

# NORDSTROM TECHNOLOGY

**This is a story about Nordstrom Technology's culture,  
both where we are and where we want to be.**

For 114 years, Nordstrom culture has been passed down as new employees join our company.

We have one rule:

A white rectangular card with a slightly textured surface, featuring handwritten text in black and yellow ink. The text reads "Use good judgement in all situations." with "good judgement" in yellow and the rest in black. A black arrow points from the bottom center of the card down to the text below.

Use good judgement  
in all situations.

We still believe this wholeheartedly, which is why all employees get [this](#) as our employee handbook!

In the last few years, we've grown quickly and are competing for the best talent in both retail *and technology* industries.



Nordstrom has been working hard to become a top competitor in technology, but you don't have to take our word for it: [Harvard Business Review](#), [BusinessWeek](#) and [Forbes](#) agree!

We want to hold true to our history,  
but we think it's time to explicitly  
share what we think differentiates  
our Technology team compared to  
other tech companies.



Our quickly-changing  
tech market demands it!




Over the past few years, we've seen an emergence of culture codes in tech companies.



Shout out to [Netflix](#), [Etsy](#), [Spotify](#), and [Hubspot](#) who have taken the steps to share their culture and inspired us in the process!

We wanted to add to these, but also distinguish ourselves by sharing the methods we've been using to create and maintain our culture.

Our culture is a differentiator!



In order to articulate our rallying point,  
we developed Nordstrom Technology's

**NORDNA**

Creating the most inspiring workplace where we enable  
talented people to provide amazing customer experiences.



# NORDDNA

Creating the most inspiring workplace where we enable talented people to provide amazing customer experiences.



NORDSTROM TECHNOLOGY

# We are skilled, passionate, action-oriented people...

## PEOPLE we are...

### ACCOUNTABLE

Follow through on commitments and delight in delivering results

### PASSIONATE

Make real impact through skills, contributions, and high engagement

### ACTION ORIENTED

Bias towards action using good judgment; don't wait for permission

### SKILLED

Bring deep expertise and a breadth of knowledge that inspires confidence

### COURAGEOUS

Take smart risks, embrace failing to learn, and share even wild ideas

### CURIOUS

Ask questions, seek inspiration, and experiment with new ideas

### COLLABORATIVE

Listen to others, build on and contribute ideas, foster alignment and accountability

### TOP TALENT

Nurture, inspire, and attract talented people who will leave the company better than they found it

### MEANINGFUL WORK

Understand the value you add to our organization and its customers

### EMPATHY

Seek to understand the perspectives of others

### EMPOWERMENT

Focus on why and let team members figure out how

## CULTURE we foster...

### COLLABORATION

Seek input and share ideas to further company goals

### FUN ENVIRONMENT

Refresh and recharge as individuals and as a team

### UNSTRUCTURED TIME

Continually improve yourself, the company, and the customer experience

### INNOVATION

Make time to explore and experiment with new ideas

NORDSTROM TECHNOLOGY

# Who foster a culture to differentiate ourselves.

## PEOPLE we are...

### ACCOUNTABLE

Follow through on commitments and delight in delivering results

### PASSIONATE

Make real impact through skills, contributions, and high engagement

### ACTION ORIENTED

Bias towards action using good judgment; don't wait for permission

### MEANINGFUL WORK

Understand the value you add to our organization and its customers

### EMPATHY

Seek to understand the perspectives of others

### EMPOWERMENT

Focus on why and let team members figure out how

### SKILLED

Bring deep expertise and a breadth of knowledge that inspires confidence

### TOP TALENT

Nurture, inspire, and attract talented people who will leave the company better than they found it

## CULTURE we foster...

### COLLABORATION

Seek input and share ideas to further company goals

### COURAGEOUS

Take smart risks, embrace failing to learn, and share even wild ideas

### COLLABORATIVE

Listen to others, build on and contribute ideas, foster alignment and accountability

### INNOVATION

Make time to explore and experiment with new ideas

### UNSTRUCTURED TIME

Continually improve yourself, the company, and the customer experience

### FUN ENVIRONMENT

Refresh and recharge as individuals and as a team

### CURIOUS

Ask questions, seek inspiration, and experiment with new ideas

NORDSTROM TECHNOLOGY

Why focus on culture?

Our #1 priority is **always** the customer!

What makes outstanding customer experiences?

**TOP EMPLOYEES.**

What makes top employees engaged?

**GREAT CULTURE!**



That's our main point, so we'll state it again:

**Culture is important because it meets our #1 priority: customer service!**

*“Why have we emphasized service? It’s very simple. Over the years, we learned that the more service we provided, the better our business became. It’s no more complicated than that.”*

**-Bruce A. Nordstrom**

Grandson of J.W. Nordstrom  
Chairman of Nordstrom, 1968-1995; 2000-2006

So how have we been working on  
Nordstrom Technology's culture?

We'll walk you through the culture side to provide concrete examples of how we're trying to foster this culture.



It's an ongoing process, so it's a little of where we've come and a little of where we want to be!

It starts with nurturing, inspiring, and attracting **top talent**.



If you want to be the best,  
you need to have the best.



## TOP TALENT

We use the audition process so that the entire team is involved in quick hiring decisions.

See our [hiring handbook](#) to learn about our audition process!

It's not just hiring, but also *cultivating*  
our talent.

## TOP TALENT

Our goal is to provide  
meaningful challenges  
and opportunities to  
grow at all levels.

We then try to connect the dots between work and Nordstrom's strategic objectives.

We think this is a pretty key part of offering **meaningful work**.



Employees should see the big picture!



## MEANINGFUL WORK

We try to tie each team's  
work to the company  
mission.



## MEANINGFUL WORK

We also encourage store visits or volunteering in stores during busy times to connect our work to our customers.

Check out this video of our Innovation Lab using immediate customer feedback to [design an app to help sell sunglasses!](#)

It's not just about having meaningful work.

We recognize that our customers and colleagues all have unique needs, and that we need to practice **empathy** to help us understand different perspectives and challenge our own assumptions.

## EMPATHY

We regularly practice being more curious (asking open-ended questions, probing deeper, and asking why).

Check out the [video](#) we use to educate about empathy.

## EMPATHY

We try to refrain from jumping to solutions before understanding the needs.

We encourage our employees to feel **empowered** to deliver great experiences for our customers.



## EMPOWERMENT

We trust our employees to work in the manner that's best for them, and to ask for help when needed.

# EMPOWERMENT


We hold each other  
accountable and try to  
define boundaries, not  
methodologies.

Don't know much about  
empowerment? We've *goat*  
your back! Check out our  
[video about goats and fences](#)  
for a lesson on empowerment.

**Collaboration** helps us construct building blocks to work together, learn from our colleagues, and push each other to do our best.

## COLLABORATION

We intentionally create opportunities and space for working together and idea sharing.



Both internally across departments and externally like the [Fitting Room of the Future](#) with eBay!

*“You have to create a culture where people feel secure about offering ideas.”*

**-Bruce A. Nordstrom**

Grandson of J.W. Nordstrom

Chairman of Nordstrom, 1968-1995; 2000-2006

# COLLABORATION

We build on each others' ideas and use "Yes, and..." in meetings.

It's an improv term!






We believe that it's important to make time for play in our work day. That means we try to create a **fun environment** to bond with our teammates and refresh as a group.

## FUN ENVIRONMENT

We look for ways to  
incorporate employees'  
passions and interests into  
work.



Like this [tweet analysis](#) of  
2013's NY Fashion Week  
that our Data Lab created!

## FUN ENVIRONMENT

We also support team time together, such as foosball tournaments, birthday celebrations, and other team-building activities.

We know that continually improving ourselves, the company, and the customer experience is important. To do this, we endorse **unstructured time**.

We try to invest in the technical and retail communities to give back with knowledge in addition to sponsorship, like we did with the [Seattle Code Camp](#).

## UNSTRUCTURED TIME

We encourage team members to participate in events that can push their boundaries.

## UNSTRUCTURED TIME

We support people  
pursuing side projects that  
improve our business.

One of our employees  
along with his daughter  
gave a great presentation  
at a conference  
[encouraging girls in IT!](#)



Lastly, we aim to cultivate an environment of **innovation.**



And we're not the only ones who believe that innovation matters!

## INNOVATION

We think big then make smaller steps towards that goal to better serve customers.

We try to make bold bets, like when we acquired [Trunk Club](#), in addition to little bets that could have a large payoff.


*“Customers don’t value channels, they value experiences, and our entire team is focused on creating **innovative** and relevant customer experiences.”*

**- Jamie Nordstrom**

Great Grandson of J.W. Nordstrom  
Current President of Stores

# INNOVATION

We explore new ideas  
and build on the ideas of  
others.



We encourage our team  
members to go through an  
[Innovation Bootcamp](#) to  
jumpstart this way of thinking.

These NorDNA values build upon each other to create (and maintain) a culture where our employees can deliver great customer experiences.

In a changing world, we'll never forget our heritage of the shoe salesperson, on one knee, assisting one customer at a time.



NORDSTROM  PEOPLE LAB

2015