

# State of (financial) *independence*

**A few months after Davidson was first born, when we were still in our teething stage, we found ourselves sketching out our mid- to long-term plans for the future, which was something we'd struggled to do back when we were employees in big groups.**

It was probably because back in those hazy days, we were constantly being asked to report on our weekly figures and stats, our managers seemed to be obsessed with results and short-term action plans. Isn't it ironic (dontcha think?) that an SME could be more focussed on its five-year plan than a major group? But the reason is actually pretty straightforward: the stock market luuurves it some short-term data, served up fresh by its listed companies. And because we weren't listed, we were able to relax. We don't have any external investors either, which is another way we're financially independent. External investors focus on the bottom-line figure to gauge profitability, and they can add to worry caused by the financial crisis through pressure to hold on to dividends whatever the cost: the result being that companies are pushed into short-term decision-making.

And that's not really what we're about, although we are a private company and we do need to make a bit of cash from time to time (independence is a luxury that comes with a price tag). Our goal is to become a long-term, high-end member of the technology consulting elite where employees feel good and at home in a great place to work.

We're debt-free, too, so we don't answer to banks that would quickly morph into cost killers. In early 2009, at a time when the credit crisis storm was raging hard, we were unlucky enough to be dropped by a lender overnight, just a few days before pay day. We picked ourselves up, dusted ourselves off, and vowed to never be reliant on banks again. 'Debt-free' means we say 'no' to rushed investments and random purchases but 'hell yes' to 100% self-funded internal growth. Another interesting factoid you might like to know: **we don't weigh up spending in terms of how it impacts profits. Instead we take a qualitative view of things: will it have a positive effect on staff well-being?** Hence you'll find that training, profit sharing, paid-for events and charity sponsorship aren't just abstract concepts at Davidson.

**Edouard**



## *Feeling inspired?*

### **Consultants**

**Keep an eye on time-tracking!** If you don't know how much time you spent on what, invoicing is impossible!

### **Managers**

Make sure you get your purchase orders in before launching a contract!

### **Admin**

You play a key role in cash flow and outstanding payment management! You're key to our independence!



## Curling... *And other stories*

**A weekend ski break, a spot of mountain-biking, a rooftop party, a night at the opera or theatre: whatever the activity, they all started with a small spark that erupted into a group event.**

Real-life story:

One night during a Davidson weekend ski trip, we were huddled around our beers at one of the resort's bars. We were psyching ourselves up for what lay ahead: one of the social committee members had organised an afternoon sled race

down one of the resort's most hardcore slopes. Picture the scene: 60 Davidsonians bombing their way down Avoriaz. Anyway, we were hanging out and coming up with ideas for the next big event. One of us was like, 'I want to do something really out there'.

We sat there thinking about it, with one eye on the curling match that was showing on the bar's TV. We didn't get it. 'What's the deal here? Pushing a puck around the ice with a broomstick? Seriously, who came up with this sport?'

And there it was. Our next Davidson event would be a night of curling. YOLO, man!

Everyone loved it. Or at least, it made everyone laugh. Fabrice called up The Club (in caps, because there's only one in Paris), set it up, let the committee know, got it approved. And a few weeks later, there we were, knees trembling on the ice, gearing up to train alongside the Ile de France region's only curling team. Remembering my colleagues' shaking, sprawling limbs still brings a tear of mirth to my eye.

**That's what the Dav spirit is all about: suggest an idea, check everyone's on board, get it organised, and have fun!** In my four years at Davidson, I've never heard of a single event idea, no matter how eccentric, that didn't get the green light. Obviously we're no different from any other company, in that we do the classics, too: annual big night out, a cooking session, go-karting, etc. But we always try to organise something a little different so that those of us who wouldn't have the guts to go it alone can try out new activities: other than the curling, there was also the scuba-diving, the hang-gliding, the skydiving, the mountain-biking and the glider plane rides, to name just a few. It means we enjoy this fantastic team spirit, and we get to meet as many Davidsonians as we can handle, people we very rarely see otherwise, or colleagues we only talk to via the company's online platform.

Me personally, after barely a year at Davidson, I'd already taken part in a dozen different events and been awarded my Level 1 diving certificate after a weekend in Bormes-les-Mimosas with eight other Davidsonians.

**Johann**

## *Feeling inspired?*

### Consultants

**Be selfish!** No, but seriously, if you're desperate to try something out, why not suggest it to the group and turn it into a team activity!

**Follow all the event news on the community platform.** Get involved in the Dutler forum discussions!

### Managers

**Get the word out and share event info with your teams as often as possible.**

### Everyone

**The social committees can't organise everything and come up with all the ideas by themselves...** Get stuck in!

