

This is where you
need to draw the line
on casual workplace
habits

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Developing an ideal workplace culture is difficult, to say the least: Factors like the unlimited number of personality types, employees' visions of the ideal employer and the makeup of clients -- in combination -- present challenging and fine lines for owners to deal with as they try to determine what is best for their companies.

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Along the way, those owners will likely consider some of the many ways in which a company can appear casual -- oftentimes, too casual: Employee appearance, location flexibility, even cursing are just a few of the aspects that can either create a well-rounded culture or take one too far.

Wrike's 2016 survey of 1,542 employees found that 57 percent of employee-respondents admitted to swearing in the workplace, yet fully 41 percent called that behavior unprofessional.

"Company culture" has become a buzzword closely associated with employee well-being. But, in a world where companies are performing on a less traditional model, where should the line be drawn between professional and amateur?

Here are four ways to create a casual company culture that toes that line in a way that's just right:

1. Look to your employees.

Ideally, workplace culture should be based off the employees themselves, with some guidance and influence from leaders. Employees are the lifeblood

of companies and should be given freedom -- to an extent -- to mold the business.

While employees are determining what they feel the company's culture should be, they're bound to be watching for cues from leaders. Sixty-six percent of employees in the Wrike survey said they were more likely to swear if their boss did, while only 25 percent reported that that didn't matter.

In order to accurately gauge what will prevail in your workplace culture, hone in on what employees are already doing. What is everyone wearing to work? How do coworkers communicate?

Of course, there will be many differences, from employee to employee. Try one-on-one meetings or an online engagement tool, like , which uses the latest findings from psychology, neuroscience and behavioral economics to gauge the current state of the workplace. Is there one person whose language makes others feel uncomfortable? Consider guidelines that will take overly casual aspects out of your workplace.

2. Refer back to the company mission and values.

These founding principles are the inspiration on which a company's groundwork was laid. Leaders and employees who understand the basis of a mission statement can better grasp what's damaging to the organization's reputation. Referencing them is a good place to start when choosing where to draw the line on workplace casualness.

Make a list of keywords that jump off the page from the mission and vision statement(s) as being the most important. Use this list to assess everything -- and everyone -- involved in making the organization tick.

What is seen and heard around the office? What actions stand out as really mirroring the values of the company? Or, which ones put a big smudge on the checklist? For example, is profanity in the office pushing against these values? If so, create a company policy that eliminates or at least cuts back on this behavior -- after all, no one is ever too old for a " swear jar."

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3. Evaluate the impact on business.

Coworkers throwing around curse words can create a relaxed and comfortable setting in the office, but this habit can also prove detrimental when such words sneak into conversations with clients and other outsiders.

The Wrike survey showed that 94 percent of employee-respondents said they swore more in face-to-face conversations versus email or online communications. This can become a major issue for companies that frequently host client meetings.

Laying down boundaries for employees establishes necessary rules to keep a company's professional image strong, but don't forget about those culture-driving employees. Schedule a team meeting to evaluate what pieces of the casual workplace are hurting relationships with customers.

Managers should be up-front about their own mistakes to create a safe place for employees to open up. As a group, brainstorm ways to keep the casual language inside the office and ensure that everyone understands the consequences of not following the guidelines.

4. Draw the line.

Each organization needs to discover what works not only for its business, but also for each employee and customer. There may be a mixture of employees and clients who either accept casual workplace situations -- like profanity-- or are uncomfortable.

Institute an open-door policy so employees know they can discuss any situation at any time. Managers will gain employees' trust and receive valuable feedback on what's working and what issues need addressed.

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Knowing where the team stands and hearing client feedback gives leaders valuable insight on where to draw the line. Should intrusive casual workplace behaviors get out of hand, be sure that each employee understands what these habits are, why they can't continue, and how to change them.