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Company culture – does it really matter?

By David S. McLaren

You hear the word culture, and maybe there is an eye roll. Does it really matter?



David S. McLaren is the managing partner of McLaren & Associates CPAs, LLC in Shrewsbury. Reach him at Dave@dmclarencpa.com.

You bet it does. Let me tell you what we do differently at McLaren & Associates CPAs.

Yes, we have benefits like a matching retirement plan, paid time off, health insurance, and other employee benefits.

We also offer flex time. This allows our team to take care of things like doctor's appointments and little league games and make up the time later. The team can work from home if that makes it easier, but most enjoy being in the office as they enjoy collaborating and working together.

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To allow team members to work from anywhere, anytime, we moved our system into the cloud, which enhanced security for our clients' protection.

How about outings and events? We have one at least every quarter. We work hard to make them fun and interesting. In fact, every team member has attended the optional events this past year. This includes bowling, cookouts, bumper cars and bumper boats, video games, pumpkin painting, whiskey tasting, dinners, and lunches. The team truly likes each other and enjoys spending time together outside of work.

In addition, our team has a vote in the policies and procedures of the firm. As the owner, I only have a one in 19 vote. While most owners would not commit to that, the positive effect it has had on our team is remarkable.

More importantly, we do not hire unless the entire team meets and approves new team members. They make the decision on who they want to work with.

Naturally, when you like the people you work with, jokes, humor, and lots of out-loud laughs fill the office hallways.

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Tax season hours? While I sometimes worked more than 90 weekly hours for other firms, our team only works what they can, with most well under 60 hours a week in the busiest of times.

We have no yelling or berating of anyone. We learn from mistakes. We do not blame. We all have the utmost respect for each other. It is a requirement for working at McLaren & Associates. Disrespect is not tolerated.

As a certified B-Corp., we keep all of our jobs in the United States.

My dream was to create a culture where our team would want to be at work, together with each other, not dread coming to work. I love coming into the office and seeing the joy within everyone. If someone is down, we discuss what is happening, how we can help, and how we can pull together to uplift our team. Our mentoring program helps those who want to excel as well.

What is the benefit from all of this besides a happier environment and a happier team? Increased retention and a greater ability to hire and compete for talent. We are always looking for talent, and while it is hard to compete when you are small, having a place where people want to be makes a huge difference.

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In the end, we are dedicated to not only making a difference in our client's lives, but in the lives of our team.



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