



INDUSTRY
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Shay Hughes is chief operating officer and owner of Hughes Marino, a nationally recognized commercial real estate firm committed to only representing tenants in their lease and purchase transactions. Hughes manages the end-to-end operations of the firm and plays a key role in all aspects of business strategy, human resources, marketing, and client relations. She has been instrumental in shaping Hughes Marino’s culture, spearheading the development of the company’s ten core values, and investing great time and energy into building a world-class team of professionals who are not only at the top of their game in business, but also treat one another like family.

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**LEARNING LESSONS THROUGH
CONSUMER-FACING SUCCESS
STORIES FROM GOOGLE, APPLE,
AND DROPBOX**

**THE
COMMON
THREAD
BETWEEN
AWARD-
WINNING
COMPANIES**

What is every company’s greatest strength and also its greatest limitation to growth? People. Finding the right people to grow a company is the single biggest contributor to and constraint on the success and growth of an organization. In other words, it’s extremely important!

As someone who leads operations and talent engagement at our company, I sometimes challenge our team on what we are looking for. Does depth of experience or a specific skill set trump cultural fit or communication style? Is it really all that important that candidates feel connected to our mission and grateful for the opportunity to join our team? Does it make sense to hire someone with incredible character who is perfectly aligned with our core values, yet knows nothing about our industry and seems teachable? At times, I wonder if our diligent search for the right people is more happy talk than stone cold facts. But at the end of the day, engaging the best talent possible is as complex and challenging as there are types of people out there – and for our company, this search strategy has proven to be tremendously rewarding.

In interviews, I frequently find myself passionately telling new candidates that we truly love our team, and that taking care of our team is our greatest motivation as owners of a growing company. While it might be foreign to hear the word “love” emphatically repeated in a job interview, this approach has served us well. Caring deeply about our team members is what empowers our team to care deeply about our clients. We’re fortunate to be recognized by *Fortune* as one of the Top 10 best

QUOTE:

WE'RE FORTUNATE TO BE RECOGNIZED BY FORTUNE AS ONE OF THE TOP 10 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN THE NATION AND BY ENTREPRENEUR AS THE SECOND-BEST COMPANY CULTURE IN THE COUNTRY, SO WHETHER IT'S HAPPY TALK OR NOT, FINDING TEAMMATES WHO FEEL LIKE FAMILY AND EMBRACE WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT SERVES US AND OUR CLIENTS WELL.

places to work in the nation and by *Entrepreneur* as the second-best company culture in the country, so whether it's happy talk or not, finding teammates who feel like family and embrace what we're all about serves us and our clients well.

Bringing in the Best

Don't just take my word for it. The best companies in the world second the value of recruiting the best people and making them a first priority. Consider Apple, one of the most admired companies of all time, with the highest ranking in customer satisfaction for a decade. Steve Jobs said, "The secret of my success is that we have gone to exceptional lengths to hire the best people in the world." Note, he doesn't just say "great" people, but the "best" people in the world. That's a pretty lofty ambition, but so is building a company like Apple.

One of my favorite business leaders of all time is Howard Schultz of Starbucks. Everything you need to know about business you could learn from Schultz. The guy is simply a genius who gets it right on every level. One of the things I admire most about Schultz is that he talks about the love of the enormous Starbucks family, from the coffee growers in Africa, to the thousands of baristas in their

cafés, to the communities Starbucks inhabits and empowers. Schultz's ability to consistently instill his vision and leadership worldwide is remarkable and awe-inspiring. How is it possible to have the same impeccable experience in the original Seattle Starbucks as you do in Istanbul, Shanghai, and Buenos Aires? Having been to Starbucks in all these cities, I can vouch firsthand that Schultz's dream of delivering the romance of the Starbucks experience is consistently executed around the world. Starbucks knows how important it is to invest in employees, called "partners" by the company. Schultz believes if you exceed your employees' expectations, they will exceed the expectations of your clients. "When you're surrounded by people who share a passion around a common purpose, anything is possible," says Schultz.

Kim Scott has helped build teams at Google, Apple, Dropbox, and Twitter, as well as her own start-up, Candor, Inc. where she champions the "radical candor" movement, so to say Scott knows something about finding great talent is an understatement. "Building a kickass team starts with something incredibly simple – not a big company process, but something you already know how to do: Get to know people at a fundamental human

level," she says. "This is one of the most important – and also the most enjoyable – parts of your job as a leader."

For years, Scott worked side by side with Google co-founder and CEO Larry Page. Their mission? To create the happiest workplace in the world. With clarity like that, it's not surprising that Google has topped just about every list ever published of best places to work. What is unorthodox is Page's ambition to align Google's culture with that of a family, where nurturing and caring for their people has defined their inspiring and celebrated culture. With more than 40,000 employees, what's the one secret Page attributes to the tech giant's cultural success? It all boils down to treating each person as family. "It's important that the company be a family, that people feel that they're part of the company, and that the company is like a family to them," Page says.

The common thread behind award-winning companies? It's outstanding people. These companies understand the critical importance of finding the best people to enhance their organization and treating those individuals like gold. From this treatment stems a love for the company they work for, which ultimately leads to success.