

A Message from the CEO:

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Massey Knakal: “A People Culture - Part 1”

At Massey Knakal, we've worked hard to foster and maintain a “People” culture. We believe this is one of our competitive advantages. As part of their on boarding process, I personally meet with every new hire to get to know them and to cover some ground rules regarding our company values and culture. A successful hire will understand our basic values from the outset and be able to align themselves with the firm's culture. Our values and culture fall in to two “buckets” centered around 1) personal and professional conduct and 2) expectations of career development. This letter will highlight some key elements of the first bucket – personal and professional conduct. In no particular order, they are:

Maintain A Collegial Manner

We believe that one of the key ingredients of success is high morale. One sure fire way to kill morale is to have people bickering with each other. Our territory system eliminates internal competition. By clearly delineating “turf”, we remove internal conflicts. Another benefit of a territory system is that if your neighbor is strong there is likely more business generated for you – help your neighbor!

Work Hard

We are not a clock punching culture, but we are in a service business. The salesperson who works 80 hours per week does not make two times what the salesperson who works forty hours makes...they make geometrically more! I haven't quite figured out why, but you get the point.

Play Hard

Every person in sales or management at MK is an “A” player and has many other interests outside the firm. We have tri-athletes, actors, wrestling coaches, scout leaders, musicians, pilots and more. We encourage and facilitate people pursuing their outside passions. They would do it anyway. We just make sure they feel very good about all of their accomplishments and successes both at work and play.

24/7

Speaking of “playing hard,” living in a play hard environment does not eliminate a primary responsibility to the firm. MK people are representatives of the firm during their every waking moment, 24/7...period.
Vacation policy

Many times, when we are helping one of our people through a stressful business issue where they are displaying more emotion than usual, we'll ask, “When was your last break or vacation?” The answer is predictably some version of, “Work has just been too crazy for me to get away. It's almost been a whole year.” Take plenty of time away. Reward yourself. Recharge your batteries and you'll be much more effective, calmer, happier and more interesting. Some of my best business ideas occur to me in the back of a plane.

“Being Early Is On Time And Being On Time Is Late”

That's a quote we borrowed from the Bo Schembechler, the famous head football coach of the University of Michigan in the 1960-1970's.

Run At Trouble

Clients are our lifeblood. If something bad happens immediately let the client know along with your thoughts for a possible solution. In our business, there also can be frustrating pauses between offers/activities. Call the client each week (no matter what) to check in. If you've got nothing to tell them just say, “I've got nothing to tell youbut I am thinking about you.” Make the hard calls first.

Return Every Call Every Day

When I was a young agent, I frequently called Sol Goldman (who at the time owned approximately 600 buildings in New York City). He returned every call personally and very promptly. I had the temerity to ask him why he did this – especially with a young rookie like me. He said, “Mr. Massey, do you know why I call everybody back? Because you never know...” At Massey Knakal we return every call every day and encourage our people to respond internally within 2-3 hours at the longest.

Bullpen Layout – No Offices

Visitors are frequently surprised when they visit our offices. Our partners and top agents (along with everybody else) sit at desks in an open “cube” bullpen. No one in the firm has an office. This fosters communication and also provides education and enthusiasm for newer people who get to sit near some of our most skilled and experienced agents. No appointments necessary.

Treat Visitors To The Office As If They Are Visiting Your Home

I had a mentor from my old high school in Boston who worked as the Chairman of a Wall Street firm until he was 106! When I visited him, even at an advanced age, he would walk me to and from the elevator without fail. He would ask me “What's the message to a visitor if they are directed to a conference room where they wait for you to finish your business?” As a result, we encourage everyone at our firm to promptly meet guests at reception and walk each visitor all the way to the elevator – just the way you would treat a cherished guest in your home.

These examples illustrate the personal and professional conduct we expect and experience at Massey Knakal. More on Massey Knakal culture in our next issue.

Warm Regards,

Paul J. Massey, Jr.