Time-Off Policies

We take pride in the culture of [AGENCY]. An important part of our culture is our reasonable flexibility with work schedules and time off. This flexibility is in recognition that our clients’ demands can sometimes require a late night, a weekend or a holiday to help them reach their goals. As a firm, we recognize that to be best at work, you also need time away from work. Every employee has the opportunity to schedule time off from work for time to relax and rejuvenate or when they have family responsibilities to which they must attend.

To facilitate this, we have a policy regarding vacation time, sick days, flex time, maternity and paternity leave, winter weather and more. This structured policy is intended to provide clarity, promote fairness and offer encouragement to take time off for each employee’s health and well-being. It also sets parameters that help us with the firm’s financial goals and planning for the year.

While we are generous in this approach, we are quite serious about advancing – and protecting – the firm and culture we are building together. Anyone who abuses this policy hurts their teammates as well as the firm and our clients...and will be scolded or worse.

***Effective date: January 1, 2016***

***Vacation***

Full-time employees: Associate, Advisor, Senior Advisor

* 15 days off when you start (pro-rated to your start date) for 0 – three years of firm service
* 18 days off after three years of service
* 20 days after five years of service

Full-time employees: Senior Executive Advisor, Vice President, Senior Vice President, plus Creative Director, Growth Manager, Managing Director and other leadership posts

* 18 days off when you start (pro-rated to your start date) for 0 – three years of firm service
* 20 days off after three years of service
* 22 days off after five years of service
* 25 days after seven years of service
* 30 days after 10 years of service

Full-time employees: Creative Team and Support Staff Team

* Operate at the Senior Advisor level for first seven years of service, then move to the Senior Executive Advisor level beyond seven years.

# Sick

Sick days? If you are sick, stay home. Please. We don’t want you here infecting the place. These do not count against your vacation days.

If you're going to be out sick for more than four working days in a row, send in a physician note with anticipated return date. If the illness persists for more than six working days and you anticipate more, discuss disability options with [OFFICE ADMIN].

The firm does not offer short term disability (being out sick continuously in the range of 10 days to 90 days), but the firm does provide each employee coverage for long-term disability for a prolonged illness after 90 days.

# Personal / Flex

In addition to vacation days, the firm offers the opportunity to take a flex day from time to time for personal days, I’m-about-to-have-a-mental-breakdown days or I-need-to-meet-the-repairman days. These moments do not count against your vacation time and can be used as necessary when the moment arises. All full time employees receive three flex days per calendar year. They can be used in half-day increments.

# Holidays

In addition to the above, the firm is closed on nine additional days (or on the observed day in case of falling on a weekend): Good Friday, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year’s Day.

Employees are welcome to take additional national and religious holidays off with use of their vacation allotment. Additional details:

* Vacation is not accrued over time nor does vacation time rollover from one calendar year to the next.
* We don’t pay for unused vacation time if you leave the firm.
* We do track vacation, sick and flex time for your sake as well as the firm’s.
* All [LOCATION] and [LOCATION] staff vacation and personal flex days must be requested via email through [OFFICE ADMIN] with a cc: to your manager and approved in advance, as possible. This is so we have a record of your time off and can plan client work and team coverage accordingly.
* In every case, it is the responsibility of each professional to ensure their time off – in whatever form it takes – causes as little disruption as possible to their clients or colleagues. Let your teams know when you will be out of the office and unavailable, whether it’s a few hours or a week.
* If you go above the time out of the office allotted, you must discuss it with [OFFICE ADMIN] or [OFFICE ADMIN] in advance for approval. Approved vacation days above those allotted per year will be provided as unpaid time off.

***Maternity***

Employees may take up to 12 unpaid weeks for any of the following reasons:

* for the birth and care of the newborn child of the employee;\*
* for placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care;\*
* to care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition; **or**
* to take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition. See the sick leave section above about validation and disability coverage.

\* For female fulltime employees who have been with the firm for more than 12 months, [AGENCY] will pay an employee her full pay for 6 weeks of the 12 weeks she is allowed by law to take after the birth of the newborn child or the adoption of a child.

* If a female fulltime employee has been with the firm for at least 12 months, then there is the option for an extra 4 weeks, in addition to the 12, of unpaid leave for a total of 16 weeks (6 will be paid leave).
* If an employee has been with the firm for under 12 months and takes maternity leave, the 12 weeks will be unpaid.

For male fulltime employees who have been with the firm for more than 12 months, the firm will pay an employee his full pay for 2 weeks (10 business days) after the birth of the newborn child or the adoption of a child without use of vacation days.

***Snow Policy***

**Q: What is our snow policy?**

A: We have no snow policy. We have, we hope, common sense.

Examples of common sense:

* If the morning roads are so dangerous that you think you will die (or, at least, damage your car) while traveling to The Horse Barn or downtown [LOCATION], then work from home in your pajamas.
* If the public transportation is running on a limited schedule due to weather, let [OFFICE ADMIN] know what your plans are.
* If your mode of transportation options improves later in the day, come to the office.

In any case, it remains a work day and client work and team meetings should continue by conference call or other means.

 ***Jury Duty***

The firm will provide employees with leave with full compensation for jury duty as long as the employee gives notice prior to taking jury leave.

***Bereavement***

Bereavement allows an employee to receive paid leave because of the death of a close relative. Employees who wish to take time off for the death of a close relative should notify [OFFICE ADMIN] immediately. Paid bereavement leave of up to three days will normally be granted unless there are unusual client needs or staffing requirements. Additional time off may be granted by request with unused vacation days. A close relative is defined by: spouse, child, father, father-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother, sister, stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, stepsister, stepson, stepdaughter, grandparent, and grandchild.

* In other instances, employees are granted one day of paid bereavement leave in the event of death of the employee’s brother-in-law, sister-in-law, aunt, uncle or spouse’s grandparent.
* In all other circumstances, unused vacation time may be used to attend a funeral.

***Additional Questions, Answers and Clarifications***

**Do we get comp time for working nights, weekends and holidays?**

No, not in the traditional sense. We do realize that client projects take us to far flung locations and sometimes require long or odd hours. It’s a consequence of what we’ve all chosen to do. Instead, we have a generous vacation and flex policy that we hope provides you time for mental relief when you want to take it.

**What if my child or immediate family member is sick and I need to stay home with them?**

We understand that happens and it is part of the work-life balance. If you’re home with a sick family member, that’s a sick day, not a vacation day. But, do make sure your client work and team responsibilities are handled in your absence. While we do not have a set number of sick days, there is firm accountability involved, so if it becomes an issue, we’ll discuss it.

**How do I know how many vacation or flex days I have left?**

[OFFICE ADMIN] will track them and they are readily available whenever you ask or you can be provided with a regular reminder. We recommend checking with [OFFICE ADMIN] from time to time to make sure the record is accurate and avoiding any last minute surprises.

**What about when I’m on vacation and I bill some hours. Does that still count as a vacation day?**

It depends, and we can look at it on a case by case basis, but if you bill and report substantial hours on a vacation day – 4 or more billable hours – it is likely not a vacation day. To be considered, you must contact your account team lead and your manager about it on that day.

**What if I am on vacation for a week and bill a couple of hour each day, do I add those hours together and get a day of vacation back?**

No. This is the nature of our business. It most often is not our colleagues who are asking us to focus on a client during time off, it is the client themselves. It is our hope and intention that this policy, as well as other lifestyle benefits of the firm, help alleviate those occasions when clients require a bit of extra time when we are away.

**Can I work from home?**

Yes, when needed. The culture of the firm is largely based on the energy of the team. If you are working from home, you are not readily available for in person meetings, when a new client call comes and a brainstorming session ensues, a crisis situation or for a quick idea in the hallway. Our service to clients and the team is built upon the creative interaction of being present – we are not a group of independent contractors. It can be easy to serve clients from home; it is much more difficult to lead a client and a team from home. From time to time, there may be a need to work from home (or Starbucks, etc) to get that proposal done or for writing a client’s strategic plan or a change of scenery for a serious of conference calls – get approval from your manager in advance, every time – and then be available by phone and email and turn in your billable and non-billable hours for it to be counted as a work day and not vacation or flex time.

**Can I take a half day of vacation or flex time?**

Yes. But for the half that you are working, you need to bill hours.

**I know the office hours are 8:30 am – 5:30 pm central, but I sometimes need to come in later or leave earlier. How is that handled?**

This occasionally happens to all of us. Because we work with clients across four time zones, our individual hours sometimes vary, but the office hours are when the phone is covered and everyone should be accounted for to some degree. As professionals, that’s the core of when we are available. If you are not in the office during those times, be sure to let [OFFICE ADMIN] know and (here is the important part) ***keep your calendar updated*** so that we will know what to tell clients or team members who are looking for you. If this may become an ongoing schedule change pattern, discuss with your manager.

**I need to go to the doctor, the dentist, or another professional appointment that is unable to be scheduled in the evening or on the weekend. What then?**

Yes, do those things. We understand. Mark it (or, if it’s a private appointment, something that lets us know you’re out for a bit) on your calendar. This is not considered time off.

**What if schools close for weather and I need to stay home with the kids?**

The first choice is to attempt to work from home. If that’s not possible, then you can use a flex day or a vacation day.

**If my plane arrives back home after 11 pm, can I come to the office a little later the next morning?**

As client and team needs allow, yes. Just let [OFFICE ADMIN] and Summer know your plans and mark it on your calendar.

**Do we get to leave early the day before a holiday weekend?**

Often yes, we close the office early. But it’s entirely dependent on client needs and expectations. We will send an email around, but in short, don’t unilaterally make plans for it.

***After reviewing these materials, please sign the vacation policy acceptance form and the employment agreement form (both found on the next few pages), and turn these into [OFFICE ADMIN].***