

# Digital Stewardship **Manifesto**

Establishing trusted client  
relationships aimed at forging  
the future together.

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The fake innovator is  
wildly self-confident.

The real one is  
**scared to death.**

Steven Pressfield  
The War of Art

# At Whiteboard, we help purpose-driven organizations leverage the Internet for good.

At Whiteboard, we help purpose-driven organizations leverage the Internet for good. The organizations that shape the future will be the ones that are the most natively digital. Whether we're helping you create and launch an innovative app or website, build a digitally-focused brand, develop and execute a broad digital marketing strategy, or explore the technological frontiers of artificial intelligence and beyond, we work closely with our clients and become a core part of your team because the *future of our society is digital*.

We believe technology can be a force for good, rather than a source of darkness, noise, and distraction. Our goal is to help you create digital environments for your audiences that feel *more human*, not *less human*.

## **We serve our clients in three ways:**

1. We consult.
2. We create.
3. We teach & facilitate.

Whether we're helping you get your product in the hands of more customers, find and engage new audiences, or think with greater imagination, we're in it with you to win it.

When we join forces with you, that means we're joining forces with your mission. If we don't believe your mission is good, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, we won't work with you. Likewise, if you don't agree with our values, you shouldn't work with us. We're certainly not perfect, and we're more than happy to adapt appropriately to help each of our clients succeed, but if we can't agree on core values then it's highly unlikely we'll be able to work well together for very long.

Doing something creative means doing something that hasn't been done before. There may be similarities between what you're trying to do and what others have done, but your world-changing pursuit is likely different enough that it needs unique thinking. If it's not, maybe you should join forces with the people who did it before you, or just "borrow" their model or idea for a while. We champion building on the shoulders of giants but we don't cut corners by simply modifying someone else's work and calling it "creative."

We're in the work of **new things**, so if you're looking for something very similar to someone else's work, we suggest you reach out to them.

**The most critical success factor in any creative or world-changing pursuit is trust among members of the team. We have to trust you, and you have to trust us.**

**Since the foundation of great creative work is trust, how do we establish a trusted relationship from the get-go?**

# Transparency.

For you, the ultimate goal is bringing your mission to life. For us, the ultimate goal is helping you achieve that mission while being paid for our knowledge, time, and effort.

That means simple and clear terms of how we'll manage our relationship and charge you money. No unattainable promises. No saying we know how to do something we don't know how to do. Most of all, it means not promising you

certainty, because if you're doing something that's never been done before, how can anyone be sure how it will go?

That also means you won't expect us to build the future (which is dynamic and changing) using yesterday's thinking (which is often static and predictable). No trying to squeeze more value out of us than you're paying for. No layers of separation from the decision makers.

COO

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THE DIGITAL STEWARDSHIP MANIFESTO

# The Core Values of Innovative Creative Work

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The following five core values govern how we work with our clients. These values are non-negotiable. If we're going to work together, you must agree to these values and commit to them without hesitation.

VALUES

**N°1**

# Good is the enemy of great.

“Greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice.”

**Jim Collins**

Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't

## Great brands set expectations rather than simply recreate the status quo.

They anticipate and shape the world we will live in rather than focusing on ideas for the world as it exists today. This commitment to greatness requires intense thoughtfulness and a relentless commitment to pioneering.

Your customers' expectations are set across a broad spectrum of digital experiences.

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### Consider:

- the effortlessness and utility of Uber,
- the way Slack has changed how teams communicate,
- how Netflix uses the internet to deliver video content to more subscribers than all cable companies combined,
- Or how Chick-fil-A's One App allows customers to bypass the drive-thru line.

In the highly competitive digital world, good is the enemy of great, and we choose and fight for greatness.

**N° 2**

# Ground-breaking creativity requires exploration.

**“It’s like we’ve forgotten who we are explorers, pioneers, not caretakers.”**

**Cooper**

Interstellar (2014)

If you express to us that you want to be a leader in your industry or work, we will expect you to exuberantly celebrate exploration. The creative process requires time, space, and energy to explore what could be. You must be willing to test hypotheses, accept “no” as a valid answer, and test again.

We will strive to help you be a leader in what you do. We will learn from those who have gone before you (and us), but you cannot be a leader simply by replicating what others have already done.

In our work for you, whether on a small or large scale, we will spend time exploring what’s possible. Since your mission is unique and our work with you is unique, sometimes a majority of the effort is spent exploring how to accomplish the goal.

We will spend resources conducting research. We will create design mockups that don’t make it to production. We will write code that ends up not getting used. We will draft copy that doesn’t make the cut. All in an effort to determine the right thing to do. Prototyping is the backbone of great digital work.



**Nº3**

# Healthy people (and healthy minds) produce the greatest results.

More time staring at the screen does not always equal more output. Our bodies, and especially our minds, need adequate rest to function at their greatest potential. We consider any restorative activity to be restful (not just sleeping) and we encourage our team and our clients to ensure adequate rest no matter what.

Some extra coffee and sleep deprivation do not add up to great ideas or solutions. The best way to produce great creative outputs is to maintain a discipline of putting in a consistent, focused amount of work on a daily basis.

We commit to you that we will show up every day ready to do our best.

Since our bodies and minds need rest to be at our best, our team does not work late nights or on the weekends. We don't use nights and weekends to make up time on a project schedule. This time is reserved for family, friendship, and rest.

The way to ensure a critical deadline is met is to reduce the work required by the deadline to be absolutely possible with more than ample room to spare.



## N°4

The quality and creative value of any project will be directly proportional to the resources you invest in it.

And... the hardest part of any relationship is talking about money.

**You say:** *"How much will it cost?"*

**We say:** *"We don't know exactly."*

Why? Because it's creative. Because it's never been done before. Because we don't know exactly how long it will take. Even a small deviation from something that has been done before means what you're doing hasn't been done before. And that makes it unique. And that makes it unpredictable and nearly impossible to estimate.

People often believe the myth that the creative or inventive process can be supernaturally accelerated by an invisible muse. 999,999 times out of 1,000,000, this doesn't happen. Sure, we've had some great "eureka!" moments, but usually only after we've spent a significant amount of time beating the pavement (mentally) toward an idea or outcome.

You can buy a go-cart for \$500. You can buy the fastest production car in the world for \$3,000,000. Both have an engine, four wheels, a steering wheel, acceleration and brake pedals, and will get you from point A to point B. You can build a go-cart with parts and tools you buy at a local hardware store. Building the world's fastest car requires the world's most highly-trained engineers, custom-designed tools, and tons, and tons, and tons of research, experimentation, and validation.

If we're working together, we're going to assume you're in the metaphorical fast car market. Maybe you're not after the title of "Fastest Car in the World," but you at least want to compete at the highest level. Your resources and tolerance for risk must match your drive to lead.

**N°5**

In a digital world,  
digital assets  
are a **long-term**  
**investment**, not a  
short-term hedge.


**Consider this:  
since the year  
2000, more  
than half of the  
companies in the  
Fortune 500 have  
disappeared.**

Why? They were disrupted by a society of digital natives.

Today, we may be discussing a website, mobile application, or digital marketing strategy; but, soon you'll be asking questions on how machine learning, artificial intelligence, self-driving vehicles etc., might influence your organization.

Every day, more and more consumers, stakeholders, and other audiences are engaging brands and organizations primarily through digital environments.

You cannot imagine the digital world simply as a short-term marketing opportunity you need to utilize more effectively. If you want to exist in the future, you must adopt a digital-centric organizational strategy from the inside out.



As a **recap**, these core values are at the center of our work with you:

**N°1** Good is the enemy of great.

**N°2** Ground-breaking creativity requires exploration.

**N°3** Healthy people (and healthy minds) produce the greatest results.

**N°4** The quality and creative value of any project will be directly proportional to the resources you invest in it.

**N°5** In a digital world, digital assets are a long-term investment, not a short-term hedge.

DIGITAL

STRATEGY

For more information follow along  
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BOARD

SHIP

WHITEBOARD