

Happy people drive success



Virtual1 celebrate their Best Company success

Being 'happily employed' is the new objective for people in work and there's no doubt that an intelligently built culture is key to an organisation's long term success.

Naturally, every organisation has its own culture and there is no definitive answer to which culture should be developed and deployed. That said, a culture that is open and dynamic can foster a positive rapport with employees and could do wonders in attracting new talent.

According to Kate Brunning, Head of People and Culture at Virtual1, placing a priority on culture and measuring engagement needs to be a religious effort if you are to sustain an award-winning environment in the fast paced, progressive comms industry.

"We dropped appraisals around two years ago and embarked on a new, innovative tool that measures both engagement and performance on a regular monthly basis. The data we get from this is what drives our success. Not only can we measure how we are performing as a business, we have seen a direct correlation between performance and engagement. We spend a lot of time and energy on feedback from our people. After all, our success is underpinned by them so empowering them even further is mission critical."

Virtual1 has also nurtured a flat structure which Brunning believes has contributed to the true family feel created at the London based business.

"Our culture is diverse, friendly, innovative, inclusive and fun. Hierarchy exists but we place an enormous amount of trust in our people to do good work. Micro management won't get you anywhere here. Put simply, we are too fast paced for that environment.

"It has been said that a workplace culture can make or break businesses, and a strong one is said to nurture happy employees, putting an organisation on the path to success.

"If you are keen to be a best company to work for, then you need to accept as many man hours as needed to go into developing your people agenda as your products," concluded Brunning.



ADAM CATHCART
9 GROUP

HOW HAVE YOU MODERNISED YOUR WORKPLACE?

Providing access to technology is important but educating teams has been the key to user adoption. Staff are now communicating far more efficiently internally and with our partners too.

HOW HAVE YOU IMPROVED WORKFORCE INTERACTION?

Conversations are much more productive and real time collaboration on documents saves time and allows decisions to be made on the spot. All of this has allowed us to work more effectively and be even more responsive and proactive with our partners.

HOW DO YOU KEEP STAFF FEELING VALUED AND RESPECTED?

Simple things like being open and transparent go a long way. I meet with every member of staff each quarter and have a one-to-one with every new employee within their first week. This creates opportunities to hear ideas and share feedback.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR BUSINESS CULTURE?

Inclusive. We have over 220 people in our team, but we've maintained a close-knit environment through things like providing free lunch every day and offering flexibility which has helped us to retain staff.



KATE WOOD
CHESS ICT

HOW HAVE YOU MODERNISED YOUR WORKPLACE?

We built 'Engage', a modern employee engagement tool, blending culture and technology through sentiment and analytics to support multi-site businesses, flexible working, homeworkers and people. It means everyone can communicate effectively.

HOW HAVE YOU IMPROVED WORKFORCE INTERACTION?

Communication had to change, growing from one office to six offices. Engage ensures everyone has monthly one-to-ones, which improved relationships at all levels. Added to this, the adoption of Microsoft Teams allows simple cross site collaboration.

HOW DO YOU KEEP STAFF FEELING VALUED AND RESPECTED?

Our 'Blueprint' details the attitudes and behaviours we expect of everyone. 'Engage' utilises AI and through sentiment scoring tells us how people really feel. Then our leaders, cultural ambassadors and parent champions step in to ensure they feel valued and cared for, while maximising their potential.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR BUSINESS CULTURE?

Technology was driving culture, now culture drives technology. We recruit good people and through technology we help them become great, and help our customers do the same. In summary our culture is Passionate, and Proud to be Passionate.



JASON ROOS
CIRRUS

HOW HAVE YOU MODERNISED YOUR WORKPLACE?

Our smart new offices in Epsom provide a showcase for our technology including a recording studio and skype rooms. We also have a social space for hosting customer and staff events like the Rugby World Cup.

HOW HAVE YOU IMPROVED WORKFORCE INTERACTION?

Our own cloud-based technology ensures that homeworkers and mobile staff can easily contribute to company discussions and debates. Staff enjoy our social action days which foster employee motivation, engagement and well-being as well as supporting local good causes.

HOW DO YOU KEEP STAFF FEELING VALUED AND RESPECTED?

We cultivate an environment that values sound judgement and good communication, the courage to take risks and inspiring ideas and actions. Staff are actively encouraged to speak up and contribute and are given the freedom to delight the customer.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR BUSINESS CULTURE?

We seek excellence. We celebrate innovation and creative thinking and, above all, going the extra mile for the customer and for our colleagues. We liken ourselves to a professional sports team where teamwork is the key to winning.



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s in the fast-paced channel



ROBERT BAYNES
ENTANET

HOW HAVE YOU MODERNISED YOUR WORKPLACE?

Our dress code policy at our new Telford office is now one word: 'appropriate'. We've introduced a quiet room and communal areas allowing staff to take part in 'big build' Lego challenges or wellness sessions.

HOW HAVE YOU IMPROVED WORKFORCE INTERACTION?

We encourage interaction via our approachable management, flat structure, open plan office and communication tools to link up our nationwide employees. This year we held International Womens' Day and Family Fun Day events for all staff to participate in.

HOW DO YOU KEEP STAFF FEELING VALUED AND RESPECTED?

Our people are key to our success and we hold regular mindfulness sessions and provide a subsidised healthcare scheme to ensure their wellbeing. We have a dedicated CSR committee and an internal scheme to allow anybody to acknowledge a colleague's special contribution.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR BUSINESS CULTURE?

We're a growing and dynamic business with a talented and knowledgeable team of employees. That's why we encourage open and honest communication to ignite vibrant ideas and creativity and lead the way in delivering full fibre.



VINCENT DISNEUR
UNION STREET

HOW HAVE YOU MODERNISED YOUR WORKPLACE?

Ergonomics is key. Comfy and supportive seating, state-of-the-art equipment, a relaxing breakout area and stylish décor have made the office environment a comfy, inviting and efficient place to be.

HOW HAVE YOU IMPROVED WORKFORCE INTERACTION?

In 2016 we initiated our 'Streets Ahead' programme. Made up of volunteers, the Streets Ahead committee organise regular trips, activities and social events for our team. We also host an annual party for our 90 staff and partners.

HOW DO YOU KEEP STAFF FEELING VALUED AND RESPECTED?

Our Streets Ahead programme incorporates recognition awards where staff can nominate peers to receive monetary rewards, gifts and experiences at a monthly prize giving. We encourage staff to have their say, promote a healthy work/life balance and offer continuous access to training.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR BUSINESS CULTURE?

Union Street is a relaxed and friendly place to work with a casual dress code and numerous staff benefits. That said, our work is fast paced and challenging. We promote an engaging and collaborative approach and encourage staff to innovate and take initiative.



PAM BLANCHARD
ICA

HOW HAVE YOU MODERNISED YOUR WORKPLACE?

Modernisation has come from our 'Smart Office' approach. We've moved away from standard on-site hardware-based infrastructure to delivering services and applications to our staff through cloud platforms, which has helped create a flexible remote worker strategy.

HOW HAVE YOU IMPROVED WORKFORCE INTERACTION?

We have introduced a number of additional inter-operable mobile/desk-based applications and the use of shared working spaces which has helped foster a more dynamic and collaborative approach for sharing information and ideas within ICA.

HOW DO YOU KEEP STAFF FEELING VALUED AND RESPECTED?

Common respect is a key value at ICA. We use 'Office Vibe' to give the team the opportunity to share regular and honest feedback to the director. The team have stated that they 'love' working for ICA and 'love' our customers.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR BUSINESS CULTURE?

ICA has been established for over 23 years and we enjoy solving problems. The business has a number of goals and objectives centred around the customer experience. We understand that this in turn helps our customer's run their businesses better.



KATE BRUNNING
VIRTUAL1

HOW HAVE YOU MODERNISED YOUR WORKPLACE?

We track our engagement religiously. We dropped appraisals two years ago and embarked on a new, innovative tool that measures both engagement and performance on a regular monthly basis. The data we get from this drives our success.

HOW HAVE YOU IMPROVED WORKFORCE INTERACTION?

Aside from the obvious human interaction and regular team nights out, we implemented Workplace last year in an effort to share and collaborate information. Essentially, it's a comms tool owned by our people, for our people.

HOW DO YOU KEEP STAFF FEELING VALUED AND RESPECTED?

We listen and we act. It's that simple. No matter what role you are in, you are treated equally. We spend a lot of time and energy on the people agenda, and this is what has led to much of the company's success

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR BUSINESS CULTURE?

Friendly, innovative, diverse, inclusive and fun! Our flat structure creates a true 'family' feel. We place a lot of trust in our people to do good work ... micro-management won't get you anywhere here!



ELLIE ALLSEYBROOK
INFORM BILLING

HOW HAVE YOU MODERNISED YOUR WORKPLACE?

Our office has open-plan and more private workspaces, comfortable collaboration areas and all equipment is high-spec. We benefit from a semi-rural location - there has been much research into the wellness benefits from work environments with views of nature.

HOW HAVE YOU IMPROVED WORKFORCE INTERACTION?

We have invested in some key systems to ensure colleagues can communicate and collaborate easily, wherever their location. Half our company are developers and half are customer facing, so understanding each other's challenges is key to bridging the divide.

HOW DO YOU KEEP STAFF FEELING VALUED AND RESPECTED?

Communication and involvement are vital. We prioritise one-to-one and team meetings and share business successes with everyone. We host regular company events and provide nice benefits, but most important is knowing how to support individuals achieve their work/ life balance.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR BUSINESS CULTURE?

Everyone has a significant impact on Inform Billing's success. Colleagues take great care in their work because they don't want to let one another down and therefore there is a lot of trust.



SUE KEMPTON
WINDSOR TELECOM

HOW HAVE YOU MODERNISED YOUR WORKPLACE?

When we moved to bigger offices, the right environment was key. It's light and bright and a place where the team can be proud to say they work. A fabulous breakout area was as important as the working environment and the tech to allow people to do their job.

HOW HAVE YOU IMPROVED WORKFORCE INTERACTION?

We use tech for what tech is good at, but there is no substitute for inter-departmental collaboration and social time, with a clear and shared mission, purpose and values.

HOW DO YOU KEEP STAFF FEELING VALUED AND RESPECTED?

Training, recognition and collaboration. The team have a fantastic input into shaping the future of the company. We work together to drive results.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR BUSINESS CULTURE?

We work hard but have a lot of fun in the way. If I hear plenty of laughter in the workplace, I know we are doing good work.

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