

CWDi rebirths as Happy Friday

A four-and-a-half-day work week; 25 days annual leave; no emails or WhatsApps after 6pm; sic hustles supported by the agency; work from anywhere and a counsellor on call - meet the through-the-line advertising agency of the future. As of 13 September 2021, CWDi will be known as Happy Friday by reinventing the agency model - for staff and clients alike.



Craig Naicker, group managing director at Happy Friday.

Future-focused

Happy Friday's group managing director, Craig Naicker, says, "You are only able to grow a sustainable business when you take care of the people within it".

This is the thinking that frames the "Happy Friday" concept because, for Happy Friday, change begins on the inside. Creative consultant Ahmed Tilly expands, "Our new agency concept was a convergence of three things: business success, agency structure and people.



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#Newsmaker: Ahmed Tilly joins forces with CWDi

Evan-Lee Courie 12 Mar 2021

"Covid acted as a catalyst for the change, but it has been a long time coming. Thinking about how we would survive and even thrive beyond the pandemic helped us see that the industry is broken. People are adversely affected by this. Agencies need a future focus beyond face value with empathy for the people that

help the agency survive”.

Beating the burnout

Happy Friday will be implementing a series of industry-bending practices that will beat the burnout and encourage stake-holderism among staff. Tilly expands on the reasoning that shaped this thinking: “We want to change the perception among agency people that what we do is about hours spent and billed on a linear timeline. We should be generating value for the client and for our staff, because happy people produce great work and are more accountable”.



Ahmed Tilly, creative consultant at Happy Friday

For agency staff members, the changes will include:

- No meeting Fridays – for staff and/or clients
- A four-and-a-half-day work week (with a view to working towards a four-day week)
- Side hustle support – allowing agency staff to work on their own freelance concerns or personal interests in the interest of generating extra income or simply their own enjoyment
- A no email or WhatsApp after 6pm rule
- A Human Library – allowing staff with interesting perspectives to make themselves available for conversation or mentorship
- 25 days annual leave
- Working from anywhere

Adding value for clients

Naicker adds, “In a time when everyone is financially stretched, retainers need to be fair, not fat. As an

agency, we must be financially invested in the client's business and connect with them. This way, we can create more beneficial fee structures and keep internal stakeholders happy, as they will not have to put in wasted hours. We should be delivering the best commercial value, even on tighter budgets, and we are not a sausage factory”.

“I feel that, in an overwhelming number of instances, leadership styles in the advertising business are outdated. In fact, you might even dare to say they are almost colonial in their ways.

It is time for a hard refresh of the way we do things in our industry. And Covid has dramatically accelerated change”.

“ *As a people-centric creative agency, we're big on happiness... our people's happiness and our clients' too. Because clients are people, too. And if they're happy, we're happy... see how nicely that all works out?*
[#HappyPeopleMakeHappyWork #HappyFriday #TTLMarketing #TTLAdvertising pic.twitter.com/1A9JS0X8kN](#)— Happy Friday Creative (@HF_creative) [September 9, 2021](#) ”

Why Happy Friday? A post-Covid model

Tilly continues, “When people are happy, they take care of the business. We are in a position to demonstrate this, not only to our industry but to businesses across the board, and our living case study is Happy Friday.

“In our industry, burnout is shockingly prevalent. Creative problem solvers are notoriously burnt out and exhausted. The immense pressure that is being put on people to deliver has a major shortcoming: you can't create good work when you're not happy or invested. Agency staff are expected to leave their lives behind them whenever they walk through the door at work. It's time to change that mindset. The whole world is going through a rebirth, and that is the singular opportunity Covid afforded us”.

Happy Friday was born from collaboration, when CWDi leadership implemented the “MD for a Day” programme, to gauge what exactly would make agency life better for its employees. The programme opened the floor to staff members, whose suggestions were taken on board, and the name Happy Friday emerged as a favourite, due to the positive feelings it invokes, particularly among hardworking agency staff.

Invigorating the agency model

Naicker concludes, “For us – and hopefully the industry at large – this concept is a rebirth, not a rebranding. The reinvention of the advertising model goes beyond processes and culture.

“We are starting at ground level and reinventing every component because it's time to find a new way of working – for ourselves and for our clients. This is an industry that should be fun for those who operate within it, so “Happy Friday” is a feeling we want to capture every day.