

It's not about the perks

Why strong corporate cultures thrive on purpose

There is more discussion than ever about how to build a “great company culture.” All the news stories and top workplace award recognitions are basically litanies of perks — the more luxurious and indulgent sounding, the better. Our company was recently recognized as the No. 1 Small/Medium Workplace in Illinois, and we do have our fair share of benefits that make our workplace an enjoyable place.



ROBERT PASIN

CEO

Radio Flyer Inc. — started in 1917 by Antonio Pasin, whose dream was “to bring joy to every boy and every girl.”

Robert is known in the company as chief wagon officer and earned his MBA from Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University.

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But, it's not about the perks. It's about the purpose, the people and the products.

At Radio Flyer, our purpose goes back 98 years to when my grandfather started the company by making the very first wagon. He was an Italian immigrant cabinetmaker whose grandfather and father had taught him that making quality products that bring people joy is a thing of great value. They also taught him that he must always treat others as he would like to be treated. This is how my grandfather lived his life, and he passed on these values to my dad and to me.

Every business exists to serve a need and therefore to bring value to people. Here are some of the ways we have brought our purpose to life in our workplace and how you can too.

■ **Tell your origin story** — Whether your business was started six months ago or six decades ago, every company has an origin story that can communicate volumes about the company's purpose. It must answer the question: “Why do we exist and how do we contribute to making a better world?” Don't assume people in your organization know the story

— tell it often. We do this during orientation of new employees and frequently at our monthly company meetings.

- **Challenge people to “grow beyond”** — There are few things more fulfilling for people than to achieve more than they thought was possible. Conversely, there are few things more soul killing than working in a culture of mediocrity. Challenge employees to reach higher and achieve more — you will often be surprised by the result. Then celebrate the success.
- **Connect your product to purpose** — Constantly remind people of how consumers use your products and feel about your products. Share customer emails, online reviews, photos, YouTube videos and any other touch points you have with your customers. Since our products are for kids, we receive many adorable pictures that say a thousand words about the purpose our products are fulfilling.

By connecting your people and products to your company's purpose and challenging employees to achieve greatness while treating them as you wish to be treated, you will build a great company culture that achieves results. The perks are optional. ●



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