

Build a Culture of Caring for Stronger Client Relationships

By: [Mark Klein](#) Date Posted: July 22, 2014



Agency culture is the most important element in how you grow your business, and each one is unique. Success is predicated on the success of your clients, so the prime directive is *care for the client*. But, if you have kids or siblings, you know that caring isn't innate; it's learned behavior. So, if you want your culture to be one that puts clients first, you have to model that behavior by caring for your employees.

Here's how you can build a great agency culture.

Build a Home

Your physical space is key; it's both an expression of who you are and an environment that enables the way you work: creatively and collaboratively. For example, our building has only six rooms with doors. Four of those are bathrooms. Having people physically close together, in an open floor plan, nurtures cross-pollination of ideas and tactics.

Make Your Own Time Zone

Don't be a clock watcher. You can open early and close late, but remember that things come up in your employees' personal lives. Focus on the work and keeping clients happy. To accomplish this, you need to start with happy employees. Letting people adjust schedules when necessary to minimize their commuting burden means people don't walk in the door exhausted and pissed off.

Hire the Person, not the Position

Be more concerned with *who* someone *is* rather than if he fits the job description perfectly. You have to be confident that you can teach smart people how your agency works, so look for good brains and good hearts. Put a premium on collaboration; you need people who know how to work together, which is harder to teach than one would imagine. When looking for specialists, the same principal applies. Keep office politics and disingenuous people out of your office. Hire individuals who want to come in and be part of a real team.

Cultivate a Farm Club

Invest in developing an intern program by bringing in talented marketing students from outstanding colleges in your area. Give them real work to do while they're there – not just filing, shredding, and making coffee. Provide your interns with supervision and enough room to make mistakes and learn from them. We hire several interns every year, and those who come up through our system learn our culture first. They don't have to be reprogrammed from some other set of values.

Go Beyond Casual Fridays

Everyone knows it's important to provide safety valves that let people blow off steam, reduce stress, and celebrate shared successes. Moreover, these moments need to be as creative and memorable as all the other components of the culture. We nurture our team spirit with uncommon celebrations such as field trips, happy hours, monthly themed potlucks, and early close summer Fridays.

Think Small

As you scale up and grow your agency, make sure to scale *down* for every client so that each one gets a dedicated team that supplies the same care and support you gave when you only had one client.

And always remember that clients are people, too — clients you work for and engage with are human beings who also have a full human range of goals, some measurable and some intangible. When you keep that in mind, your culture means that *you care more*, and that sets you apart.



Mark Klein

Mark Klein's approach to business is focused on two things: Happy Employees and Happy Clients. As the Managing Partner, Mark is very focused in creating a work environment for DX that is inclusive and collaborative but also a wonderful physical space. DXagency's NJ headquarters are located in a 110 year old renovated schoolhouse perched on a cliff across from Manhattan. Mark has been active in the entertainment and marketing industries for over 25 years also owning Hot Sauce Marketing, a successful music marketing company he founded in 1996. Previously, Mark was with Sony Music, where he oversaw video promotions working with talented artists such as: Michael Jackson, Pearl Jam, Oasis, Celine Dion, Gloria Estefan, Rage Against The Machine and Ozzy Osburne, among other. Mark graduated from Baruch College with a B.A.A. with a specialty in Human Resources Management.