

MOBI

Mobilizing Powerful Connections

By Symone C. Skrzycki

Open space. Open arms. Open communication.

There's a resounding theme at MOBI, an Indianapolis-based provider of software and services that helps businesses manage mobility.

Green walls encircle a cafeteria scattered with people and board games. The kitchen boasts two refrigerators, a freezer, three microwaves and a Starbucks-inspired area. It's also home to Frank the Tank.

Who's he, you ask? MOBI's own kegerator.

Employees can partake during the last hour of their shifts. There are rules (e.g., consuming a maximum of two beers, using clear glasses from the kitchen), which flank Frank as a friendly reminder.

"I've heard from employees that they love that we treat them as adults. They love that we trust them to give them perks (such

as an on-site theater) that not everybody gets," shares vice president of human resources Julie Ann Poepsel-Smock. "We trust them to be grown-ups, to provide world-class service, and we know that by allowing them to do that, they're going to perform even better."

Human resources manager Kristaan Jenks contends that while she appreciates the fun extras, "for me it goes back to (something deeper). I feel extremely valued and that I'm making an impact. It makes you feel good about what you do. Being a part of something bigger is huge for a lot of people here."

A little piece of 'Nirvana'

The theater area, dubbed the Nirvana Room, is bathed in green, light blue and chocolate

brown colors. A handful of employees – one standing, others relaxing on a sofa or an inviting yellow bean bag – tackle a project. An old-fashioned popcorn maker sits by the door.

It's soon revealed that all of the conference rooms are named after musical artists and/or MOBI's core values (pay attention; own it; work together; expect change; and respect people).

The company was created in 2013 when Mobility Management Services merged with Bluefish Wireless (also a past Best Places to Work honoree). In 2015, MOBI hired 90 new employees (bringing the total to more than 300), continued to expand its operations center and doubled the size of its logistics center.

Communications strategist Reid McDowell and creative manager Ryan Simmons are eager to share their perspectives on life at MOBI. McDowell enjoys the open layout ("we're all together") and the fact that "if you have an idea, you can chase it down and do it."

Simmons will celebrate five years with MOBI this fall. What's made him want to stay?

"It's always been the culture, I think, for me," he reflects. "There were 70 to 80 people when I joined up. But (despite rapid growth), the same energy still exists. It's fast paced, fun, relaxed. It's been exciting and comfortable."

Cultivating camaraderie, change

In addition to staff outings, spontaneous movie viewings, video game battles and other social outlets, employees enrich bonds through MOBI Connect. People with similar interests – trail running, soccer, yoga, playing pool and even the popular *Game of Thrones* drama – get to know one another by forming small groups.

Similarly, MOBI builds rapport by showing employees that their input matters.

"We love being on the Best Places to Work list. Last year, we weren't on it and it was hard for us," Poepsel-Smock acknowledges. "We don't participate because we get to have (an award) framed and put in our entrance. We do it because we really like the feedback we get from the reports. It's insightful. It's hurtful sometimes, but it's necessary."

She and Jenks praise benefits and wellness manager Jodi Weis for spearheading efforts to address employees' desire for more health care options. One solution: video visits utilizing Doctor on Demand.



Hitting the courts in honor of MOBI (March) Madness.



A peaceful ambience takes ingenuity to new heights in the Nirvana Room.



Seeking a bit of privacy or solitude? Step into a soundproof phone booth.

“People love it,” Jenks shares. “It’s like FaceTime. You can do it on your computer or on an app on your phone.”

Knowledge is ‘power’

Poepsel-Smock points out that although MOBI adopts a “work hard, play hard” philosophy, “we’ve grown up a lot in the last few years. It stopped being as much about ping pong and taco bars, and started to become more about developing our employees and investing in them and their future – whether or not they choose to stay at MOBI

(and) we hope they do.

“Certainly, if you need to work off some steam or there’s someone you haven’t seen in a while, go and have a ping pong game or talk in the theater, but it’s more about for me, creating that environment where I can learn from them. We’re collaborative. We’re solving problems. But at the end of the day, it’s providing that world-class service for MOBI.”

MOBI Power Academy, which combines in-person and online training, inspires employees to take a proactive role in career development. It spans a plethora of topics, such as soft skills, a new manager boot camp, Excel basics and financial wellness.

“Some of them are a little more on the personal development side, which we’re just as passionate about as the professional because we feel like the two blend together,” Poepsel-Smock asserts.

Indeed, MOBI is a place where careers can flourish in a short amount of time.

Service metrics manager Billy Calhoun, who joined the organization two years ago, is a prime example. He’s earned multiple promotions – not to mention bragging rights by winning cornhole tournaments.

“In terms of culture, I love it,” he declares.

“Last year, we had 50 internal promotions,” Jenks chimes in. “I think that’s why we have such low turnover. When people prove themselves and have ideas or want to take something under their wing and take charge of it, they (members of the leadership team) let you do that. And when you prove yourself, they give opportunities to folks that really want them and earn them.

“That’s pretty awesome.”

RESOURCE: MOBI at www.MOBlwm.com