

Our Culture

Updated August 2025

The IF Way: How We Think, Work, and Make It Better

At Intelligent Futures, we aspire to help build a future that is more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous. To do that, we've created a distinctive culture designed for solving complex challenges and making a real impact. It's a place where talented, driven people can thrive, pushing themselves, their teammates, and our clients to achieve more than they thought possible. This document is about that culture—how we think, work, and make things better every day. It captures the mindsets and behaviours that define Intelligent Futures and keep us moving toward the future we want to create.



The Foundation

What Intelligent Futures is about and what we do.



Our core purpose

We are change agents for equity, sustainability, and prosperity—in pursuit of a brighter tomorrow.

At Intelligent Futures, we help organizations tackle complex challenges and make a real difference. Building on our roots in urban planning, we use strategy, design, systems, and futures thinking to guide clients through purposeful change that benefits communities, culture, society, and the environment.

Change can feel daunting, but we believe in building a future that is fair, sustainable, and full of opportunity. We bring that belief, and the skills to make it real, to every project. Our work is built on thoughtful processes and strong collaboration. We know the best solutions come from many perspectives, so we design our work to be human-centred, bringing clients, communities, and our team together in meaningful ways. We value curiosity, creativity, and learning from different fields. We also make psychological safety a priority, creating a space where every voice is heard and respected. At the heart of it all, we know that people make change happen.

Humility, humanity and reciprocity are the foundations on which we lead. We believe that shared success is achieved through collaboration and a true team environment. Though this may be antithetical to the consultant approach, it's the method to our genius—and to yours.

The challenges we face today are all connected, and the choices we make—both as community members and leaders—can strengthen or weaken our society. At Intelligent Futures, our greatest work requires courageous action for the common good. Because what good is today without a brighter tomorrow?

Our big, intentional goal

Empower communities who are devoted to solve humanity's biggest challenges.

What we do at Intelligent Futures

We deliver strategy for the common good.

We deliver collaborative, inspiring processes that help people address wicked problems.

We bring insights and clarity to complex challenges.

We cross disciplines to find novel, impactful solutions to complex challenges.

Certified



®

Corporation

As a firm committed to sustainability, equity and prosperity, Intelligent Futures is a certified BCorp, joining a global movement of companies focused on business for good and ensuring that the global economy benefits all people, communities, and the planet. We are currently one of only approximately 550 companies in Canada with this certification.

The Four Outcomes

These are the four results we are all working towards all the time.

Meaningful change for our clients and communities.

- Every project must move the client forward in a way they can see and feel.
- Solutions are tailored, practical, and make a real difference in their world.
- The client leaves more capable, confident, and clear than when they started with us.

A better, stronger team.

- Every project should help our team sharpen skills, build knowledge, and improve how we work together.
- Team members actively 'make it better,' proposing and implementing improvements to our work and culture.
- People finish the project more equipped to succeed in the next one.

An improved reputation.

- The work is so good it becomes a reference point for future opportunities.
- Clients, partners, and interest holders see us as world-class change agents.
- Every interaction reflects our values and builds trust in IF.

Strong financial results.

- Every project is delivered on time, on budget, and profitable. Success also means each of us actively looks for ways, big and small, to strengthen IF's profitability.
- We generate healthy returns that fuel reinvestment in our people and help us keep raising the bar.
- We show that profit and positive impact go hand in hand.

The Team

What is expected of the Intelligent Futures team.



Our Values

These values and behaviours are expected at IF. They reflect what we are about.

Stay Curious

Always Strive for Positive Impact

Take Courageous Action

Extraordinary Collaboration

Stay curious.

Intelligent Futures is a place where we are constantly pushing each other to learn more about the world and how we can improve our impact.

Key behaviours:

You are always exploring new ways we can impact the world and bring practical solutions to difficult challenges, big and small.

You challenge assumptions within our team and our clients alike, and present better approaches to a problem.

You are always learning about how a variety of sectors, industries and expertise can inform our work.

You contribute effectively to the work of your teammates by bringing a fresh perspective. You provide space for your teammates to bring their ideas to the table.

You use sound judgment when navigating unclear situations, asking questions when needed and offering solutions, rather than waiting for full instruction.

Always strive for positive impact.

The work of Intelligent Futures is focused on improving our world.

Key behaviours:

You are driven to make a positive impact in the world.

You work to exceed expectations in every facet of your work. You initiate work that you see needs to be done.

You own your responsibilities and constantly collaborate with teammates to ensure the highest quality work, delivering strong performance that others can rely on.

You recognize that how we communicate is as important as what we deliver. You bring respect and professionalism to every interaction, even when facing pressure or disagreement.

Take courageous action.

Intelligent Futures is a company that thrives by taking action in places and in ways that others won't.

Key behaviours:

You say what you think with honesty and respect, even when it's uncomfortable or difficult.

You are both thoughtful and decisive.

You take smart risks.

You are willing to act in the absence of full information, while staying open to adapting as new insights emerge.

You practice integrity in all that you do by choosing to do what is right over what is fast, fun, easy, or comfortable.

You take ownership for adapting to the fast pace of our environment.

You use courage not just to speak up, but to listen openly, even when feedback challenges your perspective.

Extraordinary collaboration.

Intelligent Futures is a team, and we see our clients, collaborators and communities as part of that team.

Key behaviours:

You proactively gather team members to solve challenges and improve our work. You are an honest and supportive team member.

You treat our clients, collaborators and communities as part of a true team.

You make yourself available to the team.

You meet your obligations to the team and constantly check in to understand how we can function better.

You lean into collaboration not by waiting for direction, but by actively offering ideas, asking clarifying questions, and supporting momentum even when processes aren't fully mapped out.

Holding Tension

At Intelligent Futures, our culture thrives on the ability to hold tension in key areas that define how we work and grow. By holding these tensions, rather than choosing one over the other, we open the door to breakthrough thinking, fostering a culture that values both disciplined execution and continuous learning. This approach allows us to drive positive change while remaining adaptable and curious in a rapidly evolving world.

Being independent but an amazing collaborator

Creating clarity in ambiguous situations

Guided by systems, led by judgement

Balancing confidence with openness

Being intelligent and always wanting to learn

Knowing a lot, and wanting to know more

Being independent but an amazing collaborator

At Intelligent Futures, we trust our team members to take ownership of their work and move forward with confidence, even when every step isn't fully mapped out. That independence helps us move quickly, adapt to change, and solve problems creatively.

At the same time, we know our best work happens when we collaborate. Our projects are deeply interconnected, so we count on each other to share information, offer support, and work together across disciplines and roles.

We don't expect every process or decision to be written down. Instead, we expect team members to use sound judgement, lean on each other, and communicate openly and respectfully. When in doubt, start a conversation. When something's unclear, bring ideas, not just questions.

Holding this balance helps us build on the collective intelligence of the team to create positive impact.

Creating clarity in ambiguous situations

Our work often involves big, messy problems where the path forward isn't obvious. We're comfortable with ambiguity, but that doesn't mean we sit in confusion. When things aren't clear, we take action to create clarity for ourselves, our teammates, and our clients.

That might mean proposing a direction, asking a key question, or suggesting a way to advance. We don't wait for every detail; we make informed choices, share our thinking, reflect, adapt, and keep momentum.

At Intelligent Futures, creating clarity is everyone's job. We speak plainly, communicate respectfully, and ask for help when we need it. It's how we turn complexity into momentum.

Guided by systems, led by judgement

We build purposeful systems and processes to help us do great work consistently. But we'll never have a process for everything, and that's by design. Our systems are tools, not rules.

When circumstances change or something doesn't quite fit, we expect team members to apply sound judgment, not just follow checklists. That means making thoughtful decisions, using our shared values, principles, and frameworks as a guide, and checking in when needed, not freezing or waiting for instructions.

It also means that we expect that team members are always looking for ways to make it better, and take action accordingly.

Being led by judgement means you know when to follow the process and when to adapt it to serve the bigger picture and to improve things. This is how we stay flexible, focused, and impactful.

Balancing confidence with openness

We trust our skills and experience and we show up with confidence in the value we bring. But we also know that no one has all the answers, and every project is a chance to learn.

Being humble means staying curious, listening actively, and recognizing that others' perspectives will often challenge and improve our own. It also means offering feedback with care and receiving it with openness.

Confidence gives us the courage to speak up. Humility helps us do it with respect. Both are essential for high-performing teams that grow together.

Knowing a lot, and wanting to know more

Our team is smart, and we're proud of that. But intelligence isn't just what you know today; it's how you keep growing tomorrow.

We constantly build on what we know by staying curious, exploring new ideas, and learning from each other. That might mean digging into a new tool, researching a better way to do something, or just asking, "What if we tried it like this?"

We believe that good judgement comes from learning, and learning comes from doing. We're here to challenge assumptions, expand our thinking, and stay at the leading edge.

Blending rigour and creativity

We deliver work that is both solid and surprising. Rigour means doing the homework, backing up our ideas with research, logic, and clear thinking. Creativity means pushing past the obvious to find new, better ways of doing things.

It's not either-or. We hold both at once.

Doing great work means being both careful and creative. We use clear thinking to build solid solutions, and creativity to find new and better ways forward.

Performance

Intelligent Futures should be known for eye-popping creativity, impeccable quality, and an amazing experience for everyone that works with us.

It's up to each of us to ensure we live up to this vision.



A World-Class team

The Intelligent Futures team is made up extraordinarily skilled superstars who are great, supportive human beings.

We're a team of skilled professionals who care deeply about doing great work. That means everyone is expected to bring their best, not just in what they produce, but in how they show up.

Being part of Intelligent Futures means using sound judgment, taking initiative, and delivering consistently strong work. You don't need to have all the answers, but you are expected to think critically, ask good questions, and move things forward without needing every step spelled out.

We support each other, but we don't carry each other. We build trust by taking ownership and following through. That's how we make an impact and grow as a team.

A High Performance Culture

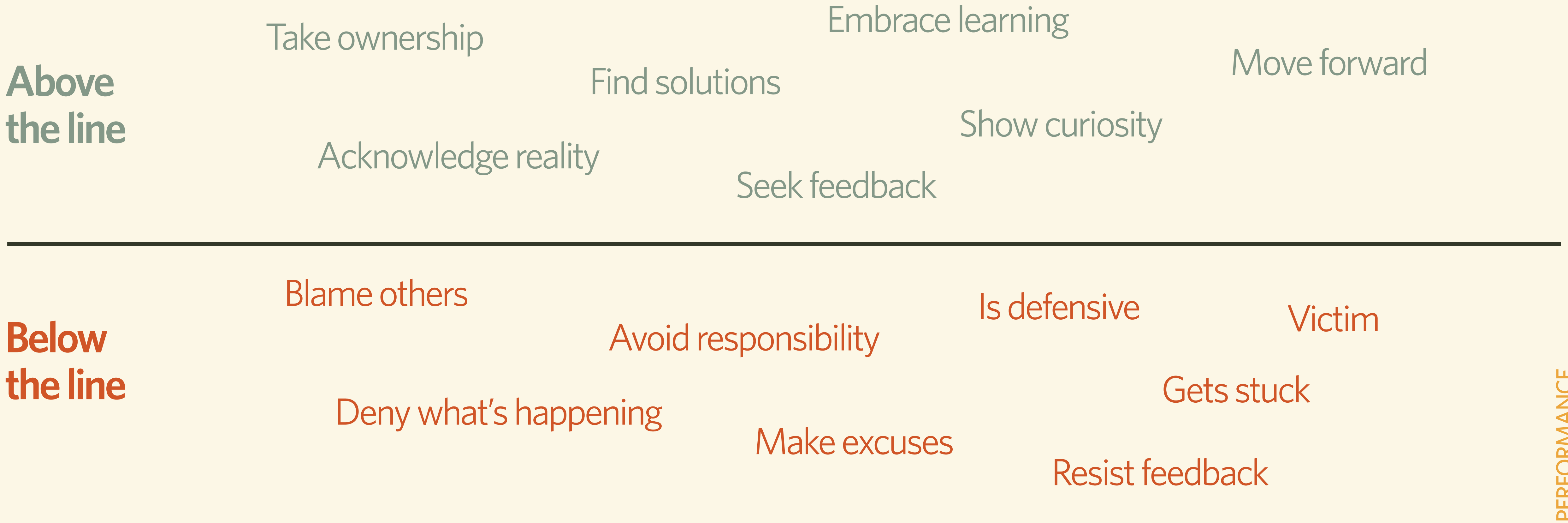
Excellence is an expectation at Intelligent Futures.

High performance isn't an option at Intelligent Futures. That doesn't mean perfection, but we do expect progress. That includes pushing through uncertainty, handling challenges with maturity, and staying committed to respectful, solution-oriented communication.

People need to show up with 'batteries included.' This isn't the place for coasting, hand-holding, or entitlement. It's a place for people who take ownership, grow from feedback, and raise the bar—for themselves and their teammates.

A High Performance Culture

High performance is as much about mindset as it is about output. This image is a reminder that staying 'above the line' means choosing ownership, curiosity, and action, even when it's hard. It's how we turn challenge into excellence.



PERFORMANCE



Language Matters

Every word we use is part of the impact we create.

How we talk about our work and each other matters as much as the work itself. Sarcasm or negativity might feel easy in the moment, but they erode possibility, collaboration, and results. At IF, we commit to language that is generative, constructive, and encouraging, because when we choose language that opens doors instead of closing them, our ideas, our team, and our impact all thrive.

Speak with respect and professionalism. Avoid sarcasm, and use language that reflects maturity and credibility, even (especially) when you're under pressure or in disagreement. Focus on solutions, not complaints. When raising an issue, bring ideas for how we can make it better.

Address challenges constructively. Complaints without solutions don't move us forward. When raising an issue, frame it with ideas for how we can improve or resolve it.

Recognize and encourage. Call out good work, give credit generously, and use language that builds trust, confidence, and momentum.

Be intentional with your words. Every comment shapes our culture and our reputation. Choose curiosity, optimism, and clarity, especially in tough moments.

"If you are complaining you can't be thinking about or creating what you do want."

- Jon Gordon

An Entrepreneurial Culture

An entrepreneurial team thrives on action, not bureaucracy.

Entrepreneurial IF Behaviours	Bureaucratic Behaviours (Not Us)
Take initiative when you see a need	Wait for instructions
Adapt and act quickly when circumstances change	Follow the process even if it no longer serves the goal
Propose and implement improvements	Do your role exactly as defined, nothing more
Take ownership for results	Pass responsibility upward or sideways
Seek feedback and act on it	Avoid feedback or stay defensive
Use processes as tools, adapting them to serve the bigger picture	Follow processes blindly, even when they're outdated
Continuously "make it better"	Maintain the status quo



Our Work Ecosystem

We rely on a dynamic system that brings consistency to our work while leaving room for creativity, context, and thoughtful decision-making.

Frameworks give structure to our thinking and shape how we understand complexity and make decisions. Unlike defined processes, frameworks don't prescribe a sequence; instead, they offer structure to help us organize information, surface insights, and choose the most impactful path forward on complex challenges

Frameworks

Judgement

Judgement is what ties it all together. It's knowing when to follow the process, when to lean on a framework, and when to trust our team's experience to find the best path forward.

Processes

Our defined processes are the backbone of consistency at IF. They help us maintain quality across projects and keep us aligned, even as we adapt project by project.

Principles

When the work gets complex, our practice-specific principles provide the lens for how we navigate, decide, and deliver.

Our Habits

How we work in order to realize our potential.



Daily Habits

Our team organizes our time into distinct blocks. We don't constantly check email or messages in order to allow us to give our clients our full attention and focus. As a result, email is not an instant messaging system for us. We need our best brain power to tackle the wicked problems we're facing.

Quarterly Habits

At the end of each quarter, we take a day to check in on the priority actions for the previous three months, assessing progress and establishing new priorities for the quarter ahead. These sessions also build a new capacity that will help us in our work to deliver the impact we are striving for.

Weekly Habits

We start the week with a team startup on Monday mornings.

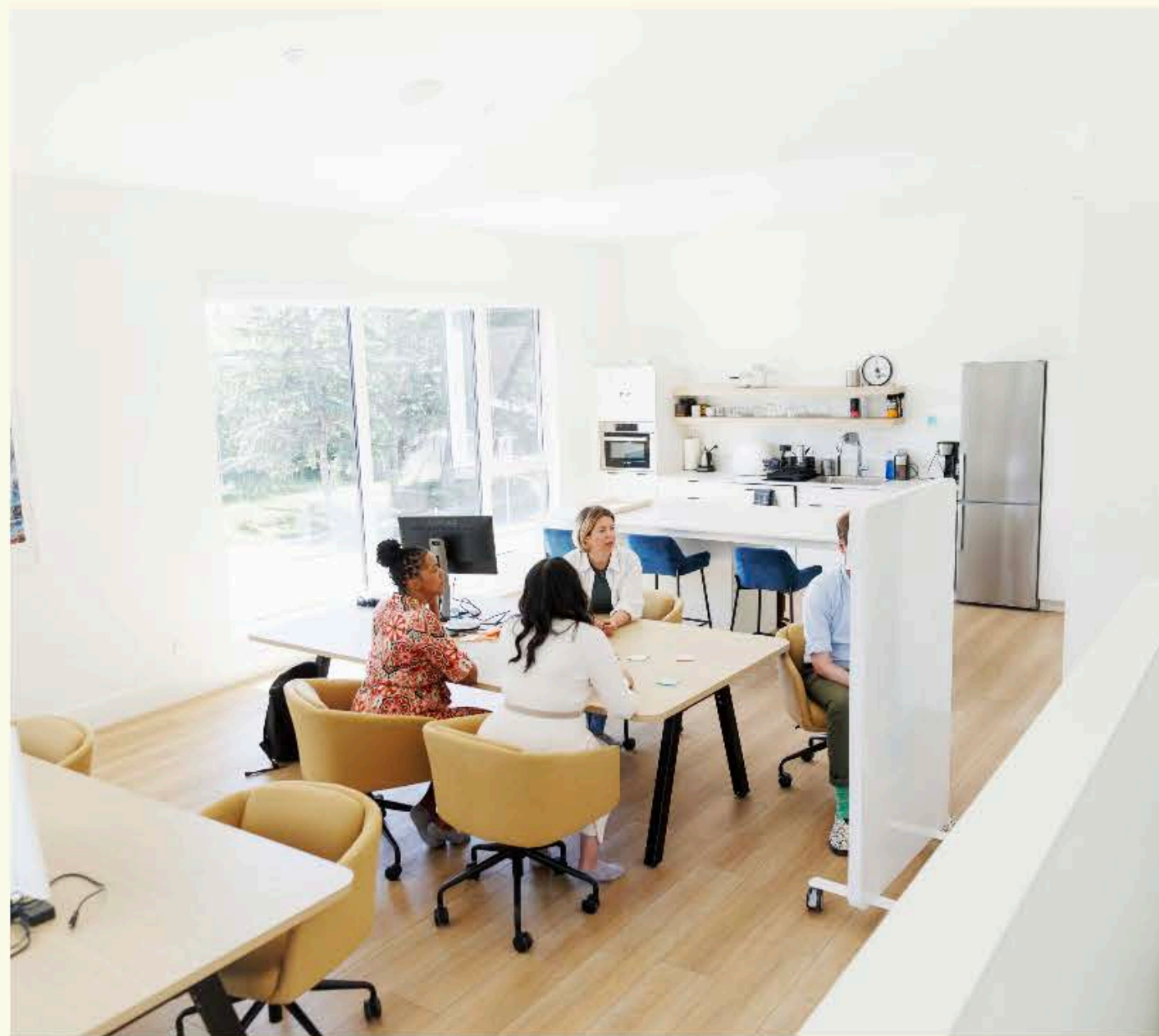
We gather Thursday afternoons to wrap up the week, reflecting on the week and identifying emerging priorities for the coming week. A team member then delivers an 'insights' presentation. This is a 15-20 minute session on something that will help make IF a better company. A 15-20 minute discussion will follow. This provides the team with fresh ideas each week.

Annual Habits

Each December, we take two days to reflect on the year that has passed, reviewing key metrics, lessons learned and team performance. We then plan the priorities for the year ahead, moving us towards our longer-term goals.

Space

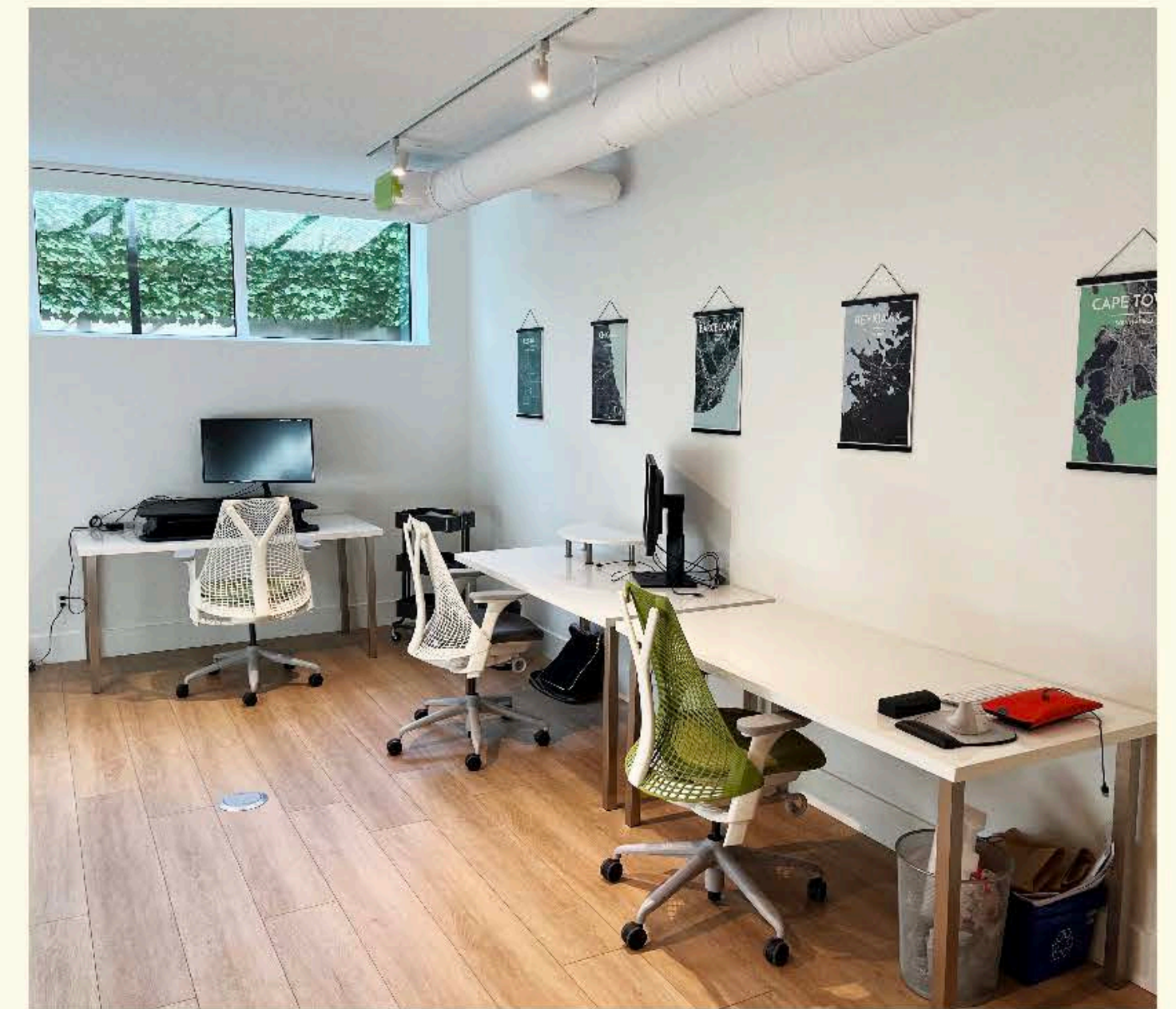
Our home is the award-winning Kensington Corner - a micro-scaled, mixed-use, all-electric project in Calgary, Alberta. The space uses an 'activity-based design' approach, where different areas are dedicated to different kinds of activities. Team members are given freedom to work where they would like - within Kensington Corner or from home.



Open space area



Collaboration area



Focus area

Time

We have core collaboration hours where the team is available to one another. Outside of that, team members have the freedom to decide when they would like to work (while obviously meeting the needs of projects and clients). We take an intentional approach to synchronous and asynchronous gathering, ensuring we meet with intentionality.



And always remember...

**BE CURIOUS
NOT
JUDGEMENTAL**

