Revolutionizing Work Culture: Insights from Bookminders' CEO Jessica Minkus

In a recent episode of the "Better People Podcast," Host Margaret Uhrich sat down with Bookminders' CEO, Jessica Minkus, to delve into the company's unique work culture and insights on building a successful remote-first environment.

Bookminders' Pioneering Approach to Remote Work

The discussion kicked off with a glimpse into Bookminders' history, highlighting its unique approach developed by Founder Tom Joseph. Bookminders provides a comprehensive outsourced accounting solution to nonprofits and small to medium-sized businesses, prioritizing employee flexibility in a home-based, remote-first setup. Joseph's approach revolutionized the accounting employment model, attracting highly qualified candidates seeking part-time professional roles. Leveraging the company's unique resources and cloud-based platform, Bookminders offers true professional opportunities for accountants requiring flexible schedules. With a physical presence in multiple locations throughout the United States, and a vision for accelerated organic growth, Bookminders stands as a leader in remote-first accounting opportunities.

Three Key Elements of Bookminders' Culture

Margaret cited Jessica's passion for creating a positive culture and asked Minkus to describe a few of the key elements involved in the process: an employee-centric approach, comprehensive and evolving standards and procedures, and employee support resources like the recently launched Team Adviser mentorship program.

Jessica defines the heart of Bookminders' culture, an employee-centric approach where business decisions are primarily based on the impact on employees. The company places a high priority on obtaining feedback and implementing employee-offered solutions, resulting in a workforce that feels heard, valued, and dedicated. Jessica notes that, *"90% of our employees say that they're going to stay with us for over three years or longer....100% of them are saying that...our expectations are realistic. We're providing them the tools to do their job and...communication is effective."* For staff, working at Bookminders is *"...a lifestyle....[people like] having the flexibility, they like the supported autonomy...our employees love doing their job. They could not imagine going back to a nine-to-five desk job."*

Uhrich and Minkus then discuss Bookminders' focus on consistency and well-defined procedures. While not as glamorous, they are critical, especially for remote workers. Jessica relays that Bookminders has documented procedures for 95% of employees' work tasks, providing clarity on expectations and ensuring reliability and consistency in service delivery.

Margaret then prompts Jessica to describe an example of the third key item: Bookminders' Team Advisors program. Recognizing the need for additional employee support to fuel internal and external growth, Minkus and her team introduced the mentorship program in the fall of 2023 to facilitate professional growth and development. Minkus explains how Advisers, selected based on institutional knowledge, expertise, and accounting specialty, are matched with advisees considering personality fits and communication style. Mentoring teams meet monthly, and advisees have the flexibility to reach out to their Adviser at any time throughout the workweek.

Jessica elaborates on why Advisers were quick to accept their roles, highlighting the opportunity for staff to grow into management positions without the administrative workload or full-time requirement. She describes how the program's monthly meetings between Advisers and senior leadership foster open communication and

collaboration, enhancing the efficiency of Bookminders' already robust business model.

Minkus emphasizes how information quickly cascades down throughout the company, stating, *"…everyone is accelerating their learning…they're learning from others instead of learning solely from their own experiences."*

Minkus and Uhrich discuss how, given Bookminders' commitment to promoting from within, programs like this are crucial for growth and succession planning. Jessica describes the overwhelming enthusiasm with which the program was met, as every staff member offered the opportunity to become an Adviser accepted it. *"All of a sudden, everyone was just thrilled about the opportunity to…be a mentor to somebody else."* Minkus shares the incredible feedback from a long-tenured employee who stated the program *"is THE best thing that [Bookminders has] done… for the organization and supporting the employees."*

A Future of Continued Growth

Looking ahead, Minkus is enthusiastic about expanding Bookminders' impact across the United States. With its supportive, noncompetitive environment and focus on flexibility and excellence, the company is well-positioned for rapid expansion while maintaining its exceptional work culture. Minkus emphasizes that growth at Bookminders is not about outdoing anyone else, but rather about individuals putting forth their best efforts, while supporting their teammates and choosing a career path that suits them best.

“Everyone has their own lane, and we’ve truly individualized the experience at Bookminders…they can choose how much they want to work. They can choose if they want to add a client to their portfolio or if they need to remove one. They have options, they have choices.” “They have the ability to get involved in other departments, to try different things…all the doors are open for everyone, and it’s up to them if they want to walk through them.”

Minkus’ leadership philosophy underscores the importance of agility and adaptability in a dynamic business environment. As Bookminders continues to grow, its employee-centric focus, comprehensive procedures, and innovative support programs ensure that its remarkable culture will scale with it.

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