

A Business Mission of Happiness

Web company Integritive seeks to blur lines between work/life balance

What happens when a web development and branding company make its mission “to love and have fun?”

According to [Integritive](#) founder and CEO John Miles, great things. He’s been running his Asheville, North Carolina company under the banner of happiness at work and the company has grown steadily since its inception in 2001.

Miles says bliss in business is the way of the future to break free from the outdated model of work/life balance. That’s because true happiness isn’t leisure time, but rather when a person becomes deeply engaged in something they love and are good at doing.

Called flow, it’s a place where people’s skill levels are equal to their challenge allowing them to become deeply immersed in the task at hand. Think a musician playing an intricate piece of music, a runner training for their next race, or a doctor in surgery.

Taken by this concept developed by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, Miles says he and his team are creating a work environment where flow can flourish, a task that involves everything from the physical to the abstract.

Integritive’s office floor plan is deliberately open, providing staff with access to each other and leaders. Bean bags sprawl the floor and, dogs, whether they belong to staff or a client, are as welcome as remote-control gadgets.

In addition to a mindful play ethos, staff members are encouraged to try new tasks and grow in their roles. Embracing new challenges keeps “a growth edge,” a key aspect of flow, and one Miles is passionate about encouraging among

staff members.

“That really delights me. When I find something that I can put in front of someone and say ‘you can move through this new challenge, it may require new competency but that’s what we are here for.’”

Work chaos, a major flow buster, is subdued by a commitment to workplace democracy that involves transparency, participatory decision making and shared leadership. The company was named to [WorldBlu’s List of Most Democratic Workplaces 2011](#), and Miles says it’s these practices that keep the company nimble and thriving.

“It’s remarkable within the team culture how many times great ideas don’t have to come from people who have been their longest or who have the most grey hair,” he says. “Everyone here feels shared responsibility for the success of the company. There is always an ongoing, open dialogue about what works and what doesn’t, which results in innovation and improved product offerings.”

On a quarterly basis, Integritive measures its success by asking three questions: are we happy, are we growing as people and an organization, and are we sustainable or abundant?

Miles points out that just because the company has a mission of happiness, doesn’t mean it’s a utopia. There are always challenges, but Integritive is proactive in addressing them.

He adds the concept of abundance is an area the company is currently focusing on to ensure staff members’ feel they are working and compensated in a manner that allows them to enjoy bounty in all facets of their lives.

To learn more about Integritive, click [here](#).

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