



From the Ocean,  
For the Ocean.

# Mission Driven Culture

## Tidal Vision's Uncommon Culture, Values, and Principles

We believe that sustainability should not require customers to compromise on economics, performance, or convenience, and that wide adoption of green biochemistry solutions are fundamentally needed for sustaining humankind and our Earth.



*Our mission is to create positive and systemic environmental impact in the industries we serve.*

*Our strategy for doing this is by unlocking scalable solutions to humanity's greatest chemistry and pollution challenges.*

*Further, we actively cultivate an uncommon employee culture to advance our mission and encourage continuous innovation.*

## **This document is about that culture.**

Like many companies, we strive to build the best team and we value integrity, excellence, respect, inclusion, and collaboration. What is special about Tidal Vision is how much we:

1. Are driven by the impact of our mission
2. Are focused on the long term vision
3. Encourage independent decision-making by employees
4. Are open and direct with each other, and avoid politics
5. Recognize & appreciate attempts at innovation, not just the successes

We strive to build and invest in the highest performing and most innovative team, to put our people and customers above process, to avoid company-wide rules as much as possible, and to have the courage to take unusual approaches to advance our mission. With this approach, we believe we are a more flexible, fun, stimulating, creative, collaborative, and innovative organization.

We have a great team of mission driven people working together to solve enormous problems across multiple industries. The more aligned you feel with our views, values, and principles, the more likely it is that you will thrive at Tidal Vision.

### **Our Views:**

We view building an innovative and mission driven company as analogous to building an ever evolving "ship". We aim to attract the best "crew" that are each highly informed "Captains" in charge of executing their roles. Each crew member is empowered to quickly modify the rigging so we can navigate the high seas through uncharted waters with unpredictable and ever-changing weather. Our approach to building the ship can be summarized by this Antoine de Saint-Exupéry quote:

*If you want to build a ship,  
don't drum up the people  
to gather wood, divide the  
work, and give orders.*

*Instead, teach them to yearn  
for the vast and endless sea.*

Our "ship" or company, and our crew believes that innovation doesn't stop after construction but must continue indefinitely as part of our core DNA.

Our mission isn't completed until every possible synthetic chemical is displaced without compromise on price, convenience, or performance. We are committed to embracing change and continuously exploring uncharted waters to further advance our mission.

This commitment can be summarized by this quote from Grace Hopper:

***A ship in port is safe,  
but  
that's not what ships are built for.***

Our goal is to inspire and support our crew's growth and success, where leaders provide the context for their crew to be able to find the best way to do their job, more so than managing them in the traditional sense. We trust our team to do what they think is best for Tidal Vision. We provide our team with lots of freedom, power, and context to make their decisions. In turn, crew members that thrive in this culture tend to enjoy a sense of self-responsibility and self-discipline to do great work that benefits the company and our mission. Our team actively seeks context from the organization so they can make better decisions. Through this approach, our crew is made up of many "Captains" throughout the organization who are well informed with context and equipped to steer the 'wheel' of their roles. In the end, our ship is built for continuous innovation and disruption, so we must 'leave port' or evolve frequently.

## Core Values

Below are our core values. These are the underlying values that drive behaviors which we choose to value most at Tidal Vision.

### Mission Driven

Our mission is directly tied to our making environmentally friendly biochemistry solutions cost effective, more convenient, and better performing than the synthetic chemical alternatives for our customers. Wide adoption of greener chemistry is only possible if our customers become more competitive in their industry. For example, if we can help our customers be more competitive by reducing price, we favor that over maintaining a higher profit margin but moving less volume.



### Customer Focused

Customer focus at the deeply contextual level is hard to quantify, understand, and therefore explain. However, it is absolutely crucial that we strive for a deeper understanding of customer's unmet needs, wants, and capabilities on a deeply contextual and emotional level. Informed Captains must seek this deeper context as much as possible when making decisions. Tidal Visionaries embrace curiosity and empathy to deliver and evolve differentiated experiences which will build strong, enduring relationships with our customers.

### Freedom with Responsibility

Tidal Visionaries have the freedom to take ownership of how to execute their roles. This freedom and ownership comes with the responsibility to uphold our values, to deliver results, to seek context, to lend a helping hand throughout the organization, and to speak up when something is preventing your ability to execute on your role's responsibilities. Some examples we define as context are: information on the direction of the company, market trends, customer's perspectives, etc.

### Encouraging Change

Our crew understands that advancing our mission is a continuous process, a cumulation of many small improvements over a long period of time throughout the entire organization. This understanding allows us to come up with and test hypotheses quickly and take action in the face of ambiguity. We understand that change can be uncomfortable and create tensions. However, Tidal Visionaries encourage continuous change and actively seek ways to improve themselves and the company. We believe this is key to achieving our mission.

## Direct & Open Communication

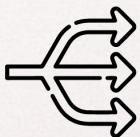
Direct and open communication takes courage and we believe is crucial for success at Tidal Vision. Tidal Visionaries actively seek and deliver feedback, seek different & diverse perspectives, and foster creating an environment where it is safe for their team to share with them. They do this by listening to understand, not just respond, and considering the viewpoints of others in their decision making process.

## Principles

Principles are strategies that Tidal Visionaries often refer to when making decisions and looking for ways to continuously improve within our organization.

### First Principles Thinking

We practice critical thinking and encourage slowing down, determining what we actually know (vs. what is assumed to be true), and then building ideas and paths forward that can be tested from there. Instead of ignoring biases we acknowledge that we all have them, and are always willing to openly question or explain how we came to a conclusion. In strategic decisions we try to avoid analogous thinking (ie, in my experience at other companies we did X, therefore we should just do X in our approach here at Tidal Vision). We search for the answer that best serves Tidal Vision's mission through the 1st principle approach. We understand this is a challenging and time consuming process, and cannot be done all the time or for every decision. This approach has led to all of our biggest breakthroughs to date - from technology to regulatory developments, and many of those efforts are things that conventional wisdom would've prevented us from even attempting.



Here's a framework we suggest for applying 1st principles:

- Separate out the details of what is known and verifiable from what isn't, and clearly delineate between those assumptions and truths
- Breakdown the problem, challenges, or opportunities to known truths
- Be willing to consider new or non-intuitive paths or solutions

### Next Actionable Step + Quick Iterations

We encourage taking the next actionable step quickly to become better informed on larger decisions, such as by initiating a small bench or pilot trials that can safely be tried quickly. Then observations can be made, the next hypothesis formed, and the following small step taken quickly. We value action and are extraordinarily understanding of failures so as to encourage consistent attempts at innovation. We celebrate trying something new regardless of the outcome and understand that continuous improvement is a part of everything we do.

### Unapologetic Prioritization

In line with the Freedom with Responsibility core value, it is appropriate and expected that you prioritize your time to maximize how your role can further our mission. We have the freedom to choose how we accomplish our roles, and the responsibility to delineate our priorities. When unsure, we seek further context about the company's current state and trajectory or external stakeholders. This means you may not even sit through meetings you're invited to when they are not the best use of your time.



## Tensions = Opportunities

As a role-holder at Tidal Vision, you're in the position to sense tensions that fuel the evolutionary growth of the organization. A tension is the feeling you get when you sense the gap between the way things are and the way things could be. Challenges, setbacks, successes, and disagreements are all examples of tensions, and they're all opportunities for learning and growth. We believe that tensions are not inherently good or bad, but always can lead to helping us toward our mission. Being a role-holder at Tidal Vision means you agree to sense tensions and process them in an appropriate way. You are only responsible for tracking tensions for you personally or your role but not for others. Everyone is expected to process their own tensions as we embrace change and continuously grow.

## Feedback is a Gift

At Tidal Vision, we believe in the transformative power of feedback. We get feedback all the time whether we like it or not, verbal, nonverbal, small and large. We have an opportunity and duty to grasp these moments and incorporate them into our decision considerations. Not all feedback can feel easy to receive in the moment, but that's ok. By reframing feedback as a gift, we can better gather the collective intelligence underneath the feedback. It is still a gift, even if you disagree on the opinion: you don't necessarily need to like the gift, but you still say thank you for the gift. Even that ugly sweater from grandma.

## Disagree Openly

We value different perspectives and want them voiced. If you have a tension or dissension, or information, it is your responsibility to bring it up with relevant stakeholders (ideally both verbally and in writing). The back and forth of discussion can clarify the different views, and this helps people reflect on what is the wise course. Silent disagreement, or sitting with unprocessed tensions is considered both unacceptable and counterproductive.

In describing courage we say, "You question actions inconsistent with our values." We want everyone to help each other live the values and hold each other responsible for being role models. This is a continuous aspirational goal.

## Invent and Simplify

We love innovation and take pride in trying new ideas as much as simplifying internal processes, or doing less, to allow us to divert more energy to further advancing our mission in other ways. Often, the greatest internal inventions are ways to accomplish the same customer experience or outcome while doing less internally, or requiring less time of our employees.

## Resourceful Frugality

We invest significantly in our employees, R&D, and trying new ideas and models to advance our mission. We value being frugal on non-necessities that don't help us advance or accelerate our mission. For example, we took pride in the only work table in our pilot plant being a sheet of plywood nailed to saw horses, and on some equipment and office furniture we got used that does just as good of a job. To be clear, we do not avoid spending on items related to safety, the quality of our products or services to customers, or items that accelerate timelines (see Value Time). We do not reward managers or teams for spending their full budgets, hiring greater headcounts, etc. We do, however, value creativity related to accomplishing more with less resources (see Invent and Simplify).



## Safety First

Everyone is responsible to speak up if there are safety concerns at any of our facilities. We will always support slowing down to assess safety concerns before proceeding, even if doing so requires us to miss customer deadlines or other short term goals.

## Value Time

We recognize that the most valuable and irreplaceable commodity that any of us possess is our time. For that reason we seek to always use our time as efficiently and effectively as possible. We respect the time of those we work with by being on time and prepared, and being concise when possible and being clear about our purpose and intentions in activities that require other people's time (such as meetings or discussions). This applies to our customers and our team members.

## Operating Framework

Tidal Vision operates in a unique way, and so we have a unique operating framework to guide us. The following concepts are how we connect and interoperate effectively and how we build our company; the foundation for the environment we work in.

### Informed Captains

For every significant decision there is a responsible "Captain" of the ship who makes a judgment call after sharing and digesting others' views. We encourage this type of decision making (as opposed to committees) in order to encourage decisions to be made quickly, with responsibility and accountability.

#### We avoid committees making decisions

because that would slow us down and diffuse responsibility and accountability throughout the company. Many times, groups will meet about topics and debate them, but then afterwards someone needs to make a decision and be that "Captain." It should be clear who is the Informed Captain at the start of a debate so everyone knows how to show up and contribute.

The bigger a decision, the more extensive the dissent/assent gathering should be. We are clear, however, that decisions are not made by a majority or committee vote. We don't wait for consensus, nor do we drive to rapid, uninformed decision making. When the Captain of any particular decision is reasonably confident of the right bet for us to take, they decide and we take that path. Afterwards, as the impact becomes more clear, we reflect on the decision, and see if we could do even better in the future.

**Process for determining who the Informed Captain is:** It is important that we have a process for determining who the Informed Captain of a given decision is. For further context, being Informed Captain applies specifically to decision making authority and the responsibilities that come with that decision making authority.

Here are some guiding principles for determining who the Informed Captain should be when multiple people are desiring and possibly equipped to make a decision.

- Who is closest to the EXTERNAL stakeholder (current or potential customer, partner, vendor, etc.)? The person who has the greatest understanding of the most important stakeholder(s) who will be affected by a decision should be the Informed Captain.
- Tidal Vision exists to change the outside world by advancing our mission. What we do internally is to advance our mission, which is externally focused.
- By external stakeholder we are often referring to customers, strategic partners, or other entities who benefit from the work we do as a company.
- Examples could be who understands the market we are creating products for the best? Who knows what a specific customer wants the most and could best decide on a decision that affects their experience? Who is closest to the strategic partner(s)? Who most deeply understands the political landscape at an organization we want some action from?

- This is inline with our Customer Focused core value. Our Customer Focus is to take the customer view of our interactions to understand the emotional and transactional bond between us and our customers - and use that context to drive our decision making as a company.

Who the Informed Captain of a decision is can be handed off if made explicit between all parties.

\*Informed Captain refers only to decision making, and is not to be confused with a role for doing the work. The Informed Captain makes the decision(s) that determine what will be done or the

direction being taken, but someone else may have the role of executing that decision (such as a project).

During disagreements, the Informed Captain on that decision has the responsibility to welcome, understand, and consider tensions, but may decide not to change the decision. Once the captain makes a decision, we expect everyone to help make it as successful as possible. Later, if significant new information becomes available that creates new tensions for your role, ask the Captain to revisit the topic.

### **“Reports To” means “Supported By”**

At times, there have been misconceptions from new team members from past experiences at other companies who may use the term “reports to” differently than we do. This section defines how we use the term “reports to”.

### **Baseline responsibilities and expectations of a role with Direct Reports:**

- **Awareness of wellbeing:** Proactively establish and maintain **awareness** of each direct report's emotional and physical wellbeing.
- **Administrative:** Proactively perform administrative tasks such as timesheet approval, time off approval, scheduling of shared company resources, etc.

- **Removing obstacles:** Support or enable direct reports to succeed in their role so that each individual can maximize time spent on doing their highest value work (Value Time). This includes removing obstacles, providing access to resources, etc.

- **Does not** remove your responsibility for directly communicating with any other member of the team, executive or otherwise, who may have context useful to your role or who you have feedback for.

- **Does not** automatically mean or imply they are the Informed Captain on any decision making roles.

- Informed Captains hold the responsibility of decision making at Tidal Vision (see Informed Captain section of culture doc)

### **Context not Control**

We want employees to be great independent decision makers, and to only consult their manager when they are unsure of the right decision. The leader's job at every level is to set clear context so that others have the right information to generally make great decisions.

We strive to develop good decision-making muscles everywhere in our company. We pride ourselves on how few, not how many, decisions senior management makes. We don't want hands-off management, though. Each leader's role is to teach, to set context, and to be highly informed of what is actually happening. The way leaders figure out how the context setting needs to improve is to explore a sample of the details. But unlike micro-managers, the goal of the leader in knowing those details is not to simply change certain small decisions, but to learn how to adjust context and information flow so more decisions are made well going forward.

There are some minor exceptions to “context not control,” such as an urgent situation in which there is no time to think about proper context and principles, or when a new team member hasn’t yet absorbed enough context to be confident, or when it’s recognized that the wrong person is in a decision-making role (temporarily, no doubt).

We tell people not to seek to please their boss. Instead, seek to serve the business. It’s OK to disagree with your manager. It’s never OK to hide anything. It’s OK to say to your manager, “I know you disagree, but I’m going to do X because I think it is a better solution. Let me know if

you want to specifically override my decision.” What we don’t want is people guessing what their manager would do or want, and then executing on that guess.

## Highly Aligned, Loosely Coupled

As companies grow, they often become highly centralized, inflexible and non-innovative. Symptoms include:

- Senior management is involved in many small decisions
- There are numerous cross-departmental buy-in meetings to socialize tactics
- Pleasing other internal groups takes precedence over pleasing customers
- The organization is highly coordinated and less prone to error, but slow and frustrating and non-innovative

We avoid this by being ‘highly aligned and loosely coupled.’ We spend time debating strategy together, and then trust each other to execute on tactics without prior approvals. Often, two groups working on the same goals won’t know of, or have approval over, their peer activities. If, later, the activities don’t seem right, we have a candid discussion. We may find that the strategy was too vague or the tactics were not aligned with the agreed strategy. And we then reflect then discuss how we can do better in the future.



The success of a “Highly Aligned, Loosely Coupled” work environment is dependent upon the collaborative efforts of high performance individuals and effective context. Ultimately, the end goal is to grow the business for bigger impact while increasing innovation and agility.

## Seeking Excellence through Continuous Improvement

We do not seek to preserve our culture, we continuously seek to improve it! Every person who joins us helps to shape and evolve the culture further. Together we can find new ways to accomplish more to further advance our company’s mission. So far, every year our team has unanimously said they feel a real difference in how much more effectively we are operating than in the past. We aim to learn even faster than ever because we have additional passionate people with diverse perspectives trying to find better ways for our talented team to work together more cohesively, nimbly and effectively.