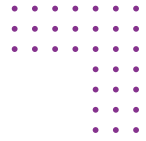




SMARTLY.IO

# CULTURE HAND BOOK

2022



Our culture  
is why our  
customers and  
great talents  
choose us and  
stay with us.

Living by our values helps us create value for the right customers at the right time and make Smartly.io the best place for the growth-minded people, leading to profitable growth in the long term. Nurturing and developing the culture is at the core of our future success.

In this handbook, we explain the philosophy that has helped us grow from two founders to a global company of 650 people in nine years. We'll also open up about the challenges we need to overcome to scale sustainably.

We hope the handbook helps you understand how we work and if Smartly.io is a company you'd like to join.

**Cheers,**  
**Humble Hungry Hunters**  
**a.k.a. the Smartly.io team**

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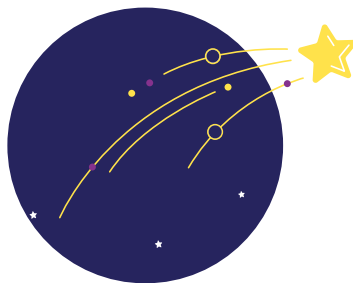
# Our **Purpose** and **Vision**

## We Bring Brands and People Together Smartly

We help brands build deeper and more meaningful connections to consumers with more relevant advertising, making the experience of interacting with brands online better for everyone.

### We Make Every Day of Advertising Easy, Effective, and Enjoyable

We are the strategic go-to-partner in digital advertising, combining media buying, creative, and data to improve every step of digital advertising. Our aim is to unify the full funnel of marketing and break silos between advertisers, marketers, and creatives.



We build technology that liberates marketing teams from manual work so they can focus on what matters.

Working towards our vision, we pay close attention to three lifelines that we believe to be crucial to our long-term success: being the best place for growth-minded people to make an impact, making our customers extremely happy, and growing profitably.

Our culture and values, which are all about trust, transparency, and feedback, are the foundation for how we'll reach our vision, cherish our lifelines, and fulfill our purpose.



## VISION & PURPOSE

Smartly.io Makes Every Day of Advertising  
Easy, Effective, and Enjoyable

To Bring Brands and People Together Smartly

### LIFELINES

11:09



Best Place for  
Growth-Minded  
People to Make  
an Impact



Extremely  
Happy Customers



Profitable  
Growth



### STRATEGIC PILLARS

Expansion  
of Market &  
Ecosystem

Smarter  
Advertising  
Cloud

Strategic  
Partner for  
Customers

Leading  
Technology &  
Engineering

Smartest  
Talent &  
Teams

### CULTURE AND VALUES

TRUST

TRANSPARENCY

FEEDBACK



# Our Values



Our values distill the essential elements of our culture. They guide how we work with our customers and as a team, how we build our product, whom we hire and reward, and how we'll reach our vision.





# Humble Hungry Hunters



We're humble yet ambitious to become the best in what we do.

We're hungry to win—we experiment relentlessly and make bold decisions to stay ahead of the curve.

**“** *Being a Humble Hungry Hunter is clearly depicted in how we do sales at Smartly.io. We're humble to ask the right questions and listen to customer feedback, but we also have the hunger to take on new challenges and bring value to our customers. Being grounded enough to understand customers' pain points is the key to closing deals.”*



**Brett Wagner**

VP, Creative & Managed Services, Smartly.io  
- New York City

# Build Trust

Trust is the cornerstone of any successful team and a must for fast decision-making and candid feedback. We build trust by holding ourselves and each other accountable for our actions and decisions. If trust is broken, we go out of our way to restore it.

“We cultivate a safe environment that builds on trust. We can speak our minds without being judged, and we set aside our differences to act in the best interest of the company. I’m thankful that it’s not taken for granted but nurtured actively.”



**Kimberly Chen**  
HR Business Partner, Smartly.io  
- Singapore



# Take Ownership



**Nothing is someone else's problem—we act as owners and work towards common goals as one big team. We optimize for the success of the whole company, not just our own.**

**“** *To take ownership often means owning your mistakes in order to learn, improve and become more resilient. It also means proactively taking responsibility in ways that can help yourself, your team members and the company grow—whether it is editing an article to be accurate and up to date in our platform's Knowledge Base or studying a platform's documentation in advance of meetings so you can better help your customers—it all requires taking ownership!”*



**Dylan Douglas**

Head of Customer Success, NorAm West, Smarty.io  
- Los Angeles

# Work Smarty

We make decisions nimbly, automate manual work, and execute with speed as a habit. Working smarter, not harder, allows us to take care of our wellbeing and productivity in the long run.

“Our campaigns have hundreds of flight deals with custom images and prices changing every day. We couldn’t manage them manually, so we needed a tool to automate them. And that’s when we decided to start using Smarty.io.”



**Simon Lejeune**  
Head of User Acquisition, Hopper



# Maximize Learning



We learn fastest by boldly going for the biggest challenges—if we fail, we make sure to learn from it, teach others, and set the bar even higher on the next try. We champion radically candid feedback to help each other improve.

**“** *You should find the sweet spot between what you are good at, what you enjoy, and what Smartly.io needs to succeed. If all Smartlies find this sweet spot, focus on it, and then surround themselves with great colleagues, customers, and partners whom they can learn from, they have a good chance to become the best in what they do.”*



**Kristo Ovaska**

Founder & CEO, Smartly.io  
- Helsinki

# Act Customer First



All our decisions are inspired by providing long-term value to our customers. We understand their needs by working closely with them and collaborate across teams and functions to solve their trickiest problems.

**“** *Our relationship with Smartly.io has been wonderful. I rarely fall in love with a partner, but the speed and quality of your work have been outstanding. The responsiveness—you guys show up, you do what you say, you listen closely and try to solve our problems. It's very, very enjoyable to work with people who are able to deliver the value that you've been able to deliver for TechStyle.”*



**Laura Joukovski**

SVP Media + Analytics, TechStyle Fashion Group

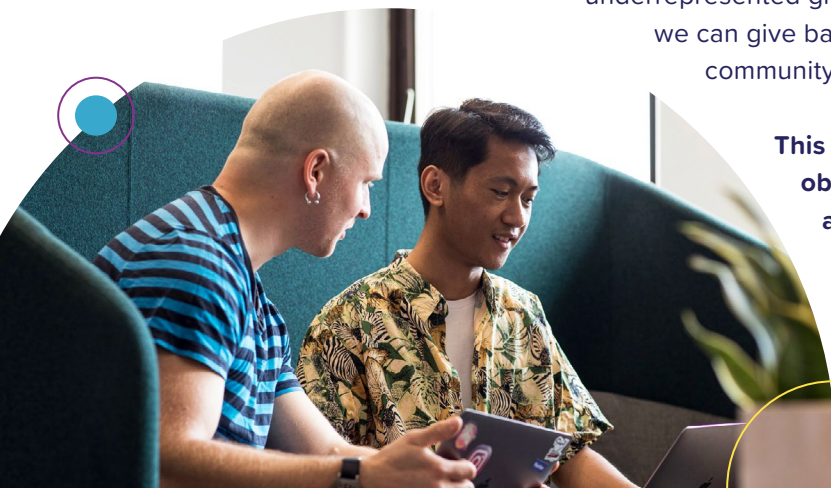
# Our Team

## **As Humble Hungry Hunters, we strive to design an inclusive environment, where great work is achieved through a commitment to respect and openness for all voices.**

We achieve success through teams that foster true diversity in experiences, backgrounds, and thoughts. We strive to celebrate and maximize learning from our differences. As a result we build trust, experience enhanced creativity, innovation, and a deeper understanding of different cultures. We work smartly to incorporate this mindset in our day to day work and challenge all Smartlies to take ownership of creating a positive impact not only for fellow employees but for the entire ecosystem within which we operate.

There are many initiatives and programs we have already put in place at Smartly.io to support our deep commitment to being an inclusive workplace. Some internal initiatives include company-wide learning and education programs on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, a standardized process for inclusive recruitment, anonymous employee surveys and employee interest groups covering topics from diversity, equity and inclusion to social justice and corporate social responsibility. We also partner with external organizations serving underrepresented groups so that we can give back to our community.

**This is an evergreen objective. We always strive to do better.**





Smarty.io is a respectful and safe workplace with equal opportunities for all, regardless of background, age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, family status, or any other attribute. We're committed to building and maintaining a culture free of harassment and discrimination.

In practice, this means that we...

... approach building a culture like building a product—through iterative, constant development

.. are respectful and considerate towards each other

... work together to constantly develop our ways of working together

... hire, reward and promote based on merit and ability

... take ownership of fixing things that don't work, instead of complaining about them

... value diversity, practice empathy and disagree gracefully

... don't stomach demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behavior or speech including cursing or inappropriate jokes

... don't talk behind people's backs, instead share feedback directly



**“** *I know implicitly that all of us Smartlies share a singular vision of constantly striving to be better—by improving our product, service, culture, or ourselves. I trust without question that the team will be there to support me to achieve success, but also to have my back if I struggle. It’s a pretty rare and beautiful thing, and I’m honored to have, and to give this trust to the team.”*



**Tegan Kerr**

Head of Southern Europe & MENA Customer Success,  
Smartly.io  
- Dubai



**“** *Empathising with other Smartlies helps me understand their viewpoints, build more trusting relationships and improve our ways of working so that we are happier and more effective working together.”*



**Khaled Halwani**

Senior Creative Solutions Partner,  
Smartly.io  
- Berlin

**“** *Smartly.io offers me way more than just a job — a safe space where I can deliver my best and be myself. I learn every single day in this open, transparent and diverse environment, where respect for each person comes before anything. I’m super proud to be part of this journey and build our future together.”*



**Rodrigo Oliveira**

Customer Success Manager, Smartly.io  
- São Paulo



# How We Work With **Our Customers**



**We help our customers succeed.**

As a strategic partner, we measure our success in the long-term value we bring to our customers. We help them find the winning strategies through iterative testing, save them time and money by automating their manual work, and stand out from competitors with deft and thoughtful support.

**We aim to enable collaboration between our customers' performance and creative teams.**

As highly visual and personalized advertising is trending, we help our customers thrive by closing the feedback loop between media buying and creative teams. Our technology enables Creative and Performance teams to work together to produce, test and launch beautifully effective ads.

**Customer-facing Smartlies understand the product.**

We hold a high bar for product knowledge. Customer success managers, salespeople, and other Smartlies who work closely with customers, need a deep understanding of our product as well as their customers' business to be able to help our customers succeed.

**Engineers are customer-focused.**

Understanding how our customers use our tool to drive business results helps our engineers to build a product that our customers love to use. Our engineers also gather learnings from the market and transfer them into value-adding features. We invite some of our most advanced customers to a workshop with our engineers. →>>

**“** *Everyone at Smartly.io seemed to have the right answers which has been fantastic.”*



**Anne Thouas**

Head of Awareness Marketing, Wonderbly

**We develop our platform in close cooperation with our customers.**

We don't pretend to know what our customers need—we ask them. Understanding how our customers use our tool to drive business results helps our engineers to build a product that our customers love to use. Our engineers also gather learnings from the market and transfers them into value-adding features. We interview customers to help us pinpoint what to build to make their work easier and help them achieve great results.

**All customer-facing and product development teams contribute to customer support.**

Understanding the customers' pain points is key to great products and services. We aim to have half of the global support load handled by non-support professionals from our commercial and product development teams. Helping customers resolve ad hoc issues and use our platform effectively gives Smartlies a firmer grasp of how our product and service could be further improved. We have scaled our technical support to cover all time zones and help our customers globally 24/7.

“In the beginning, we sat down to discuss service expectations and they've been consistently meeting them ever since. Their time to market and reactivity are spectacular, making it possible to innovate together.”



**Llibert Argerich**

Global Director  
of Social and  
Content, eBay

“It's never about the quick wins, but rather creating a long-term partnership with our customers. We're leveraging our global presence to keep learning, improving our solutions and service, and bringing new ideas to the table.”



**Riikka Pello**

Global Head of  
Creative and Brand  
Solutions, Smarty.io  
- San Francisco

# How We Build **Our Product**

**Automated workflow and first-class usability are significant competitive factors for us in the long term.**

We aim to automate all repetitive manual work in acquiring and growing customers online. An efficient user experience and an explorable tool are cornerstones of serving advertisers of varying levels of tech-savviness in the best way. Our goal is that our users could learn to become world-class online advertisers through using our platform.

**We prototype and develop solutions with customers for a speedy feedback loop.**

At Smartly.io, engineers work closely with the most advanced customers:

they workshop with the customers and develop features in close cooperation with the customers and their account managers.

**As the complexity of our product grows, it's crucial to maintain our ability to keep ahead of the curve.**

We're extracting microservices from a monolithic code base. Refactoring to a more agile product also allows us to test tackling new advertising platforms. →>>





### **Self-organizing developer teams own the product roadmap.**

We believe that decisions should be made by the people who have the most knowledge on the subject. That's why our engineering teams have end-to-end ownership of their focus areas in the tool, and they're empowered to make decisions about which features to prioritize to meet customers' needs.

### **We're lean and transparent.**

Our engineering teams have chosen to use Kanban to track their progress. Their roadmaps are open for everyone to see, and teams share their plans regularly to the whole company. Engineers also have monthly meetings, where they discuss new components and technologies, and improve their ways of working. The notes from these sessions are shared openly to the whole company.

### **We deploy continuously to production.**

Automatic testing and continuous integration allow us to see our work in production extremely quickly. We've automated and streamlined our deployment processes to eliminate manual work. Therefore, the feedback cycle is short and allows us to deliver new features and fix bugs faster. We wrap up each week with Friday Demos, where the engineers demo the changes they've made to the tool in front of the whole team, educate Sales and Customer Success teams about the new features, and gather feedback.





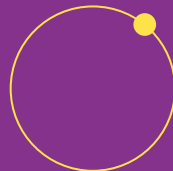
“*My team doesn't have rock stars or divas. We treat each other as equals. The most junior coder can voice their opinion, knowing that they will be treated respectfully. While we are humble, we are also hungry to be the best at what we do. We search out the best practices for development, craft our code with quality, and own our mistakes. I feel very lucky to work with these smart and empathetic people.*”



**Holly Gibson**

Engineering Manager, Smartly.io

- Helsinki



“*The environment and the technologies we use develop extremely fast. It's great that Smartly.io invests in helping people maximize their learning. I have boosted my development as a software engineer by reading books in our office library and also been encouraged to buy books with the company's money.*”



**Valtteri Virtanen**

Principal Software Engineer, Smartly.io

- Helsinki

# How We Hire and Reward **Our People**

**The culture of trust, feedback and taking ownership starts with hiring people who are great at self-management.**

Smartlies act like owners and put the success of the company before their own. When self-organizing teams act in a way that benefits the whole company in the long run, we don't need cumbersome processes to guide our work. It makes us more nimble and better equipped to succeed.

**We hire to elevate the team.**

We build strong, complementary teams where each new person expands their team's skill set. Each team member takes part in planning and setting goals. We hold a high bar in recruiting, even if it means slow hiring because we want to find the best people for each team. If in doubt, we don't hire. We skip hiring people who don't commit and contribute to our values—no matter how senior, skilled, or nice they are. →>>



**We encourage Smartlies to find the sweet spot between their competitive advantage, true motivation, and impact on Smartly.io.**

Our success depends on Smartlies aiming to become the best in the world at what they do. If Smartlies find this sweet spot, focus on it, and then surround themselves with colleagues, customers, and partners whom they can learn from, they can maximize their learning and impact, which in turn makes the whole company successful.

**If we succeed, everyone gets to enjoy the upside.**

We value long-term impact over quick wins and reward Smartlies for their input to the long-term growth and profitability of the company. Our compensation aligns with the level of a Smartlie's impact, not their seniority or status. Smartlies have regular feedback discussions with their team leads to understand how they can grow with the company and amplify their impact.



**“** One of the key drivers of Smartly.io's success can be attributed to how we hire people. Through our unique hiring process, we have been able to select the brightest people around the world. And they are the reason why this has been my best job so far.”



**Jun Kai Lim**

Software Engineer,  
Smartly.io

- Singapore

**“** For me, Smartly.io is the ideal learning platform, where I can work in cross-functional teams and move horizontally in the organization. In practice, this means being able to work on both technical, analytical and product-focused projects, as well as meeting customers and working in a more business-driven team.”



**Stella Tuovinen**

Global Head of  
Marketing Science,  
Smartly.io

- San Francisco

# How We Want to Lead and Be Led

**If you need constant management, Smartly.io isn't a place for you.**

We value a self-aware and action-oriented attitude in the people we hire. All Smartlies are strong self-leaders who are able to set goals and get others excited about them, define the plan to reach them, find the needed resources, and execute. We expect everyone to seek and understand the broader context, prioritize, and make smart decisions to get us closer to the company-wide vision. Your team and team lead will always support you and help you learn, but they won't lead you by the hand and tell you what to do.

**We follow six leadership principles:**

**Nurture trust:** be consistent in decisions and actions, keep decision-making transparent and explain why.

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**Create direction and clarity:** understand your team's role in executing Smartly's strategy and creating success in practice and communicate it to your team regularly.

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**Help others grow:** enable your team members to exceed themselves in their roles.

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**Emphasize action:** foster culture of moving fast, iterating and learning to deliver the best outcomes.

---

**Hold accountable:** monitor progress and intervene if necessary.

---

**Lead by example:** walk the talk, make our values alive every day and keep improving.



**Team leads are responsible for building high performing teams.**

They link their team's work to the company strategy, help their team set the right goals, and hold the team accountable for reaching them. Team leads don't monopolize decision-making, but allow their team to participate in making decisions. They are responsible for prioritizing when the team can't reach a consensus. Team leads recognize and reward those who perform, and help those who don't. Team leads keep regular 1-1 meetings with their team members and care for their members' well-being and personal growth.



**We expect everyone to take ownership.**

All Smartlies are trusted to take ownership beyond their role, and make decisions that drive the whole company's success, not just their own or that of their team's. We don't stomach office politics or optimizing for your own success at the expense of others—we only hire people who are motivated to help others around them succeed.



“ *It is every Smartlie’s responsibility to create an environment where people support each other, grow, and have the highest impact on the business.*”



**Lotta Suuronen**

Head of Customer Success, NorAm East, Smartly.io  
- Austin

“ *The beauty of managing a team is the diversity of opinions & feedback I get to hear on a daily basis. I always encourage peer-to-peer learning as it fosters an environment of teaching as well as open communication. As a leader, I feel it is my role to encourage debate and to promote an understanding that it’s okay to have more than one right answer.*”



**Stanton Quan**

Global Head of Sales  
Development, Smartly.io  
- New York City



# How We Uphold **Transparency and Feedback**

**Transparency is a cornerstone of our culture. It gives our people on company, team and individual level the broader context they need for smart and fast decision-making and contributing to our shared goals.**

**We want to share the good, the bad and the ugly.**

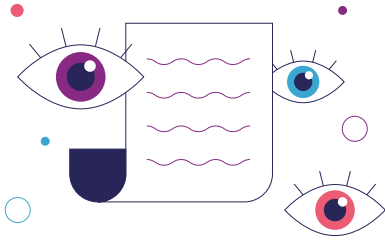
When we communicate decisions, we provide context as much as possible to clarify why those decisions have been made. We do retros on our work: where we succeeded, where we failed and what we learned from all that – and share these learnings across organization. Transparency doesn't automatically translate to complete freedom of information. Some topics cannot be shared, like salaries or individual employment details, due to confidentiality, laws, and ethics.

**Transparency can also become noise.**

We balance between information overflow and too little information by communicating and sharing knowledge in an easy way and curate the most important information for Smartlies to easily digest. We strive for T-shaped communications: on company-level we communicate the vision & strategy, give bigger picture and context, and all relevant information to succeed in your work is easily available for a deep dive. We share our key business metrics dashboards for everyone. This way our team understands the larger context, stays updated on what is going on in the company, and can align their work accordingly. →>>



**To ensure transparency, we follow some practices, which we continuously improve:**



1

Meeting notes from all teams, including the Executive team, are shared in appropriate channels available for everyone.



2

Learnings from both successes and failures are documented and shared with a relevant, broader audience to maximize learning across the organization.



3

We make discussions as transparent as possible in our internal communication channels – at the same time try not to overflow information to everyone.



4

All Smartlies have access to the company's financials and business metrics, and raw data from company surveys, e.g., people and customer engagement surveys.

**Candid feedback keeps us humble and hungry to learn.**

We practice radical candor in our feedback: we challenge directly and at the same time care personally. At Smartly.io, you will need to be open to give and receive feedback and ask actively for it. We need to be brave to share our failures and celebrate winnings. Independent of your scope of work, prepare to reveal your work for candid feedback.

**We challenge each other daily – from bottom to top and vice versa.**

Whether it is within a team or from a developer to a an Executive Team member, we welcome feedback. We truly believe in listening to our people. We have regular practices where we share feedback, create dialogue and engage across organization, like Leadership Team Happy Hours, regional summits and all-hands summits, where we bring the whole organization together. With a fast-moving and scaling organization, not everyone can be part of planning everything, but the big things we want to open for discussion and engage Smartlies to share their opinions.

**We communicate respectfully with each other.**

Being frank does not mean being mean or rude, whether it is face to face or over collaborative tools. Appraisals and appreciations are more than welcome to be public, but constructive feedback we give 1-1 and do not call out on people publicly. When we share learnings, we don't pinpoint individual contributors, but focus on learnings on a larger scale. Every Smartlie regularly goes through a feedback training together with other Smartlies to practice the skill we need in our daily work.



**“** *Smartly.io thrives on a strong feedback culture. Everyone within the company actively provides constructive feedback and seeks feedback from customers. Dailies, Monday Kickoffs, Retros, Friday Demos and team days are some of the regular avenues where everyone gets to practice giving feedback.”*



**Mala Patel**

Product Designer, Smartly.io  
- Helsinki

**“** *Whether it's the 100-people startup when I joined, or the 700-people company it is now, I appreciate the consistently high degree of transparency at Smartly. The Executive team and team leads share first-hand insights about important decisions and significant events. We have company-wide monthly Leadership Happy Hours for different timezones where employees can ask the Executive team questions and give feedbacks in real-time. All executives and team leads are also available on Slack for us to reach them directly.”*



**Lex Yang Xiao**

Sales Engineer, Smartly.io  
- Singapore

# Scale Sustainably

**We have got off to a good start—finding our path from being a promising startup to a scaleup on a profitable growth path. However, we are still at the beginning of reaching our vision: guiding our customers through the transformation of digital advertising, as well as automating ad buying, creative production, and everything in between.**

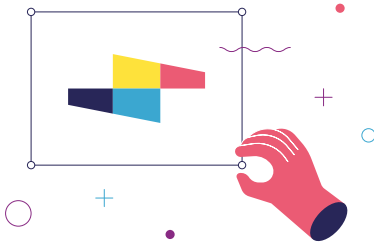
When an organization scales, change is the only constant. Something will always be broken, and we will make mistakes. Nurturing a culture of trust, transparency, and feedback will help us stay on track and learn from our mistakes.

In the end, our long-term success is determined by our team. That's why we need to make sure we have the right people in the right roles, where they can take ownership, maximize their learning, and have an impact on the company's success.

As we grow, our culture evolves with us. Just like we refactor our codebase to build a more stable product, we also need to refactor our ways of working so that they support our organization in the next phase—and the one after that. We develop our culture iteratively by identifying what we want to stick to and consciously nurturing those elements as we grow.

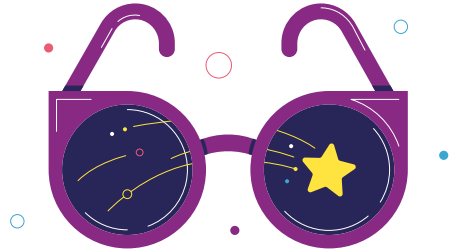


## Some of the exciting challenges we are currently solving together:



1

Scale as an organization without diluting our culture or crippling our ability to move fast. Instead, keep developing our culture iteratively.



2

Realize our creative vision by understanding what kinds of creatives drive performance and building solutions and services that automate creative production.



3

Keep the hiring bar high and invest in the growth and the happiness of Smartlies.



4

Grow skilled leaders from within the team to support our scaling organization.





**“** We’re all extremely motivated to build our future—developing the best product and service for our customers, and building the best company for our people. If this is something you see yourself contributing to and what gets you excited, you’re in the right place.”

**Kristo Ovaska & Tuomo Riekk**  
Founders of Smartly.io





[CAREERS](#)

[DEVELOPERS](#)

[LINKEDIN](#)

[GLASSDOOR](#)