks culture handbook is a great foundation but needs to evolve through time as the company grows and ultimately changes. This will require the ongoing active participation of the Dazzle Rocks team.

7.3 Additional research topics

Because the goal of this thesis was to develop a culture handbook, it would be important to evaluate how the handbook succeeds in its goal, culture onboarding. It would also be fascinating to develop the handbook further through service design or other participatory methods by involving now only the existing team but also new employees who have experienced the handbook first hand in their onboarding process. Because the culture handbook is only once part of culture onboarding, observing how and why certain organizations succeed in culture onboarding can provide more insights and ideas on how to improve the overall culture onboarding process at Dazzle Rocks.

Another further research topic would be to examine how culture handbooks are utilized in employer branding. Many of the benchmarked handbooks have two audiences: employees of the company and prospective employees of the company. Dazzle Rocks’ culture handbook is first and foremost directed to its existing employees, but it would be very interesting to examine the culture handbook could be useful in employer branding.

Because this thesis also provides a general framework for creating culture handbooks, utilizing the framework in other organizations and especially other industries would be imperative to determine its effectiveness. Testing the framework could also yield useful improvements and development suggestions to it.

References

- Ahmed, W. 3 March 2022. Supercell is donating €1 million to UNHCR to support humanitarian efforts in Ukraine. Dot Esports. URL: <https://dotesports.com/news/supercell-donating-1-million-to-unhcr-to-support-efforts-in-ukraine>. Accessed: 7 May 2022.
- Allsup, M. 21 July 2021. Activision Blizzard Sued Over 'Frat Boy' Culture, Harassment. Bloomberg Law. URL: <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/activision-blizzard-sued-by-california-over-frat-boy-culture>. Accessed: 7 August 2021.
- Atlassian. 2022. What is Agile? URL: <https://www.atlassian.com/agile>. Accessed: 15 May 2022.
- Beck, K., Beedle, M., Bennekum, A., Cockburn, A., Cunningham, W., Fowler, M., Grenning, J., Highsmith, J., Hunt, A., Jeffries, R., Kern, J., Marick, B., Martin, R. C., Mellor, S., Schwaber, K., Sutherland, J. & Thomas, D. 2001. Manifesto for Agile Software Development. URL: <http://agilemanifesto.org/>. Accessed: 15 May 2022.
- Blizzard. 2021. About. URL: <https://www.blizzard.com/en-us/company/about/>. Accessed: 7 August 2021.
- Bouton, K. 17 July 2015. Recruiting for Cultural Fit. Harvard Business Review. URL: <https://hbr.org/2015/07/recruiting-for-cultural-fit>. Accessed: 1 May 2022.
- Burkus, D. 2 December 2014. How to tell if your company has a creative culture. Harvard Business Review. URL: <https://hbr.org/2014/12/how-to-tell-if-your-company-has-a-creative-culture>. Accessed: 7 August 2021.
- Cambride Dictionary. 2021. Innovation. URL: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/innovation>. Accessed: 14 August 2021.
- Dazzle Rocks 2021. Game. URL: <https://www.dazzle.rocks/>. Accessed: 5 August 2021.
- Dealessandri, M. 4 August 2021. Activision Blizzard faces new lawsuit, this time from its investors. Gamesindustry.biz. URL: <https://www.gamesindustry.biz/articles/2021-08-04-activision-blizzard-faces-new-lawsuit-this-time-from-its-investors>. Accessed: 7 August 2021.
- Deloitte. 2022. Virtual Facilitation in Practice. URL: <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/dk/Documents/human-capital/Virtual%20Facilitation%20in%20Practice.pdf>. Accessed: 9 April 2022.

Dewar, J. 3 March 2022. 10 Employee Onboarding Statistics you Must Know in 2022. Sapling. URL: <https://www.saplinghr.com/10-employee-onboarding-statistics-you-must-know-in-2022>. Accessed: 15 May 2022.

Drumond, C. 2022. What is Scrum? Atlassian. URL: <https://www.atlassian.com/agile/scrum#:~:text=Scrum%20is%20a%20framework%20that,and%20losses%20to%20continuously%20improve..> Accessed: 20 April 2022.

Dweck, C. 4 November 2015. Teaching a Growth Mindset - Carol Dweck. Stanford. Online video. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isHM1rEd3GE>. Accessed: 9 October 2021.

Futureplay. 15 December 2020. Including inclusion (and why it's key to growing your business). URL: <https://medium.com/tales-from-a-mobile-game-studio/including-inclusion-and-why-its-key-to-growing-your-business-427882f63b15>. Accessed: 21 May 2022.

Futurice. 2022a. About. URL: <https://futurice.com/about>. Accessed: 15 May 2022.

Futurice. 2018. Futurice culture handbook. URL: <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/553433/Futurice%20Culture%20Handbook%202018.pdf>. Accessed: 15 May 2022.

Glassdoor. 2022. Smartly.io Employee Reviews about "company culture". URL: https://www.glassdoor.com/Reviews/Smartly-io-company-culture-Reviews-EI_IE1398927.0,10_KH11,26.htm. Accessed: 26 March 2022.

Glassdoor. 2022a. Best Places to Work 2022. URL: https://www.glassdoor.com/Award/Best-Places-to-Work-LST_KQ0,19.htm. Accessed: 8 May 2022.

Gottesdiener, E. 2002. Requirements by Collaboration: Workshops for Defining Needs. Addison-Wesley. E-book. Accessed: 9 April 2022.

Great Place to Work. 2022. About. URL: <https://www.greatplacetowork.com/about>. Accessed: 1 May 2022.

Haaga-Helia. 2022. Brain-writing. URL: <https://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/brain-writing>. Accessed: 10 April 2022.

Hakanen, J. 2011. Työn imu. Työterveyslaitos. Helsinki. E-book. URL: <https://www.ttl.fi/file-download/download/public/1036>. Accessed: 15 May 2022.

Hakulinen, S. & Hämäläinen, J. 4 May 2020. Why and How Startups Should Document their Culture before Scaling. Soaked. URL: <https://www.slush.org/article/why-and-how-startups-should-document-their-culture-before-scaling/>. Accessed: 15 May 2022.

Half, R. 13 April 2022. How Recognition Can Help Employees Work Happy. OfficeTeam. URL: https://www.roberthalf.com/blog/management-tips/how-recognition-can-help-employees-work-happy?utm_campaign=Press_Release&utm_medium=Link&utm_source=Press_Release. Accessed: 1 May 2022.

Hamilton, P. 2016. The Workshop Book. Pearson. E-book. Accessed: 9 April 2022.

Handley, L. 6 January 2020, updated 6 July 2021. Riccardo Zacconi: Hitting the sweet spot. CNBC. URL: <https://www.cnbc.com/riccardo-zacconi-hitting-the-sweet-spot/>. Accessed: 14 August 2021.

Highsmith, J. 2001. History: The Agile Manifesto. URL: <http://agilemanifesto.org/history.html>. Accessed: 15 May 2022.

Hubspot. 2022. About us. URL: https://www.hubspot.com/our-story?utm_id=345226263263&utm_medium=paid&utm_source=google&utm_term=marketing_hubspot_EN&utm_campaign=Marketing_MQLs_EN_EMEA_NORDICS_Brand-HubSpot_e_c_campaignid1050623662_agid53073410338_google&utm_content=&hsa_ver=3&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_acc=2734776884&hsa_kw=hubspot&hsa_grp=53073410338&hsa_mt=e&hsa_cam=1050623662&hsa_ad=345226263263&hsa_tgt=kwd-6356688152&hsa_src=g&gclid=EA1aIQobChMlpMfovclQ9wIVsRJ7Ch12IQOaEAAYASA AEgIXIPD_BwE. Accessed: 7 May 2022.

IDEO.org. 2022. Brainstorm rules. URL: <https://www.designkit.org/methods/28>. Accessed: 9 April 2022.

littala, H. & Ranta, E. 10 November 2021. Yli 23 miljoonan tulot – heidät Smartly nosti tulo-huipulle: ”On kunnia maksaa veroja Suomeen”. Iltasanomat. URL: <https://www.is.fi/taloussanomat/art-2000008394331.html>. Accessed: 26 March 2022.

Kainulainen, J. 22 April 2022. Kempower ja Virta yhteistyöhön – tähtäimessä merkittävä kasvu pikatalatauksen tarjonnassa Euroopassa. Kauppalehti. URL: <https://www.kauppalehti.fi/uutiset/kempower-ja-virta-yhteistyohon-tahtaimessa-merkittava-kasvu-pikatalatauksen-tarjonnassa-euroopassa/9be2bb88-0d7a-4915-a153-77de72bcd1bd>. Accessed: 7 May 2022.

Kauppalehti. 2022. Smartly.io Holding Oy. Alma Talent. URL: <https://www.kauppalehti.fi/yritykset/yritys/smartlyio+solutions+oy/2555760-6>. Accessed: 26 March 2022.

King. 2021. Home. URL: <https://www.king.com/>. Accessed: 14 August 2021.

Lucidchart. 2022. How to Use Brainwriting to Generate Ideas. URL: <https://www.lucidchart.com/blog/how-to-use-brainwriting-for-idea-generation>. Accessed: 24 April 2022.

McNiff, J. & Whitehead, J. 2001. Action Research in Organisations. Taylor & Francis Group. London & New York. E-book. Accessed: 15 May 2022.

Mentimeter 2022. Mentimeter overview. URL: <https://www.mentimeter.com/features>. Accessed: 10 April 2022.

Merriam-Webster. 2021. Definition of self-management. URL: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/self-management>. Accessed: 14 August 2021.

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. 12 March 2020. Government decides on recommendations to curb the spread of coronavirus. Press release. URL: https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-/10616/hallitus-paatti-suosituksista-koronaviruksen-leviamisen-hillitsemiseksi?languageId=en_US. Accessed: 15 May 2022.

Moritz, S. 2005. Service design : practical access to an evolving field. Köln International School of Design. E-book. URL: https://issuu.com/st_moritz/docs/pa2servicedesign/15. Accessed: 10 April 2022.

NOBL Academy. 2016. What You Can Learn from Culture Decks and Employee Handbooks. URL: <https://academy.nobl.io/the-a-to-z-guide-to-team-handbooks/>. Accessed: 15 May 2022.

Ojasalo, K., Moilanen, T. & Ritalahti, J. 2015. Kehittämistyön menetelmät. 3.-4. edition. Sanoma Pro Oy. E-book. Accessed: 15 May 2022.

Otter, M. 24 September 2020. Why Cultivating A Caring Company Culture Makes A Difference. Forbes. URL: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2020/09/24/why-cultivating-a-caring-company-culture-makes-a-difference/?sh=1ac25c6742d6>. Accessed: 7 May 2022.

Puusa, A., Juuti, P. & Aaltio, I. (2020). Laadullisen tutkimuksen näkökulmat ja menetelmät. Gaudeamus. E-book. Accessed: 23 May 2022.

Rehkopf, M. 2022. What are Sprints? Atlassian. URL: <https://www.atlassian.com/agile/scrum/sprints>. Accessed: 30 April 2022.

Rossi, A. 2015. Kulttuuristrategia 2. Meedia Zone OÜ. Viro.

Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., González-Romá, V. & Bakker, A.B. 2002. The Measurement of engagement and burnout: a two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 3, pp. 71–92.

Schein, E. H. 2009. *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide: New and Revised Edition*. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco. E-book. Accessed: 7 August 2021.

Schein, E. H. & Schein, P.A. 2016. *Organizational culture and leadership*. 5th edition. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. New York. E-book. Accessed: 7 August 2021.

Schwaber, K. & Sutherland, J. 2020. *The 2020 Scrum Guide*. ScrumGuides.org. E-book. URL: <https://scrumguides.org/scrum-guide.html>. Accessed: 30 April 2022.

Schwartz, J., Mallon, D., Durme, Y. V., Hauptmann, M., Yan, R. & Poynton, S. 15 May 2020. The compensation conundrum. Deloitte. URL: <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends/2020/new-compensation-trends-for-the-future-of-work.html>. Accessed: 7 May 2022.

Shah, D. 24 June 2021. The HubSpot Culture Code. URL: <https://network.hubspot.com/slides/the-hubspot-culture-code-1f8v20t3a/1>. Accessed: 15 May 2022.

Smartly.io. 2022a. About us. URL: <https://www.smartly.io/about-us>. Accessed: 26 March 2022.

Smartly.io. 2022b. Culture handbook. URL: https://f.hubspotusercontent20.net/hubfs/1570479/Culture%20Handbook/Culture%20Handbook-2022.pdf?__hstc=87482439.2de0b893beb678214bd7ed636f9e6236.1622839644703.1648886843229.1651341298014.7&__hssc=87482439.1.1652643325315&__hsfp=1857873962&hsCtaTracking=325cba9e-2afb-4a92-bed3-cbe77c78bb60%7Cafacfc0c-dab9-4bda-b5ee-89874e20884d. Accessed: 15 May 2022.

- Stanford University. 2021a. Profiles. Carol Dweck. Bio. URL: <https://profiles.stanford.edu/carol-dweck?tab=bio>. Accessed: 9.10.2021.
- Stanford University. 2021b. Profiles. Carol Dweck. Publications. URL: <https://profiles.stanford.edu/carol-dweck?tab=publications>. Accessed: 9.10.2021.
- Steger, M. F., Dik B. J. & Duffy R. D. 2012. Measuring Meaningful Work: The Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI). Journal of Career Assessment. Issue 00(0). Pages 1-16. URL: <http://www.michaelfsteger.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Steger-Dik-Duffy-JCA-in-press.pdf>. Accessed: 1 May 2022.
- Stevens, E. 2022. 6 Of The Best Icebreakers For Your Next Workshop Or Meeting (Ideal for in-person, remote & hybrid workshops). Workshopper. URL: <https://www.workshopper.com/post/icebreakers-for-meetings-and-workshops>. Accessed: 15 May 2022.
- Stickdorn, M., Hormess, M., Lawrence, A. & Schneider J. 2018. This is service design doing. O'Reilly Media Inc. E-book. Accessed: 10 April 2022.
- Summa, T. & Tuominen, K. 2009. Fasilitaattorin työkirja - Menetelmiä sujuvaan ryhmätyöskentelyyn. E-book. URL: <https://globaalikasvatus.fi/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2021/08/fasilitaattorin-tyokirja-menetelmia-sujuvaan-ryhmatyoskentelyyn.pdf>. Accessed: 30 April 2022.
- Takahashi, D. 5 May 2020. Dazzle Rocks raises \$6.8 million for Minecraft-like mobile MMO. URL: <https://venturebeat.com/2020/05/05/dazzle-rocks-raises-6-8-million-for-minecraft-like-mobile-mmo/>. Accessed: 5 August 2021.
- Tallholm, J. 2 September 2019. Sanotaan, että Salesforcella eletään arvojen mukaan - mutta mitä tämä tarkoittaa käytännössä? URL: <https://www.salesforce.com/fi/blog/2019/salesforce-arvot.html>. Accessed: 17 April 2022.
- Taloussanomat. 20 June 2012. Suomessa Euroopan paras työpaikka. URL: <https://www.is.fi/taloussanomat/yrittaja/art-2000001757695.html>. Accessed: 15 May 2022.
- Thornton, G. S., Mansi V. R., Carramenha, B. & Cappellano, T. 2019. Strategic Employee Communication – Building a Culture of Engagement. Palgrave MacMillan. Switzerland. E-book. Accessed: 1 May 2022.
- Turku, J. 7 December 2021. Mitä fasilitointi on? Ideapakka. URL: <https://ideapakka.fi/blogi/mita-fasilitointi->

Attachments

Appendix 1. From values to behaviours workshop: Presentation materials

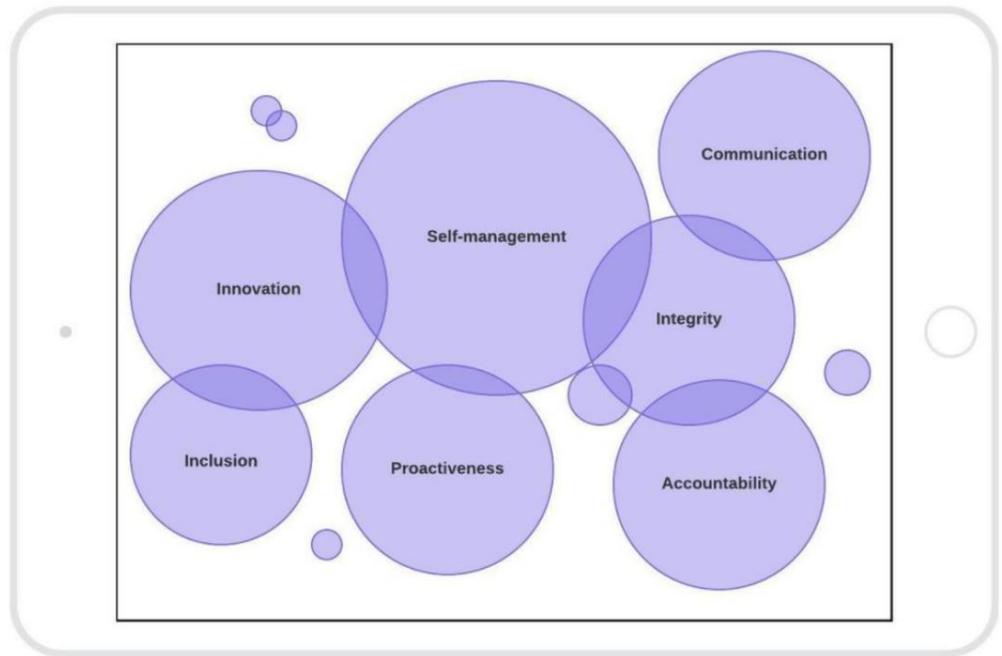


Let's dream!

Once the covid situation eases and we're able to travel again, what would be your dream travel destination and what would you like to do there? Post a photo of your dream destination to Lucidchart (link in #general) and share what you would like to do there.



Dazzle Rocks values



Group work teams

Group 1 (General)	Group 2 (Zoom 1)	Group 3 (Zoom 2)
Alex S.	Otto	Zuzana
Jarkko	Jukka	Timo
Alex L	Oskari	Ilona
Zach	Joonas	Tommi
Howard	Joel	Panu
Values: Self-management & integrity	Values: Proactiveness & communication	Values: Accountability, innovation & inclusion

- Go into the Zoom room of your team
- You can find the instructions for your exercise from the same Lucidchart as before. There are separate sheets for all 3 teams.
- You have **45 min** to complete the exercise.



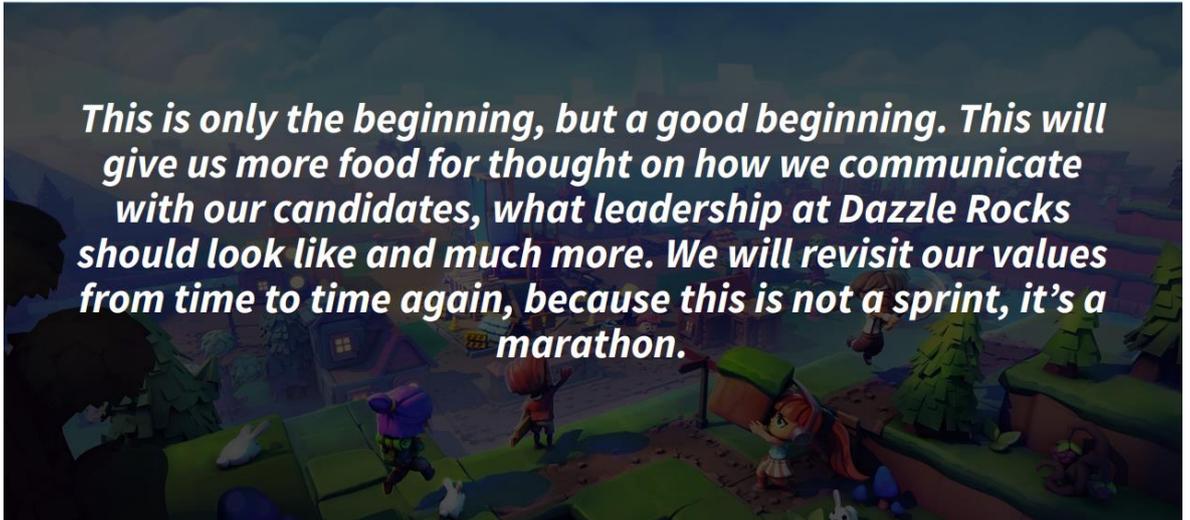
Star voting

***What resonates with you the most?
Pick one point per value that you
think is the most
important/impactful and put a
star next to it.***



What happens now?

This is only the beginning, but a good beginning. This will give us more food for thought on how we communicate with our candidates, what leadership at Dazzle Rocks should look like and much more. We will revisit our values from time to time again, because this is not a sprint, it's a marathon.



Thank you.



The unpolished stone, dazzling tomorrow

Appendix 2. From values to behaviours workshop: Group work Lucidcharts

Self-Management

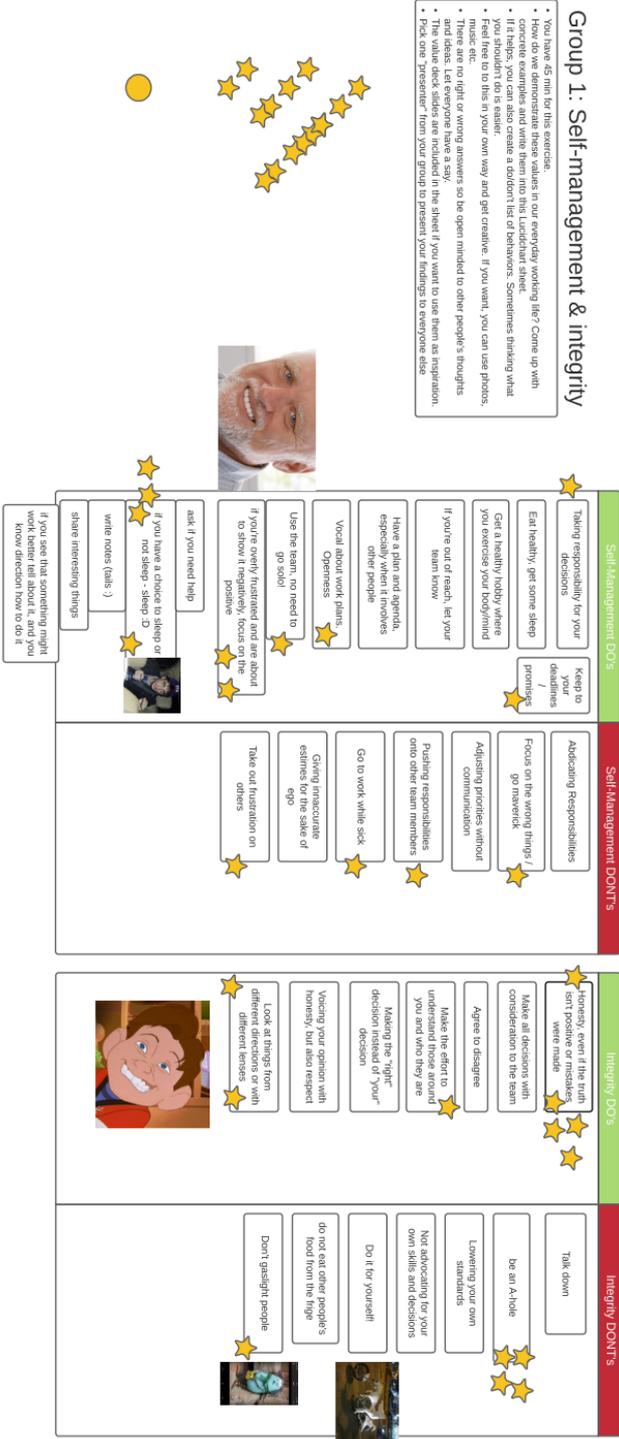
1. Have one body assigned to roll the dice with the team
2. You have 45 minutes for this exercise
3. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings
4. You have 10 minutes to present your findings to the group
5. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings
6. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings
7. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings
8. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings
9. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings
10. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings

Integrity

1. You have 45 minutes for this exercise
2. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings
3. You have 10 minutes to present your findings to the group
4. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings
5. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings
6. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings
7. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings
8. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings
9. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings
10. You have 10 minutes to discuss your findings and write up your findings

Group 1: Self-management & integrity

- You have 45 min for this exercise.
- How do we demonstrate these values in our everyday working life? Come up with concrete examples and write them into this Lucidchart sheet.
- Each person will create a random list of behaviours. Sometimes thinking what you should do is easier.
- Feel free to list in your own way and get creative. If you want, you can use photos, music etc.
- There are no right or wrong answers so be open minded to other people's thoughts
- The value deck slides are included in the sheet if you want to use them as inspiration.
- Pick one "presenter" from your group to present your findings to everyone else



Group 2: Proactiveness & communication



- You have 45 min for this exercise.
- How do we demonstrate these values in our everyday working life? Come up with concrete examples and write them into this Lucidchart sheet.
- If it helps, you can also create a do/don't list of behaviors. Sometimes thinking what you shouldn't do is easier.
- Feel free to do this in your own way and get creative. If you want, you can use photos, music etc.
- There are no right or wrong answers so be open minded to other people's thoughts and ideas. Let everyone have a say.
- The value deck slides are included in the sheet if you want to use them as inspiration.
- Pick one "presenter" from your group to present your findings to everyone else

Proactiveness

1. You are curious to keep ahead of industry knowledge, and go beyond
2. You actively work to improve through experience, teaching one another and cultivate the desire to be the best at what we do.
3. You strive for excellence in everything you do
4. You actively do what is the best for Dazzle Rocks
5. You make your colleagues better in a respectful manner
6. You are able to be vulnerable, ask questions in search of the truth
7. You are open-minded to learn from your colleagues
8. You are quietly confident and humble in public

Dos

- Google a lot
- Challenge yourself
- Be open to learning new things and technologies
- Share your insights and ideas with others
- Recognize when your coworkers are lacking some knowledge you have and offer it to them respectfully
- Ask for opinions and feedback from peers earlier rather than later
- "Do something, don't do nothing" - Otto 2021

Don'ts

- Don't talk down to people when helping them improve
- Don't be afraid to ask for help
- Don't just wait for people to hand solutions to you

Communication

1. You listen carefully and mindfully before reacting
2. You articulate the message such that it is commonly understood despite cultural or cross-disciplinary differences
3. You seek for the root cause to understand the bigger picture
4. You communicate goals to the extent that the expectations are aligned with the team
5. You share information openly and communicate with the right tools for everyone in the team
6. You give helpful and solution-oriented feedback
7. You share your ideas without reservation and back it with substance
8. You communicate in a punctual, concise and timely manner to respect people's time

Dos

- Listen to your coworkers and try to understand what they are saying or asking
- Be mindful of that conversations you overhear and jump into might have more context
- Utilize Slack and Zoom in real-time, prefer public communication over private
- Organize meetings when needed
- Give others the chance to talk
- Be mindful of your tone, prefer kindness
- Speak up when you notice people speaking or behaving badly
- Understand that people have bad days, and let others know when you're having one

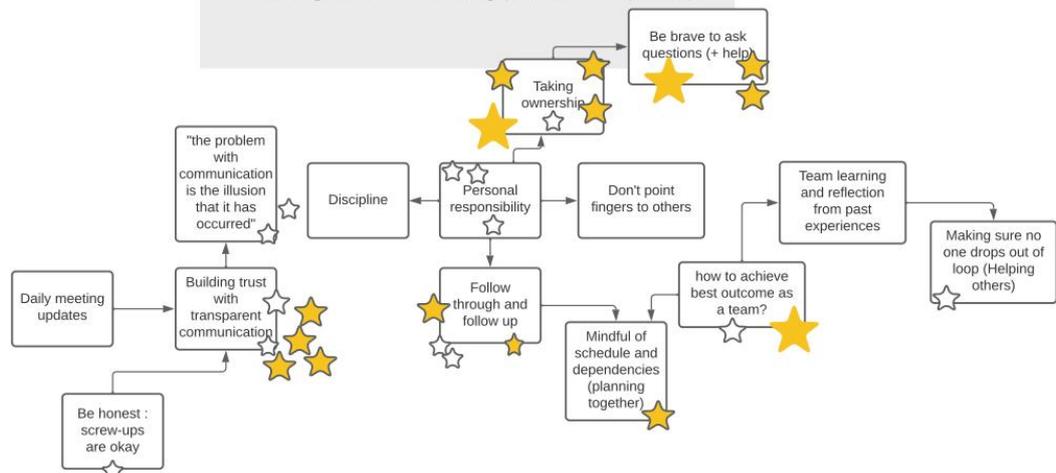
Don'ts

- Don't talk down to people
- Don't be afraid to ask for clarification
- Don't be afraid of sounding stupid
- Don't read too much into people's facial expressions
- Don't expect the worst - someone sounding irritated is probably not because they hate you

Group 3: Accountability, innovation & inclusion

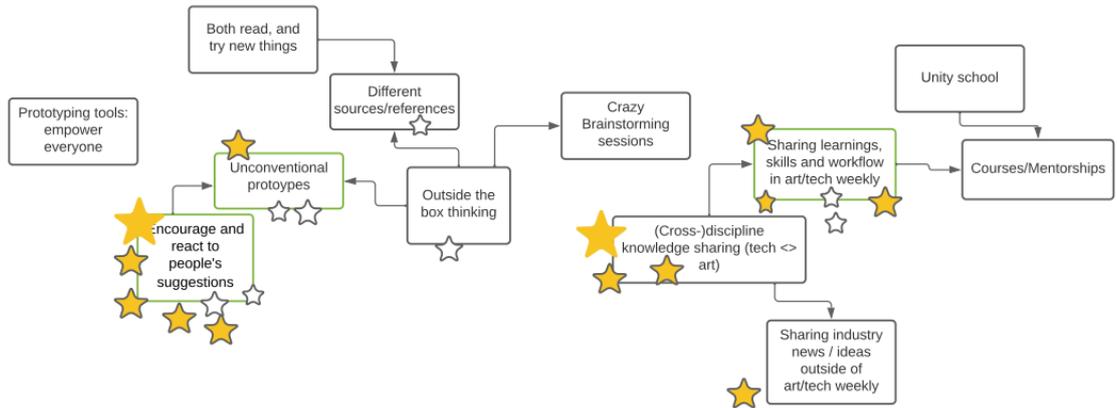
Accountability

1. You see that the company success as a joint and shared effort
2. you actively align with company goals and drive team to success
3. you take active role to communicate until the common goal is reached
4. your team can rely on your commitment to deliver the common goal
5. You take ownership and consequence of the task you commit
6. you admit mistakes freely and openly and actively seek for solutions
7. You take gratitude of freedom and align your action with responsibility



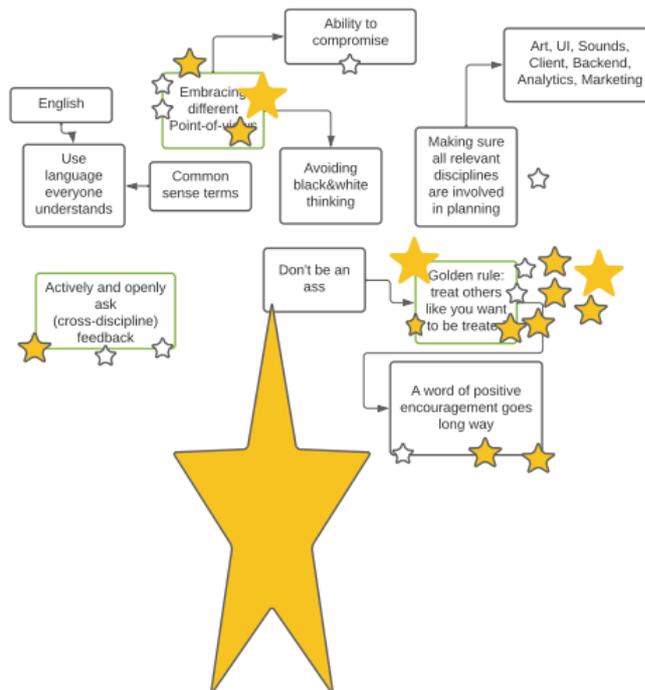
Innovation

1. You boldly bring out new ideas that prove useful
2. You understand the context of solutions for the company success
3. You tackle the unknown by thinking of new ideas and question the norms to suggest better approach
4. You re-conceptualize issues to discover solutions to hard problems
5. You keep us nimble by minimizing complexity and finding time to simplify
6. You enhance the team's abilities to achieve company success
7. You proactively adopt and push for change to achieve company success
8. You thrive on change



Inclusion

1. You collaborate effectively with people of different backgrounds and strive to learn from them
2. You embrace new perspectives for better, informed decisions
3. You recognise we all have biases and work to grow past them
4. you make every team member part of the team.
5. You are extraordinarily candid with each other



Appendix 3. Cross-function collaboration workshop: Presentation materials



Teams

Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 5
Alex S.	Oskari	Otto	Ilona	Howard
Joel	Jukka	Zuzana	Panu	Joonas
Tommi	Zach	Alex Lee	Timo	Jarkko
	Heikki			

People on the **blue** background: Go to meet.google.com, click on “Join or start a meeting” and invite the rest of your group members into the session.

Why are we doing this?

2021 is a big year for us. The team is growing and it's important that we collaborate efficiently with each other in order for us to achieve all that we have planned for this year. Let's develop ways in which we're able to collaborate cross-function more constructively.



***Go to [Menti.com](https://www.menti.com) and enter
code 10 54 32 3***

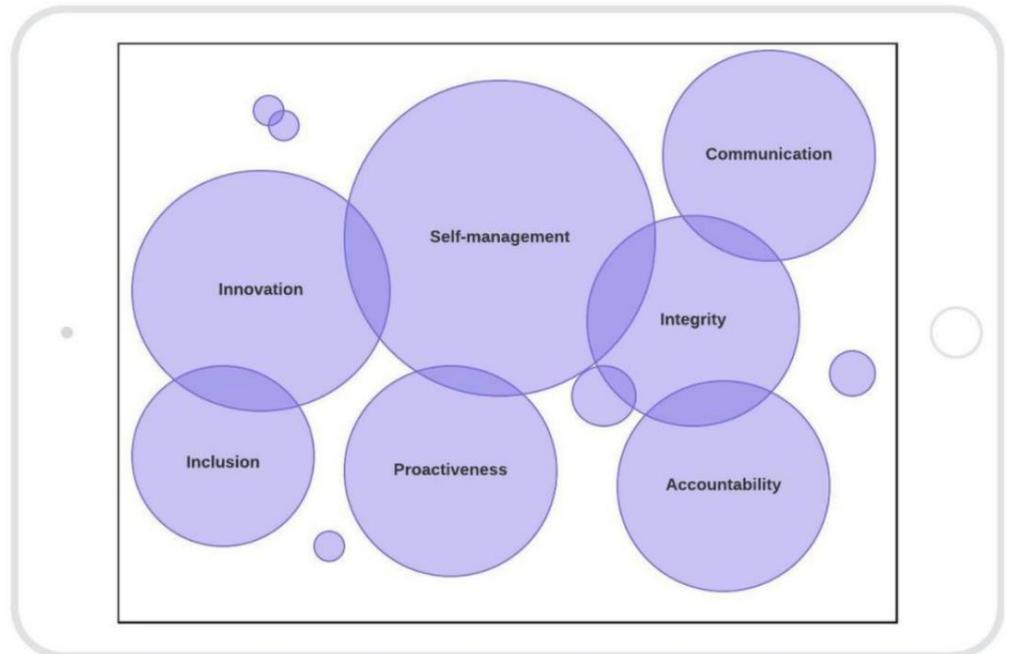


Groups for brainwriting

Group 1 (General)	Group 2 (Zoom 1)	Group 3 (Zoom 2)
Zuzana	Timo	Zach
Heikki	Tommi	Alex L
Howard	Jarkko	Iiona
Joel	Alex S.	Jukka
Otto	Oskari	Panu
Start with sheet 1	Start with sheet 2	Start with sheet 3

- Go into the Zoom room of your team
- You can find the instructions for your exercise from Lucidchart (link will be shared in #general).
- Groups will start from different sheets (1-3) and spend 15 min filling that one sheet up. Write down as many ideas as you can in the limited time you have.
- After the first 15 minutes is up, move to the next sheet and continue in the same way, until your group has been through all 3 sheets. In total you will have spent 45 minutes.

Dazzle Rocks values



Dot voting

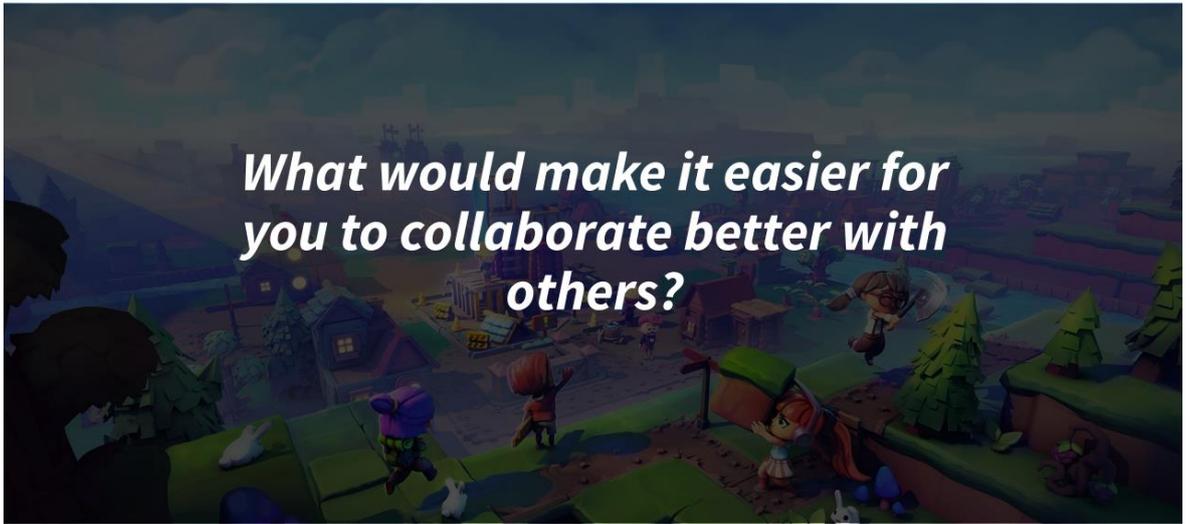
***Go to the last sheet you worked on.
As a team, choose 3 actions that
you think are the most
important/impactful.***

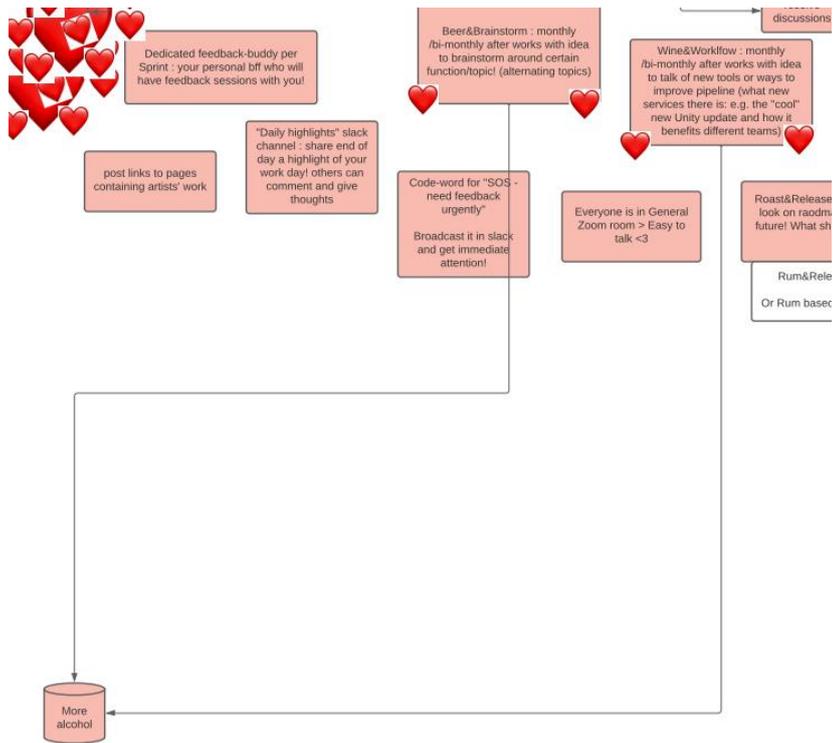


What happens now?

***Discussions about these
topics continue. We need to
come up with a concrete
plan on how we implement
some of your best ideas into
our daily lives.***

Final thoughts







Unpolished stone, dazzling tomorrow

As a company we've come a long way and experienced both ups and downs. We come from humble beginnings but have a huge appetite for success and massive ambitions for the future. Through trial and error (and many, many cups of coffee) we've developed our shared vision that unites the team to work on something special that has never been seen on the market before: a mobile first social MMO for the creator communities.

Whether it's jousting in the middle-ages or playing chess with your grandfather, games have always been inherently social, and in modern times technology has enabled more creative and immersive ways for people to play together. Games have also become more complex and at times you might feel like you need a wiki to learn how to play something new. Dazzle Rocks creates games for the social generation where anyone can start creating easily from the first moments onward.

Our vision is to be a category leader in cross-platform social MMO games both in the East and West



Our values and principles



Our values

Our 7 values are at the core of how we operate and what we believe in.



Self-management

We have big ambitions as a team, and self-management enables us to develop ourselves and respect others. Self-management doesn't mean we don't have managers in the team to help and guide you but by taking an active role in working on your own strengths and weaknesses, you have the power to steer your own professional development at Dazzle Rocks.

- You are fully present and energised to sail the ship with the team
- You channel and manage your stress and time without affecting your peers and work
- You recognise your strengths and weaknesses and actively strive to improve them
- You actively set progressive goals for yourself to achieve the company vision
- You maintain your composure regardless of the situation and seek for solutions



Inclusion

The Dazzle Rocks team is very diverse with various professional backgrounds, nationalities and more. All of us have a part to play in how we nurture the spirit of the team.

- You collaborate effectively with people of all different backgrounds and strive to learn from them
- You embrace different perspectives for better, informed decisions
- You are open-minded to understand and discuss different opinions to achieve better results
- You recognise we all have biases and work to grow past them
- You make every team member part of the team and treat others like you want to be treated



Integrity

Whilst everyone in the team has their own part to play and contribute, ultimately, we work and succeed as a team. We hold ourselves to a high standard together and have strong principles.

- You treat others with respect regardless of their opinion
- You have empathy to relate to others' point of view and work together toward the same goal
- You embrace failure and learn from it
- You care greatly about the team's well-being
- You put team goals above personal bias and egoism
- You are open, honest, and kind with your colleagues
- You are quietly confident and humble in public

Team > Individual



Communication

Communication is the essence of effective collaboration.

- You listen carefully and mindfully before reacting
- You are aware of your audience and recognize cultural and/or cross-disciplinary differences when delivering your message
- You actively communicate and ask questions to reach a common goal
- You seek for the root cause to understand the context and bigger picture
- You communicate goals to seek aligned with the team
- You share information openly and communicate with the right tools for the occasion
- You give helpful and solution-oriented feedback
- You share your ideas without reservation and back them with substance
- You communicate in a respectful, punctual, concise, and timely manner



Accountability

Promises kept sew the seeds for trust and respect in the team.

- You see the company's success as a joint and shared effort, not a solo mission
- You actively align with company goals and drive the team to success
- Your team can rely on your commitment to deliver high quality work on a common goal
- You take ownership and consequences of your work and decisions
- You admit mistakes freely and openly and actively seek for solutions
- You take gratitude of freedom and act responsibly



Proactiveness

“It is not my problem” is not an option at Dazzle Rocks because we are in this as a team. Proactiveness enables us to move fast and gives freedom to the team to take ownership and develop the product and company further.

- You actively do what is the best for Dazzle Rocks
- You strive for excellence in everything you do
- You are curious to keep ahead and go beyond industry knowledge
- You actively work to make the team the best at what we do by improving with experience and teaching one another in a respectful manner
- You are able to be vulnerable and ask questions in search of the truth
- You are open-minded to learn from your colleagues

***"Do something.
don't do nothing"***

-Otto (Data Engineer)



Team principles

Reach for the stars, land on the moon. The team is ambitious but realistic. Ambition pushes us to think big and beyond perceived limits to make better games. There is always a solution to any problem.

T-shaped skills. All of us are masters in our own craft but can wear multiple hats whenever needed. The versatile nature of our work means every day is different.

Sailing in the same direction. All of us come from varying backgrounds and have skills, and abilities but a common goal is what unites us all.

No assholes allowed. Simple but effective and speaks for itself.

Stay hungry & stay foolish. To make something unconventional and move the industry forward, you need courage to try new things and keep learning.

Enjoy the moment. We make video games! What's not to love about that!



Our team



Our team is...

...Diverse

The Dazzle Rocks team is one of the most diverse teams in the Finnish games industry. Not only do we come from multiple cross-discipline backgrounds such as tech, design, art, business and more, our team also represents over 10 different countries all the way from the Americas to Asia. We all use a common language, English, at work so anyone is able to jump into a conversation easily without feeling left out.



...Distributed

Whilst most of our team is located in Finland, we also have a significant part of our crew located all over Europe in countries like Romania, Spain and France. Regardless of your location, we strive to make everyone feel like they're a part of the team.



Our team is...

...Dynamic

We move fast but deliberately as a team. Every few weeks there's always something new being added to the product and we are used to pivoting fast when it's smart.



...Dazzling

All of us have our own unique and special skills that we bring to the table and we're really good at what we do. That doesn't mean that we are perfect either, hence we always aspire to grow as individuals and together as a team. Our helpful nature means that you're guaranteed to receive help at the drop of a hat if you need it. Trust is given right from the start. We truly care about each other and treat one another with kindness and respect. Most of all we're really fun people to work with ;)

Our ways of working



Our ways of working

Agile. We are agile and iterate when we see better ways of doing things.

- Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
- Working software over comprehensive documentation
- Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
- Responding to change over following a plan

Cross-functional. Game development is a collaborative effort requiring many different disciplines from tech to art and more. We work in diverse feature teams where multiple disciplines are represented. This enables the teams to gain a better overall understanding of the product from multiple different angles and ultimately make better decisions and learn from each other.

“The best thing about working at Dazzle Rocks is that I can wear multiple hats and utilize various skills during development. I feel like I have real influence on the game content.”



- Timo (Client Developer)



Our ways of working

Organized by flexible. We run a tight ship and have routines that are repeated weekly like our product reviews, where the whole team gets to play and give feedback about new features that are in development. Coming to meetings prepared is important but sometimes we need to be flexible in the face of sudden changes.



Hybrid. We have crew in multiple countries but some of us also work from the office. We support hybrid ways of working in multiple ways. All team members are provided with laptops, so you won't have to carry around a 10 kg monster of a PC on a plane in you come and visit Helsinki. And yeah, we also bring our overseas team members on regular visits to our HQ! For effective communication during hybrid work, we provide Slack, Zoom and multiple other ways to collaborate with your colleagues. Our Zoom General channel, the virtual “living room” of the company, is worth visiting whenever you have an urge to hang out with others.



