

NOVA



Cultural Handbook

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Purpose & Objective of the handbook

The aim of this handbook is to provide you as an employee an understanding of who NOVA is, our culture, and how to best navigate within the organization.

Good cross-cultural understanding

Good cross-cultural understanding improves communication between people from different cultures. Consequently, it fosters greater trust. Cross-cultural communication involves understanding the similarities and differences of people from different cultural backgrounds and groups to better communicate information and engage with them.

Robust organization

We believe that our collaboration between people across the organization will be more robust if we know each other's differences and similarities.

NOVA

NOVA is a Nordic consultancy group, founded in Norway in 2007. NOVA offers a complete range of services to businesses with a digital core. From brand strategy to applied technologies and performance marketing.



NOVA
LAB

rocket

POINT:TAKEN



nova
net

SINGULAR
STUDIOS



◆Pineberry

Egde

fyr

Epinova



cloudnine°

GROWTH IN NOVA

2007

Epinova was founded

2012

Northern Beat was founded

2018

NOVA Sweden was founded
Epinova in Stockholm was
founded

2020

Explore Equity became our
minority investor

2022

Cloud Nine was acquired
Fyr & Singular were founded

2010

Novanet was founded

2014

Point Taken & Novacare was
founded

2019

Novalab was founded

2021

Pineberry & Infunnel were acquired
Rocket was founded

2023

Dekode & Egde were acquired
NOVA Poland was founded

NOVA IN NUMBERS

575
experts



COMPANIES IN NOVA

14



GENDER BALANCE

26% women

74% men



AVERAGE AGE

39,5



NATIONALITIES

17

The foundation of NOVA

Let's share a bit of our history.

Nova Consulting Group was founded by Geir Allan Hove (CEO) Inge Halvorsen (CEO Epinova), Geir Andås (CSO Epinova) and Thomas Leela (Tech lead Epinova) back in 2007. Since we started our first company (Epinova) in 2007, our goal has always been to be the best place to work. Since then, we have grown to become one of the leading consulting companies in Scandinavia.

Our roots are Norwegian, and our company culture is deeply influenced by Nordic values. We believe in equality, cooperation, responsibility, and fairness in everything we do.

The vision was clear – to create a company where the founders would continue to work throughout their careers – making it the best place to work! Every day, we work towards achieving this goal, not only for our founders, but for all employees.

WHAT WE VALUE

**The values we
hold that make
this company
truly exceptional**

CO-OWNERSHIP MENTALITY

We are committed to fostering an inclusive and entrepreneurial culture that empowers all employees to feel valued and engaged and to seek co-ownership.

SPECIALIST CULTURE

We believe that experts thrive in specialized companies. To facilitate this, each of our brands nurture a unique core culture as a foundation for developing specific capabilities.

COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT

We believe that great things happen when experts collaborate, which is why we are dedicated to nurturing a culture of transparency and teamwork throughout our operations.

Work culture

We are experts who care about our colleagues and the professional craftsmanship

Our work culture is characterized by a flat organizational structure, open communication, and a strong focus on collaboration. We believe in giving our employees the freedom to explore new ideas and take ownership and initiative in a strong professional environment.

Means of communication

We believe in open and positive dialogue, which is the key to building collaborative and lasting relationships.

NOVA HUB

NOVA Hub is our intranet in NOVA where you can find information relevant for you such as new in NOVA, ethical guidelines, information about the offices, HR info and a lot more.

VIDEOCHATS

Most companies in our organization use Teams or Google for video meetings, chats, file, and app sharing. It's a priority for our teams to have video meetings when possible.

SLACK

Some teams use Slack for day-to-day communication in addition to Teams.

STAND-UP

Some of our teams do daily stand-ups using these tools, while others use them for ad hoc, quick meetings.

HUMA

Huma HR is our HR & personnel system. In Huma, you can update your personal information, and look up information in the personnel handbook - among other things.

WORKING BETWEEN COUNTRIES

Remote communication between the countries can be difficult - but is absolutely achievable.

ESTABLISH CLEAR COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Agree on the communication channels that you'll use to stay in touch, such as e-mail, instant messaging, and video conferencing. Make sure everyone knows when and how to reach each other.

BE OPEN TO FEEDBACK

Be open to feedback from your colleagues. This will help you improve your work and build stronger relationships with your team. Keep the feedback constructive.

COMMUNICATE PROACTIVELY

Stay in touch with your colleagues and managers regularly. Let them know when you're available and how they can reach you. Be proactive in communicating any issues or concerns that arise.

CLARIFY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Make sure that you understand your role and responsibility. This will help avoid confusion and ensure that tasks are completed.

PRIORITIZE THE OFFICE

In NOVA we believe in the value that is created when we meet our colleagues in the office.

Even though you work towards a Nordic client, the office should be prioritized in the country where you are located.

COLLABORATION

Meeting colleagues in the office promotes spontaneous interactions, brainstorming sessions, and teamwork, which are essential for driving innovation and creative problem-solving.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Face-to-face meetings enable the sharing of knowledge and expertise, facilitating skill development, mentorship, and professional growth within the organization.

COMMUNICATE PROACTIVELY

The office serves as a hub for social interaction and community building among NOVA employees, promoting friendships, mutual support, and a sense of unity within the organization.

To decide together in the team

In the beginning of the project, it is key to understand how you best should work together. As there are cultural differences it is important to clarify how to communicate, how to structure the work, how to report and how to document the work. Here are some questions that you can ask the team.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is vital for successful teamwork and collaboration.

How do you communicate as a team? How often do you have meetings?

REPORT

Reporting on progress is crucial to track project development and maintain transparency.

How do you report on your progress?

TOOLS

Choosing the right tools is essential for smooth workflow and productivity.

What tools do we use?

STRUCTURE

The way we structure our work can impact productivity and efficiency.

How do you structure your work - do we work in iterations and how long are they?

DOCUMENTATION

Proper documentation ensures knowledge retention and supports future endeavors.

How do we document the work?

ESTIMATION

Proper project estimation ensures success through efficient resource management and risk control.

How do we estimate our work?

NORDIC WORK CULTURE

As NOVA is a Nordic organization, we are also of course permeated by the Nordic way of working, which we would like to introduce to you. This will help you navigate and thrive in NOVA.

The Nordic workplace culture is based on a combination of teamwork and individual accountability. Norwegian and Swedish work culture is known for being egalitarian, cooperative, and inclusive.



FLAT HIERARCHY AND FRIENDLY COLLABORATION

The Nordic work culture and the NOVA culture are very flat in terms of organizational structure, with a focus on open communication and inclusiveness with managers and employees working closely together.

Decisions are not made by the person at the top of the management pyramid alone, but by consensus- resulting in a short chain of command. In NOVA and in the Nordics we consult with colleagues and seek the opinion of their employees. Managers are happy to accept suggestions for improvement.

We believe this approach fosters a sense of equality among coworkers and encourages collaboration and mutual support.

CONSENSUS ORIENTED

There is a strong emphasis on teamwork and collaboration, and everyone is encouraged to contribute their ideas and opinions. Norwegians and Swedish believe that everyone's voice should be heard and that decisions should be made collectively. The managers prefer to listen to all involved parties before making a decision, and for important decisions, there will usually be several rounds of discussions.

INFORMAL TONE

There is an informal tone among coworkers in Norway and Sweden, as well as in NOVA. As an employee, you will be treated with respect, irrespective of your position in the company or your level of education. There is an overall friendly mood in the NOVA companies.

MEETINGS

Meetings generally start and end on time, and deadlines are taken seriously. There is usually not a very detailed agenda, but the topic of the meeting is followed. The objectives of the meeting is always set before the meeting. Minutes of meeting are not always held – it is always appreciated if someone volunteers to write the minutes.

DRESS CODE

The Nordic dress code is generally informal and relaxed. However, it is important to dress appropriately for client meetings and other formal occasions.

GENDER EQUALITY

Another important aspect of Norwegian and Swedish work culture is the emphasis on gender equality. Norway and Sweden have been at the forefront of promoting gender equality in the workplace, and this is reflected in policies such as parental leave and flexible working arrangements. Women are well-represented in leadership roles, and there is a strong focus on diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

EFFICIENCY

Even though Norwegian and Swedish employees have a very autonomous work culture and highly value work-life balance, does not mean they are less productive. There is a strong work ethic and a common understanding that tasks will be completed in a timely and organized manner.

PUNCTUALITY

In the Nordics, punctuality is highly valued, and being on time is considered a sign of respect. If you find that you are running late, make sure you let the person you are meeting know that you are going to be late and why.

Usually, people start working sometime between 8 am and 9 am - with the first meetings starting around 9 o'clock. In Norway, lunch is served at 11 am, and in Sweden, it is at 12 pm. In Norway you usually work until 16 pm, and in Sweden until 17 pm - as they have a longer lunch break. In Poland you find the same work hours, and the lunch break starts at 12 pm at earliest.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

In Sweden and Norway, having a sustainable working life is encouraged. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that employees have a healthy balance between work and personal lives.

AUTONOMOUS

Most Norwegians and Swedish will do little follow-up and will expect people to work quite autonomously. If they do not hear from you, they will think that everything is on track. If you have any problems or delays in your work it is your responsibility to address the issue as soon as possible.

POLISH WORK CULTURE

There are many similarities between Polish and Nordic work culture, but there are also some differences that are important to be aware of and have a cultural sensitivity for. In our opinion, having the knowledge of the differences is a key to success. Then we can use that knowledge to find ways of collaborating, despite cultural differences.

POWER DISTANCE

Poland is a hierarchical society – in comparison to The Nordics. This means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place, and which needs no further justification. Hierarchy in an organization is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities, centralization is popular, and subordinates expect to be told what to do.

Our recommendations:

Given the Nordic business culture at NOVA, we recommend adopting a flatter hierarchy style, aligning with Nordic practices. However, it's essential to regularly conduct check-ins with Polish employees to ensure alignment and clarity regarding their expectations and roles.

INDIVIDUALISM

Similarly, like Nordics, Poles are an individualist society. But, the Polish culture also houses a contradiction – a combination of significant Power Distance and a high score on Individualism creates a specific “tension”.

Our recommendations:

Establishing personal connections with employees is a wise approach, ensuring that they feel acknowledged and valued within the organization.

INDULGENCE

Poland has a short-term orientation, which means that it is more normative than pragmatic. People have a strong concern about establishing the absolute Truth. There is a relatively small propensity to save for the future and a focus on achieving quick results.

Our recommendations:

Dividing the work into smaller tasks can be a wise approach. This enables individuals to accomplish their objectives more frequently and experience a sense of fulfillment.

SHORT TERM ORIENTATION

Polish culture is one of restraint – compared to the Nordic culture which is more leaning toward indulgence (especially Sweden). There's a tendency to cynicism and pessimism in Poland, and leisure time is not as appreciated as in the Nordics. People invest a lot in their work, and they like to be challenged, have interesting projects, get recognition as well as frequent and direct feedback.

Our recommendations:

Polish employees invest a significant part of themselves in their work. Consequently, it is crucial to acknowledge their efforts and provide them with engaging tasks.

FURTHER READING

You can read more about the cultural differences between Norway, Sweden and Poland on our Intranet.

MOTIVATION TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

Poland has high motivation towards achievement and success and is thus considered a decisive society. People compete at work, and managers are expected to be decisive and assertive. People like to focus on their strengths and master them. This is very different from the Nordic culture which encourages softer aspects of culture – such as consensus, collaboration, levelling with others, not showing off etc. In The Nordics, well-being and quality of life is more a sign of success than wealth.

Our recommendations:

We recommend creating opportunities to work on difficult business problems through hackathons, ideation, and innovation.

UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE

Poland has a very high preference for avoiding uncertainty. There is an emotional need for rules. Time is money and sense of security is an important element in individual motivation. This fosters a quality assurance culture at work. It is common to work in an environment that learns from own or someone's else successes or mistakes.

Our recommendations for managers:

We recommend providing clear job descriptions and defining objectives explicitly to minimize uncertainties.

How to master the workload

Mastering your work tasks is a fundamental factor to have a good feeling at work.

Your sense of mastery is based on the prerequisites you have in terms of abilities, experiences, and skills. In addition, the feeling of mastery is closely linked to your and others' expectations. For example, if you fail to solve a task that you expect to be able to solve, your sense of mastery decreases and frustration increases. Mastering your work tasks is a fundamental factor to have a good feeling at work.

From time to time, challenges may arise related to coping and managing expectations. If the feeling of mastery decreases for shorter periods, we believe that you can handle this. If the feeling persists over time, and you cannot find a solution yourself, it is important that you notify your immediate supervisor. Then together we can try to solve the challenge and find possible alternatives to move forward.

Notify your supervisor if your workload is becoming too heavy, or that you are struggling with prioritizing. Sometimes it can be helpful with the view of another person.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



Psychological safety is a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking.

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Spend time getting to know each other. Even if it can seem a bit corny or wasted sometimes.

HOW TO WORK TOGETHER

Talk about how you want to work together. Make an effort to understand what your colleagues need to function optimally at work.

FURTHER READING

The Fearless Organization – Amy C. Edmondson

MEETINGS

It is important to have frameworks that ensure equal speaking time and that everyone dares to share. Regular meetings such as stand-up, weekly planning, and retro are good arenas for constructive feedback.

WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT

Clarify expectations. Actively listen to your colleagues. Dare to talk about what is a little uncomfortable and accept that people do not experience things in the same way as you.

The power of initiative

In NOVA we value taking initiative

We believe that seeing a problem and taking initiative to fix it will drive both you as an employee, and our business forward.

Why initiative matters:

- **Problem-Solving:** It empowers individuals to tackle issues head-on and find solutions.
- **Innovation:** It fosters creativity and leads to groundbreaking ideas and advancements.
- **Productivity:** Initiative enhances efficiency by taking ownership of tasks and responsibilities.
- **Personal Fulfillment:** It provides a sense of purpose and accomplishment, boosting self-esteem and well-being.

TRACKING EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

Once every quarter we run a survey asking you how you feel, through the HR system Huma or Winning Temp

PURPOSE

Surveys are a valuable tool for us to monitor and identify trends, identify areas of improvement, and ultimately create a better workplace for you and everyone in NOVA.

IF YOU STRUGGLE

If you struggle, don't wait for the quarterly survey – speak to your manager directly and let him/her know how things are. You can also reach out to HR (Ingrid Kjöllström, ingrid.kjollerstrom@novaacg.no or by phone: 0047 92 61 73 06.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

You can also find further information on our ethical guidelines on NOVA Hub on how to act if you experience or encounter misconduct.

MEET DANIEL

Meet Daniel, a valued member of the Point Taken team, serving as a project manager and Azure advisor. His expertise in information technology and management has made him an essential asset in the company.



Since joining Point Taken, Daniel has thrived in an environment that encourages continuous learning and collaboration. Embracing every opportunity to expand his knowledge, he has taken on challenging responsibilities that have allowed him to grow both professionally and personally.

As an Azure consultant, Daniel is deeply passionate about transforming how companies approach identity and security. He actively seeks to implement cutting-edge solutions that will benefit businesses. Beyond his technical skills, Daniel is also an effective leader, fostering a spirit of teamwork among his colleagues.

With a focus on continuous learning and growth, Point Taken is an ideal choice for those seeking a fulfilling career in information technology.

SUSTAINABILITY IN NOVA

We are committed to being part of the global effort to create a sustainable world. We have selected 4 out of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals to which we believe we can make a meaningful contribution.

GOAL NR 3 - GOOD HEALTH & WELLBEING

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



GOAL NR 4 - QUALITY EDUCATION

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



GOAL NR 5 - GENDER EQUALITY

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



GOAL NR 13 - CLIMATE ACTION

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts



QUESTIONS?



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Thank you

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