

Parade Stone Writing Samples

Updated April 2021

EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

Client: Acheloa Wellness, an executive wellness coaching

Role Description: I was hired to create a wellness email campaign for Acheloa Wellness



A handwritten 'Thank you' message in a cursive script, rendered in a light purple color. The text is written in a fluid, elegant style with a large 'T' and a long, sweeping 'y'.

Hi Parade

Thank you for joining the Acheloa Wellness community! You are now a part of a network of passionate and dynamic professionals like yourself. Through our biweekly emails, you'll receive resources to help you better prioritize your mental, emotional and physical health, even during the busiest of work weeks.

Subject: Thanks for joining!

Hi Parade,

Thank you for joining the Acheloa Wellness community! You are now a part of a network of passionate and dynamic professionals like yourself. Through our biweekly emails, you'll receive resources to help you better prioritize your mental, emotional and physical health, even during the busiest of work weeks.

A Little Bit More About Us...

[Acheloa Wellness](#) is an Executive Wellness Coaching firm committed to reducing stress and burnout for hardworking professionals. We are transforming the corporate landscape by providing today's ambitious and committed workforce with tools for empowerment.

Whether you're learning to set healthy boundaries or to eat foods that align with your body's natural rhythm, we are confident that you'll conquer your goals when you feel your most balanced and grounded.

Empowered. Transformed. Together, We Thrive.

What We Offer

- [Executive Wellness Coaching](#) for Individuals (and Groups Programs)
- [Ayurvedic Health](#) Consultations and Cleanses
- Yoga and Reiki [Remote Private Healing Sessions](#)
- [Customized Trainings](#) and Keynotes for Corporations

Now more than ever, we must tend to our bodies and minds as much as we focus on other personal and professional responsibilities. In a time that can exacerbate feelings of isolation and overwhelm, we are happy to welcome you into our community.

Check out our [blog](#) where we unpack our stressors and the benefits of Ayurveda, an evidence-based science focused on longevity to find aligned health.

I look forward to supporting you on your amazing journey.

Be Well,

Lauren Baptiste
CEO & Executive Wellness Coach



Hi Parade,

Did you know that 75-90% of all doctor visits occur due to stress-related health concerns? Think about your last couple of appointments. Perhaps, you've met with a gastroenterologist to discuss frequent acid reflux and heartburn. Or maybe, you visited your dermatologist because you've experienced adult acne. Were you going through a stressful time when you made these appointments? I would venture to guess that answer is yes.

Subject: If you don't focus on your wellness, you will focus on your illness

Hey Parade,

Did you know that 75-90% of all doctor visits occur due to stress-related health concerns? Think about your last couple of appointments. Perhaps, you've met with a gastroenterologist to discuss frequent acid reflux and heartburn. Or maybe, you visited your dermatologist because you've experienced adult acne. Were you going through a stressful time when you made these appointments? I would venture to guess that answer is yes.

Health issues so often stem from the effects of stress. This is because stress wreaks absolute havoc on our bodies. When your body confronts stress, it releases cortisol into your bloodstream. Cortisol is a hormone that elicits our "fight-or-flight" response. If you are constantly anxious your body essentially reacts as if you are facing an emergency at all times.

With all those stress hormones coursing through your bloodstream, it's no wonder your body is acting out. This brings me to my key point: If you don't prioritize your wellness, you will have to prioritize your illness.

When I work with highly productive professionals, I always ask about their physical health. How does their body feel each day? Are they ignoring any warning signs from their body? As highly motivated individuals, sometimes we forget to check in with ourselves. We prioritize work over our health because a little heartburn or acne isn't so bad, right? Wrong! These symptoms are your body's way of alerting you to a bigger problem.

It can be tempting to sacrifice your physical comfort and wellbeing for the sake of your career. But Ultimately, if we don't prioritize our health, we won't be able to sustain doing the work we love. Eventually burnout will catch up to us.

I believe that everyone is capable of balancing their career aspirations with their health. Perhaps we don't attain our goals as quickly if we're also tending to our body's needs and that is okay! Wouldn't you rather climb a mountain feeling great than arrive at the top on the brink of collapse?

I understand that creating a plan to prioritize wellness while meeting your goals can feel daunting. I am ready and eager to help you on your journey. Book a FREE breakthrough session and we will come up with a customized gameplan to help you get started.

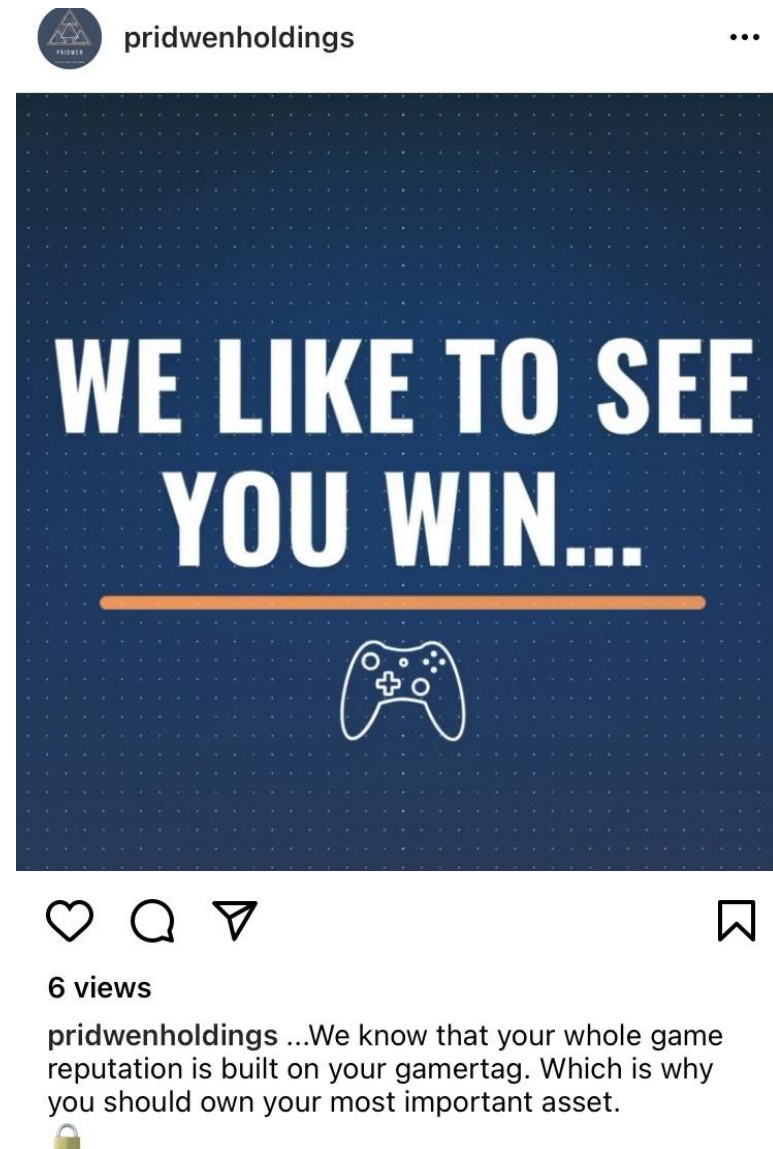
Be well,

Lauren

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Client: Pridwen, a gamer-tag licensing company

Role Description: I was hired to write captions for images that will promoted on Instagram and Facebook





pridwenholdings



5 likes

pridwenholdings If you're a [#gamer](#) or [#streamer](#) then you know your gamertag is your identity. Let us help you protect it. Click the link in our bio to learn more. 🎮

1. Caption: You're a great gamer. You fight to shield yourself from imminent danger in the virtual world. Let Pridwen shield you from potential virtual identity theft. Registering your gamer-tag with Pridwen means protecting your digital identity and assets. We'll focus on identifying virtual thieves, you focus on identifying your next move. [#gaming](#) [#digitalassets](#) [#pridwenprotection](#)
2. Caption: When it comes to gaming, your gamer-tag is the key to your reputation. Defend your online identity with Pridwen. When you register your gamer-tag with Pridwen, you enlist the help of a company to protect your brand and online presence. We shield your gamer-tag from identity theft, you preserve your gamer reputation. [#gaming](#) [#digitalassets](#) [#pridwenprotection](#)

3. Caption: Are you on a winning streak in your gaming platform? Defend your title by shielding your gamer identity from theft. Register your gamer-tag with Pridwen to ensure legal ownership of your digital assets and protection against gaming identity theft.
#gaming #digitalassets #pridwenprotection
4. Did you know Pridwen is the name of the shield that protected King Arthur through many battles? From 6th century skirmishes on the battlefield, to 21st fights on a Nintendo Switch, Pridwen continues to protect its users. If you're a gamer, register your gamer-tag with Pridwen to ensure legal ownership over your gamer-tag. We'll shield your digital assets so you can focus on the fight. #gaming #digitalassets #pridwenprotection
5. Include in Graphic: Pridwen: A New Kind of Shield for Gamers #gaming #digitalassets #pridwenprotection
6. Include in Graphic: Battle virtual enemies and shield your digital assets from real ones
7. Caption: You might be a great gamer, but are you under great protection? Take the next to step to protect your gamer identity, reputation and digital assets with Pridwen. Register your gamer-tag with Pridwen today and we'll help you trademark your gamer-tag and shield your digital assets from virtual identity theft. #gaming #digitalassets #pridwenprotection
8. Caption: Are you working to become a successful gamer? You've probably realized that gaming has transformed from a hobby to a powerful opportunity for financial gain. If you made an investment, wouldn't you want to protect it? Shield your digital assets as you would your player and register your gamer-tag with Pridwen. #gaming #digitalassets #pridwenprotection
9. Caption: When you're a great gamer, you know your way around the gaming world. If you're feeling lost when it comes to protecting your gaming identity, Pridwen is here to help. We help you manage your brand by shielding you from gamer identity theft and teaching you the ins and outs of trademarking your gamer-tag. Take the next step in your gamer career with Pridwen. #gaming #digitalassets #pridwenprotection
10. Caption: When you win a game, chances are you know the importance of a strong defense. Think of Pridwen as your shield against virtual identity thieves. Your digital asset is valuable. Protect yourself and your right to legally own your gamer-tag with Pridwen. #gaming #digitalassets #pridwenprotection

BLOG CONTENT

Client: Acheloa Wellness

Role Description: I was hired to ghostwrite content for the Acheloa Wellness blog

Article Link: <https://www.acheloawellness.com/post/benefits-of-turmeric-milk>

Get to Know the Benefits of Turmeric Milk



Get to Know the Benefits of Turmeric Milk

Sometimes, there's nothing better than a steamy latte in the morning or a warm cup of tea before bed. Whether you're a coffee or tea drinker, I recommend that you consider swapping one of your morning or nighttime beverages for a soothing cup of turmeric milk.

Also known as Golden milk, this comforting beverage nourishes your body, promotes digestive and reproductive health, and stabilizes the Vata Ayurvedic dosha, particularly during autumn and winter. With all of these wonderful benefits, who wouldn't want to add this yummy beverage to their daily routine?

Golden Milk Recipe Ayurveda

Have you heard of bulletproof coffee? This popular trend calls for a surprising secret ingredient in your typical coffee preparation process: Butter. That's right; the addition of fat aids digestion in this acidic beverage and helps to taper the release of caffeine, giving the drinker a more regulated boost of energy.

You can consider this recipe for bulletproof golden milk, a healthier alternative to coffee. By swapping out milk for coffee, you avoid the anxiety that caffeine can elicit. Additionally, if you replace the butter with ghee (butter without the milk solids), you will soothe your digestive tract. So, without further ado, let's get into this turmeric milk recipe:

Ingredients:

- Turmeric root (fresh)
- Ginger root (fresh)
- 1 tsp Ghee
- ¼ tsp Cinnamon
- ⅛ tsp Cardamom
- Pinch Nutmeg
- Pinch Ajwain powder
- 2 cups whole milk (non-homogenized, if possible)
- 1 cup filtered water (optional: reduces the unctuous quality)

Preparation:

1. Peel and grate the turmeric and ginger root in order to make a paste. You can also use a blender or food processor. If you produce excess paste, no worries! It will keep in the fridge for four days or you can store it in the freezer
2. In a small saucepan, sauté 1 tablespoon of turmeric/ginger paste with approximately 1 tsp of ghee (enough to moisten the paste). Sauté for 2 minutes.
3. Add cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg and ajwain to taste to the ghee and paste mixture.
4. Pour in 2 cups of milk and optional 1 cup of water. Bring mixture to a boil and then reduce heat. Simmer for 5 minutes.
5. Serve hot. There is no need to strain, the turmeric/ginger pieces are beneficial.

Vegan Alternatives

If you are vegan and prefer not to use ghee and whole milk, I recommend combining coconut oil with oat milk. Although there is no substitute for the nutrients provided by a cultured ghee or raw, non-homogenized milk, you can still reap many of the benefits of the recipe. The warmed spices will support your digestive, reproductive and overall health.

The Benefits of Turmeric Milk

You may already know that turmeric (the spice that gives the golden milk its trademark golden color) has anti-inflammatory properties. But did you know that according to Ayurvedic thought, milk provides many health benefits as well? The beverage is actually considered a power food when it comes to penetrating the body's 7 dhatus or layers of tissue (bones, nervous system, muscles, fat, blood, plasma, and reproductive tissue).

Golden Milk for Better Sleep

When my clients complain of sleep deprivation, I always suggest making spiced milk in the evening. The grounding quality will ease a restless mind, particularly during movement-driven Vata seasons.

Bulletproof Milk for a Balanced Morning

Many of us begin our mornings with a cup of coffee or black tea. While I understand the desire for a boost of energy during a groggy morning, caffeine can clog your digestive track and create unnecessary anxiety. If you cannot let go of caffeine, even swapping your second cup for golden milk will do wonders for your digestion.

Enrich Your Day With a Cup of Turmeric Milk

Whether you're keeping yourself grounded during the day or readying yourself for sleep, this golden milk recipe nourishes your body. I consider taking the time to make yourself something delicious an act of self-care. This drink is like a warm embrace for your mind, body and spirit. I hope you try drinking golden milk and feel the effects of its many health benefits grounding you, especially during Vata times.

If you're curious to learn more about recipes like these as well as the benefits of incorporating Ayurvedic practices into your life, schedule your free breakthrough session and we can create a personalized plan to help you thrive in 2021.

Client: Homestead Hemp, a health and beauty shop

Role: Blog Contributor for Website Relaunch

Article Link:

<https://homesteadhemp1787.com/women-in-business-direction-amidst-uncertainty/>



Women in Business: Direction Amidst Uncertainty

If you are discovering Homestead Hemp, you may know a thing or two about the company's farm grown [CBD and hemp products](#). Whether you're a CBD enthusiast or a newbie, take a moment to get to know Iris Rogers, the company founder and CEO. Rogers is an outspoken feminist, entrepreneur and champion of women in leadership roles.

Like many farmers navigating the burgeoning world of regulated cannabis and hemp, Rogers is in the midst of quite the balancing act: starting a small business, pioneering a brand new industry and all the while, facing the abundant challenges of gender inequality in the United States.

True to form, men hold a disproportionate percentage of leadership roles in the cannabis industry. [According to Forbes](#), as of April 2019 only 17.6% of women hold a "Director" or "Executive" role in cannabis companies across the US. This doesn't even account for the vast disparity in cannabis business owners within communities of color. As of 2017, [less than 5%](#) of stakeholders of cannabis companies were people of color.

Are these disappointing statistics? Yes. Are we shocked? No, of course not. Issues of inequality for marginalized people aren't exactly a new phenomenon in any field. As we continue to hold space for the voices of those least represented, it is not only inspiring but necessary to acknowledge the triumphs of marginalized leaders.

As Rogers continues to grow a company that embraces ethical practices as well as strives to promote equality, she looks to other women leaders for support, guidance and inspiration. As an acknowledgement of all the badass women out there building their careers, we want to introduce you to these three entrepreneurs and their important work.

Jean L. Chou: JLC & Associates

Jean L. Chou, Esq. passed the bar exam in 2009, the same year she began building a strong client base for her firm, [JLC & Associates](#). The real estate firm celebrated their 10-year anniversary in May, amidst planning for an office move, a transition to remote working and of course, the Covid-19 pandemic.

If you think starting a law firm is an easy task (you probably don't, it sounds objectively difficult), then consider the most recent statistics for women in legal fields. According to the [American Bar Association's 2019 Commission on Women](#), as of April 2019, women made up 38% of staff in legal professions as opposed to the 62% of men working in law. And then, of course, there's the ever-pervasive pay gap. As of 2018, women lawyers made 80% of male lawyers' salaries.

Despite these daunting barriers, Chou speaks of her legal practice with the ease and confidence of someone who knows exactly where she's meant to be. When describing the seeds of her trailblazing career path, she recounts an interest in entrepreneurship from an early age. Chou laughs as she recalls selling soap bars on Ebay in high school over summer break: "I've always been really drawn towards having something of my own."

Chou built JLC & Associates to be a firm that practices law with compassion and integrity. Her team represents a host of clients, from business owners looking for commercial leasing to individuals looking to purchase or sell a home. Her firm offers pro bono work to organizations that actively support their communities, including GLAAD and the New York City Bar Justice Center.

As Covid-19 continues to set in motion massive systemic change, Chou confronts her relationship with her role as a leader: "It's been a really humbling, eye opening journey because a lot of us (entrepreneurs) entered 2020 with certain visions of growth. I think you really start to test your own values and integrity when you're facing a loss or the opposite of what you perceive as success."

Much like the values that her law firm promotes, Chou rose to the occasion with compassion and integrity. She worked to keep her staff employed and adapted to the changes in business

throughout the pandemic. Her perseverance reflects the values she sees in her mother, a practicing dermatologist.

Chou's mother immigrated to the United States from Kaohsiung, a city in southern Taiwan. When she was 33, she started medical school while pregnant with Chou. As she reflects on her upbringing, she describes her mother with admiration: "I think I've inherited her work ethic...She always said as long as you work hard for it, it'll come. It just reminds you to focus on long term goals."

It is clear that Chou's propensity toward thorough, long-term planning contributes to her effective leadership style. I was inspired by her assured and professional demeanor, even in the face of a global emergency. And her moments of vulnerability as she described her family only highlight the combination of strength and humanity that true leadership requires.

Tegan Miller: MTC Music Academy

Tegan Miller juggled *a lot* of jobs before founding [MTC Music Academy](#). Thanks to her many talents (and NYC's exorbitant rent), Miller's professional music career has included voice coaching, music directing, choral conducting, teaching music to both adults and children, and performing live.

After years of freelance work, Miller noticed the joy she felt from voice coaching and how little time she had to devote to teaching. "I wanted to teach on my own terms, on my own schedule and teach the methodologies that I believe in most," she explains. She hired a business coach for some extra guidance and thus, MTC was born.

MTC stands for Musicianship, Technique and Confidence, the three pillars that support Miller's pedagogical philosophy. It is clear to me that her own foundational creative beliefs reinforce the core values of her academy. "Music is for everyone. I believe that people have everything they need inside of them, they just need a little guidance," she confidently asserts.

Miller opened up her academy to students in December 2019. Just as she began to find her footing as a new business owner, pandemic safety procedures forced her to quickly adapt to online teaching and learning.

Despite the formidable task of moving forward in unfamiliar territory, her business has only grown. In fact, she recently moved to Georgia and plans to expand MTC to her new home state in addition to furthering the development of the New York location. Additionally, she channeled her love of music into a women's choir that she led via Zoom throughout quarantine.

Miller isn't afraid to dream big when it comes to MTC: "I see MTC growing much larger past me into something much bigger because I really believe in the philosophy and the methodology and the approach. I would love to see it grow across many cities, many countries, many teachers and therefore, affect the lives of many, many students."

Miller leads her students and teaching staff with a steady hand and compassionate heart. While her impressive resume speaks for itself, she never assumes she's finished learning. In her words, "Music and I have a deep, deep love. I could probably say that it used to be a love-avoid relationship...but it's like my best friend. Once I realized that, our relationship got stronger." Her teaching philosophy continues to encourage students to form their own ever-growing relationships to music.

Marla Louissaint: Claim Our Space Now

The same week that the theatre world paused all programming to stop the spread of Covid-19, Marla Louissaint prepared herself to begin tech rehearsals in what would've been her Public Theater debut. As her quarantine continued, images and videos of Black people murdered at the hands of police spread with relentless frequency.

The overwhelming combination of state sanctioned violence and growing civil unrest dropped a match in Louissaint's reserve of emotional gasoline; she'd had enough. She partnered with Dimitri Joseph Moise, a fellow actor, activist and national HIV spokesperson. In just two months, Louissaint and her network built [Claim Our Space Now](#), a non profit organization that facilitates what she describes as the "swiss army knife of activism."

The need for organization and correct information fueled Louissaint's concerns in regards to the activism surrounding the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, as well as the fight to dismantle white supremacy. She explains, "I truly do see a lack of resources for people...If we want to be steadfast in this fight, we have to have a trusted source of information that's fact checked - that's beyond journalism and Instagram."

Three core tenets shape the work of Claim Our Space Now: Inform, Inspire and Speak Truth to Power. The organization provides a wide variety of offerings including a national resource directory. Anyone in need of support can search through helpful filters like "Queer Safe Spaces," "Reproductive Health" and "Legal Aid/Bail Funds" in order to connect with the organization's vetted resources. Additionally, Claim Our Space Now partnered with HeadCount.org, GLAAD, Swing From Home and Drag Out the Vote for their [Claim the Vote](#) initiative. Through their work with these advocacy organizations, the team aims to educate new voters and ensure that intersectional and intergenerational communities are counted in the census and registered to vote.

Under Louissaint's mission to 'Inspire', the organization promotes Black artists from a variety of mediums. The site features its multifaceted founder modeling in a series of photos that she curated. Louissaint strives to visually represent a Black woman's journey to empowerment in her work: "She's stepping into her power, into her sexuality (despite) whatever they call her - a jezebel or the strong Black woman trope...She stands in her truth."

A model, activist, performer, and computer science major at Fordham University, Louissaint speaks about how her many skills inform her style of leadership: "I realized I can use my computer science knowledge and I can also use my love of art, knowing that art is the true vehicle that's been at the helm of every revolution."

In speaking with Louissaint, I was struck by how comfortable she seemed in her role as a changemaker. "I am a rebel through and through," she proudly states. In a culture that has for so long taught women, and Black women in particular, not to embrace their power, Louissaint unapologetically claims her space as a leader.

Final Thoughts

Through my interviews with Chou, Miller and Louissaint, and my work with Rogers, I've learned that great leadership requires as much vulnerability as it does strength. With the help of the trusted support system they've built for themselves, these women leaders continue to pave their paths with confidence, compassion and the courage to keep educating themselves.

Get to know the good work they're doing in the websites linked above! And if you're a product of a 21st century upbringing like me, check out their Instagram pages: [@jlclaw](#), [@mtcmusicacademy](#) and [@claimourspace](#)now.

CONTENT WRITING

Client: JLC & Associates, Real Estate Law Firm

Role Description: I was hired to write short articles about the JLC staff. The founder of JLC plans to send the articles within an email campaign for her clients

A Drive Emblematic of New York Itself: Get to Know Alison C. Gaskin

Alison C. Gaskin, Esq., Managing Attorney at JLC & Associates, began her work with the firm through an internship in 2013. She met Jean L. Chou Esq., founder and Principal Attorney of the firm, while studying at New York Law School. The upward mobility of her job history speaks to her talents as an attorney and as a team member. Think about it - how many of us can say our early career internship turned into nearly eight years of employment with a successful law firm?

Gaskin developed an interest in law early in life as teachers frequently suggested that she could be a lawyer when she grew up. Gaskin chuckles as she explains, “I was one of those kids who was always the die hard defender of anyone. I have a lot of siblings and I was always going to bat for them when I felt they were being treated unjustly.”

Gaskin cultivated a passion for real estate law when she worked for a title company after receiving her undergraduate degree from Fordham University. As she worked alongside the company’s staff of attorneys, she learned the intricacies of real estate law and admired the fast-paced intensity of the industry. “Every day is different from the last,” she explains with satisfaction.

A Queens native, Gaskin likens the spirit of New York City to that of real estate law: “...it really requires a certain type of drive. It’s emblematic of New York itself.” This fierce tenacity allowed Gaskin to rise to the occasion when the city quickly became the epicenter of the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving her and her husband to work from home while raising their two-year-old son. Gaskin is grateful to work remotely and prioritize her health during this time but acknowledges the difficulties of those early, uncertain days: “Kudos to all the working parents out there because it is one of the hardest things we’ve had to do.”

In addition to navigating parenthood along with today’s ever-changing work landscape, Gaskin is expecting her second child shortly after the new year. Despite this potentially overwhelming combination of challenges, Gaskin moves forward with that same New York City tenacity: “You don’t know what you can do until you just do it.”

The JLC & Associates team maintains a strong focus on supporting each other in order to service their clients with the quality level of care and attention to detail associated with the firm. Gaskin and Chou emphasized the importance of teambuilding from the beginning of the pandemic as they decided to implement a daily group Zoom meeting to foster a sense of community. Gaskin exclaims in disbelief, “We had never used Zoom before!”

Gaskin values her title as a team leader and an attorney. The intrinsic qualities of both roles influence her approach to her work: “When I first started with the firm, something Jean said that always stuck with me is that as attorneys, we are service providers...And that’s how I’ve always tried to consider myself. The service aspect of it is paramount to our firm and how we operate.”

Gaskin will be on maternity leave for the first quarter of 2021. She feels hopeful for the firm as well as for her return in the second quarter: “I think we all feared the worst in 2020... We pulled through it so I’m really excited for the growth that we can see in 2021.”

Client: Acheloa Wellness

Role: Ghostwriter for article published in Forbes

Published: January 21, 2021

Article Link:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ellevate/2021/01/04/thirty-companies-in-thirty-days-real-time-insights-on-the-importance-of-employee-health/?sh=2a0d2c081866>

Thirty Companies In Thirty Days: Real-Time Insights On The Importance Of Employee Health



Ellevate Contributor ⓘ

ForbesWomen

We share our expertise on leadership, business skills and more.

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Thirty Companies in Thirty Days: Real-Time Insights on the Importance of Employee Health

During the late summer, I took on a challenge: Connect with thirty companies in thirty days to discuss Covid-19-prompted changes in the workforce. I spoke with professionals from companies within law, accounting and finance industries that ranged in size from 100 employees to over 10,000. These leaders illustrated a key commonality: Albeit a clear understanding that employees are significantly challenged by the added stress in this time of Covid-19, and although there's a desire to make a positive impact, organizations are significantly struggling to actualize meaningful ways to empower their personnel.

I felt called to this outreach initiative as I continued to witness the major shifts of morale over the prior months. I normally collaborate and co-create programming within a company to support employee well-being by reducing stress, preventing burnout and finding a healthier work-life balance through my wellness coaching and consulting firm, Acheloa Wellness, but these prior months were unlike I've ever seen. As a professional who worked at a Big Four accounting firm for over a decade and endured an extremely arduous work schedule, I can empathize with the difficult position that leaders and employees have been put in to survive.

Law, finance and accounting firms have historically adapted well to industry changes, but this year's turbulent events put a strain on employees. Professionals in the tax industry, for example, just faced their busiest season yet, and all while navigating layoffs and the transition to working from home. It is no surprise that

Corporate leadership must incorporate employee wellness along with other KPIs for the sake of staff retention, financial gain and company longevity. With this in mind, my firm has compiled a list of meaningful and effective tactics to address employee burnout.

Put Wellness in the Forefront of Your Business Strategy

Now more than ever, companies are feeling the pressure to cut corners and save money. This means layoffs and defunding resources they once offered to their staff. The employees are left to shoulder the burden of extra work with little to no support. While I understand the stakes of financial loss at this time, I invite corporate leaders to consider incorporating wellness initiatives at the core of their business strategy.

When employees overwork themselves, their work becomes less efficient and loses quality. Ultimately, the whole company suffers. Business leaders can address short term needs and long term vision. And they can start by going beyond sending the standard "we're here for you" email with links to check out their designated EAP's website.

Even in so-called "normal times," accessing comprehensive mental health care can be difficult, let alone during this new normal. The pandemic has shaken our sense of stability to the core and

meeting day-to-day responsibilities can feel emotionally and mentally taxing. Teams need personal accountability, easy-to-incorporate resources and ongoing support to make sure they are properly eating and sleeping. Now is a time of going back to basics.

Importantly, I do not advocate for business leaders to address their staff's mental health needs; they are not qualified to do so, and furthermore, it is not the best use of their time or expertise. Instead, an organization can invest in a third party consultant for additional support. This can look like offering access to intentionally-curated resilience programs, executive coaching and ongoing professional development training, as well as events to boost overall well-being. By prioritizing innovative and agile solutions to employee burnout, companies can expect to keep their teams focused and engaged, and ultimately, prevent revenue drain from impacting overall profitability.

Establish Healthy Boundaries

In an effort to provide their staff with flexibility in their schedules, company leaders have unintentionally blurred the lines of work and rest. Team leaders have given staff the option to work later hours as many employees must address new needs during the work day. However, employees' struggle to "make up for lost time" and feeling that they can lose their job at any moment exacerbates the gap in efficiency.

The work-from-home experience further intensifies this lack of boundaries. If the living room becomes the office space, how does one distinguish work from home? When an employee continues to receive emails and phone calls at 10pm, they lose crucial time to unplug and recharge for the next day.

Leadership can facilitate healthier boundaries while providing their staff with increased flexibility. This can look like asking anyone working after 6pm to schedule their emails for the morning or mandating that work calls cease after business hours. These small adjustments give employees the option to work at a time that is convenient for them while maintaining a distinction between work and rest.

Embrace the Human Approach

In my discussions with the thirty companies, I observed that many of the conversations focused solely on executing safety procedures with employee well-being as an afterthought. While a safe and healthy work environment is imperative, leaders can also boost morale through a more humanized approach to inspire and re-engage teams.

Many leaders have facilitated events that unfortunately contribute to anxiety rather than reduce it. A mandatory Zoom happy hour, for example, robs staff of valuable personal time. Employees likely have a number of responsibilities to address after a full day of work and are already feeling zoom fatigued. More screen time can feel overwhelming if the content isn't contributing to their personal needs.

As an alternative, I suggest leaders schedule a coffee chat, lunch, or a one-one-one meeting with staff members. Fifteen minutes of genuine connection makes more effective use of time than an hour long event. Additionally, consider events that boost morale by investing in resilience and other professional development workshops. As humans, we often put ourselves last. Events like these can help employees remember how they must put their oxygen mask on first in order to thrive.

Address the Short and Long Term

I encourage leaders to reflect on the way they measure the effectiveness of their wellness initiatives. Now is the time to consider the long term effects of programs that promote employee health. Leadership should message the importance of personal health to their staff and lead by example. By implementing long-term wellness initiatives, industries will see positive results via lower turnover, higher engagement, and reduced revenue loss, even during these darkest of times.