



Starfish Partners



The Starfish Way

...describes the behaviors, principles, and practices that are the foundation of our unique culture. It explains how we relate to our clients, candidates, each other, and even our vendors and suppliers. It's who we are, and it's what drives our extraordinary success.



1. COLLABORATE GENEROUSLY.

Have an abundance mindset.
Share information and work together.
Collaborate with our clients, candidates,
and our teams to find better solutions.
We're stronger together – empower
each other. True and generous
collaboration generates better
ideas and builds trust.

2. KNOW THE GOAL.

Ask enough questions to get
absolute clarity about the goal or
the problem we're trying to solve.
Know what success looks like for
the other person or the client.
Wasted effort comes from
confusion around the goal. Know
the goal with certainty before
you begin your work. Own your
piece of the process.





3. DO WHAT'S BEST.

Do right by clients, candidates, and our people, even if it's to our short-term detriment. There's no better way to build a reputation than to consistently do what's right for others.

4. ACT WITH INTEGRITY.

Demonstrate an unwavering commitment to doing what's right in every action that you take and every decision that you make, *especially when no one's looking*. Always tell the truth, and if you make a mistake, own up to it and make it right.

5. INVEST IN RELATIONSHIPS.

Get to know candidates, clients and co-workers on a more personal level. Talk on the phone or in-person more and email and text less. Find





out what's important to them. Strong relationships enable us to successfully work through difficult issues and challenging times.

6. EMBRACE CHANGE AND GROWTH.

What got us here is not the same as what will get us to the next-level. Get outside your comfort zone, rather than stubbornly hanging on to the old ways of doing things. Be excited about the possibilities that change and growth bring. Be flexible.

7. ASSUME POSITIVE INTENT.

Work from the assumption that people are good, fair, and honest, and that the intent behind their actions is positive. Set aside your own judgements and preconceived notions. Try to see the situation through the other person's perspective.





8. TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR WORK.

Demonstrate a passion for excellence and take pride in the quality of everything that you do. Seek opportunities to educate yourself on what you do not know. Have a healthy dislike for mediocrity. Good is *not* good enough – make it amazing.

9. HONOR COMMITMENTS.

Do what you say you're going to do when you say you're going to do it. Be on time for all phone calls, appointments, meetings, and promises. Don't over-commit. If a commitment can't be fulfilled, communicate quickly and find a new deliverable to be honored.





10. LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND.

Listening is more than “not talking.” Have an open mind and be curious to know more rather than jumping to conclusions. Be present and engaged.

11. SPEAK DIRECTLY.

Speak honestly in a way that helps to make progress and doesn't tear others down. Say what you mean, and be willing to ask questions, share ideas, or raise issues that may cause conflict when it's necessary for team success. Address issues as they occur with the people involved, rather than speaking behind someone's back.

12. CHECK THE EGO AT THE DOOR.

Don't let your ego get in the way of doing what's best for the team. Worrying about who gets credit





or taking things personally is counterproductive. Make sure every decision is based solely on advancing team goals and doing what's best for our clients and candidates.

13. GET THE FACTS.

There's always more to the story. Learn to ask questions and gather the facts before jumping to conclusions and making judgements. Be curious about additional information that might yield a more complete picture.

14. BE A LEARNER.

Keep learning. Look for and take advantage of every opportunity to gain more knowledge, to increase your skills, and to become a greater expert.





15. **THINK AND ACT LIKE AN OWNER.**

If you're not an owner yet, you could be one someday. Make decisions by asking yourself, "What would I do if this were my company? What would I do if this were my own money? Will this help the company to succeed?" We're a services-based organization; own your piece.

16. **TREAT EACH OTHER LIKE FAMILY.**

Our relationships go deeper than simply being teammates at work. We genuinely care for and about each other. Whether it's a kind word during a tough stretch, a friendly smile, or a helping hand in stressful times, show your compassion.





17. CELEBRATE SUCCESS.

Recognizing people doing things right is more effective than pointing out when they do things wrong. Regularly extend *meaningful* appreciation and acknowledgement in all directions throughout our organization.

18. BE A FANATIC ABOUT RESPONSE TIME.

Respond to questions and concerns quickly, whether it's in person, on the phone, or by email/text. This includes simply acknowledging that we got the question and we're "on it," as well as keeping those involved continuously updated on the status of outstanding issues.





19. PRACTICE BLAMELESS PROBLEM-SOLVING.

Be solution-oriented, rather than complaining or pointing fingers. Identify lessons learned and use those lessons to improve ourselves and our processes so we don't make the same mistake twice. Get smarter with every mistake. Learn from every experience.

20. BE RELENTLESS ABOUT IMPROVEMENT.

We're inching towards greatness. Regularly evaluate the way you/we work to find ways to improve. Don't be satisfied with the status quo. "Because we've always done it this way" is not a reason. Guard against complacency. Be willing to be vulnerable. Find ways to get things done better, faster, and more efficiently.





21. **DELIVER RESULTS.**

While effort is important, our clients expect *results*. Follow-up on everything and take responsibility to ensure that tasks get completed. Set high goals, use measurements to track your progress, and hold yourself accountable for achieving those results.

22. **BE POSITIVE.**

You have the power to choose your attitude. Choose to have a “can-do” spirit. Your attitude is contagious. Even when it’s not easy, spread optimism and positive energy.

23. **BOUNCE BACK.**

Problems and mistakes don’t define us – how we handle them does. Our best chance to “wow” is when a teammate, client, or candidate is upset and frustrated. Seize





the moment and attack the problem. The bigger the problem, the greater our chance to show what we're made of; we show our true selves in adversity.

24. LEAD IN YOUR OWN WAY.

The best way to influence others is through your own example. Embrace what you're good at. Walk the talk. Take responsibility, both formally and informally, to coach, guide, teach, and mentor others. Be resourceful about sharing best practices and empowering the next generation.

25. THINK SCALE.

Create systems and processes that are scalable and that support our ability to perform with consistency. Strong processes are the foundation of organizational effectiveness.





26. UNDERSTAND THE BUSINESS OF STARFISH.

We're in business to deliver value for our clients while making money. We all play a role in building revenue that exceeds our expenses. Look for ways to increase our sales, develop new clients, and control our expenses. EVERYONE at Starfish can add value and revenue, regardless of what seat they are in.

27. GET CLEAR ON EXPECTATIONS.

Create clarity and avoid misunderstandings by discussing expectations upfront. Set expectations for others and ask when you're not clear on what they expect of you. End all meetings with clarity about action items, responsibilities, and due dates.





28. DELIVER LEGENDARY SERVICE.

It's all about the experience. With every experience, do the little things, as well as the big things, that surprise people. Make every interaction stand out for its helpfulness. Create the "WOW" factor that turns clients into raving fans. This includes both internal and external customers.

29. KEEP THINGS FUN.

While our passion for excellence is real, remember that the world has bigger problems than the daily challenges that make up our work. Stuff happens. Keep perspective. Don't take things too personally or take yourself too seriously. Embrace our fun traditions. Laugh every day.

