



# The Cardy Way

**Not a statement on display. Lived every day.**

HIRED FOR

·

APPRAISED ON

·

PRACTICED DAILY



# Why this handbook

***If a value never changes what we do or how we do it, it isn't a value. **It's decoration.*****

This handbook is written for the people who join, grow and lead at Cardinality.ai. Every value here is testable on a real Tuesday, not a poster.

**Read it once end to end. Then come back to it when a decision is hard.**



**Not a statement on display.**

**Lived in our everyday behavior, decisions and actions.**

These ten values are how we make decisions at Cardy. They guide who we hire, how we grow people and how we show up for customers. When two good things conflict, they tell us which way to go.

### **Hired for**

Every interview explores the values with real behavioral questions.

### **Appraised on**

Growth is measured on what you delivered and how you delivered it.

### **Practiced daily**

Reviews open with customer impact and decisions name the value they lean on.

# The ten, at a glance

**01** Customer First

**02** Earn Trust

**03** Take Ownership

**04** Be Bold

**05** Move Fast

**06** Deliver Excellence

**07** Win Together

**08** Respect People

**09** Innovate Always

**10** Be Frugal

# 01

## Customer First

*Start with the customer's problem and work backwards. Everything else is noise.*



### YOU'RE LIVING IT WHEN...

- Friday 6pm blocker before a long weekend? The customer gets an owner and a plan that night.
- A prospect asks for a feature we lack. Honest answer plus roadmap, never overselling.
- Refactor vs. customer-blocking export: the customer wins the sprint and the refactor gets a date.
- We demo what caseworkers actually do all day, not the screens that flatter us.
- We look for customer cues everywhere: support tickets, surveys, feedback and real conversations.

# 02

## Earn Trust

*Do what you said. Say what you saw, especially when it costs you.*



### YOU'RE LIVING IT WHEN...

- Trust runs in every direction: leaders from teams, teams from each other, Cardy from customers.
- Slipping a date? Flag it two weeks early with a recovery plan, not the morning it's due.
- Show the metric that hurts your proposal on the same slide as the one that helps it.
- Commit in the meeting. There is no meeting after the meeting.
- Sales promises only what delivery confirmed; delivery treats the promise as sacred.

# 03

## Take Ownership

*Own the outcome, not your slice of it. “Not my job” is not in our vocabulary.*



### YOU'RE LIVING IT WHEN...

- A 2am incident spans three teams? You drive it end to end until customers are unblocked.
- “That’s a platform issue” becomes: you file it, chase it and update the customer yourself.
- You inherit a struggling project. Week one ends with a get-well plan, your name on it.
- The demo fails on someone else’s module. Your name was on it, so you own the apology and the fix.
- A gap nobody owns? You claim it or assign it. You never walk past it.

# 04

## Be Bold

*Take the smart risk. Disagree out loud and early, then commit fully.*



### YOU'RE LIVING IT WHEN...

- Disagree with leadership in the room, with data. Not in DMs afterwards.
- Bid the deal everyone calls too big, with a real delivery plan.
- Kill your own feature when the evidence says so. Sunk cost is not a strategy.
- Propose the AI-first path when the safe answer is the old playbook. Bring a fallback.
- Sign the honest, uncomfortable estimate, not the popular one.

# 05

## Move Fast

*Most decisions are reversible. Decide with the data you have and correct course fast.*



### YOU'RE LIVING IT WHEN...

- Reversible decisions get made today, not routed through a meeting to schedule a meeting.
- You prototype in three days and put it in front of a real user, instead of a 30-page spec.
- Blocked on another team for 24 hours? You escalate. Escalation is coordination, not aggression.
- You ship the 80% that unblocks the customer now; the 20% gets a real date and ships on it.
- After an incident: mitigation in hours, root cause in days, process fix in the same sprint.

# 06

## Deliver Excellence

*Good enough isn't. Raise the bar every time you touch something.*



### YOU'RE LIVING IT WHEN...

- Test the demo on the customer's network, browser and data the day before, not an hour before.
- Client documents go out with zero typos and one clear recommendation.
- “Done” means monitored, documented and ready for anyone to run.
- The senior architect's PR meets the same bar as the intern's. The bar belongs to the work.
- “Would I put my name on this screen?” Ask it before every release and act on the answer.

# 07

## Win Together

*We win as one team. No silos, no lone heroes, only shared victories.*



### YOU'RE LIVING IT WHEN...

- Delivery sits in the bid room. Nothing is thrown over the wall after the win.
- A sister team is drowning? Lend your best person, not your bench.
- Credit goes down by name; blame goes up alone.
- Be the positive influence. Optimism and encouragement travel with you into every room.
- Refuse the KPI where your team wins and the company loses.

# 08

## Respect People

*Be hard on problems and gentle with people. Ideas get debate and everyone gets dignity.*



### YOU'RE LIVING IT WHEN...

- Attack ideas fiercely, never people. No sarcasm, no eye-rolls, no “obviously.”
- Meetings end only after the quietest person has been asked what they think.
- Hard feedback in private within 48 hours; praise in public the same day.
- Off-hours are respected across every time zone. Sustainable hours produce the best work everywhere.
- An exit is handled with the same dignity as an offer letter.

# 09

## Innovate Always

*Stay a student. Learn something daily and turn it into something better.*



### YOU'RE LIVING IT WHEN...

- Every incident and lost deal gets a blameless post-mortem that changes a checklist.
- Real weekly hours on new tools, demoed to the team. Wins and failures both.
- Seniors say “I don't know, let's find out.” Curiosity outranks ego.
- Retro action items close before the next retro.
- Automate the third time you do anything manually.

# 10

## Be Frugal

*Constraints breed invention. Frugality is a growth strategy, not a limitation.*



### YOU'RE LIVING IT WHEN...

- Before building, ask “can configuration do this instead of code?” Then check.
- Prove it with a two-week pilot before asking for a six-month budget.
- Headcount asks start with what the team automated, simplified or stopped doing.
- Reuse a platform capability over a bespoke build we maintain forever.
- The world's best products started in garages. Small teams with tight budgets outbuild giants every day.

# Real values collide. Here's how we break ties.

Values earn their place when they guide real choices. We pre-decide the tie-breakers so every team moves with confidence.

## **Move Fast vs. Deliver Excellence**

Excellence is non-negotiable at the customer promise. Everywhere else, speed wins. Know which zone you're in.

## **Customer First vs. Be Frugal**

Solve their problem without building every custom one-off. The most customer-first word is a well-explained “no, here's a better way.”

## **Be Bold vs. Earn Trust**

Bold before the decision, committed after it. Every debate ends in one shared direction.

## **Respect People vs. Innovate Always**

Challenge the work, honor the person. Improving what someone built is respect for the work, never criticism of the builder.

## **Take Ownership vs. Win Together**

Every outcome has a single named owner and every owner has the whole team behind them.

# Hired for. Appraised on. Practiced daily.

These ten are operating mechanisms, not aspirations.

## Hiring

- Two or three values per interviewer, probed with behavioral questions.
- Values evidence scored alongside skills.
- A bar-raiser safeguards the values in every loop.
- Candidates walk the ten values before signing.

## Appraisals

- Half what you delivered and half how you delivered it, with written evidence.
- Behavioral anchors per value: below, meets, exceeds.
- Promotions show the values at the next level of scope.
- Living the values is what earns the top ratings.

## Every day

- Reviews open with customer impact.
- Decision docs name the values trade-off they make.
- A monthly peer-nominated value-in-action story, with names.
- Leaders set the tone. What they model becomes culture.



# Culture is what we repeat.

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