Non-Negotiables

Working with PEN Consultants

To be clear, though, there are a few items that are a minimum standard - if you're not following through and maintaining this minimum standard, that is grounds for termination. When you are not performing and doing your part, it affects the entire team, which in turn affects our clients.

All team members (including SDRs and Interns)

- **The Standard Stuff**: Inappropriate Professional Conduct: discriminatory comments, harassment, cursing, being uncooperative, disrespectful, unlawful activity, being under the influence of any "mind-altering substance" (ex. alcohol, illicit drugs, certain prescription drugs, etc.) during Services rendered, etc.
- **Communication**: Staying engaged in all topics/channels is highly encouraged (in email, Slack messaging, etc.), but it is a non-negotiable for communications related to engagements you are assigned, as well as questions and comments specifically addressed to you. Slack, email, phone, and other messages must be checked at least a couple of times per day. For testers, staying engaged on all topics/channels is required to move up in performance.
- **Response Time**: Your responses to internal and external requests related to client communication or client engagement matters must be within a reasonable amount of time - non-negotiable. What's a reasonable amount of time? We contractually obligate ourselves to respond to a client in less than 24 hours. In many cases, we must coordinate/collaborate internally on an answer prior to responding to a client, so the internal response time must be far less.
- **Availability**: There are no core work hours, but most time-sensitive client communication and meetings occur during the day.
  - SDRs: You must be available for client phone calls Monday - Friday during the hours of 9 AM - 4 PM local time for your target market (as needed, with advanced notice).
  - Testers: If you are unable to commit to client calls Monday - Friday during the hours of 9 AM - 4 PM Central time (as needed, with advanced notice) for the period of time you are offered to lead an engagement, then a supplementary role may be offered (when available), otherwise the you will be placed back at the end of the tester assignment queue.
- **Sharing Vulnerability Details (or other sensitive information)**: [See "Sharing sensitive or vulnerability details" in the CompanyPolicy](#)
  - Note: Candidates will be shown a copy of this during the interview process.
- **Plagiarism**: Word-4-word quotes are an important part of our reporting, but must be in quotes and the source cited. Large quotes (ex. an entire paragraph) are also sometimes warranted (ex. after the BLUF statement in a finding), with the same requirements.

Under no circumstances are these quotes to be treated as our own (i.e. not quoted+cited). There is zero tolerance for this unethical, and often illegal, activity.
- **Forbidden Countries**: See "Country Restrictions" in the Resources GDocs.
  - Note: Interview candidates may view the list at: https://penconsultants.com/industries

Testers only

Generally speaking, your success working with the team and the compensation you make is tied to the performance criteria listed in the "KeyResultAreas_performancePromotionEtc" GDoc.
- **Deadlines**: We must meet client-imposed deadlines and stay under maximum time on engagements. Generally, the maximum testing time is 30 to 45 days. If you're working ~15-20 hours per week (the minimum we require for part-timers who elect to take on an engagement), this shouldn't be a problem as we typically scope jobs based on 20 working hours per week total (for all testers assigned). If you are unable to commit to that at certain times (ex. traveling during the summer), then do not take on an engagement until you have availability.
- **Peer Review**: You do not work in a silo to yourself. Not only must you be open to peer review, but you should request and provide it often. This goes for places called out in the guide (ex. peer review of scope), tools you're not familiar with / give peer review to others with tools you are familiar with, emails or requests prior to going out to clients, code that is written, etc.
- **Testing Guides**: Why follow them?
  - Contract/Standards-based testing: Every engagement, we have contractually obligated ourselves to the client, it ensures testing coverage, etc.
  - Meticulous: If the guide is explicit about running something a certain way, do what it says, especially if it literally says do not do it another way.
  - Wisdom: There are decades of collective knowledge, wisdom, troubleshooting, lessons learned, etc. in the guides. Wisdom is learning from others' mistakes.
  - Emphasis: Ignoring what is in the guide and doing things your own way is unacceptable. For the things that are documented, we know they work, and not only work but work more efficiently and thoroughly than anything else that has been tested/tried before it. It wasn't added to the guide on just a whim, but has gone through an extensive vetting process, as any new replacement process or tool must go through.
  - Going outside the lines: To be clear, the above is the baseline. A fully functioning tester is expected to make suggestions for new tests, improvements and automation to existing tests, etc. (all with peer review/vetting). See the "DuringTesting-general" GDoc for details.
- **Real-Time Notes**: rawTimeline, rawNotes, TOCs, rawFindings, master spreadsheet, etc. These are contractually obligated to be near real-time. See "Real-Time Notes" in the onboarding GDocs