



HR STAR



Great Work Perks Founder Jonathan Rapoport Helps Boost Employee Morale

[By Robin Salisian]

Boost morale. How? Toss around the words “free” and “discounted” at work and watch employees grin. Offer them free food, discounted spa visits, and 35 percent off Dodger tickets and watch them *really* grin.

Thanks to Jonathan Rapoport and his dynamic company, Great Work Perks, LLC, employers and HR professionals can boost morale *and* save time all at once. The company, founded by Rapoport in 2006, offers employers free handmade discount packets to present to their employees, and all the employers get stuck with is the credit.

“I wanted to provide a free service that would benefit human resources professionals and save them time. I knew they couldn’t spend all day approaching vendors for employee discounts. They have a huge job. Whereas I could literally devote all my time to finding great things from discounts to sporting events, restaurants, and spas that I could package and offer to human resource executives as an entirely whole perk program for their employees,” says Rapoport.

Sounds brilliant.

It wasn’t until Rapoport began working at 20th Century Fox and received — along with the other employees — Fox Fun Newsletters that he first got his perk program idea. The Fox newsletters offered perks for employees, but while “everyone seemed to enjoy [them]...[they weren’t] really robust.”

“I realized that I could consolidate small, medium, and large companies together and devote 100% of my time to finding their employees discounts to the best of L.A.,” says Rapoport. And that’s how the Great Works Program (GWP) came to life.

Today, as CEO and founder, Rapoport “handles everything that needs to be done from sending out cards to employees and meeting with new companies who want to subscribe, to approaching premium establishments that,” Rapoport says, “would be great for the employees.”

His first GWP endeavors were with larger companies, such as Paramount Pictures, Neutrogena, Yahoo, Children’s Hospital, Los Angeles County Medical Association, and MTV. Since larger firms had dealt with free

employee benefits before, embracing this free service was easy; however, Rapoport discovered that “smaller companies, doctors’ offices, and boutique law firms” had a harder time believing the program was free.

“They think there’s some type of gimmick. It’s really just about teaching them about what we do at Great Work Perks and letting them try it out. After all,” Rapoport reminds us, “it’s free!”

But before HR and before GWP, Rapoport spent numerous years in a New York City bank, where he learned an important lesson: he wasn’t a banker. “I knew I didn’t want to do that the rest of my life, and what I really wanted to do was start my own business. I also knew I enjoyed marketing, so I went to business school and focused on marketing, human resources, and entrepreneurial classes.”

So, after graduating from Vanderbilt University’s business school with an MBA, Rapoport worked in product marketing for Kimberly Clark’s Huggies brand. However, a move to Los Angeles (to be with his wife), caused a change in jobs, and soon he was marketing video games with Vivendi Universal.

What came next would mark Rapoport’s last stint in the corporate world — working at 20th Century Fox as the brand manager in the home entertainment division and bringing new releases like *Walk the Line* and *Sideways* to DVD. After that, Rapoport flew solo. Sort of.

Q. What do you like to do outside of work? Any odd hobbies/interests? Are you married? Do you have children? Can you explain a little about your personal life outside of your company?

A. I enjoy running, surfing, sailing... however, a lot of that has been put on the back burner for our new baby... which is my new passion... My wife Karen and I love spending time with our new baby girl, Avery Mae.

Q. What CD is in your CD player right now?

A. Everything from John Mayer and Keane to Red Hot Chili Peppers. I really like a variety of music.

Q. What is the last magazine you read?

A. *Entrepreneur*.

Q. What is your favorite TV show?

A. I love *The Office*... it’s one of my favorite TV shows [laughs].

Q. Who is your role model?

A. My grandfather and my mother.



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“My career has evolved in such a way that I’m now an extension of over 200 human resource departments in Los Angeles.”

And Rapoport’s excitement is contagious.

“Employees really appreciate it. They think of it as their company going the extra mile for them and finding really wonderful things for them to do.”

“I get a lot of feedback from human resources executives letting me know how the service has saved them so much time and that the offerings are top notch,” continues Rapoport. “They say that that their employees are really using the program and that they like that Great Work Perks not only introduces them to things they may not have known about, but it also offers them a discount. I guess it’s a way of opening up Los Angeles to employees, showing them what’s out there, and providing them a perk in doing so.”

Along with being a free service, GWP is also a safe program (the company doesn’t require any individual employee email addresses or personally identifiable information), a time-conscious program (“It’s simply an easy e-mail or intranet notification once a week that’s an HR timesaver providing great services and activities for employees”), and a money saving program (“It reduces corporate expenses by saving money on catering, corporate outings, office parties, and business expenses”).

But, “most of all, it’s just fun because employees get to experience the best of Los Angeles at a discount.”

Saving money and time while providing employees with plentiful perks, GWP appears to be unstoppable. Rapoport envisioned GWP, worked hard, and eventually built a business commodity. Looks like it runs in the family: “My grandfather definitely,” says

Rapoport, when asked about influences in his career. “He was an immigrant from Lithuania with thirteen dollars in his pocket who eventually started his own business. Through his hard work and perseverance, it became a success. I always admired that. He was my ultimate mentor, and I always strive to be like him.”

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