

# *The* **Culture** **Code**

*Our Real Intelligence Culture Handbook*

# ***I am hugely passionate about all things culture.***



To me, culture isn't a side project – it's the foundation for everything we achieve. Some of my proudest moments at Brainlabs have been seeing Brainlabbers accomplish things they never imagined possible: pitching to the world's most sought-after brands, leading enormous teams, or owning rooms on the biggest stages in our industry. But what fuels that kind of growth isn't just talent – it's the environment we create. Culture is what makes those leaps possible. It's not static. It's built, shaped, and maintained deliberately. As we've grown past a thousand people, it's become more critical than ever to define that culture clearly, so that every Brainlabber – new or tenured – knows what great looks like here and how to grow into it.

This isn't about putting some lofty ideals on the wall. It's about making intentional choices about how we show up and how we think, what we expect from each other, and what we hold ourselves accountable to. These codes give us a shared mental framework: not just rules for collaboration, but tools for thinking well. They aren't universally "right" in every context, but they are right for Brainlabs. They reflect what has actually worked for us, what we believe in, and how we want to operate going forward.

We've codified this into **twelve Culture Codes** because fewer simply wouldn't do justice to the complexity of what we expect from ourselves. We deliberately chose not to boil our culture down to three or four generic values. Those tend to become vague, forgettable, and interchangeable between companies. Instead, we wanted a set of rich, nuanced, actionable principles – ones that evolve in meaning as you grow in your career. You won't remember them all immediately, and that's okay. This isn't a branding exercise; it's a deep operating manual. Think of the codes as career accelerators. The behaviour cues will help you become a stronger teammate; the mental models will sharpen your thinking and expand your impact. The more you apply them, the more they'll shape your instincts – and the more value you'll create, for yourself and for Brainlabs.

**Daniel Gilbert**

Global CEO



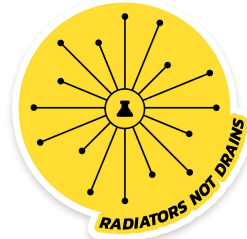
# ***The Culture Code***



**01 We are One Team**



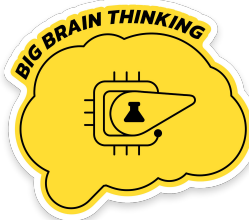
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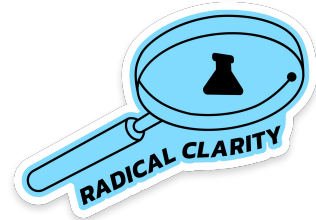
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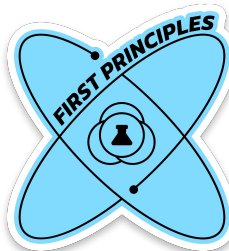
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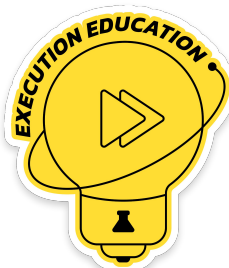
**08 First Principles**



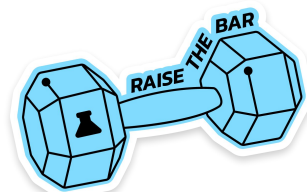
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# ***We are One Team***

Raise everyone's game, tap into strengths so the group brain beats any solo genius. Be a coach. Ensure everyone is in the right role, knows what they're doing and how they contribute to the team goal. All vectors must point in one direction. Your job is to show others how to do great work and help get them promoted.

## It's **very Brainlabs** when someone...

Pairs a data analyst with a storyteller to craft a killer deck. Champions others, aligns skills to goals, and makes team success the default.

## It's **not very Brainlabs** when someone...

Guards expertise: "Only I can do this part." Views leadership as self-focused. Doesn't take the time to coach others to grow.





# Feedback is a Gift



Feedback is a lever for growth – ask for it, offer it, and act on it. It's a gift that fuels both personal and collective improvement. Community-led feedback drives better work and stronger teams.

## 👍 It's **very Brainlabs** when someone...

Asks for feedback after a pitch, reflects, then iterates. Offers specific and timely feedback with care. Encourages post-pitch debriefs to fuel team growth.

## 👎 It's **not very Brainlabs** when someone...

Gets defensive or shuts down after feedback. Only gives vague comments like "all good". Avoids follow-ups or improvements.



# Radiators Not Drains



It's a smart choice to cultivate a positivity bias. Control the controllables. Change the way you see things, and the things you see change. Choose to radiate good energy, see potential, and build momentum.

## It's **very Brainlabs** when someone...

Approaches tough feedback as a learning moment. Journals wins, hypes teammates, frames problems as solvable. Turns losses into learnings.

## It's **not very Brainlabs** when someone...

Defaults to "this won't work" or focuses only on failure. Kills energy before trying. Gets stuck on problems.



# ***We Win with Our Clients***



We don't just answer briefs – we grow businesses. Be proactive and strategic. Focus on long-term client success to drive mutual growth and opportunity.

## It's **very Brainlabs** when someone...

Pushes back on low-ROI ideas with strategic alternatives. Builds tools and tech that grow the client's business. Prioritizes client wins over internal politics.

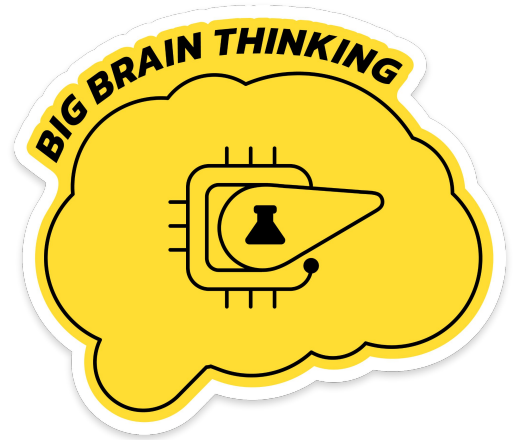
## It's **not very Brainlabs** when someone...

Treats client work like a checklist. Reacts to briefs without context. Forgets who pays the bills. Thinks client happiness = "no feedback."





# Big Brain Thinking



Combine human insight with AI horsepower – let the model crunch so your mind can create. Default to AI where it adds value, then elevate with your own judgment and experience.

## 👍 It's **very Brainlabs** when someone...

Uses AI to organize ideas, then shapes them with strategic thinking. Knows when AI helps and when human input is essential.

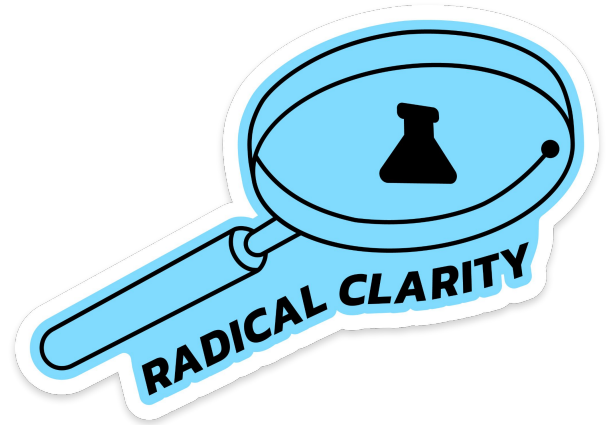
## 👎 It's **not very Brainlabs** when someone...

Re-types data manually because "I don't trust the tool."  
Fails to oversee or guide AI outputs.





# Radical Clarity



Clarity, not complexity – face facts exactly as they are. Be honest, direct, and kind. Operate in reality, and create a culture where dissent is normal and simplicity is celebrated.

## 👍 It's **very Brainlabs** when someone...

Flags a slipping deadline early and shows the real burn-down chart. Says what they really think – with clarity, candor and respect.

## 👎 It's **not very Brainlabs** when someone...

Sugarcoats or sidesteps issues, even while trying to be 'kind'. Hides blockers, or vents in private chats. Prioritizes being liked over being clear.



# Big-Lever Bias



Time is capital – invest it, don't spend it. Focus on the work that creates real outcomes, not just outputs. Be intentional about how you use your energy.

## 👍 It's **very Brainlabs** when someone...

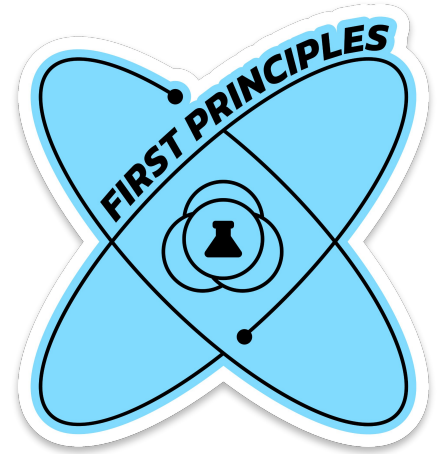
Cancels three low-impact meetings, batches emails. Finds a way to get stuff done, barriers or not. Questions whether tasks move real KPIs before acting.

## 👎 It's **not very Brainlabs** when someone...

"Busy" all week, yet nothing moves the KPI. Spends energy reacting to low-leverage tasks or noise.



# First Principles



Get to the root to find and fix causes, not symptoms. Keep working upstream. Separate signals from noise. Derive conclusions from observed reality, not the herd.

**👍 It's **very Brainlabs** when someone...**

Maps 5 Why's. Patches the source data feed to remove errors. Rewrites a flawed process from scratch. Challenges how it's done with clear reasoning and data

**👎 It's **not very Brainlabs** when someone...**

Adds another manual QA step each time a bug shows up. Cites best practices without understanding them. Follows norms blindly. Builds on broken foundations.





# Freedom in Frameworks



Build processes to empower people with autonomy, not to control them. Default to automate. Design frameworks that remove friction and create space for smarter, faster work

## 👍 It's **very Brainlabs** when someone...

Turns one-off solutions into scalable systems. Automates any manual task repeated three or more times. Clearly documents processes so others can build on them.

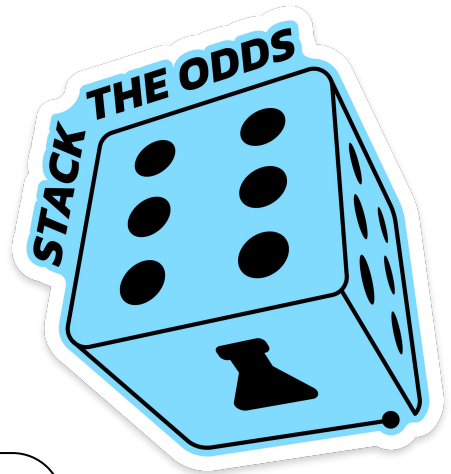
## 👎 It's **not very Brainlabs** when someone...

Creates processes that require sign-off at every stage, regardless of risk level. Repeats work someone else has done.





# Stack the Odds



Choose games you can win; keep score on outcomes. Be strategic in selecting projects that align with our strengths and best serve our clients. Win consistently and deliberately.

**👍 It's **very Brainlabs** when someone...**

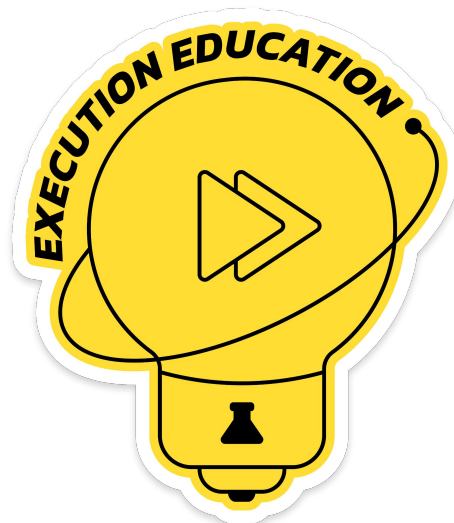
Passes on a flashy pitch opportunity that distracts from our business goals. Doubles down on high-ROI channels. Guides clients to invest in winnable bets.

**👎 It's **not very Brainlabs** when someone...**

Enters every contest "for exposure" or "future gain".



# Execution Education



Learn by doing, iterating, and shipping.  
Move fast, reflect often, and teach others  
what you've figured out along the way.

## 👍 It's **very Brainlabs** when someone...

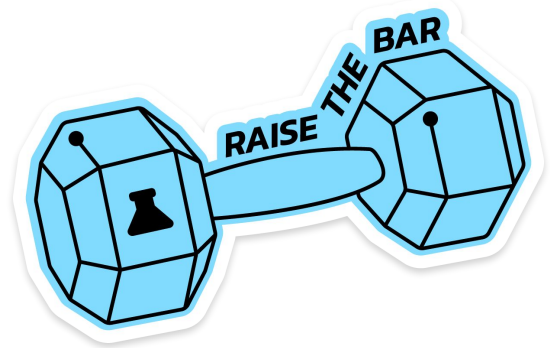
Gets on with it – ships a small feature, gathers user data, refines quickly. Runs an A/B test. Takes time to teach, show and guide others, much like we hope others do for you!

## 👎 It's **not very Brainlabs** when someone...

Reads five strategy books, applies no learnings.  
Focuses only on their tasks, not sharing knowledge or developing others.



# Raise the Bar



Innovation is never complete – iterate, improve, and constantly evolve. Know when to evolve and when to reinvent. Expect high standards, raise them, and help others do the same.

## 👍 It's **very Brainlabs** when someone...

Levels up strategy after seeing what worked on another client. Pushes the team to always go for the highest quality outcome, even if it's harder or novel.

## 👎 It's **not very Brainlabs** when someone...

Copies and pastes the deck template from last year without any improvements. Believes “good enough” is the finish line.





# ***Bringing Real Intelligence***

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## ***• to Life***



We bring Real Intelligence to life by striving to embed it in how we behave and how we think – every day, in every interaction, and in every piece of work. It's not just about being smart. Intelligence alone isn't enough. Real Intelligence is the combination of human insight and the intentional use of AI – bringing together empathy, critical thinking, technical expertise, and the ability to harness the right technology to scale impact.

Each of our twelve Culture Codes reflects this blend. Some focus on how we collaborate and support each other; others guide how we solve problems and think clearly. Together, they define what it means to apply intelligence in a way that drives outcomes, lifts teams, and creates value for clients.

This shows up not just in what we know, but in how we show up – how we build systems, teach others, and use the right tools to amplify our thinking. The Culture Codes are how we make Real Intelligence real. They help us turn smart into impactful, and capable into transformative. That's what sets Brainlabs apart.

Every Brainlabber is responsible for studying the Culture Code – that doesn't mean memorising every line or revising for an exam. It means taking the time to understand the principles behind each code so they can live by them. We know we are truly living the culture when we're able to put the principles into practice, not just when things are going well, but even more so, when we're stretched or facing new challenges.





# Our commitment to you

We describe this handbook as a shared commitment between Brainlabs and everyone who works here. Through the twelve principles, we have laid out our expectations for how Brainlabbers should approach our culture and their work.

But how about our commitment to you? As a company, we're committed to bringing the Culture Code to life in order to foster an environment in which you can be the very best version of yourself.

*Our commitment is three-fold:*

## 01 • We do people not politics

We don't do tokenistic gestures or industry pledges. We are not a news desk with a roster of statements for global events. We are not political or divisive. We focus our energy on living the Culture Code, which includes supporting you when you actually need it.

### **How?**

- The company and our leaders will not make statements relating to world events or politics; we'll leave the job of news broadcasting to the experts. We want our communication channels to feel like a safe place for everyone, without distraction or triggers from the outside world.
- We will, however, provide and signpost support where something outside of work impacts your ability to deliver your best work. We have, and will, do what is needed to support, provide resources and give the time and space needed for people who are impacted by events outside of work, be those personal or geopolitical.



## 02 • We build superteams

Building superteams is about hiring people with a diverse range of skills and putting them in roles and team formations that play to their strengths. Like any great football team, different people perform better in different positions and need an environment where they can thrive. It's our responsibility to create a culture where performance is recognised and rewarded, and low performance or counter-culture behaviour is not OK.

### ***How?***

- We have rigorous and data-led recruitment and promotion processes, making decisions based primarily on skills and potential over experience.
- When creating and growing teams, we ensure we bring together people with complementary skill sets, casting our net wide when hiring and thinking outside the box when developing people internally, especially via the Academy, our entry-level program.

## 03 • We invest in your growth

We commit to creating a space for you to completely fulfil your potential. We provide you with career-defining opportunities and then support you in the continued acquisition of skills and knowledge applicable to your current and future roles.

### ***How?***

- Everyone has access to the learning and resources they need to reach their potential, from classroom learning to mentors and coaches at pivotal moments in your career.
- Our promotions process is clearly documented and transparent, so all Brainlabbers have clarity on what they need to do to develop.



# Communication guidelines

How we talk is how we work. These are our house rules for communicating with speed, clarity, and intention.

## Slack

**Use Slack for fast, informal, in-the-moment collaboration across teams and time zones.**

- Put context + ask in the same message. Don't just say "Hi" – say what you need, clearly, in one go.
- Use threads – always. Only reply in the main channel if everyone needs to see it.
- DM for 1:1s. Keep group chats focused and noise-free.
- Cap your messages at ~150 words. Use bullets, bold, links, and white space for clarity.
- Keep your status up to date. Let others know when you're heads down, OOO, or in meetings.
- Use Do Not Disturb to focus. Mute notifications when you need to think – just let people know.
- Schedule-send across time zones. Slack messages can wait – use "Send Later" so they land at the right time.

## Meetings

**Use meetings to align live, make decisions, and tackle complex issues that need discussion.**

- Book a meeting or have a Slack call if there's back-and-forth. Don't debate in Slack – talk it out live.
- Use Google Meet for 4+ people. Slack huddles are best for 1:1s or quick chats.
- Default to in-person meetings wherever possible. When hybrid, be considerate of those joining virtually.
- Meeting invites must include an agenda. Add pre-reads, key points, and intended outcomes.
- Keep titles short and clear. Use 2–4 words max: "Pitch Sign-off" not "Can we finalise the deck?"
- Start with the outcome. Clarify the goal before diving in. Wrap with actions and owners.
- Only invite those who are essential. Mark others optional if they're FYI only.
- Post notes and actions in Slack. Do it promptly, and don't default to email unless external.







## Email

Use email for external comms or anything critical, formal, or permanent.

- Avoid emailing internally unless needed. If it's not business-critical, use Slack.
- Write subject lines like labels. For example: "Client Feedback – Q2 Campaign," not "Just a few thoughts..."
- Start with a TL;DR. One short line summing up the what and the ask.
- Keep it under 500 words. Use bullets, bold, and links. If it's longer, use a doc.
- Tag people and highlight asks. Use @Name and bold for anything that needs action.
- Only loop in those who need to know. Use BCC if they don't need to follow the thread.



## Intentional Communication

Collaborate across time zones and give people time to think before they respond.

- We default to sending anytime, but don't expect replies until working hours. Be respectful of people's time – even if they're in a different zone.
- Use schedule-send when you can across regions or if you know someone's OOO.
- Summarise instead of spamming. If someone's been off or it's outside of their hours, don't send 10 messages – wait and send a single, clear update.
- Use Docs, Sheets, and Slides for feedback. Comment, tag, and suggest instead of jumping on a call.
- Go fully OOO when you're out. Block your calendar, update your Slack status. Avoid using email auto-replies unless absolutely necessary; advance warning is less distracting.
- Don't slow the system. Communicate so clearly that others can act without needing to chase you.

