



# Culture Book



Meet Sempre

The first thing to know about Sempre is that we take the work that we do very seriously, but never ourselves.

This isn't a place for people who are too 'buttoned-up' or stuffy and who aren't able to take a joke. Nor is it a place for people who are self-centred or overly introverted.

This isn't a company for everyone and we like it that way.

## Welcome

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However, if you're the kind of person who is willing to give their time to someone who needs it, someone who is able to laugh at themselves and someone who loves the company of others, then you'll feel right at home here.





Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work

''

*Steve Jobs*

Co-founder, and Chief Executive Officer,  
Apple Inc



Sempre  
/'semprə/

From the Latin 'Semper'

Meaning: "always, ever, at all times, continuously"  
(literally "one, as one, together")

# Our Story



MODERN TECHNOLOGY MEETS  
TIMELESS PRINCIPLES

It was actually Neil's mum who suggested the name "Sempre". It originates from the Latin word Semper and means "always" or "forever". For us, it's a term that epitomises good parenting, but it also says so much about who we are, what we're about and actually why we got started in the first place.

We'd spent many happy years working together at another company, but that all changed when it was bought out by someone new. The warm, personal service we prided ourselves on quickly became less of a priority. We were sometimes forced to make decisions that weren't necessarily in our clients' best interests. That didn't sit comfortably with us.

Too many organisations today are out for what they can get, rather than what they can give. We founded Sempre to bring together our expertise in modern technology, with a more traditional, timeless approach to doing business.

One based on always being there; a long term relationship, not just a short-term transaction. On making friends, not just winning customers.

On giving way more than we get, but receiving all the more for it.

*Neil & Nick*

**“ I’m just so happy here. I’ve  
never had a problem on Monday  
mornings ”**

*Paul*

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**Our Mission**

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OUR PURPOSE:

Why we exist beyond  
financial gain

“

To help people and  
organisations grow,  
whilst embracing  
each day with  
good humour and  
professionalism.

OUR VISION:

An ambitious, yet achievable  
position in our market

“

To be the first point  
of call for business  
leaders, during times  
of organisational  
change.

OUR MISSION:

The difference we seek to  
create in our customers lives

“

To transform  
disconnected data  
into clear information  
our customers can  
understand and act on  
with confidence.

When you stand for something,  
decisions are obvious ”

*Jason Fried*

Co-founder and CEO, Basecamp



# Who We Are

Advisers. Developers.  
Analysts. Listeners. Makers.  
Doers. Friends. Family.



Our culture is as important (sometimes even more important) than ability. We are firm believers that who we hire will either add to our positive vibe, or start to erode it away. We are proud of who we are as a company; therefore we approach recruitment with very careful consideration and thought.

We are dedicated to building a company with a real family feel; therefore we view social activities to be very important for building a strong bond with one another. Annual company away days abroad (on us of course) family BBQ's in the summer (invites extended to teammates' partners, children & pets), as well as regular drinks at the pub, are all frequent features on our busy calendar.



“

The thing that will  
endure for 100 years,  
the way it has for most  
100 year companies, is  
the culture

”

*Brian Chesky*

Co-founder and CEO, Airbnb



# Our Values

A code to live by

These four core values are our shared code of honour. The things we'll never compromise on. Not today, not 100 years from now:

1.

Be Open & Approachable

2.

Treat Colleagues Like Family, and Customers Like Friends

3.

Bring Value, Don't Extract It

4.

Take Yourself Lightly, But Your Work Seriously

# 1.

## Be Open & Approachable

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Your energy introduces you before  
you even speak.



Being approachable means that no question is ever too small and that every opinion matters.

It's about being available to help others even when we're under pressure ourselves. In fact, we try to stay calm no matter what's going on. Being open means we'll always give an honest answer to every question and engage constructively with feedback.



“ There’s a lot of mutual respect here; Sempre isn’t a bitchy place ”

*Kym*

“ They don’t mind being criticised. They didn’t feel threatened when we questioned them ”

*Paul Thurlow*

Crest Nicholson



In the very early days of the business an ex-client of ours, from our darker days working at a former company, rang me up because he needed some help on a technical Cognos Planning question.

As we were under a non-compete clause, we couldn't work with him in the short or even medium term. We didn't even have a support desk because there were only three of us in the entire business. But we took the time to answer the question and helped him solve his problem.

Skip forward to three years later and we were helping him again, this time with advice and guidance on a planning tool. The outcome? He ended up buying the tool through us without feeling the need to look at the market. The trust was there already.

## Nick

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“ With previous suppliers we had to call the help-desk, never the consultant. Whereas with Sempre, I know if I have an issue, I don’t necessarily need to call the help-desk, I can actually give Tom a call. ”

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*Dipa Brevern*

Martin Brower

If you're not open, you're not transparent, you're still holding on to vaults of information, you're not going to build that trust

”

*Gavin Newsom*

Lieutenant Governor of California



“ In my interview, I mentioned to Neil that I knew someone at Sempre. He encouraged me to get in touch with them. He wasn't at all guarded; he was open and transparent. That said a lot.

”

*Cherie*





“ Paul Scales at Sempre is very good. He is fluent in the language of BI, but has the ability to convey that into business language so our Payroll Manager or HR Manager can understand ”

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Wei Fu  
CVS

**“ Personal service with a high level of competence, and the knowledge that any advice given is in our best interest. ”**

*David Jeffery*

IFDS



**The best weapon of a dictatorship is secrecy, but the best weapon of a democracy should be the weapon of openness**

*Niels Bohr*

Danish physicist



Ask Anything



You know that feeling when you want to talk to someone about something that's niggling you? Or, you just want to run a seed of an idea past someone who gets it? We don't want anyone at Sempre to sit there in silence. So if anyone needs anything, they can reach out to the leadership team, anytime.



**“The company is very transparent. That makes it very unique”**

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*Kym*



**“I can talk to Nick about anything. That's a major positive”**

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*Simon*

# 2.

Treat Colleagues Like Family, and  
Customers Like Friends

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Happiness is working with  
great people



We believe Sempre isn't just a company. We're a family. That means always having each other's back, being a listening ear and keeping each other going through the tougher times.

It means taking the time for face-to-face chats and playing together, not just working together. Most importantly, our family value means helping our colleagues and clients grow to the point where they no longer need us.



“ I don't think of them as a supplier, I think of them as friends actually. Yes, they are our supplier, but they're not just that. They are more like friends ”

*Dipa Brevern*

Martin Brower

**“ We feel that  
Sempre care about  
us and our projects.  
We feel as if we have  
a business partner,  
rather than a 3rd  
party consulting  
company ”**

*Amanda Marshall*

Monsoon



**“ The most important  
thing is our customer  
becoming self-sufficient;  
almost like evolving from  
a teenager to an adult.  
They can make their own  
decisions, but we'll always  
be the first person they'll  
call if they need a hand ”**

*Paul*





“ They emphasised that we would end up owning the solution, so that the reliance wasn’t always on them. They said, “We want to be able to walk away: we don’t want you to depend on us.” We had never heard that kind of language before. For them to promise that was refreshing ”

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*Vlad Soriano*  
Dealogic



“ I really love the social side of the company. We work together, and play together. It's a real family feel ”

*Theyab*

If you go looking for a friend, you're going to find they're very scarce. If you go out to be a friend, you'll find them everywhere ”



*Zig Ziglar*

Author and motivational speaker

When I worked at Alexander Mann, I took on the role of advisor rather than building the solution as it was the best way for our client to learn and understand what was being built. By the end he was building with minimal involvement from myself; now we very rarely get support calls from them as they manage and maintain their own model. It means we get less follow up consultancy days but we chose what was best for the client over what would make Sempre the most money.

Rob

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An acquaintance merely enjoys your company, a fair-weather companion flatters when all is well, a true friend has your best interests at heart and the pluck to tell you what you need to hear

”

G.C. Bucchianeri

Author

“ We've been out on social events with the guys from Sempre. They do charity events, and pub quizzes. There's always stuff that we try to get involved in. It's giving a bit of support to them, in the same way they support us ”

Paul Thurlow

Crest Nicholson



## Company Away Days



Sun. Sea. Sempre. Every year we jump on a plane and head off for our company away-day. You can't work together, if you don't play together.

**Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others**

”

*Jack Welch*

Former chairman and CEO, General Electric



“ I've never worked somewhere before where there isn't one single person that I try to avoid ”

*Cherie*



Never Send a Stranger



If you pay for Sempre, you get Sempre. We want to deliver a consistent experience and we'll never be able to build a friendship if we keep changing who turns up. So we never, ever use contractors and we never, ever send a stranger in to any client. When someone new starts working for us, they shadow another consultant at the client's office until they get to know everyone there. We don't charge the client for this time, we absorb the costs ourselves.



**“** My wedding was on a work day but a large number of the team took the day off to be there. Those who couldn't sent so many good wishes. This just showed to me what a close knit unit we are **”**

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*Paul*



All lasting business is built on  
friendship

“ ”

*Alfred A. Montapert*

Author and philosopher

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“ I very rarely stay  
in hotels when I travel  
down south to the office.  
I stay with Nick. I even  
have my own room! ”

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*Nigel*

Now we are 5! This is us celebrating our big day. Good friends. The whole family. And a cocktail, or three.



Birthday  
Thanks

“ Congratulations on this  
fantastic milestone and wish you  
the very best for the next five  
years. May I be some part in that  
journey ”

“ We’re surprisingly chipper  
here in Chelmsford despite  
Sempre’s best efforts last night.

Thanks for the invite, a great  
event and good to catch up with  
you all and some of your other  
customers. Have a good ‘Fat  
Friday’ and weekend ”

# 5 Things

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What are you most  
proud of?



**“ Becoming  
IBM’s leading  
TM1 and BI  
partner ”**

*Nigel*



**“ Seeing the  
company grow,  
but retain the  
family feel ”**

*Rob*



**“ Our unwaveringly honest approach to everything we do; how we treat each other and clients ”**

*Jen*



**“ Over half the team completing the Three Peaks Challenge together ”**

*Neil*



**“ Customers at  
the 5th birthday  
having a great time  
and reinforcing  
why they enjoy  
working with us ”**

*Nick*



# 3.

## Bring Value, Don't Extract It

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Always deliver more  
than expected



Bringing value means focusing on what you can give, not what you can get. It means generously sharing your knowledge, advice, and your time. And giving it all freely without any expectation of return and without applying pressure to do things your way.

It's also about having a "can do" attitude, but never going for the short-term fix in favour of what will be best for everyone involved in the longer-term.



**“ We've always tried  
to be customer led,  
not sales, software or  
services led ”**

*Nick*

**“ Sempre's helpdesk  
manager is so helpful.  
In one particular  
instance, he helped me  
for over an hour. The  
support is remarkable ”**

*Wei Fu*

CVS





“ They helped us with no questions asked, whether we were going to be their customers or not. Without charging me anything, Tom got Cognos running again. When our IBM renewal came up, I insisted we go with them. Because I trust them, and they will do anything to help basically ”

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*Dipa Brevern*

Martin Brower

Paul took the lead and ran the first Sempre API Hackathon, to share his expertise. It was a real eye-opener. Not only did everyone learn something but it even generated some new opportunities. It's put us in a good position because this is definitely a growth area for the future. I'm looking forward to seeing what comes out of the next one!

David

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“ At the first presentation, we were immediately impressed. You came across as professional, knowledgeable and straightforward (i.e. not too sales heavy) ”

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*Mufeedah Athaullah*

Miller Insurance

PureGym requested a meeting to discuss services, as they weren't happy with their current supplier. They were keen for us to provide assurances or some kind of proof that if they were to use us they would not have the same problems as with their current partner.

However, since Rob was at the meeting, we suggested that the customer demonstrate their current problem there and then.

When shown, Rob was able to provide them with advice that immediately improved some of the issues and instantly alleviated their fears about our ability to help them.

We're not believers in pushing for a sale or just sending salespeople to meetings. This story perfectly illustrates why.

Neil

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“ Witnessing how colleagues are so quick to help each other out. There's never a concept of things 'not being my job' ”

*Catherine*

Remember that the happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more ”

*H. Jackson Brown Jr.*

Author

Have a Day On Us!



If our consultants aren't booked onto another project, we'll often get in touch with clients to offer up some extra consultancy time - at zero cost. It's all part of sharing our knowledge and making sure we're always giving more than we get.

# 4.

## Take Yourself Lightly, But Your Work Seriously

The most wasted of all days  
is one without laughter



Taking our work seriously means taking pride in what we all do but always asking "How can I do my work even better tomorrow?"

It also means being able to take feedback, take a joke and laugh at ourselves. Even when things get tough, we always see the light side, find the fun in everything and use humour to make everyone's lives more enjoyable.



“ There aren’t any office politics here. It’s professional, without being corporate ”

*Rob*



“ We’d never put someone onsite and call them an expert, when they’re not ”

*Tom*

People who take themselves overly seriously are often, ironically, taken less seriously by the people around them.

”

*Michael Kerr*

Author and public speaker



“ They are funny when you talk to them on the phone ”

*Dipa Brevern*

Martin Brower

Aviva told us the reason they hired us was because of our people and experience. They loved the fact that we clearly knew each other well - and were able to have a joke at each other's expense in the meeting! They bought into who we were rather than our size, scale or history.

Neil

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“





**“**We're relaxed,  
fun and good-natured,  
but ambitious and  
driven too **”**

*Theyab*

The best preparation for good  
work tomorrow is to do good work  
today

**”**

*Gilbert Hubbard*

Author and philosopher



“ There’s this pub quiz they hold; there’s always a bit of fun. It’s not about the thing they do; they do it because it’s fun. They do it because they enjoy it ”

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Nad Soriano

Dealogic

Mix a little foolishness with your  
serious plans. It is lovely to be silly  
at the right moment

”



*Horace*

Roman poet



“ Nobody takes  
themselves too  
seriously. You can have  
a joke with everyone ”

*Dominique*



**“** No nonsense,  
easy-going people to  
work with! **”**

*Stephane Lobet*

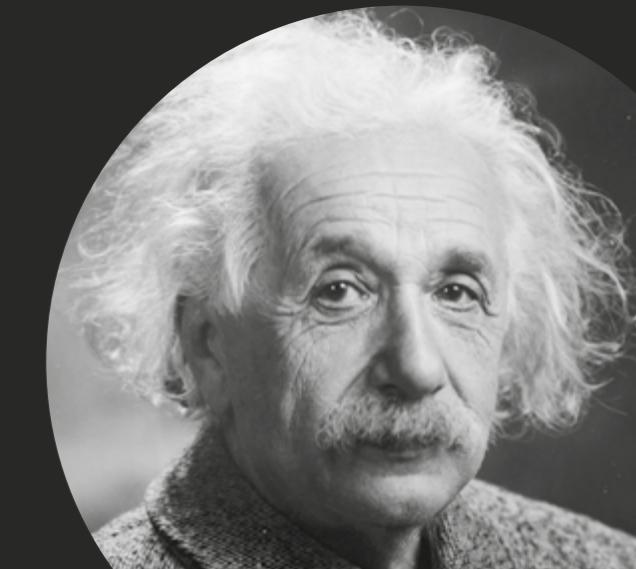
Pret A Manger



Play is the highest  
form of research

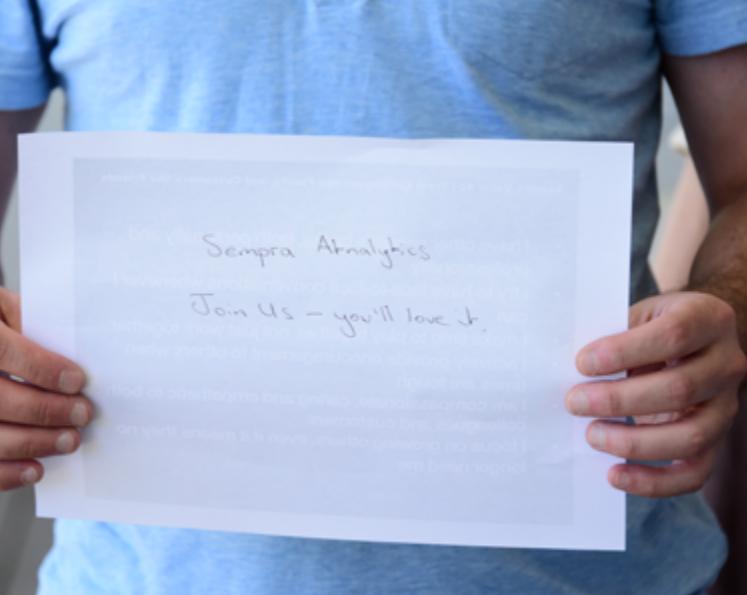
*Albert Einstein*

Theoretical physicist



“ You don't stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing ”

*Michael Pritchard*





**“ It’s the best  
company I’ve  
worked for ”**

*Katie*



**“ Trust is something  
that takes a long time to  
build, but can be lost very  
quickly. We’ve never lost  
that trust with Sempre, in  
the three and a half years  
that I’ve been at Crest ”**

*Paul Thurlow*

Crest Nicholson

# AND THAT'S JUST THE BEGINNING...

We plan on being around for a very long time yet.