

Career Coach

Working to have fun will leave you loving to work



Doyle

The scenario: On June 4, our Business Coaches assigned summer homework. Kelley Doyle asked readers to incorporate “play” at work, then report their stories. What did Kelley hear?

Coach: Kelley Doyle.

Inspired by the book “Fish!,” a quirky management parable based on the success of Seattle’s Pike Place Market, I asked for stories of people fostering energetic and fun work environments. One Charlotte entrepreneur in particular caught my eye, and in an unlikely field – law.

We know the stories of the dot-coms and technology start-ups that have casual dress attire and Ping-Pong tables in the company rec room. But a

law firm? Aren’t they supposed to be serious?

It turns out you can be serious about business and have fun doing it. Michael Miller, founding partner of Business Law Advisors, a Charlotte-based boutique corporate, transactional and entrepreneurial law firm, knows how.

“It’s about relationships, not billable time.” Miller says. He knows that when you enjoy your work environ-

ment and your clients, stressful times are more bearable.

For instance, every August, the firm hosts a day at Lake Norman for clients, colleagues and business friends aboard a triple-decker, 80-foot houseboat. The party includes lunch, margaritas, cigars and of course, water-sports. Miller says it’s a great way to network and while he lightheartedly threatens to toss cell phones in the water if he catches anyone using one; he admits business does get discussed.

A dedication to “high-touch” human service fuels enthusiasm at CaroMount Family Medicine in Lowell-McAdenville. Janet Kelchner, a family nurse practitioner, says, “The crew is bound together by a love for customer service. That equates to a rewarding and happy place to work.” Events such as the annual Halloween party

fosters camaraderie among the workers, helping them get to know each other beyond the desk or hallway.

Businesses that stand out and win customer loyalty bring play into their culture for both employees and customers. As with the people at the fish market, they create their workplace; the workplace doesn’t create them. Think about it. Do you prefer to work with the companies who are open and welcoming? Do you choose the coffee shop that makes you smile? Do you get a little rush when you hear, “Welcome to Moe’s!,” and keep coming back for more?

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