



# GUIDEBOOK

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## Welcome Around the “Campfire” :)

We get excited every time someone joins us around the “fire” of Camplight. This is the beginning of a journey that will take each one of us deeper into alignment with the principles and objectives which bring us together.

We have elaborated this Guidebook so that you can get to know our co-operative, its concepts and methods more easily. This will bring about conditions for you to get involved more efficiently and start creating. We hope this Guidebook will inspire you.

While sitting around the “campfire”, we expect nothing more from you than to enjoy your time, create, evolve yourself and those around you and change for the better.

However, you must remember that the best way to get to know Camplight is by truly experiencing it and properly communicating with the company’s team.

## Background

At the end of 2011, a small group of software engineers and designers decided that they would rather grow in a transparent environment. Thus, in February 2012, a limited liability company (Ltd.) was legally incorporated in Varna, Bulgaria, under the name of Camplight. And this laid the foundation of a free, transparent and flat organisational structure enabling those involved in it to change it on a daily basis and with joint efforts.

Camplight is a Ltd. company but we call it a “co-operative”. We chose the legal form of Ltd. because it would give us the greatest freedom to grow and evolve. We define our structure as something different than a limited liability company because we use a self-governing model by applying the paradigm of co-operation.

Some of our company’s background has been disclosed in the [2016](#) and [2017](#) Public Transparency Reports.

## Principles

### *Transparency*

Transparency is a mechanism for preventing conflicts, errors or other negative impacts of people working together and their ambitions.

This builds the trust on which Camplight stands. In addition to the principle of transparency, the following can be considered to be a good approach:

***Communicate your intentions, in advance and as soon and transparently as possible, to those Camplight's team members who happen to be directly committed to the results of your actions!***

For example, Goethe discovered that he would not be able to cope with his weekly tasks, so he **promptly** notified the team members via their **common** communication channel. As a result, some of his tasks were distributed among the other team members.

### ***Together We Can Do More***

Camplight is an entirety of human relations and support. Thus, we realise that people can achieve more by working together in a system.

Just as when a candle lights another candle, it loses nothing and only gets brighter. So is with sharing the knowledge and skills around the Camplight “fire” enabling us to achieve more by working together. Therefore, the following can be assumed to be true:

***Two minds are better than one; four hands can do more than two.***

### ***Freedom***

Being a company of flat organisational structure, Camplight attaches great importance to freedom. This principle is embedded in the method of mutual organisation and self-government. This provides a possibility to everyone to choose an action which is most appropriate for them following the principle of transparency. In general, the following applies:

***Everyone has complete freedom of action as long as they do not harm others.***

### ***Growth to Benefit People and Society***

Our main desire and ambition is to join our efforts and work on projects to the benefit of people and society. Such projects that have the potential to develop and improve the environment are of our highest priority.

This is what determines our company's mission, which is ***to perform actions that benefit as many people as possible for the longest possible time.***



## *Responsibility*

As we know, what will happen tomorrow depends on what we do today. Therefore, taking conscious responsibility is crucial for the effective work of the co-operative members. This responsibility mainly lies in the following relationships:

*Cause & effect; Action & result.*

## Some Facts

### *Camplight Is Self-Funded*

Since the very beginning, we have never searched for investors, nor have we applied for loans or used any other financial crutches. This allowed us to remain independent and free from commercial interests. Also, this ensured confidence in our skills, energy, discipline and motivation to keep the “fire” beautiful and warming.

### *Camplight Is More Than An Outsourcing Company*

Over the first years of running our business, Camplight provided services mainly related to the operations of business clients. However, our skills are not limited solely to outsourcing activities. We develop our own products, an organisational and technological ecosystem, and we also put efforts in external projects. All of the above helps us to get even better in outsourcing, but we are mostly a company of people full of passion for creativity and perfection.

## *There Are Others Like Camplight*

There are other networks of collaborating professionals which are transparent, flat and self-organised. A few examples of companies we have been in touch with include:

[Outlandish](#)

[Crisp](#)

[Loomio coop](#)

[Enspiral](#)

## Camplight Structure

Camplight has a flat organisational structure. This means that instead of taking orders, we are looking for collaboration; instead of having standard job positions, we have interchangeable roles at all times. Thus, we chart the course of our own career paths and together we generate opportunities for how to create and what we deserve for our skills. Our leading values are collective ambitions and desire for growth.

Our organisation is nothing else but the individuals who compose it. By working together and developing our skills, helping and complementing each other, we succeed in breathing life into our collective brand called Camplight.

The legal form of Camplight is Ltd. Any Camplighter has the opportunity to be a partner within the company. However, not everyone wishes so, because partners play purely operational role before the state. They, along with the manager officially entered in the Commercial Register, are the face of Camplight before the government authorities. The partners and the manager are the bridge between the company and the compliance with the regulatory framework of the Republic of Bulgaria. While they do not exercise authority over the other members of Camplight, they help for the lawful existence of our “campfire” through the required administrative activities.

Each team member sitting around the “campfire” earns their money on their own. Camplight does not accumulate any excess capital or reserves.

## Making Decisions

Due to the flat organisational structure of Camplight, decision-making is of vital importance, especially when a decision leads to actions affecting everyone around the “campfire”. At the same time, each member of the company has the task of making autonomous decisions and decides what to do with their own time and energy.

### *What Should I Do When There Is No One To Tell Me What To Do?*

Look around. Think about what your goals are and what your need. Then discuss the possible actions with the others around the “campfire”. There are many ways to keep yourself busy, but none of them include passive waiting. It is much more effective to get involved in existing initiatives or to create one. The important thing is not to wait. There is nobody to tell you what to do at Camplight, so you should suggest what you would do instead. If your idea is good, there is a good chance that the others sitting around the “campfire” will get involved.

### *How Does Camplight Decide What To Do?*

The company is an entirety of the individual decisions of everyone involved. The directions of movement are as diverse as many of the ideas and initiatives that are generated at all times.

Decisions are discussed through an online discussion on [Trello](#) or another suitable online channel. A decision is often accompanied by the creation of an initiative. The company and its members can grow where adequate, logical and rational decisions are made.

In our practice so far we have seen that responsibility lies with the individual. The three types of decisions we make are the following:

### ***Co-ordinated decision (consensus):***

The outcome of such a decision affects all of Camplight or a group of them and requires lack of reasonable objections.

For example:

*-“Hey, I would like to invite a new guy to the co-operative,”* said George. *“Does anyone mind,”* he asked.

*-“This is great, but I disagree. Because I have been working with this guy for three months already and he has never performed his tasks fast and good enough,”* answered Maria.

There was no way for George to take any action because there was one person who disagreed with the decision.

### ***Consulted decision:***

We usually ask each other for advice or feedback. However, there are cases where a decision can be made without using the knowledge gained from advice.

For example:

*-“Hey, I’m planning to initiate this new project and program software for twelve hours a day in a language called M--. Can anyone give any feedback,”* said Miguel.

*-“Oh, Miguel, what a terrible idea! First of all, working for twelve hours a day is not good for your health. And second, this language does not allow rapid iterations! You are going to regret it,”* Larisa replied.

*-“Damn... Anyway, I am going to give it a try because the client is quite rich and is willing to experiment.”*

Miguel collected expert opinion but did not take it into account and acted as he believed was best.

### ***Individual decision:***

We only make such decisions for actions that are reversible.

For example:

*-“Guys, I think I should archive this card in Trello. If anyone minds, just say it and I will take it back,”* said Stefan and archived the card this very second.

Stefan’s action was not destructive and could be changed. Therefore, there was no need to make any fuss by asking for advice or coordination.

## How To Become A Camplighter

If you do not know anyone of us at Camplight, feel free to apply by sending an email to [team@camplight.net](mailto:team@camplight.net). If, by using your skills and experience, you can directly contribute to the development of any of our initiatives, a procedure will follow where we are going to test each other. The duration of this procedure will depend on you and the person who is introducing you to the co-operative. With the appropriate synergy and desire on both parts, you will be officially invited to Camplight.

Throughout your introduction we can discuss any questions you might have, e.g., the type of employment relationship which will be best for you, such as a civil agreement, employment agreement, or subcontractor.

When you join the co-operative you will not be required to get involved in any activity. You can either do nothing, or join the initiatives of your interest. To make it even clearer, here are some examples of Camplight's team members and their involvements:

- Jack has been a member of the co-operative for three years. He works only on outsourcing initiatives and does not participate in discussions of organisational issues. He covers his shared expenses.
- Jane has been a member of the co-operative for two years. She works on outsourcing initiatives. In addition, she facilitates in-house projects in her role of a PM. She is also proactively involved in the company's growth. She covers her shared expenses.

### *First Six Months at Camplight*

After you have been invited, usually the first six months are crucial for whether you will get involved and start growing within the co-operative or not. The course of events depends on you. We can inspire you with professional and friendly manners. Demonstrating personal initiative, organised manner of work and desire for communication will be of benefit for you. If you fail with this, there is no way for us to know how further you want to develop your potential.

If you have questions, but you do not know who to ask, feel free to address them to the person who invited you to the co-operative. If you need help, you can always contact the #help slack channel available to all Camplighters.

Our company has been founded so that we could help each other grow. If you feel that you are not using the maximum of your abilities or you have no project to work on – speak up! Contact the teams involved in initiatives where you can add value. There is always an option, along with other co-operative's team members, to find a new direction for Camplight growth and development while having fun.

A few members of the co-operative have discovered that the easiest way to achieve this is by:

- Taking care of our health and emotions
- Constantly evolving to be able to create new potentials and be more useful
- Striving towards financial independence.



# Camplight Flames: The Initiatives

The company's development is achieved through initiatives. Therefore, participating in such initiatives is crucial for the success of everyone involved in Camplight.

These are tasks, ideas and projects that people can implement. An initiative is any focused action that has an implementation **plan**, an **objective**, and analysable **outcomes**.

## *How Can I Create A New Initiative?*

Put your initiative on the list of initiatives. It can be of any scale, e.g. from designing Camplight business cards to creating a new software product for external/internal use.

## *Creating An Initiative*

Organising an initiative starts by identifying its objectives or issues to be resolved. An initiative would always undergo a decision-making process considering its completion. An initiative can also be transformed into a consensus among the people involved in it or can be archived, if needed.

What follows is setting up a team to bring the initiative to the desired results by taking real actions.

## *The Team*

The team structure of an initiative develops organically over time. In most cases, it is directly linked to helping organise an initiative and its completion. In addition, participants in an initiative may choose the model of management and allocate roles and responsibilities among themselves.

Often, the Camplight members play different roles in different initiatives. While in some cases they can be responsible for organising the performance of an initiative, in other cases they can be the very performers. This is determined by the team involved with the task to help achieve targeted objectives and desired results.

For example:

Servantes created a new card in Trello with the idea of making a blog. Michelle and Paul found the idea interesting and suggested that Servantes should help them with the organisation. Together they succeeded in developing the blog. The design was Michelle's job. By completing this initiative they created a setting for publishing blog articles.

## *How Can I Join An Initiative?*

The easiest way to join an initiative is to read what is happening in this initiative, give a feedback, or signal if you see a problem. Joining the initiative's team would be most helpful, even if it is temporary.

## Who Is Sitting Around the Camplight “Fire”?

### *The People*

Any person who possesses the required skills, as confirmed by the Camplight's members, and reveals their desire to join, can sit with us around the Camplight “fire”.

These would be the people who have joined at least one initiative (even by giving a feedback only).

### *The Partners*

Camplight may work side by side with other companies with similar interests, opportunities and goals. Such entities, and their individual members, are seen as partners. The main difference between a member of Camplight and a partner of Camplight is in their access to information and amount of interest.

All of Camplight's partners have access mainly to client requests that Camplight is not able to take, for one reason or another.

We will share relevant information with our partners only which is required for our effective and efficient collaboration. In our experience, we have found that there is certain information which, if shared with our partners, could harm our collaboration. For example, sharing rates with subcontractors can create tension.

Any partner can be invited to become a member of Camplight.

## Payment

Money can come from [services](#), [products](#) provided by Camplight or another initiative which is monetised. The money you have is kept in your MoneyFlow account. You can withdraw it whenever you want and as many times as you want, as long as your balance is not negative.

The key to success is discussing openly your adequate individual pay.

The best way to do this is to make a comparison between you and other Camplight members, and keep in line with the global trends and free budgets.

## Offices

Due to the distributed structure of Camplight we rely mainly on virtual offices. We build those using:

- Trello: it helps us co-ordinate all co-operative's initiatives and organisation.
- Slack: it enables us to briefly discuss cases until they become suitable enough for Trello. Also there, we build a sense of belonging to a community of people.
- Conference call software.

A good option is to hire workspaces aimed at bringing people together. This can be achieved in many different ways and based on the geographic location or infrastructure we have managed to adequately cover:

- Visiting hackerspace or co-working space type of locations.
- Dev retreats: hiring houses in the open countryside where most of the co-operative members gather for a certain period of time.

## Conflicts & Issues

It is important to understand that there are no human conflicts or issues that cannot be resolved.

### *What Should I Do If I Encounter An Issue?*

Share your issue with the other Camplight members or with the person who invited you. We are people; the least we can do is help with an advice, but we, as Camplighters, can also help with real action. After all, we are here together so that we can more easily deal with problems.

### *How To Resolve A Conflict With Another Camplighter?*

We should not forget that we have gathered in Camplight to evolve and help each other. In the scale of our co-operative evolution, interpersonal differences are negligible. Conflicts between Camplighters usually occur infrequently, and when this happens, they are mainly in the field of work environment. If such conflict occurs, it will be good for the affected parties to reasonably discuss the problem in search of a possible solution.

If, for example, issues arise due to different points of view, we can ask ourselves what is the other person trying to say?

For example, you can ask: “Do you mean [what you have understood],” and then move on to further discussion. Therefore, in order to resolve a conflict, the parties need to start speaking the same language first. It is good to know that in most cases both parties have objective and true arguments, but somewhere throughout communication they came to disagreement.

If it is impossible to hold such conversations, it would be appropriate to share the conflict with the other members of the organisation and get their advice and action steps towards resolving such conflict.

## Failures

Camplight’s operations are group initiatives. Failures that happen to occur are always on a team level. An individual mistake can only be made in the absence of transparency. That is because, if actions are non-transparent, the other team members cannot respond quickly when they identify a potential failure.

An example of failure is the failure to assist a person who has to shift to a remote method of working. Apart from providing [articles](#) on the [subject](#), the team can help this person by giving them personal advice and examples.

A failure may be the result either of messy processes or of an experiment in a new field.

Accordingly, if this happens, we would analyse such failure down to its roots and build mechanisms to prevent it in the future. And while doing that, we would never blame or punish the individuals responsible for such failure.

For example, an individual’s failure to qualify through our mutual testing procedure and start working on a project will reveal a potential for errors. As a result, our relationship with a certain client may fail; and this would be a failure of Camplight because we would have failed to create the expected value.

## Communication

Without communication, the company would not have existed. The more open, punctual, and objective the communication is, the more beneficial it will be for the persons involved in it. The more transparent the information, the smaller the chances of conflicts and misunderstandings.

Communication refers to concepts, desires, issues, conflicts, actions, conclusions, experiences and other aspects of human nature. There are many ways of performing a communication among the members of Camplight. It is important that the members communicate in such a way that their ability to involve other members in the communication is not restricted, and also, such communication should be in support of their proper synchronisation and organisation.

Having a huge amount of communication and just a little action can also be a sign of an obvious problem. The best way to resolve this is to discuss such cases with the Camplight members and with people having the required experience and knowledge.

## Resources

The availability of a large amount of stored resources does not contribute to achieving greater success in any way, but on the contrary, it is an indicator of gaps in their effective utilisation. That is why we, at Camplight, do not accumulate capital and all resources are concentrated in the members.

### *Shared Expenses*

In order to maintain the processes and keep the company running, the teams of different projects need to work with communication (Slack, gmail), organisation (Trello, github), finance (bank, accounting) and other tools. The costs of these tools are distributed among people who use them. This is what we call shared expenses. In order to easily manage such expenses, we use a system that we have developed under the name of [Shared Expenses](#).

An example of expenses shared within the company is the remunerations of members responsible for the administrative issues (we call it Overall Account Management). It includes:

- Communicating with the Accounting Department on:
  - Bonuses
  - Invoices for services and materials
- Issuing or confirming invoices
- Managing funds in Shared Expenses & MoneyFlow (our internal accounting systems)
- Executing documents, such as agreements, contracts, addendums, orders, etc.

### *Co-budget*

Another example of shared expenses is the co-budget. Participation in these expenses is optional for members.

Examples:

- Raising a monthly budget for a Camplighter if they, at this point of their life, do not have the ability to earn money
- Raising a general budget to fund initiatives
- Raising a donation budget



## *Funds*

A major influx of funds is payments for services provided to customers. Camplight's financial success is measured by the personal gain of each member. This means that Camplight is only as rich as the people in it.

For the transparent movement of cash flows at Camplight we use [MoneyFlow](#). This tool helps us see how much money everyone has made in the organisation, and our revenue and expenditure by projects. It enables us to prepare transparent financial statements and reports to raise our financial awareness.

## *Hardware & Servers*

Using their funds in MoneyFlow, the Camplighters can acquire the required hardware in the form of servers or other devices. If this will be useful for the other company members, it can be considered to be a shared expense.

## *Software & Services*

The software can be an expense shared only by the members who use it.

Being a software company, Camplight also has the direct opportunity to produce the required software, especially when it is effective and indispensable. Thus, we have created different products and technologies that we use proactively. One of these is the [node organic](#) ecosystem.

## Our Key Objective Is To Include New People Around The “Campfire”

An organisation is as successful as the individuals in it. The responsibility to include new people is crucial for the company, and the consequences of these actions help the company move forward or backward. The inclusion of an experienced and mature member will have a favourable effect both on them and Camplight in general.

## *How Do I Include A New Member Of Camplight?*

You can include a new member of Camplight by:

- Participating in the voting procedure. Any Camplight member may cast their vote for a new candidate and it is a good practice if everyone observes the process of including new people, especially in order to gain experience and prevent making mistakes.
- Suggesting a candidate by providing sufficient information for them and their contact details on [this Trello board](#).
- Testing and introducing the candidate into our workflow. Upon successful introduction and lack of reasonable negative reactions to the inclusion of such a person, they will be granted access to the Camplight infrastructure.

### *Who Is Eligible To Be A Camplighter?*

Such persons will be required to be responsible and evolve in sync with our self-organising culture. They will also be required to take challenges, be good professionals and get involved in improving our procedures. They should accept the principles of Camplight and be the followers and builders of Camplight.

[Everyone has the potential](#) to develop the qualities required to thrive and flourish at Camplight.

An important task, when we invite a person, is to assess their potential and whether we have the strength to integrate them. To assess this, for example, it will be good to get to know each other through a discussion over the Guidebook.

## Co-experiencing Camplight

We have gathered together so that we can also consider the emotional climate in this turbulent business reality. That is why we, at Camplight, have a number of initiatives. Some of them are of experimental nature and help us grow as better human beings. For example, one of these is the [happiness index](#), which measures the emotional state of our entire organisation. In combination with our monthly online meetings ([happy hangout](#)) or the visits to dev retreats, we succeed in working as a team.

We hope that this Guidebook has been useful to you. Feel free to come back to it at any time, discuss it and improve with the other Camplighters. We are happy to have you co-experience Camplight with us!

