



Yitzi Weiner, Contributor
A "Positive" Influencer

How These 99 CEO's Create A Great Work Culture And Maximize Employee Retention

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If you want your employees to stay and thrive, a healthy work culture is essential



Companies are always looking to improve employee retention. Every employee represent an enormous investment on behalf of a company and when a good employee leaves it can be a big blow to a company's morale, bottom line, and brain trust.

I reached out to as many CEO's as I could to learn what they do to create a work culture that improves employee retention.

1. Give and Get Out of the Way

In 2008, Sam Rajan and I founded CoverMyMeds with a mission to help patients get the medication they need to live healthy lives. In less than 10 years, we've grown to employ more than 600 incredible people and have a retention rate of 96%, which vastly exceeds the average retention of the nation's top technology companies. At CoverMyMeds, we've created an environment where employees can be

themselves, embrace challenges and achieve amazing results. As a testament to our incredible culture, we're consistently named a ["Best Place to Work"](#)—including one of the "Top 50 Places to Work in the Nation" by Glassdoor as well as one of Glassdoor's Highest Rated CEOs. We've built a culture around remarkable people, and we're dedicated to giving them bigly opportunities and the tools they need to succeed—then getting out of their way. The best people for us are those who want to achieve more than the rest of the world will allow them to achieve at a given point in their career. - **Matt Scantland, Co-Founder & CEO, [CoverMyMeds](#)**

2. Keep a "Customer First" Mentality

The focus for BMW was on improving the customer's experience in Service and Sales at their dealerships across North America. While there were upgrades on skills, procedures, amenities, and even the physical layout, the biggest focus was on implementing a culture of "Customer First" at the dealerships. To do this there was a focus on improving selection practices, orienting new staff better, improving staff recognition, and most importantly, improving the leadership skills of the front-line managers. We developed a series of workshops and learning experiences that helped managers understand how they impacted their staff (and as a result, their customers) through their words, actions, and behaviors, on a daily basis. Whenever you look to transform a culture, the focus must be on the managers and getting them more engaged and responsible for delivering a better employee experience. Happy employees still equal happy customers so, the best way to improve your customer's experience is to improve the employee experience first. -

Shane Green, CEO of [SGEi](#) and Corporate Culture Consultant for BMW

3. Flexible Work-Life Balance

"Saint-Gobain recognizes that we're a 24/7 society, so like many companies, we're focused on introducing more flexibility into how we approach work-life balance and ensuring that people have a purpose here. But we also recognize that personal comfort in our workplace impacts employees' well-being. Company culture can speak to the work we ask people to do and how they want to do it – but also the physical environment in which we ask them to work. When Saint-Gobain set out to redesign its North American headquarters, we saw a unique opportunity to improve both the work *and* the workplace by using our own building products to create a space that enhances employees' comfort and well-being. We created a 'living laboratory' where our research team studies the impact of our products on improving air quality; increasing access to natural light; controlling temperature, oxygen and CO2 levels; managing acoustics; and more on a real workplace. We're measuring physical comfort as it relates to employee well-being, engagement and retention and have already seen improvements. It's true that technological advancements have made it possible for people to work anywhere, but we've found at Saint-Gobain that if you create a space where people feel comfortable, they'll want to come in – and they'll want to stay – because most people recognize that great ideas are born in collaborative environments." - **Tom Kinisky is president and CEO of [Saint-Gobain Corporation](#), the North American holding company of Saint-Gobain, one of the world's largest building materials companies and manufacturer of innovative solutions.**

4. Equip Employees to Become Intrapreneurs

Rather than talk about my company, let me report how we've boosted retention at a typical customer, Swisscom, the leading Swiss telecom. Talent retention is just one element of a holistic, employee-centric People Operating System (PeopleOS) that supports and empowers employees throughout their career cycle. The modern workplace is an amalgam of legacy command-and-control structures existing alongside modern open, dynamic, agile, and flexible structures. Workers want to succeed and develop their careers in all environments, and companies that install a People OS – a combination of technology, services, and cultural transformation – that enables that success will enjoy superior retention rates.

Retention at Swisscom has improved via a PeopleOS that equips employees to become intrapreneurs – entrepreneurs working inside the company, empowered to go beyond their job descriptions to invent new and improved processes, systems, products, services, and ideas.

A culture of agile intrapreneurship inevitably leads to greater employee engagement & retention. Employees are trusted to use the full measure of their talents and capabilities within a supportive structure with clear strategic guideposts and boundaries. Employees become more invested in their work and their organization because they are true stakeholders, listened to and rewarded for contributions. - **Kelly Max, CEO, Haufe U.S.: Co-creation & Swisscom**

5. Foster Continuous Improvement

Our Continuous Improvement (CI) program has been fundamental to our cultural transformation. CI is a management system that empowers employees to solve problems; enables better customer service; and strengthens relationships. Through CI, our employees feel connected to our mission, and to our success, because they are empowered to make decisions that affect positive change. We push decision-making down into every level of our organization. We hire top talent, so we trust their judgement and give them autonomy to identify and solve problems within their business. This enables business leaders to focus on strategy and employee growth and development.

Our culture is powered by our people and the inclusion of perspectives from a diverse workforce. Our benefits, policies and practices reinforce Voya's commitment to inclusion and equitable treatment. We strive to maintain a workforce that's reflective of our communities and customers.

We know that our people value the Voya culture. Seventy-five percent of Voya employees anonymously surveyed by Great Place to Work® said the company offers a great workplace, and 91 percent of employees feel good about the ways they contribute to the community. - **Chairman and CEO Rodney Martin, Voya Financial**

6. Establish Core Values

World Wide Technology (WWT) established a set of core values years ago which are the foundation of everything we do. We also developed an integrated management and leadership curriculum that ensures everyone understands our vision, mission, values and the behaviors expected at all levels of our organization. Our values and culture are key to our recruiting process. We use them to help recruit,

manage and motivate our employees. We also use them to help coach out the employees who don't fit our culture. Our goal is to have (100%) highly engaged and inspired employees. We believe highly engaged and inspired employees will engage and inspire our customers, partners and community. We also believe our highly engaged and inspired employees help attract and on board the best people in the market. We are humbled by our success but equally confident about our future because of our culture and great employees! - **Jim Kavanaugh, CEO of [World Wide Technology](#)**.

7. Do the Right Thing

The retention of staff at [Danby Appliances](#) went through the roof when I agreed to settle [50 Syrian refugee families in Canada](#). The engagement of staff has been incredible. Some work through their lunch teaching people English. Some have given up their weekends to help people move. Everyone has donated clothing. This engagement was an unintended consequence of a charitable effort. I was just following what I had repeated thousands of time "Do the Right Thing" - it is Danby's tag line. - **[Jim Estill](#) CEO**

8. Strive for Open, Honest Communication

NFP's employees are the bedrock of our company. When we took NFP private in 2013, we understood that the pressure of producing short-term results did not square with our vision of long-term, employee-centric, sustainable growth. People desire openness, honest communication, and genuineness – the values that underpin NFP's culture. We understand that each of our employees bring a unique and valuable perspective and strive to ensure that each of them understands their relevance to the organization and personal measurement of performance.

How have we invested in our people? By offering a broader scope of offerings than what is typically seen in the industry, which reflects the needs of our multigenerational workforce. These offerings focus on mentoring, professional development and education, comprehensive wellness and work life balance. We have established a Women in Leadership Council and allocated resources for employees that were affected by floods in Baton Rouge and hurricanes across the U.S. and Puerto Rico. We regularly hold town hall meetings with our employees and broadly support community outreach and charitable endeavors, to name a few.

The results: NFP's employee retention rate in 2017 is 95 percent and our average seniority is more than eight years. We're most proud that we were recently included as a Top 100 place to work in the insurance industry. We understand that vulnerability, humility and kindness is the key to successful human relationships. Why should it be any different in business? Quite simply, we try harder everyday to make our workplace rewarding and fun for our employees! - **[Doug Hammond, Chairman and CEO of NFP](#)**, the fourth largest U.S.-based privately-owned broker

9. Give Your Company the Best Tools and Tech

“Over the past 18 months, we’ve really looked at updating our company’s wellness programs with the latest tools and technologies.. We’re adding new member-management systems (apps) for our fitness centers. We’re adding more sit-stand workstations to encourage employees to sit less. We’ve created opportunities for virtual visits with providers for non- emergency care. Employees can access a provider from their PC or mobile device and use the Health Resource Center space for privacy.

“Contemporary employer-sponsored wellbeing programs are not only a nice thing to do for your employees, they make good business sense. Employers have a unique opportunity to support employee wellbeing through well-designed, meaningful programs and a supportive environment. By prioritizing health and wellness, companies can boost productivity among workers, lower health expenses, and find unique ways to engage employees. Many employees spend over 60 percent of their waking hours in the workplace, so an employer who cares and supports healthy lifestyles is more attractive to potential candidates.” - **Laurie Mitchell, Assistant Vice President, Global Wellbeing & Health Management,** [Colonial Life](#) - a market leader in providing financial protection benefits through the workplace, including disability, life, accident, dental, cancer, critical illness and hospital confinement indemnity insurance.

10. Don't Be Afraid of Criticism

“As a national voluntary benefits company that relies on thousands of independent sales agents and brokers to be your feet on the ground in all 50 states, any discontent or venting can create problems and challenges unless addressed quickly and productively channelled.

“My advice to other business leaders facing these challenges is simple: Open yourself up to feedback and criticism, especially if company leaders aren’t face-to-face with employees on a daily basis. Allow yourself to be uncomfortable. Be willing to hear the negative talk and respond with a willingness to listen and a plan to address the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities. When partners and employees recognise you are committed to hearing their concerns, attempting to answer them and then coming back for more, you can start to make changes to continuously improve company culture.” - **Tim Arnold, president and CEO,** [Colonial Life](#), Columbia, S.C. - a market leader in providing financial protection benefits through the workplace, including disability, life, accident, dental, cancer, critical illness and hospital confinement indemnity insurance.

11. Set Values Influenced by Your Brand Promise

When Dayforce was acquired by Ceridian in 2012, we set three clear priorities for the business: build a strong culture, develop great products and delight our customers. We knew, however, that solving for culture was the most important of the three. It was our belief that if we could establish a great culture, the rest would follow naturally. We created a new brand promise – Makes Work Life Better – and set values for our culture to rally around. With shared values and a shared sense of purpose, we could become much more focused on innovation and performance. The results have been tremendous. Today, we’re recognized as a Great Place to Work and one of the most highly recommended companies on Glassdoor. Our culture has helped us become an employer of choice, attracting the best talent and winning in the

market – which in turn, makes Ceridian a more enjoyable place to work. - **David Ossip, CEO of [Ceridian](#)**, a global human capital management technology company serving more than 50 countries.

12. Hire, Fire, and Promote Based on Culture

“In many organizations, the culture isn’t actually what leaders think it is. Make your culture real by making it the reason why you hire, fire and promote people. Do this and you’ll attract like-minded and mission-driven people that stay the course over the long term. Making your culture systemic is the key to attracting and retaining the right people.” - **Brett Wilson, VP, [Adobe Advertising Cloud](#)**

13. Wow Factor or Productivity – Create Space that Does Both

From our work in building out interior spaces, we’ve learned a lot about how the work environment can excite and motivate employees. We used those lessons in creating [our own headquarters](#) space recently.

To build an exceptional work environment, spend your construction dollars wisely and focus on features and amenities that will both appeal to employees and enhance their productivity. A top priority for our space was to install the latest video conferencing technology, which impresses our office guests but more importantly, improves communication between our Chicago and San Francisco offices.

Our open plan makes the workplace more vibrant, spontaneous and dynamic, but we know that noise can be a problem. So we added three large multipurpose rooms featuring overhead doors to cut down on ambient noise—and they look really cool. To encourage teamwork and provide on-demand privacy, we incorporated more than 30 uniquely-sized and furnished collaboration spaces—conference rooms, focus rooms, team rooms and quiet rooms. We also put in a high-quality coffee bar and comfortable lounge area, all of which are very appealing to employees and keeps them working instead of standing in line at Starbucks. Lastly, sit-stand desks at all workstations enhance well-being and productivity.

Don’t choose between the ‘wow’ factor and office productivity in building out your space. Do both. - **Mark Skender, CEO of [Skender Construction](#)**

14. Arm Employees with the Latest Knowledge

Ascensus prides itself on fostering a positive work environment that promotes best-in-class service. In the last several years, we’ve expanded our footprint across the nation, and our continued growth has created career opportunities for new and tenured employees alike. We recently opened our Tucson, Arizona office and selected employees to be our first pioneers, ready to mentor our 50+ new associates there.

We’re also focused on arming associates with the latest knowledge to help them excel, offering a training program that allows them to develop better a understanding of our industry and clients’ needs. A great example of this was an immersive training session designed by the client service team that included both traditional classroom sessions as well as practice scenarios to help new associates gain confidence as they work with our clients.

Beyond fostering skillsets and knowledge bases, we recognize the need to develop the full person in an inclusive environment. In 2014, we added Employee Resource Groups, allowing associates with shared experiences the opportunity to network with colleagues. The groups give employees a safe space and acceptance, which goes a long way toward retaining top talent. - **Bob Guillocheau, President and CEO at [Ascensus](#)**, a technology and solutions provider that helps more than 7 million Americans save for the future.

15. Have an Open Concept Space. And perks.

“Working in sports means spending a lot of hours at the office, so office culture is a high priority for us. We moved into a new building this year, and before construction started we toured other spaces and studied workplace design trends to learn what creates positive culture, particularly among younger workforces like ours. The result was an open concept space with lots of natural light, plus amenities that promote a healthier lifestyle like a lounge stocked with healthy snack options and an on-site gym with a professional trainer, which added to things we already offered like on-site yoga, free off-site gym memberships, and annual wellness screenings. Building on that theme, last year we launched a speakers series and we’ve heard from experts like Deepak Chopra on meditation, Dr. Ian Smith on healthy eating, and a Navy SEAL on mental strength. While we’re proud of what we’ve accomplished so far, we know that creating a positive office culture is a continuous process, and there is always room for growth.” - **Michael Reinsdorf, Chicago Bulls President & COO**

16. Let Your Employees Make a Positive Impact

Operating with a purpose-driven business model has had an extremely positive impact on our organization overall, including our recruitment and retention. Thankfully, many senior and high-potential talent today are looking for something more than a paycheck, or title, or big brand to put on their resumes. They are looking for substantive ways that what they are doing every day is having a positive impact on the world around them and at large. Simply being who we are and being able to demonstrate the results of our work have boosted morale within our company and motivated many more to want to join in what we are doing and the impact we are making. For example, through our Nyakio brand, we recently launched a nationwide campaign with Girls Inc. to support the education and empowerment of girls from disadvantaged communities. In 2017 and 2018, 50,000 girls will be trained and mentored nation-wide. ~ Richelieu Dennis, CEO of beauty manufacturer [Sundial Brands](#)

17. Coach Your Leaders

In an industry like recruiting where retention is typically low, WinterWyman has created such a tight knit community that our retention is quite high. How? I believe people don’t leave companies, they leave bosses, so I always aim to show people I have faith in them, and I coach the leadership at WinterWyman to do the same. We practice what we preach when we talk to clients and candidates about finding the right place. I try to get to know everyone’s name, their spouse, kids, pets, and not just meet all my employees but to sit down when with them if I can. It comes down to one simple thing – the best form of retention is attention. - **Bob Boudreau, CEO at [WinterWyman](#)**

18. Innovate Through Honesty

“[Shopify](#)’s culture centers around our ‘default to open’ culture. For us, that means we default to oversharing with employees. We look at the information and decide what we cannot share, remove it, and then share the rest. Most public companies take the opposite approach and mine for information to share rather than watch out for information they shouldn’t. It’s a unique point of view that keeps us as transparent as possible internally, while defaulting to secrecy externally. Default to open is a value that has been critical to our success from the start. Shopify’s founder and CEO Tobi Lutke believes that honesty puts people in a better position to do their jobs – they can be more efficient, more innovative and more impactful when they have all the facts. Our current retention rates prove this approach is working, and it’s a company value that aligns with the values of our employees.” - **Brittany Forsyth, SVP of Human Resources, Shopify**

19. Make Good Feelings Stick

Just as an executive team would prepare a business plan, you need to create a culture plan. Ask yourself these simple questions: How do you want the team **to feel** when they think about, are driving to, and while they are actually doing the work? Once you have those answers, create the culture, or ‘the glue’ that makes those feelings stick. At Decision Toolbox, we wanted to build a virtual company that felt like we were working with family members. To do that, we combatted internal competition by applauding those who applauded others rather than themselves. For example, we started the “boo boo of the month” award, a gift card for the person who made the biggest mistake. No matter what your culture is, you need to make sure it is crystal clear to everyone. This starts with your onboarding process: A new employee needs to know your culture before they accept the position. - **Kim Shepherd, Chairwoman, [Decision Toolbox](#)**

20. Offer a Career Path

Being a great place to work and grow is key to At Home’s success. Our employees enjoy working here and we want them to build a career here too. We’ve embedded it into the company by transforming our benefits, compensation, and corporate culture. We enhanced the compensation of our store associates, raising their base pay and adding a bonus program for all store-based team members. We improved benefits to ensure they feel valued and recognized. They get paid time off to serve in the community and we close our stores on holidays so they can spend time with family and friends. We’ve created clear career growth paths, and this year there were over 300 internal promotions and turnover was reduced by almost 70 percent. Actions like these enable At Home to be one of fastest growing retailers in America but I’m most proud to have one of the best people-first company cultures found in the country.

— **Lee Bird, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of [At Home](#)**

21. Hire For Culture

Culture and employee retention go hand-in-hand. Attracting and retaining great talent in a competitive landscape such as tech isn't easy, but culture can't be faked and it needs to be constantly maintained. The company, brand, customers - and bottom line - thrive in an environment where people feel happy and fulfilled. We hire for culture and our people feel very protective of it. We've turned down applicants with impeccable resumes because members of our team didn't feel they'd be a good fit. Culture comes from the top down, so I meet with all new hires in orientation to share the company mission and strategy and personally welcome them. This provides a lens into the expectations we set for them but also solidifies, I believe, the value they bring to this company. We provide generous benefits and great perks, but sometimes it's the unexpected support that people appreciate. For example, we offered our headquarters as a place for our employees and their families to sleep if they lost power and air conditioning following Hurricane Irma. A company's character and positive attitude help maintain a productive and supportive work atmosphere, and have helped us thrive. - **Daniel Cane, chief executive officer & CEO of [Modernizing Medicine](#)**, the leading specialty-specific EHR and suite of health IT solutions

22. Empower Employees to Become Value Generators

"The evolution of empowerment has created a change in which the value for customers, and therefore profits, are made. The customer now faces the empowered rank-and-file employees, who are the value generators in the business, not the CEO."

Phil believes that the value of a company stems directly from the employees. Under Phil's leadership, Spreadshirt tripled in size - global headcount of 750 and \$100M revenue mark in 2016. Spreadshirt adopted "Feel Good Management" to ensure that employees stay happy and want to come to work in an environment where they are free from distractions and feel challenged. It also provides them with an unexpected competitive edge against other global giants when it comes to recruiting and retaining top talent. Spreadshirt's employee satisfaction ratings are high - constantly receiving new employees through referrals. Companies must focus on their unique culture and deliberately shape it to stay relevant to top talent. - **Phil Rooke, CEO of [Spreadshirt](#)**, the self-expression global e-commerce company

23. Show Employees Their Future

"Part of the overarching philosophy for great workplace culture, in addition to appreciation and authentic leadership, is making sure each employee has a career plan for themselves. If your employee understands how they can advance in their careers (e.g. skills, compensation...etc.) and contribute to the overall growth and success of the organization, they don't need to look elsewhere to do it." - **Seven Handmaker, CMO of [Assurance](#)**

24. Great Customer Experience Leads to a Great Culture

At the core of Bullhorn's work culture is our company mission of creating an incredible customer experience. When customers have a great experience with your company, they'll refer you more business, which leads to company growth and creates more opportunities for employees to grow their careers. With that in mind, we've created five core values - ownership, energy, service, speed and agility, and being

human - that all employees must embody. Every employee is graded on each of the values, and bonuses are tied to these scores. The values ensure that our entire team is working together toward accomplishing our mission. For employees who display exemplary efforts, I highlight their outstanding achievements in our town hall meetings. Publicly praising and rewarding employees motivates other employees to produce superior results by proving that their contributions are also worthy of recognition. Developing a strong work culture starts with establishing a credible and authentic leadership team. If your employees believe in your leadership team, they'll also believe in your company, your products, and, ultimately, your culture. -

Art Papas, founder and CEO of [Bullhorn](#), the global leader in CRM and operations software for the staffing industry

25. Create meaningful methods of contribution

Culture is the number one thing when it comes to employee retention. You have to have a culture where employees feel respected and valued and where they can contribute in meaningful ways. It starts from the top down. If the CEO doesn't value those things, no one in the organization will.

We make sure we are listening to employees by sending out bi-yearly surveys to gauge satisfaction, and by hosting monthly "town hall" meetings that create increased transparency within the company as a whole. These meetings and surveys led us to discover that what our employees wanted weren't more parties, but more opportunities to serve and donate to organizations of their choosing. This resulted in the creation of the Jive Foundation. - **John Pope, CEO and Co-founder of [Jive Communications](#)**—a Unified Communications company offering voice, video, and contact center

26. Focus on Leadership and Talent Will Come

Over the years, we have helped clients improve retention rates in a range of contexts. Based on our collective experience, key drivers for unwanted turnover include lack of alignment with the corporate vision, strategy or core values, weak leadership, insufficient financial and non-financial incentives (e.g., career opportunities, recognition, etc.), and cultural misalignment.

Although practical examples such as increased parental leave, stock options, executive coaching, on-site facilities etc. are frequently discussed, the single common element across leading companies is an unrelenting focus on behalf of the company's leadership to create an environment where the best talent is drawn to, developed and given the opportunity to flourish. - **Ted Bililies, Managing Director at [AlixPartners](#)**, where he leads the firm's Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness activities.

27. Encourage Healthy Competition

Our company was founded by lifelong athletes so competition and teamwork is a key component of the culture of Digital Media Solutions (DMS). DMS is made up of people, processes and technology. Without the strong morale of team DMS, we wouldn't be experiencing the explosive growth at the rate we do. When you're a younger company like ours that has grown both organically and through strategic acquisitions, employee culture is critical as it has a direct impact on our performance. As the CEO, it's

important for me to be the living and breathing example of those values. I'm always pushing our leadership to redefine the win because I know we've got the grit and the talent to outperform our peers. And it works. Whatever industry our team serves – whether its mortgage, consumer goods, higher education or careers – everyone on team DMS finds a way to connect that competitive spirit to the work we do every day. – **Joe Marinucci, CEO of Digital Media Solutions.**

28. Live and Breathe Core Values

CEO Boris Katsnelson and I faced some challenges when we acquired SpeedPro Imaging in 2014. Initially, we tried to move underperforming employees into new roles, but they simply didn't have what it took to succeed under our leadership. Until we read Gino Wickman's book, Traction, it was difficult to affect change, establish a positive culture and help the franchise system meet and exceed its potential.

Traction taught us the key to an effective culture is living and breathing core values. Our core values are Integrity, Respect, Fearless Leadership, Focused, Driven and Fun. With those in place, we firmly believe we can train skills...but we can't train work ethic. And everyone who fits here is on board with that!

In the past two years, our collective commitment to core values has helped us add 12 new employees who fit our culture perfectly. We help each employee define their role and empower them to own it. Additionally, we regularly reward our employees and encourage them to speak their mind and set up personal meetings with me to discuss anything they want to discuss – even if it's personal finances or issues with colleagues.

With these new staff members in place, we have enjoyed unprecedented success at SpeedPro, blossoming into a \$58 million business with 124 studios in 31 states. - **Steven Brown – COO of [SpeedPro Imaging](#)**, the nation's leading printing and graphics franchise

29. Have an "I AM" Principle

I was a college athlete and I've coached kid's sports for years. So, I know team success lies within individual contributors working together by...

- knowing the outcomes and how what they do contributes to the win
- having the freedom and opportunity to make great plays in big games
- understanding the importance of both personal and professional growth

We apply the same principles for our AdvantaClean employees, which has created very significant measurable success. They are happy, and want to stay. I call it the "I AM Principle."

In the "I AM" principle, the "I" stands for "Inclusive", making sure employees recognize how important they are as team members. They love knowing their input has value. They also love knowing how what they do makes a difference in the achievement of company objectives.

“A” is for “Autonomy,” giving employees the best tools and appropriate incentives to encourage individuals to make decisions aligned with the success of the company.

“M” represents “Movement.” Real opportunities for advancement and reward, based on their progress. -

Jeff Dudan, Founder/CEO of [Advantaclean](#), America's fastest-growing Light Environmental Services™ franchise system

30. Go on “Blind Dates”

Very early on I became a big believer in the importance of culture. Not just to help drive business performance, but because I really wanted to work at a place where people look forward to coming to work on Monday morning.

Great cultures are the result of three things: careful hiring, explicit values that clarify and help enforce expected behaviors, and a willingness to put in the work to keep the culture strong as your organization scales. We've experimented with different culture “hacks” along the way as the company has grown; what's required at 20, 40, 80, 150 employees to keep culture strong can be very different.

Two years ago, we experimented with a “blind dates” program where employees volunteered to be set up with people from different teams to meet up for a coffee or lunch. These “dates” were designed to give employees who wouldn't normally interact the chance to get to know each other as people, not just roles. I'd like working at FreshBooks to feel like being at the world's greatest cocktail party where you're surrounded by interesting people you may not have met just yet, but who you'll really like. - **Mike McDerment, CEO and Co-founder of [FreshBooks](#)** - provides easy-to-use accounting software to 10 million small businesses all over the world

31. Build an Environment of Collaboration

As young entrepreneurs who came from a background in athletics, myself and co-founder (and childhood best friend) Amanda Klane, knew that creating a work environment that was built on collaboration was key for Yasso. From an open office concept to frequent all staff meetings, we wanted to blur the archaic lines between “c-suite” and staff, creating a vibrant and fun work culture. For a fast-growing company like Yasso, that also means our employees have the autonomy to navigate opportunities and challenges that arise quickly – a key component that has led to some of our greatest breakthroughs in innovation, operations and marketing. Community involvement is another core pillar of the Yasso environment. Selling dessert is fun – but we aim to do more than that. We empower our employees and provide the resources, including time off, to give back to their communities. We also value the importance of a true work life balance. We trust our people to work hard and perform while providing flexible schedules among other benefits. Lastly, as a founder led brand, we truly believe that we wouldn't be where we are today without our team, and that appreciation is shown by granting all employees equity, an incredible financial benefit that undoubtedly contributes to high retention and talent recruitment. - **Drew Harrington, co-founder and co-CEO, [Yasso Frozen Greek Yogurt](#)**

32. Allow for a Lot of Freedom of Expression

I would argue that culture fit is the most important aspect of hiring process. Our company has a very entrepreneurial, high-growth spirit, so if you are not ready to learn, explore and get challenged - not sure you'd be a good fit. In our company we believe that people come first - we believe that great results come as a result of people – teamwork, processes set by people and effective people management across different geographies.

So when attracting talent at Creamfinance, we look for young individuals who are hungry for new experiences and are not afraid to risk. Our secret to retention is hiring young, passionate, hungry people with entrepreneurial mindset. We empower people and give a lot of freedom to express themselves, their ideas and show their potential; by empowering them to take risks and responsibility, we ensure operational excellence and customer intimacy.- **Matiss Ansviesulis, Co-Founder & CEO of [Creamfinance](#)**, a personal finance company powered by Smart-Data

33. Offer Telehealth Coverage

At EaseCentral, we provide de-location, meaning employees can work from wherever they choose. We utilize technology makes it feel like everyone is in one office, from Slack to video chatting and centralized platforms. With costs skyrocketing everywhere, there's a demand for employees to move elsewhere to start families. We support these employees fully, and it's our priority to ensure our employees are truly happy.

Additionally, one of our favorite offerings is coverage for Telehealth. Mental health doesn't have a schedule, and it's often hard to find time in one's schedule to see a therapist, offering the option to set up text sessions or even Facetime sessions entices everyone to keep their mental health in check. It's crucial that our employees are happy and healthy, and mental health is an imperative component to the full picture of wellness. Plus, productivity and health have been found to have a positive correlation. - **David Reid, CEO of [EaseCentral](#)** – a SaaS platform for HR & benefits

34. \$15 an Hour Minimum Wage Two and a Half Years Before Mandate

Field Roast is a community of 170 employees and shareholders in Seattle, Washington who make and market a line of vegan food products that are distributed throughout the USA and internationally. We believe in the intangibles – the human interaction in the food making process, and in the dignity of making food. We call it FoodMaker Pride, and we seek to leverage our daily business activities to create and maintain the social wealth of our community.

Recently, Field Roast became an official Social Purpose Corporation, which is defined a for-profit entity that enables corporations to consider social or environmental issues in their decision-making process instead of relying solely on profit-maximizing goals. As an independent, family-run company, this means more than having a dedicated workforce to create great products – it means creating shareholder value and ensuring the wellbeing of employees. As an example of Field Roast's commitment to Community

Equity, fairness, and dignity of work, the company recently decided to implement the new \$15 an hour minimum wage a full two and a half years before the mandated requirement by the City of Seattle.- **David Lee, President and Founder of [Field Roast](#)**

35. If Need Be, Hire a Business Coach

After reading Traction, we hired a business coach to help us define our core values and implement the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS). The wake-up call happened when everyone on the leadership team, including myself, received some negative scores on our core values. It proved the value of defining culture – because when it isn't clearly defined, everyone is safe due to groupthink. This inspired me to take several trips to my cabin in the mountains for 120 hours and build a visionary plan to implement our new culture/key values.

We have established an extremely aggressive growth goal of 500% for all of our companies for the next three years. To reach those goals, we must demand A-level performance from all employees and use complete candor to eliminate politics and inefficiencies. This has turned our office into a fast-paced, rugby-like environment – those who aren't a culture fit feel drained and overwhelmed and those who are a fit defend the culture as a promise to fellow employees. While these new cultural expectations have sparked over 30% employee turnover, they've also been the key catalyst to our unprecedented growth – we are now on a clear path to become a \$100 million company. - **Allan Young, CEO of [ShelfGenie](#)**, a national company offering custom pull-out shelving for cabinets and pantries

36. Teamwork is Always Key

“Teamwork over ego” is one of Lucid's core values, and is something all of our employees live by. Lucid is a visual diagramming and communication platform that helps teams collaborate. It seems obvious, but it is always worth repeating that no degree of excellence is achieved without the support and collaboration of your teammates.

We see this core value as a key to retaining employees because if everyone collectively feels valued and appreciated, the team is able to work through challenging situations that might otherwise push individuals to leave.

My co-founder and I have worked closely with the rest of the executive team to make sure this core value is put into practice. It's why our VP of Engineering goes over the department's core values of “teamwork, innovation, and excellence” in meetings with the same rigor and scrutiny as their OKRs. It's why we take all 300+ employees on a yearly camping trip in the Utah mountains to bond and realign behind our company vision. And it's why I still personally interview every new Lucidite. - **Karl Sun, CEO and co-founder, [Lucid Software](#)**

37. Make First Impressions Count

We work hard to employ people who see every phone call as an opportunity to make a difference in someone's day. Ruby's culture is the result of a wonderfully diverse community of employees who are

unified in their commitment to making connections, and we incent, inspire, and empower them to bring their best. As a company built on the importance of first impressions, an employee's first day is a critical opportunity to inspire. On their desk that first morning, they'll find hand-written welcome cards from fellow employees and a healthy dose of Ruby swag, plus an area map and gift cards to the favorite nearby lunch spots. And our "culture funds" program empowers every employee with \$100 a year to spend however they'd like on Ruby life, with people pooling funds to launch big ideas. Born from this program were, among other things, a running club, cookbook, and the annual Space Kitten Pizza Party. - **Jill Nelson, Founder and CEO of [Ruby Receptionists](#)**

38. All of our employees get to work remotely

At Wibbets Inc we believe that a great work culture is the most important aspect of building a sustainable brand and business legacy. All of our employees get to work remotely and do their project tracking in Trello, we are flexible about time off and we believe employees should feel like a vital asset and not just a number. Having a flexible and employee based model allows us to have substantially more employee satisfaction than most companies.

We believe in mental health days, also all of our non sales employees make an above average minimum wage. Additionally even though local laws vary and we can't advocate breaking any laws. We are huge cannabis advocates and are a 420 friendly workplace. Our employee health is very important to us and we pride ourselves on their well being. Employees can also make recommendations on benefits and perks they want us to look into. - **Jason Baudendistel CEO of [Wibbets Inc](#)**

39. Warm, Central Space

I understand that one of the best "benefits" I can provide to our employees is to create an environment at the firm where people look forward to coming to work each day. To that end, we recently renovated our lunchroom/lounge, updating the appliances, the wallcoverings, and the furniture. We wanted to a warm, central create space where employees could communicate and share ideas. Many firm get-togethers are held there, and on any given day, you will see attorneys and staff eating lunch together and socializing; it's not a hierarchical environment. Because of the "family atmosphere" – many of the employees here bring in cakes, pies, candy and other goodies to share with co-workers (at their own expense). Every month, I have "bagel day" celebrating the birthdays for that month. For the holiday season (beginning in November), I had "pie day" (before Thanksgiving), a tree lighting (for Christmas), a menorah lighting (for Hanukah) and a "Festivus" party, derived from a Seinfeld episode, allowing everyone to air their grievances. - **From Russell Ascher, Executive Director, [Scarinci Hollenbeck Attorneys at Law](#)**

40. Go Beyond the Minimum Requirement

Organizations are looking for the secret sauce to perfect their culture. Yet, many complain about the war on talent, lack of retention and poor employee engagement. These 'leaks' in an organization won't change until they go beyond 'code' (minimum requirements.) Forget the buzzwords and take action. CEO's must engage their entire team, all levels to first define their 'code' and then go beyond that minimum. A

company's success is predicated on the strength and congruency of their workplace culture. The staff must be aligned to the company's mission, vision, values, behavioral needs, and then motivated daily. Culture is the very thing that helps companies attract highly sought-after employees and customers. It is not words on a wall, or a ping pong table in the breakroom. It must be feed daily. It will only survive and thrive if you fuel it like you must fuel your body to survive – DAILY. From Shelley D. Smith, CEO, Premier Rapport, Inc.

Define what success looks like for the company and each member of the staff. Step 2: Ensure this aligns with your mission, vision, value and culture statements. Congruency is one of the keys to long-term success. Step 3: Define the job characteristics across the organization that will yield the results you seek in step 1. Step 4: Attract and retain employees that have the behavioral fit to the defined job characteristics. Step 5: Define and align your workplace culture, going beyond just 'code.' Step 6: Go beyond 'code', the bare workplace culture minimum to motivate and include the team on a daily basis. Step 7: Seek feedback, measure results, instill accountability at all levels of the organization. Step 8: Celebrate any and all victories. Step 9: Repeat and pivot annually as needed. The strength, struggle or demise of your company resides in the strength of your workplace culture. From Shelley D. Smith, CEO, Premier Rapport, Inc.

I purchased my company, MyCorporation.com, out of Intuit back in 2009. When we presented offers, all of the employees came with us to the now privately-held company. A huge percentage of those team members are still with us, 8 years later! We attribute the longevity and employee retention to being a positive place to work. We're "all-in" – our leadership sits on the floor with everyone else and each team member contributes to the overall success of the company just like all of the other employees in our team. We are a true team and everyone seems to feel that. Each team member is valuable and unique. They want a happy place to work, and we afford them that. We allow them to be themselves and to take initiative and to thrive. For that reason, we have very little turnover! - **From Shelley D. Smith, CEO, Premier Rapport, Inc.**

41. Collect Ongoing Feedback

Employee engagement and retention are buzzwords all over the news these days. There is a good reason why engagement has a direct impact on business results. However, the true motor behind both employee engagement and retention is your company's culture. At CultureIQ, we define culture as *how* and *why* things get done, and engagement is one of many outcomes of a high-performance culture.

To drive engagement and experience the associated business benefits, leaders must focus on creating a culture that meets the needs of your employees and your customers. The first step is to understand what is important to employees by collecting ongoing feedback. Why guess what will keep employees around when you can simply ask them? Another tip is to align decisions with your company mission and values. This practice connects employees to a purpose, and according to CultureIQ data, is a key driver of employee engagement. - **Greg Besner, Founder and CEO, [CultureIQ](#)**

42. Send out Weekly Emails

At Source Capital, retaining our top talent is essential to our success. Retaining our employees allows us to promote from within, develop a positive work culture, maintain consistency, and reduce training expenses and time spent searching for replacements. To help keep our employee turnover to a minimum and maintain a positive work culture, we make it a point to make sure our entire staff knows we appreciate them and all their hard work. One way we do this is by sending out an email at the end of each week, recognizing those who have gone above and beyond. This email gets sent out to the entire office, allowing others to join in on congratulating their colleagues on a job well done. This encourages the entire office to communicate and gives our employees the opportunity to form healthy work relationships. The sense of community that is built by this simple gesture results in an increase in communication, productivity, a sense of purpose, and most importantly, employee retention. - **Sacha Ferrandi, Founder | Principal,** [Source Capital Funding, Inc.](#)

43. Mix Beauty Chic with Inclusive Family

“To retain the best employees, you have to offer them the best. Since opening my doors in 2014 with four staff, I’ve worked hard to maximize retention by creating a corporate culture that is beauty chic meets inclusive family. In three years, we’ve grown to 18 strong, talented women, comprised of different backgrounds and areas of expertise. Most of my senior team came from agencies that discouraged openness, so everyone here is as inclusive as possible – kindness is one of our cornerstones. Evolve also offers competitive benefits, including industry leading health insurance coverage, unlimited vacation, paid maternity leave, flexible working hours, profit sharing, fully paid cell phones, 401K match, time-off for philanthropy work and an onsite beauty treatments. While I can’t change certain aspects of agency life and client service, we can certainly make it as fun and as flexible/healthy as possible.” —[EvolveMKD’s](#) Founder & CEO, [Megan Driscoll](#)

44. Involve Everyone in the Decision-Making Process

Many companies operate entirely along traditional “Gen X” rules while employing a mostly millennial workforce. Once we came to the harrowing realization that the old rules were going to end up jeopardizing the future of our business, rather than fight an entire generation, we decided to adapt, and made clear, concrete changes to nearly every aspect Clyde Group life: working expectations of face time, the way we meet, vacation time, benefits, expectations, meeting norms, client interactions. Everything. Staff turnover has been reduced to nearly zero, and according to the most recent anonymous survey, 100% of employees have rated Clyde Group as an “Excellent” place to work. We subscribe to the culture of “service leadership” – a management style that works to empower team members. Today, everyone at Clyde Group is involved in the decision-making process from top to bottom – staff provides major input into everything we do. Our employees ARE the company. Most importantly though, is the value of listening. Listening to your employees. Listening to your clients. - **Alex Slater, Managing Director,** [Clyde Group](#)

45. Foster Camaraderie During Work Hours

“For a relationship to be successful, all parties must benefit. At [Chargebacks911](#), we benefit by hiring dedicated, highly-motivated FinTech professionals who’ve helped our company prosper, and our employees benefit by joining a workforce that rewards hard work, values creativity, invests in personal growth, and understands that humans aren’t automatons – but individuals with dreams, desires and aspirations of their own. That’s why everyone in our company is invited to submit ideas and contribute at meetings. All voices are heard, because all voices have value. Additionally, we offer complimentary workout sessions with a personal trainer (during work hours!) because sometimes, we all need to escape the office and clear our heads. We have dodgeball competitions, kickball games, pot-luck socials, pizza parties, and costume contests. Not only does this foster camaraderie, but it also helps us retain top talent. We’re mutually invested in each other’s success. When one of us wins, we all win.” - **Monica Eaton-Cardone, COO of [Chargebacks911](#)**

46. Allow for Personal Development

For us at Cave Social, creating a culture that focuses not only on retention but more so on development, has become very important. Team members are given four hours per week for personal development. Whether it’s continued education, learning another language, going to events, etc. By giving our team a place where they are able to continually grow, and towards something they’re passionate about we’ve seen two things: (i) people are able to bring in different perspectives to our current business from their development and (ii) we aren’t subject to the turnover rates usual marketing agencies incur. Reverse engineer what your team is passionate about, sit down with each employee quarterly to get a sense of what they excited about, their career goals, etc. If someone is motivated by learning new skills, you need to enable that for them to feel a deeper sense of purpose at the company. - **Jordan Scheltgen, Founder & CEO at [Cave Social](#)**

47. Schedule One-on-One Time

“At Lola, I take it upon myself to personally hire and build the right team. I am a part of the interview process for each candidate and also set up one-on-one lunches regularly with all team members. It’s important at Lola that everyone has a shared vision and believe in the bigger goal at hand, which in our case is to provide the busiest travelers with the best travel tech, making it easy to plan, book and manage their business trips. I also encourage employees to express their opinions and ask tough questions, and I take what everyone says and use it in the way we build Lola. At the end of the day, there is are plenty of free things you can do to build great culture - it’s not just about the free snacks or FitBit competitions.” - **Paul English, CEO of [Lola](#)**

48. Be Straight Up

“A great culture is underpinned by solid, shared values. finder has five key values that drive everything we do, which in turn has been instrumental in creating our culture. These are **1 Crew**, focused on collaboration; **Empower People**, encouraging everyone to feel ownership in taking action; **Be Straight Up**, for honest and timely communication; **Go Live**, around being proactive and **Master your Craft** to recognize we should always be striving to be our best.

“Having clear goals will get all employees on the same page vision wise. It’s not enough to ‘set and forget’ these though. You need to embody and lead through example.

“Further to your values, which are key, a great culture is also fostered through implementing cool perks. One we offer is free lunches daily which everyone sits down to eat together creating a closeness and family vibe.” - **Fred Schebesta, CEO of personal finance comparison website, [finder.com](#)**

49. Empower People to Be Their True Selves

We have worked hard to create a company that girls feel valued and respected. We take the time to get to know our girls strengths and weaknesses, send out weekly emails with articles attached on female empowerment as well as plan small gatherings for the girls to hang out, be themselves and get to know one another. We constantly show our team that they are valued. Take care of your employees and your employees will take care of your company. - **Kelsi Kitchener, Co-founder of [VIPER](#)**

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50. Ease Life's Stress

When your clients include US Bank, GrubHub, Hartford Insurance and more...culture's tricky. C3 Metrics' professional culture is based around "The Pit"; an area filled with couches and bean bag chairs for team meetings. The Pit is surrounded by bookshelves and framed articles from Gartner to AdAge, a full-sized Chewbacca and Star Wars lightsabers crashing through walls. Cardboard cutouts of Star Trek heroes and different Avenger heads complete our landscape. C3 Metrics encourages a healthier lifestyle by paying for monthly massages, monthly gym memberships, free catered lunch and unlimited paid time off. Had too much to drink or didn't eat enough before a night out? We'll pay for Uber; no questions asked. We strive to ease life's stress, because happy employees are more productive. Work isn't a curse, it's a place to contribute and solve problems. We won't hire anyone that we wouldn't want to go on vacation with. - **Jeff Greenfield, COO & Co-Founder of [C3 Metrics](#)**

51. Have Diverse, Badass, and Hungry Employees

Two critical elements of the JOANY culture are transparency and diversity. We have an open floor plan with no assigned seating, and an open door policy so every employee has access to leadership. There are no managers - everyone is empowered to make decisions and everyone's opinions are valued. We

promise to surround our employees with other individuals who are equally as badass and hungry for excellence, so everyone's on the same page. We have team members from all walks of life - with different ethnicities, sexual orientations, lifestyles etc. - as having a range of experience and perspective is crucial for our continued growth. We also offer perks in the form of healthy catered lunch every day - we find eating together encourages collaboration - and a fully stocked kitchen. We have things like an avocado toast station and a fridge full of La Croix, which might sound trivial, but we find it goes a long way in terms of employee happiness. And most importantly, we keep the team motivated through the common goal of making healthcare affordable and accessible for all Americans. Having one overarching company mission that is clearly communicated to everyone in the organization is crucial for keeping the team happy and excited to come to work each day. - **Christine Carrillo, Co-Founder & CEO of [JOANY](#)**

52. Reward and "Share" with Employees

A startup business founded in 2012, Startle has always operated with an employee-first culture. We believe that having a team who genuinely care for the business and feel truly involved will be more committed and motivated to work towards success.

We've recently introduced an employee share scheme that recognises hard work and achievements by awarding each team member a number of shares, and this contributes to a great sense of recognition, inspiration and motivation. Startle's 'work from home' model also assists an excellent quality of working life, as employees don't have the costs and stress of travel, and have more ownership of their time.

It's these kinds of initiatives that we believe are undeniably important in retaining a happy team. With celebrations for birthdays and company achievements, encouraged progression, time off for charity work and much more, leading with an employee-first approach is something we channel through Startle to drive our success. - **Adam Castleton, Founder of Startle** - a leading background music and technology provider to retail & hospitality brands

53. Love and Loyalty are Key

I believe our company has, and is, being built by our people, not necessarily our products. While we consider our brand "best-in-class," we couldn't succeed without our employees. My top executives and myself are LEADERS, but NOT "BOSSSES," and we firmly believe in teaching by example and with kindness. I've learned that giving your employees the power to do their best work only produces the best results: love and loyalty are key. We are humans before employers or employees - we all have goals and aspirations and we believe in giving our staff 100% of our confidence, as well as ample training, and as much time as possible for them to excel. I personally spend more time with my employees than anyone else I work with on a regular basis, they become family. Our company's purpose is "To initiate a shift from our current reality to encourage individual transformation." - ARTURO LOMELI, CEO & FOUNDER Clase Azul Tequila

54. Complete Autonomy

At Tortuga, our unique culture is built around one of our core values: working on our terms. We don't work from depressing cubicles or distracting open offices. Our team works from wherever they are happiest and most productive, whether that's at home, a coworking space, or the other side of the world. We are a 100% remote company with no offices. To keep our team bonded and working well together, we hold twice yearly retreats in cities like Montreal, Lisbon, and New Orleans. Most companies aren't willing to go remote because this change requires trusting your team and giving them autonomy. Managers are typically too scared or ego-driven to do their jobs without constantly monitoring and micromanaging their reports. We've worked hard to create a differentiated work culture that treats people like humans, not cogs in a machine. As a result, we've never had anyone quit in our 7 years in business. - **Fred Perrotta, CEO, Tortuga**

55. There is No Room for Big Egos

"Chirp has become the global leaders in our industry, yet has done so with a team a fraction the size of those of our rivals. How? Because of my team's quality. What I look for, and what I advise any company to look for is the very best. Look for attitude, integrity and most importantly, humility. In my team, there is no place for egos. And that starts with me. It's not about me. As CEO, my job is to give my team my complete trust and autonomy to do what they do best – without the need to micromanage. That's why they're there. The CEO should provide the platform, tools, mentoring and support for the team as individuals and as a collective to grow, mature, learn and ultimately thrive, to work together through both hard and challenging times, as well as to celebrate the reward of success they collectively have earned and achieved" - **Moran Lerner, CEO of Chirp**, a global leader in data-over-sound technology

56. Avoid Neglect or the System Fails

Pinch A Penny maintains great retention first, because we believe in honesty, trust, integrity, ethics and fairness. Those are guiding influences in how we treat our customers, franchisees, suppliers, and our employees. All four of those groups are essential to our success, and all four groups are comprised of people. When any one of those groups feels neglected, the system fails. Second, we are not quick to terminate employment unless it is over a breach of our core values. We expect our employees to make mistakes, and we expect them to learn from those mistakes, thus instilling a trusting and open relationship. Third, a company must have reasonable benefits and compensation, but we have found that this is not the end-all driving force. Benefits and compensation are important, but if the moral compass of the organization is off, and employees are not treated with respect, these benefits will only delay the departure of great employees. - **John Thomas, CEO of Pinch A Penny Pool Patio and Spa**

57. Show Appreciation and Be Available

In 2012 I took the reins as CEO, challenged not only with revitalizing a struggling brand, but also reenergizing an entire team from the ground up. We began first by creating the brand's four core values: Solid Relationships, Playing to Win, Creative Spirit, and Living Better. Then we live those values everyday by doing three very important things: 1 – Be Available to Them – I have an open-door policy, if anyone needs to talk to me, I am available any time of day whether I am in the office or out. 2 – Be Appreciative of

them – recognize their efforts and socialize that recognition any chance you get. 3 – Be a voice of encouragement to them – lead them in setting aggressive goals because you know what they are capable of and what you are willing to do to aid them in achieving those goals. - **Mike Rotondo, CEO Tropical Smoothie Cafe**

58. Surround Employees with Perks

As a former dishwasher, server and restaurant manager, I've always had a special appreciation for the front and back of the house. Front Burner, The Melting Pot's restaurant management company, represents the idea that a company's most important assets (its employees) are similar to the front burners of a stove — they're integral, they always report to duty and they're the only part of the kitchen that never breaks, despite how hard they work.

Retaining these “assets” in the restaurant industry can be a tough feat. I believe perks attract employees, but they don't retain them, so we wanted to create an environment — in both the Front Burner office and in our restaurants — that set up each employee for success, even those that learn, work and communicate differently. The idea is to surround employees with “perks” that make them better versions of themselves — not just full from a snack bar. These “perks” came in the form of determining certain personality indicators that help employees understand the best and most productive ways to work with each other based on personality type and communication styles. The entire office was included in making recommendations on what they would like to see in their office space. We built visual metaphors throughout the office, such as the our life-size swing and rock climbing wall, to spark creativity and imaginative ideas, and encourage employees to surpass limits they put on themselves with strategy and problem solving. Our company grew five times faster in its second decade of business than its first, and I attribute much of that success to the changes we made internally. - **Bob Johnston, CEO of Front Burner, The Melting Pot's** restaurant management company

59. Start an Office Hobby

At Badger, we've made it a priority to create a positive and diverse culture from the beginning on. We've done several things to build a great work environment where all types of people can thrive in, ranging from hiring a diverse team to flexible work policies.

We have the same ‘office hobby’, Foosball, across all offices that people enjoy playing. It's a very inclusive activity anyone can have fun playing regardless of background, gender, etc.

By giving people from different offices the chance to truly get to know one another and spend time in other offices in Spain, SLC or San Francisco, we were able to build a great community as well.

Badger also has flexible work policies which are not only important for the employees, but also benefit the company in that it will retain its best employees as they go through different phases in their lives. - **Steven Benson, Founder and CEO of Badger Maps**

60. Set Up an Incentive Program

85% employee retention over 25 years is great work culture. Alfred P Sloane Award Workplace Excellence for 5 years proves it.

cSubs innovates to support families and honor the individual while inspiring growth and serving our clients. We attract what we want and what our clients need. Continually recreating our business from an intention of serving feels right because we underpromise and overdeliver. Finding satisfaction, making money, and having fun is our way of life. We're rewarded for listening to our inner voice and being part of something bigger. Ethics live in our actions, not on our mission statement.

Nourishing ourselves serves our clients, families & communities. cSubs' Employee Incentive Program is world class. cSubs' vacation program rewards accomplishing successes like client compliments, client referrals, years served, community service, going above and beyond, identifying work efficiencies and reducing costs. cSub get exchanged for a vacation.

Rewarding & celebrating success is key to growth. Money is forgotten. Vacations last. - Julie Sue Auslander, Chief Cultural Officer at [cSubs](#) - Subscriptions Simplified

61. Think Out of the Box—and the Office

We have great retention, and that's due to what we've left out of the environment, as opposed to what we've put in.

I think it's impossible to enjoy work whilst being enveloped in polystyrene ceiling tiles, and that one should always try to resist gimmicky behaviour (and office toys) to elicit what we call forced fun. Use what people want, not what you 'think' makes you look cool.

We found a Victorian mill, stuck some massive desks in, and the team developed it over the years fixtures and fittings-wise, but more importantly - how they behaved in it. It's good because they use it with freedom - as in they're not always there. Work isn't bound to a desk (or the office) with meetings in local cafes and pubs frequent and welcomed. There's the obligatory canine, but what makes it special is the freedom to move - both in and out of the office. - **Trevor Palmer, director, digital PR agency** [Tank](#)

62. Vote for a MVTP

When a company's leadership style is rooted in fear and criticism, employees fight inter- and intra-departmentally to survive. This kills productivity, innovation, and systematic processes for success. I watched it crumble and create cultural chaos in several Viacom properties as a former corporate executive there before earning my Masters in Psychology to inspire better leadership. At the companies I've helped turn around and grow, I've employed a one-for-all approach. As CSO for beGlammed, a hair and makeup tech startup, employees vote cross-departmentally for the most valuable team player (MVTP) based on business objectives for each quarter. (They can't vote for themselves). Monetary rewards are small, especially at start-ups, but additionally earned, paid time off tied to the MVTP award motivates employees to meet expectations. But it's the being seen and valued by their colleagues that yield greatness and continued collaboration. Even Michael Jordan needed his team mates to guard opponents

and enable his greatest moments after all. You see quickly who is a team player and who is in it for themselves, creating the opportunity to coach-up even the weakest member by capitalizing on his strengths. When accountability is conducted with grace and compassion instead of harsh criticism by the leadership team and colleagues, employees feel safe, supported and treat each other with respect, and want to make them proud. Quarterly check-ins and bi-annual reviews with measurable goals demonstrate fairness and celebrates standout strengths. Check-ins keep the conversation alive and gives the culture the “why” to invest in the company and each other throughout the year. Dominance and criticism kills culture. Lastly, as a leader, when appropriate, I show my team my vulnerabilities. It lets them know I’m flawed and am always trying to improve on myself in all I do with self-compassion. This lets them see my human side and models that through self-awareness, progress, not perfection, triumphs. - **Jennifer Musselman, beGlammed CSO and Executive Coach**

63. - Lead by Example and Inspiration, Not Authority

At Valoso, we value employee autonomy and do everything in our power to promote a supportive environment that values professional growth and skill enhancement. Our work culture encompasses free communication across departments. We aid complete transparency and stimulate new ideas by organizing quarterly presentations. This helps everyone understand how their work affects the company as a whole and the role they play. We deter from helicopter management because we feel this feeds dependence and suppresses initiative. Instead we empower our employees to empower themselves by offering support whenever needed, but never spoon-feeding instructions. We trust employees to take full responsibility of their decisions. Finally, we go by the notion – lead by example and inspiration, not authority. A great leader needs to be decisive, always show respect, communicate vision clearly, be resourceful, and recognize and reward good performance. - **Bobby Lin, CEO and Co-founder of [Valoso](#)**, a global video production company

64. Be Attentive to Details

“Being both founder and CEO of a big business is hard work. Each entrepreneur, who is leading his company, from the very first moments without being distracted by other projects, knows this. But on the other hand, my position gives me the opportunity to better understand how to motivate our employees and newcomers. Me and my company heads have the vision of the company future, and I understand what the atmosphere should be, so that our team can move comfortably towards aimed goals.

First of all, the working space. In May of this year we completed the construction of our Moscow [campus](#). It was created with special attention to details, that are crucial to our team - people of our culture code and our understanding of what is “fine”. Fine - this is Marvel superheroes, hi-tech, coffee and fruits.

Second, the attitude within the team and my personal attitude to the team. For our officers really important to always stay focused on goals. If we do, then why should we make short stories long, implement artificial corporate codes, or other attributes of “big guys”? For the sake of the procedures?

Thus, I believe is the only right mix. Motivating working environment and clear procedures give the team a sense of involvement and the desire to drive success.” - [Alex Bachmann](#), founder and CEO [admitad](#) - leading company in CPA marketing and invest fund

65. Favor Intern(al)ships

Company culture is ultimately defined by the people you hire. At Favor, we focus our culture on our employees as individuals to build out their careers as best we can.

In 2016 we launched a program we refer to as Favor Intern(al)ships. This program allows employees to develop new skills by partnering with another team in the company for a full month. Employees have to apply to the program, and if successful, after that month they have the opportunity to move full-time into that team.

Today, 40% of our employees are doing a different job from the job we originally hired them to do. We are building careers by offering jobs they would not ordinarily be considered for by giving them the opportunity to learn and prove themselves.

It turns out that equipping employees so that they can easily leave actually results in them wanting to stay longer. - [Jag Bath](#), CEO and President of [Favor](#)

66. Get “Traction”

Gino Wickman’s book, Traction, has been an important catalyst for our success at Soccer Shots (we have grown our corporate team by 150% in recent years and generated 40% YOY growth last year). Traction helped us evolve our culture and define our core values – We Care, We Own It, We are Candid, We Are Stronger Together, We Grow, and We Pursue Excellence.

Here’s an example of how this changed everything. One former employee was a great person who never made waves. However, with Traction concepts/core values in place, it became apparent she was a “cultural misfit” because she failed to take initiative and “own it” – the company’s most critical core value line item. She was the wrong person for the job and everyone on the Soccer Shots team knew she needed to be offboarded with dignity, care and candor. It was time to let her find employment opportunities elsewhere.

We went 6 months without filling the vacated position because we were committed to finding the right person for the right seat. It was well worth the struggle as we’ve found the right person. As an example, this employee is responsible for managing expenses and arranging travel. She goes the extra mile to search for coupons and discounts of meals, rental cars, hotels, etc. to save the company money and make life easier for executives on the road. The savings per trip may be minimal, but the impact on our culture is immeasurable as we have real metrics/examples to prove she is owning her role. - **Justin Bredeman**, **President of [Soccer Shots](#)**, a national company offering after school soccer programs to kids

67. Remember to Have Fun

We are a family-owned company whose mission is to literally connect new movers with local businesses in their area. Therefore, we know what it takes to build a strong relationship between folks. It's no different in the office and we understand the key is having fun and doing things differently.

Few companies, if any, can rival our amount of team-building exercises and fun team-outings. We ensure that everyone at our company, regardless of role or tenure, feels a strong connection to our company and our leaders, including myself. Here are a few things we do:

- Annual company cruises with staff and franchise owners
- "Mandatory Fun" days where we leave work early and go to sporting events
- Countless potlucks that inspire whole families to interact
- Dress up parties for Halloween, July 4th and other holidays...and 80's Day, Superhero days and others just for fun
- Lunch for all full-time employees almost daily

To further extend the impact our culture has on employees, we are moving into a brand new 44,000 sq ft building this fall that will allow for employees to be much more comfortable in their work environments. Whether it be window-offices, offices in general (as some were previously in cubicles), a larger lunch room, larger conference room, etc. The new building will provide for a much more comfortable work environment, thus, happier employees. - **Michael Plummer, CEO of [Our Town](#)**, the nation's premier new mover marketing franchise

68. Give Employees Consistency

I've been a serial entrepreneur since I was 12 years old and have always believed company culture and financial success is directly correlated to the example I set as the business owner. We've quickly grown Monster Tree Service into a thriving, \$11 million franchise business simply because we are committed to out-hustling, outmuscling and outworking the competition. We're blue-collar guys who work in a blue-collar business – we love getting our hands dirty and we're willing to work the long hours to keep customers happy. However, there are a few things unique to Monster Tree Service that give our brand a boost over others. Our name is fun and our logo is a cartoon monster. Kids and families love it and our franchise partners go ALL OUT with guerilla marketing to get the monster all over town – fliers, signs, t-shirts, strap bags, you name it. Also – not only are we fun-loving, we are committed to treating our employees right. We pay competitive wages. We give specific, set hours when it's not industry standard. We stay open throughout the winter (unlike most tree companies) to give our employees more consistency that they can build a life around. It's those small, but significant things that we do at Monster Tree Service that create a culture that sets us apart. - **Josh Skolnick, Founder/CEO of [Monster Tree Service](#)**, the nation's first and fastest growing tree service franchise

69. See People for Their Potential

At America's Swimming Pool Company (ASP), we have a knack for finding the right people to work for the company, and then holding on to them.

In 2008, I hired the first full time employee, and have added 13 more to our leadership team since that time. Today, they are all still with ASP, contributing in much different roles than the ones they were hired to do. I take great pride in that fact.

We believe in hiring potential, coaching up the needed skill sets, then plugging people into platforms for ongoing personal and corporate success. We believe that keeps employees engaged, happy, and loyal.

We also believe a direct line of communication from me to the team creates a “culture of confidence” at ASP. Everyone who works for us knows...

- their roles
- what's expected of them
- their performance has a direct impact on corporate success

We also recognize the importance of work-life balance in retaining employees. So, we offer plenty of on-site fun benefits, like team lunches, a fully stocked break room, and a fitness center. This makes our culture magnetic and rewarding. - **Stewart Vernon, Founder/CEO of [America's Swimming Pool Co.](#)**, the nation's leading swimming pool franchise

70. Encourage Idea Makers

We are constantly working to attract and retain key employees at Wayback Burgers. We have created an inclusive corporate environment, a real “team feel.” Everybody knows they are valued and contributing to a common goal: making Wayback Burgers the number one choice in fast casual dining.

As an example, employees are encouraged to offer ideas on everything from enhancing corporate relationships with franchise owners, to opinions on new additions to restaurant menus.

Another opportunity for team building happens once a month when new franchisees, training at the corporate office, get together with Wayback employees for a “welcome/get to know you” lunch provided by the company.

Professional growth is also encouraged, which can lead to internal advancement, with increased autonomy and no “micro-managing” from me or any other executive.

We vigorously promote a fun, energetic atmosphere, which leads to creative, out of the box thinking. We have great benefits and terrific technology. But at the end of the day, I want my team to know my door is always open, and that I care about them as people, not just employees. - **John Eucalitto, President and CEO of [Wayback Burgers](#)**, America's hometown burger joint and one of the nation's fastest growing burger franchises

71. Launch a Mentorship Program

At Power Digital Marketing, we are anything but cookie-cutter, and that includes how we motivate and retain our employees. Knowing our young team is driven and fulfilled by a deep desire to grow as professionals and as marketers, we launched the Power Pairs Mentorship program crafted for millennials and run by millennials. In the past, we've organized traditional tactics to grow and retain our team, but was challenged with the major time commitment from the executives or large sums of capital investment. For this program, we selected 18 employees – 9 diverse mentors and 9 diverse mentees – to be the inaugural members of the three-month program. The winners of the program would be determined at the “Power Pairs Pitch Off”, where each team visually presented their processes, learnings and findings to win the \$1000 compensation. A member of the winning team, Bill Wilkinson mentioned, “it's really fun and rewarding to see someone internal grow as a direct result of your work with them. Helping them develop a new skillset is something that's incredibly motivating and encourages this constant collaboration and sharing of expertise.”

Our employees appreciate the daily catered lunches, unlimited PTO and quarterly trips Power Digital provides, although we realize that those perks are offered elsewhere. That's why it was a no brainer to create an unconventional program that we know is catered to their deepest craving, to grow. - [Power Digital Marketing](#), CEO and co-founder [Grayson Lafrenz](#)

72. Work on it Daily

Great company cultures aren't accidents. [Stride](#) is proud of our 100% retention in 2017. Our culture is worked on daily by a great team. Here's our recipe:

- **Trust.** Our employees trust each other. We spend time explicitly building upon that trust. Without trust, nothing is possible.
- **Humility.** I aggressively protect Stride's 5 core values. I am willing to be wrong about everything else.
- **Learn from failure.** We have Toast to Failures. We each share a professional failure. We then clap and celebrate the learnings. It's so cathartic!
- **Give everyone a real voice.** Monthly, we debate issues as an entire company. No topic is off limits - compensation, benefits, hours. This is a powerful way to create a safe space for open and honest conversation.
- **Empower every employee to feel safe to say “I Disagree”.** Each employee needs to be comfortable telling every other employee, “I think you're wrong and here's why.” - **Debbie Madden, CEO and Founder** [Stride](#)

73. Enable Decision Makers

At the first company I founded, I was too ingrained in every business decision, which significantly slowed down business. I look back on that as my dress rehearsal for [Decibel Insight](#), which helps enterprises quantify the digital customer experience, that I founded in 2013. Our management philosophy is centered around creating a work environment where people want to spend their day, vs. an obligation. As CEO, I don't consider myself the chief decision maker but instead the chief enabler, creating a collaborative workplace where our team is empowered to make independent business decisions. The word “employee” in terms of hierarchy, or being called “the boss”, makes me uncomfortable. Our team wouldn't be successful without every person's unique expertise. This team-centric philosophy will be critical as we look

to more than double headcount next year in our London and Boston offices. - **Ben Harris, CEO and co-founder of [Decibel Insight](#)**

74. Bond Outside the Office

We believe our collaborative culture is responsible for Gesture's success in working with more than 5,000 non-profits nationwide helping them to raise more money through mobile fundraising technology. When our 70 person staff feel championed and supported in the workplace, they are able to bring innovation and compassion to our charity partners. A traditional way to people's hearts is through their stomachs, so we provide daily use of a fully stocked kitchen and frequent catered lunches. We offer flexible hours, work at home options and unlimited paid time off. We work in casual dress in our bright open space floor plan that replaces chairs with fitness balls (as desired) or at an outdoor work space option. We bond outside the office in optional evening company sports leagues, trivia nights and contests in which the winner gets money donated to the charity of his or her choice. We coordinate at our charity partner events to help mission-driven organizations surpass their financial goals. Together, we encourage our teammates to reach more non-profits with our products so that they too can "help make hope happen!" - **Jim Alvarez, CEO of fundraising technology company, [Gesture](#)**

75. Loyalty and High Expectations

We take a very long view of loyalty and retention at Double Forte – we want our employees to be loyal to us for their entire careers whether they're on the payroll or not. To that end, we focus on three things to make the company a great place to work:

1. Do everything we can to line up employees' work with their goals. Once we understand what people want to do, we help them get there in the context of our work.
2. Have really high expectations of people and work product and hold them there respectfully.
3. We have a culture of appreciation. Teams that feel appreciated outperform those that don't by up to 30% and tend to stay in organizations up to 24 – 48 months

We learned these the hard way. And I share how to bring these to life in my book, [The Boomerang Principle](#), which explains how to create positive workplace cultures that drive profit and sustainability. This starts with The Boomerang Principle – the belief that organizations that allow and encourage former employees to return have a strategic advantage over those that don't. - **Lee Caraher, president and CEO, [Double Forte](#)**

76. Bring in the Best Minds

Everyone at AutoGravity shares a common vision: revolutionizing the way people buy and finance their cars. This is embodied in our motto, "One Team, One Dream." We reach our dream by bringing together the best minds in the automotive and financial services industries with the brightest stars in tech – uniquely talented product managers, designers and engineers. Our team comes together in a one-of-a-kind office – designed to foster accessibility and collaboration that's fun and lively.

AutoGravity's leadership team believes great ideas come from all employees. We work hard to elevate all voices and test new concepts regardless of who or where they come from. Every member of the leadership team is approachable – AutoGravity has no offices, we sit with our employees every day. The combination of accessibility, empowerment, competitive pay and an unlimited discretionary paid time off policy make working at AutoGravity an experience unlike any other.

There's an undeniable camaraderie that unites the diverse AutoGravity team. With a retention rate of 95 percent, our rapidly growing team has produced an award-winning app that has been downloaded more than 750,000 times with more than \$1 billion in financing requested in just one year. - **Andy Hinrichs, Founder and CEO of [AutoGravity](#)**

77. Practice Servant Leadership

What top employees most want is the opportunity to grow. As long as they're growing they're going to stay. We've built a culture that fosters constant growth. Every employee owns their domain. Managers help them define goals but charting the course to achieving that goal is completely up to them. This creates a deep sense of ownership and the opportunity to push your skills every day. We've also inverted the leadership pyramid - managers work for their teams, not the other way around. That's one of our core leadership principles - we practice servant leadership to ensure every employee is enabled and supported to reach their goals. Finally, we're radically transparent. Every week I send an all-company email about what's top of mind for me, what I'm concerned about, and what strategic initiatives are on the horizon. I even include a monthly statement of cash flow. Every person in the company knows exactly what's happening, we hide nothing, and this creates a deep sense of trust and team. Every person is highly valued. - **Manny Medina, CEO and cofounder of [Outreach](#)**

78. Build Your Workplace Around Your Goals and Culture

Getting our culture right is hugely important in enabling us to attract top talent because talent is what ultimately differentiates a company.

NovuHealth's business is helping health plans get people more engaged in their own health, and we want people at the company to be actively engaged too. When we remodeled our office, we listened to the team to find out what they feel makes a great workplace. We heard that they valued flexibility and the problem-solving that comes from being able to have casual conversations, so we created a mix of open and private meeting spaces and places to relax and connect with coworkers more casually.

But beyond creating a physical environment that fosters creativity and collaboration, our culture is based on core values of authenticity and respect. We believe in being empathetic but also direct with each other and we simply don't tolerate it when someone is disrespectful. - **Tom Wicka, CEO, NovuHealth**

79. Treat Everyone Like Family

Alliance Homecare is a concierge home health care company providing medical and non-medical services to patients in the NYC metro area. What we do is enormously intimate. If something goes wrong – it can

be in an unexpected way. The sign of a culturally strong organization is HOW you respond. We are able to truly partner with our clients and their families because we treat our entire team like a family itself. This includes our 'Grandma Rule' hiring philosophy. We only hire those we would trust to care for our own families.

All staff, regardless of level or seniority, receive four weeks standard vacation and access to a number of perks – from Massage Mondays and Lunch Tuesdays to summer outings (think baseball games and theme parks) and early leave Fridays in the summer. We offer remote flexibility, premium salaries, and a bonus payout structure. Everyone feels the importance of what we do and therefore gives 110% to make sure it happens. This business is not for everyone, but for those that choose this line of work, it is very rewarding.

- **Greg Solometo, co-founder and CEO of [Alliance Homecare](#),**

80. Keep it Stress Free

"At Zipari our team is focused on thinking about the candidate first. That means we don't keep them waiting around for hours and we make the process as stress-free as possible. After a phone-screen, we bring them in for a four-hour series of interviews – three to assess skills and three cultural screens. I'm the last to meet them.

As the interviews move along we collect email feedback from each interviewer. So by the time I come in, we've essentially decided to hire them (if not, we'd politely end the interview before it got to me). My job is to close the deal. From there, we move fast. Most offers go out the same day as the interviews.

At Zipari, we win based on talent, and in order to have the best team, you have to show your employees that they are a priority – starting with the very first impression." - **Mark Nathan, CEO of [Zipari](#)**

81. Recognize Efforts Weekly

At Source Capital, retaining our top talent is essential to our success. Retaining our employees allows us to promote from within, develop a positive work culture, maintain consistency, and reduce training expenses and time spent searching for replacements. To help keep our employee turnover to a minimum and maintain a positive work culture, we make it a point to make sure our entire staff knows we appreciate them and all their hard work. One way we do this is by sending out an email at the end of each week, recognizing those who have gone above and beyond. This email gets sent out to the entire office, allowing others to join in on congratulating their colleagues on a job well done. This encourages the entire office to communicate and gives our employees the opportunity to form healthy work relationships. The sense of community that is built by this simple gesture results in an increase in communication, productivity, a sense of purpose, and most importantly, employee retention. - **Sacha Ferrandi, Founder | Principal, [Source Capital Funding, Inc.](#)**

82. Offer Only the Best

"To retain the best employees, you have to offer them the best. Since opening my doors in 2014 with four staff, I've worked hard to maximize retention by creating a corporate culture that is beauty chic meets

inclusive family. In three years, we've grown to 18 strong, talented women, comprised of different backgrounds and areas of expertise. Most of my senior team came from agencies that discouraged openness, so everyone here is as inclusive as possible – kindness is one of our cornerstones. Evolve also offers competitive benefits, including industry leading health insurance coverage, unlimited vacation, paid maternity leave, flexible working hours, profit sharing, fully paid cell phones, 401K match, time-off for philanthropy work and an onsite beauty treatments. While I can't change certain aspects of agency life and client service, we can certainly make it as fun and as flexible/healthy as possible.” -[EvolveMKD's](#) Founder & CEO, [Megan Driscoll](#)

83. Never Settle

I started Pinnacle Advertising & Media Group to satisfy my entrepreneurial spirit and my passion for retail advertising. My drive for the best has created a work culture that is always curious and finds a fresh approach by looking at things differently. Build relationships. Absolute trust and integrity are at the core of our values and by appreciating the talents each employee brings to the table, we are able to do what's right for our clients, and our people - no matter what. When you believe each employee is the very best at what they do it creates an environment where you bet on ideas and have the courage to take calculated risks that turn great ideas into great success stories. Performance driven. By embracing a responsibility that our clients must win before we can. - [Michael Magnusson](#), President/CEO [Pinnacle Advertising & Media Group](#).

84. Take the Time Up Front

At [Workshop Digital](#), company culture is about hiring the right people, creating a clear path forward, and allowing everyone to have a voice. Company culture isn't just a buzzword; it's the single most critical factor that separates good companies from great companies. It is something that is built over time and must be nurtured. As co-founders, Andrew Miller and I have kept Workshop Digital's culture front and center. We understand just how critical it is for everyone working here to understand our vision and to be bought into it so that we can actually achieve it. We actually focus all interviews and employee reviews around our six core values. “Building a strong company culture means spending the time up front to ensure that new hires are capable of doing the work, adhere to the core values, and support the culture the company was founded on, even as we grow,” said Brian Forrester. - [Andrew Miller](#) & [Brian Forrester](#), **Co-Founders**, [Workshop Digital](#)

85. Be P.O.E.T.I.C

In 1997, I started Intermarkets on the foundation of creating a place where employees wanted to go to work. I held previous roles where my co-workers and I got the “Sunday night blues,” and it was important to me that our colleagues at Intermarkets never had that experience.

To ensure that people are happy and want to stay, I strive to lead by example and make sure everything maps back to our mantra to be P.O.E.T.I.C. — positive, optimistic, enthusiastic, tenacious, innovative and

committed. I want our team to feel challenged and supported, so that they will be motivated and focused on finding solutions and creating opportunities for our clients, vendors and partners.

I attribute our success and the fact that no one has voluntarily left Intermarkets in more than two years to these core values and our ongoing commitment to them. - **Kevin Lucido, CEO and Founder of [Intermarkets](#)**

86. Be Inclusive

Inclusion is a powerful thing, and it has a special effect when applied to workplaces. Creating a culture where your staff feels included and important will lead to a higher retention rate as people are more likely to stay with companies where they feel engaged and happy.

At [MrOwl](#), we've built a culture where employees feel encouraged and energized to share their ideas. With company-wide brainstorming sessions, each employee—regardless of department or rank—has contributed an idea that has been implemented into the MrOwl consumer experience. Employees see their direct effect on the company and feel they're making a real difference.

Varied people, with varied backgrounds, give varied answers within meetings and brainstorming sessions. This will only make your company stronger. There's a real power to the diversity of thought with employees. - [Arvind Raichur](#), CEO and Co-founder, [MrOwl](#)

87. Hire for Personality and Attitude

When I started Lotame 11 years ago, I had one goal in mind: to never work with jerks again. And whenever I interview someone, no matter what the position, I keep that in mind. If you aren't nice, it's not going to work out.

A lot of companies talk about culture, pointing to their fancy office space, free food, happy hours and other perks. We have that too, but in my opinion, a great culture isn't just a punchline, and it can't be bought. I truly believe our success rests with our people. There's no stifling corporate hierarchy here and big egos aren't welcome.

So my advice to someone looking to build a company with a great culture is to focus on hiring good, smart people who you like to be around, and who share your vision of working together to achieve far-reaching and exciting goals. - [Andy Monfried](#), CEO and Founder at [Lotame](#)

88. Have “Leaders” instead of “Managers”

“When I joined global creative agency Jones Knowles Ritchie eight years ago, it was obvious a hierarchal culture with rigid chains of command wouldn't work. So to retain the best of the creative design industry's thinkers and doers, we made an active decision to shift our core management team from ‘managers’ to ‘leaders’. It's not just a matter of semantics. It's about having a team of leaders that believe in their people, and believe they're capable of more than they think they are.

“Being in the service industry as we are, it’s not about throwing people in the deep end to learn on someone’s else’s dollar either. It’s about inspiring them to take a chance, make mistakes and learn in a controlled environment so they can truly own their work. It’s about allowing them to do things that will really drive business forward and deliver on our vision.

“Since taking this approach, top line has tripled, profit line is five times its original, and we’ve got 250 of the brightest minds in design on our side. Not to mention, four of the original seven core managers are still with us today. So I’d say the proof is in the pudding – when you truly believe in people, it’s remarkable what they can do.” - [Guy Lambert](#), Global CEO, [Jones Knowles Ritchie](#)

89. Catered Lunch

One company perk that is increasingly common for companies looking to attract and retain top talent is the catered lunch, especially the customized catered lunch.

“Offering great food for our employees has contributed to the strength of our productions. I would highly recommend this kind of customized food-delivery service”. Andrea Sheffield, Talent Management, [ARITZIA](#) (Speaking in particular about working with Foodee)

Foodee is a leading platform that connects offices across North America with top restaurants, bringing local food culture into boardrooms and satisfying the cravings of Fortune 500 companies such as Apple, Amazon, Comcast, eBay, Facebook, Microsoft, Starbucks and more. Foodee currently operates in 10 cities in North America and is rapidly expanding.

Some additional quotes referring to the same service:

“Foodee NEVER fails our needs! The team is great to work with and always comes through with all our needs big or small!” Anna, Executive Assistant, Amazon

“Working with Foodee has been such a great experience. They offer a wide variety of vendors that are able to cater to all of our event needs. Whether it is a small breakfast meeting for 15 people or a large lunch order for 100 people, they are always able to accommodate our asks, even last minute! Their employees are very personable and I highly recommend them whenever someone is looking for catering.” Barb Barrington-Foote, Administrative Assistant, Lululemon

“[Foodee](#) is a great solution for small business and leading corporations who want to offer employees quality food in the workplace. I’m excited to be working with a company who continues to raise the bar when it comes to feeding our employees. My last venture employed over 350 people in our Vancouver office and my new start has a team of 15. Foodee is the perfect solution for both enterprises.” Andrew Reid, Current Founder & CEO, VC Labs Inc., Previously Founder & President, Vision Critical

90. Give Employees Control

We believe in letting our team take initiative and creative control on social media, specifically Instagram and Pinterest. We believe that our team is most dialed into Millennial shopping trends and will create content that resonates with that segment since the brand caters to the female millennial generation. - **Christina Crawford, CEO of International beauty brand, BubblePopBeauty.com**

91. You can do anything with us

Here at Brāv Online Conflict Management (www.brav.org), so long as it limits liability and touches upon conflict management, we are interested! - Remi Alli

92. Have a Big Impact and Be Heard

“Like most startups, the value opportunity for employees to work here, instead of at a big corporation, is a sense of purpose as a highly impactful contributor. At Vydia, your voice gets to be heard and influence the forward progress of the company. In addition to our efforts advancing the video and rights management industry, my team is passionate about staying involved in events that shape our community. Reinforcing a positive sense of purpose, both inside and outside of the office, is the best way to team build and keep morale high.” - **Roy LaManna, CEO of Inc 500 Tech Company, Vydia**

93. Thank Employees with Fun Extracurriculars

“While some of my team works out of SaleHoo’s local office in New Zealand, we also have many employees that telecommute from the Philippines. As remote workers, some of my Filipino staff even worked on the same island but had never met one another. I wanted to infuse company pride and team camaraderie into the company culture of my remote workforce, so I decided to fly to the Philippines once a year and take my employees and their families on an all-expenses-paid vacation! Not only do my employees enjoy an incredible company perk, but they also have remarkable teamwork, not typical of many telecommuters. Investing so much money into an initiative without direct financial gain for the company wasn’t an easy decision. Of course, my Filipino staff couldn’t be happier about the vacation, but my local New Zealand staff was a little jealous. My New Zealand staff doesn’t get a vacation, but we enjoy weekly barbecues and periodic team outings at wineries and ski resorts. I do my best to balance the paid extracurriculars of my New Zealand staff with that of my Filipino staff’s. Above all, I’m always looking for ways for us to have fun and socialize as a team.” - **Simon Slade, CEO and Co-founder of SaleHoo**

94. Keep Your Employee Issues Private.

If you have an issue with an employee (no matter their level - an intern or an executive), don’t lecture/talk to them in front of the rest of your staff. It’s always better to speak to them in private and approach the situation in a constructive manner. Most of the time, they’ll appreciate your constructive criticism and consider your feedback seriously. They won’t just brush it off. -Kristin Marquet, CEO of CreativeDevelopmentAgency.com and Publisher of TheHauteRebel.com.

95. Create a Fun Work Environment

We take our company culture and team member engagement extremely seriously around here and have lots of programs and efforts towards maintaining a high level of satisfaction based on recurring internal surveys. One of the things we've done is created a full time position called "Director of Happiness". The primary responsibility is team member engagement and morale. We've also made sure that clear goals are set for each team member which are measurable and broken down annually and quarterly. As a result, every team member knows what "winning" looks like. Another idea we implemented was providing transparent and open recognition which is given by fellow team members and then projected onto a 10 foot high screen on the front wall of our office. Each recognition is also tied to one of our core values. Additionally, we give personalized birthday celebrations, free music festival tickets as rewards, and a team member of the month award worth \$500. Lastly, we do a monthly town hall meeting recognizing the major wins of each department followed by free lunch and games. - **Brian Lim, Founder and CEO of**

[iHeartRaves](#)

96. Set a Clear Goal and Vision - Then do Nothing

Ok, maybe not "*nothing*". But if you've hired someone with a great attitude, autonomy tends to be one of the great motivators. No one likes a micro manager, and if you have clear outcomes that need to be achieved, all working towards a greater goal, that makes people feel as though their work means something. Yes, provide support and training where it's needed - but let the person use their own creativity and problem solving skills to tackle the task at hand. If you see ways to improve efficiency after the fact, then you can make those suggestions in a scheduled catch-up. -**Simon Thompson, Founder and CEO of** [Growth Assembly](#)

97. Creating a Fun Company Culture in a Remote Environment

We are in a unique position of having 100% of our employees working remotely, so building a great company culture is much more difficult than a traditional office environment. Texting each other has become the dominate communication method, but we encourage 'fun-texting'. We send each other funny GIFs and each employee has created a Bitmoji of themselves that we use often, it's a lot of fun. Also, we have our Hangout-Hour where everyone logs into their webcams from 8:30am to 9:30am, Tuesdays and Thursdays, to interact together while we work. Some employees are quieter than others and some love to chat about TV, music and movies. We find our employees actually look forward to those mornings together. Finally, we get together often for lunches, dinners, and most importantly our annual company retreat away from home for 3-4 days! **Dan Roberge, President of** [Maintenance Care](#)

98. We Like to Promote Health and Well Being

Company culture is a critical pillar of our company's mission. We strive to treat each other well, give back to our communities, remain transparent in our work, and remember that quality of life trumps climbing the corporate ladder. We want our team members to be empowered to grow and achieve their goals and ambitions. This is no easy feat with a diverse crew, but we've found that circling back to these beliefs that our team has self-corrected and been able to grow our company with minimal effort. We also invest resources into team building events like BBQs, tickets to popular events, and retreats. We offer weekly

acupuncture service as well as credit for healthy meal services. By focusing on nurturing our team's bodies and souls we have provided great service and products that are clients are thrilled with. **Kevin Drolet, owner of [cThru Media](#)**

99. Find Your Employee's Pain Points, and Fix Them

As funny as it may seem, we genuinely try to focus on annoying employees as little as possible. By this, I mean we try to find the pain points that prevent them from doing their jobs efficiently. It differs for everyone. For example, some people want two monitors, some people want more powerful machines, some people want a chair with head support. We really try to figure out what annoys people about doing their job and then we try to remove those elements. But it's also quite personal, so we have to ask our employees. Often times it's a simple thing that can build up over time. For example, a bad monitor hurting an employee's eyes over time, that can really hurt an employee's morale. These issues can be easily fixed if they're addressed in the right way. **Adnan Raja, Vice President of Marketing for [Atlantic.Net](#)**

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