



What's Your Green Goldfish Executive Summary

Abstract:

Motivation for employees is sagging. Recent reports show that motivation has fallen off at more than half of all companies. In difficult economic times, how can companies boost employee morale and drive high performance? The simple answer is doing the little extras beyond compensation to demonstrate commitment and caring. What's Your Green Goldfish examines how companies go above and beyond to capture the hearts of their employees. Creating signature extras that help them stand out from competitors, drive engagement and reinforce their culture. This executive summary outlines the Top 9 takeaways from the book, the ingredients / R.U.L.E.S of creating green goldfish and the 15 different types of green goldfish. **OVERALL TAKEAWAY:** Culture trumps strategy and principles beat rules. The entire premise of "What's Your Green Goldfish" is that employees must come first and that happy engaged employees create happy customers.

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PART I: WHAT'S YOUR GREEN GOLDFISH

TOP 9 KEY TAKEAWAYS

#1. The Workplace is Changing and is in Crisis

One could make the assertion that workplace has changed more in the last five years than it has in the previous 25. Seismic shifts in technology, social media and management have drastically changed how we work. Combine all this change with record levels of disengagement, meaning employees are emotionally disconnected from their workplaces and are less likely to be productive. According to Gallup, two out of every three workers are either not engaged or actively disengaged.

#2. Engagement is Key to Tripling Your Growth

Engaged organizations grew profits as much as three times faster than their competitors. Earnings per share (EPS) growth of 89 organizations found that the growth rate of organizations with engagement scores in the top quartile was 2.6 times higher than organizations with below-average engagement scores. Also, according the CLC, highly engaged organizations have the potential to reduce staff turnover by 87%.

#3. It's Not Ignorance

According to Accor, 75% of leaders have no engagement plan or strategy even though 90% say engagement impacts business success.

#4. It's Important to Show that You Care

According to a study by Towers Watson, of seventy-five possible drivers of engagement, the **ONE** that was rated as the most important was the extent to which the employees believed that their senior management had a sincere interest in their well-being. Google sets the gold standard for taking care of its employees. No stone is left unturned in their quest to provide a welcoming and happy work environment. WHY? Here's an answer according to Google's Chief People Officer Laszlo Bock, *"It turns out that the reason we're doing these things for employees is not because it's important to the business, but simply because it's the right thing to do. And from a company standpoint, that makes it better to care than not to care."*

#5. Shift Your Mindset

Employees are the bedrock of your organization. You would be better served taking compensation out of the equation and thinking of them as volunteers. Here is a great analysis from Ted Coine on this exact approach,

"CEOs, team leaders, and everyone in between: if your people don't love your company after four years of employment (or four months, or four quarters), that's all on you... Do you have the pick of the employment litter? Are your best people dying to stay on board? If not, it isn't that they're ungrateful, and it isn't that your competitors are luring them away. It's that you suck as a leader... Act as if every single employee is a volunteer. Because you know what? In a fundamental way, they are."

#6. Beyond Dollars

Money is not the major motivator among college-educated workers. Today's employees are looking beyond conventional monetary rewards. And it doesn't take a huge budget. Many of these rewards can be free. Sylvia Ann Hewlett cites the results of a survey on working remotely, "83% of Millennials and 75% of Boomers say that the freedom to choose when and where they work motivates them to give 110%.

#7. Little Extras Can Be Drivers of Performance

Doing the little things can make a big difference. For example, most managers take an, "if, then" approach to recognition. Shawn Achor believes this paradigm needs to change, "...from thinking that encouragement and recognition should be used as rewards for high performance as opposed to thinking that encouragement and recognition are drivers of high performance."

#8. If You Build It, They Will Come

Focus on what you can control, creating a great environment to work in. Your goal should not to be the biggest or to have the best clients, but simply to become the best place to work for. If you become known for being a great place to work, you'll attract the best people. And if you retain the best people, the best clients will follow.

#9. Culture is a Commitment, Not a Campaign

Actions speak louder than words when it comes to employee experience and building a strong culture. Brands need to start taking small steps to add value to the experience over time. Little things can truly make the biggest difference.

PART II:

THE 5 INGREDIENTS OR R.U.L.E.S OF A GREEN GOLDFISH

Five Ingredients

There are 5 ingredients or R.U.L.E.S when creating a green goldfish:

R elevant - it should be of value to the employee

U nexpected - it should "surprise and delight"

L imited - it should be signature to your business

E xpression - it should be a sign that you care

S ticky - it should be memorable and talkable

PART III:

15 TYPES OF GREEN GOLDFISH

There are 15 impactful ways you can provide little extras.

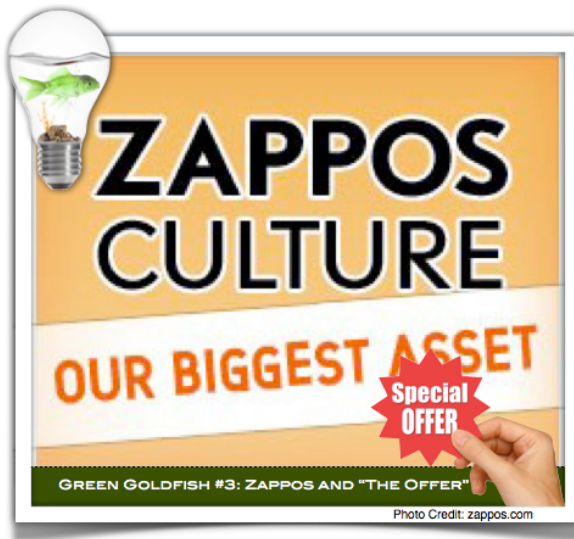
- #1. Recruiting
- #2. Onboarding
- #3. Food & Beverage
- #4. Shelter
- #5. Transparency
- #6. Wellness
- #7. Time Away
- #8. Modern Family
- #9. Team Building
- #10. Recognition
- #11. Flexibility
- #12. Retirement
- #13. Training
- #14. Pay it Forward
- #15. Empowerment

The different types of green goldfish can be categorized as the **Three B's** on the nine-inch journey to winning the heart of your employees:

1. **Basics**- The first three inches. Creating a stable environment where people can thrive.
2. **Belonging**- The middle three inches. Enabling high functioning teams and recognizing their efforts.
3. **Building**- The final three inches. Empowering employees to learn, give back, and take control of their destiny.

Categories – *What's Your Green Goldfish* contains 200+ examples. Here is an example from each category:

#1. Recruitment – Finding the right fit for your organization.



Zappos – Zappos offers prospective employees, “The Offer.” The offer is part of the four-week new hire paid training at Zappos. The training immerses the group into the culture and Zappos’ laser focus on customer service. At the conclusion of training and before starting work, everyone is offered a packet of cash to leave. The amount has been raised numerous times over the years and now the current offer is \$3,000.

#2. Onboarding – You never get a chance to make a first impression. Research shows that employees make the critical decision to stay or leave within the first six months.



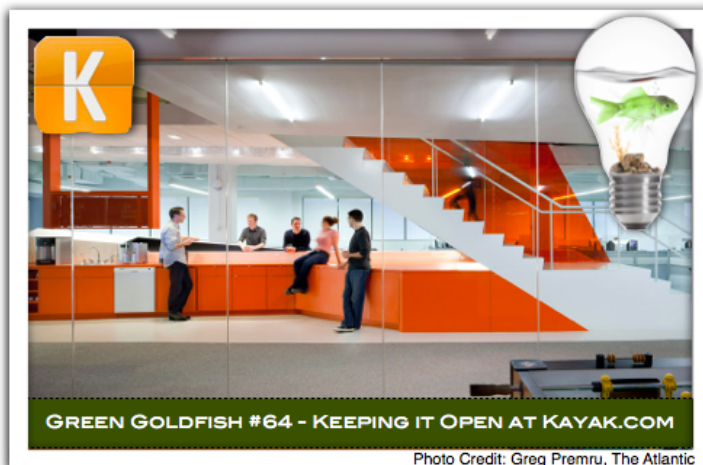
USAA (#456) figuratively runs a Boot Camp. The insurance provider for military members and their families has an interesting onboarding process for new employees. Training includes trying on military fatigues, eating MRE’s (ready to eat meals) and reading letters from family members.

#3. Food & Beverage – Little things can make a big difference. Even silly little things like M&M'S.



SAS (#437) Free fresh fruit every Monday, M&M'S on Wednesday, Breakfast goodies every Friday and Break rooms stocked with complimentary soft drinks, juices, crackers, coffee / tea.

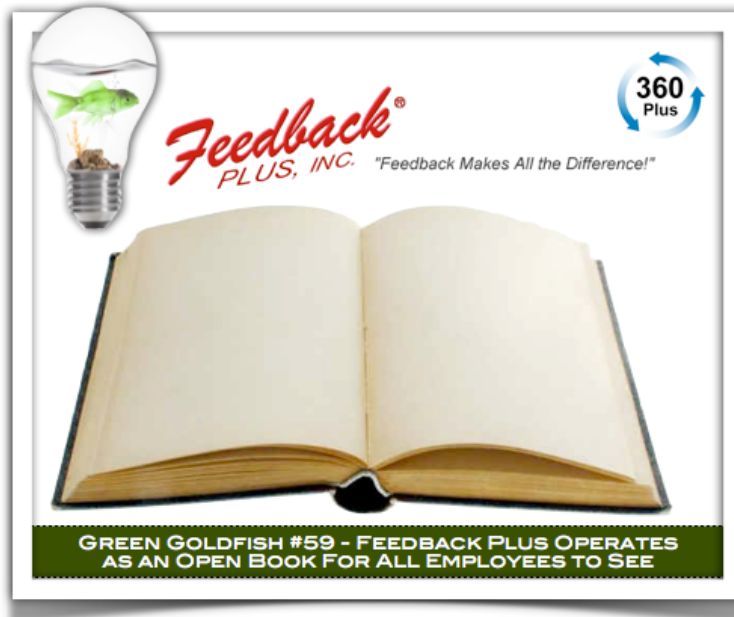
#4. Shelter – The design of the workplace, the type of the work, and where people are situated will influence collaboration and engagement.



Kayak.com (#64) has an open office environment. In the words of CTO Paul English, "I sit out with the product managers. We hold design meetings at one another's desks throughout the day. We do design interaction like that, where everyone can hear and anyone can jump in. If anyone needs to make a private phone call, there are a few private offices, but our general philosophy is that an open environment facilitates intellectual intensity. Here, when people overhear a discussion, we encourage them to walk over and say, 'There's another way to do that.'"

KEY TAKEAWAY: Kitchens are vital for team building and collaboration. The larger the better.

#5. Transparency - According to Louis Brandeis, "Sunlight is the best disinfectant." If you want a strong culture, keep things open by default.



Feedback Plus (#59) has an open ledger policy for employees. They can read the company's financial statements any time they wish.

KEY STAT: Based on a recent study by Chris Zook, the co-head of the Worldwide Strategy Practice at Bain & Company, only **40%** of the workforce knew about the goals, strategies and tactics.

#6. Wellness – Without health, we have nothing. It's an easy concept to grasp. More than just health, wellness is also about enhancing productivity.



Some organizations have a company gym. Others may subsidize or pay for gym fees. **Reebok** (#4) took this to the next level in 2010 by converting a brick warehouse at Reebok's headquarters into an employee exclusive CrossFit "box" or workout center, with six coaches and extensive equipment. About 425 employees at Reebok are taking part in Canton. This benefit reinforces the company's new mission: to get consumers moving. Participants lost over 4,000 pounds collectively during its first year.

#7. Time Away – A recent survey polled over 200 employees from 98 companies to find out what rewards they valued the most. Time off was the number one choice. Time away from the office is not only valued by employees, its regenerative.



The CEO of **FullContact API**, (#19) said that in a market competitive for top talent, he wants to keep his employees happy and refreshed. The founder offers his employees \$7,500 for what he calls "paid, paid vacation," however there are rules. "One, you actually have to take a vacation to get the money and two, you have to disconnect from work, so that means no calls, no emails, no tweets, no work of any kind."

#8. Modern Family – Families have changed. Today's employers need to deal with issues such as same sex marriage, infertility, adoption, parental leave, day care, returning workers and eldercare. Making certain that employees can focus on their families reduces stress and keeps workers on a more even keel. This allows them to feel supported and focused on the tasks at hand.



Aetna Life & Casualty Co. (#68) reduced resignations of new mothers by 50% by extending its unpaid parental leave policy to six months, saving the company one million dollars a year in training, recruiting and hiring expenses. "The reason so many of America's top companies offer paid parental leave is that it keeps workers loyal, and that holds down turnover costs," according to IWPR President Heidi Hartmann. "It's not generosity, its just good business."

#9. Recognition – Actions speak louder than words.



The Container Store (#459) has an award called *The Gumby*. Being Gumby is about doing whatever needs to be done to serve a customer, help a co-worker or complete a task. It's about not getting "bent out of shape" when a customer makes a request of you that you'd rather not do. And it's also about bouncing back quickly after having a tough encounter with a challenging customer.

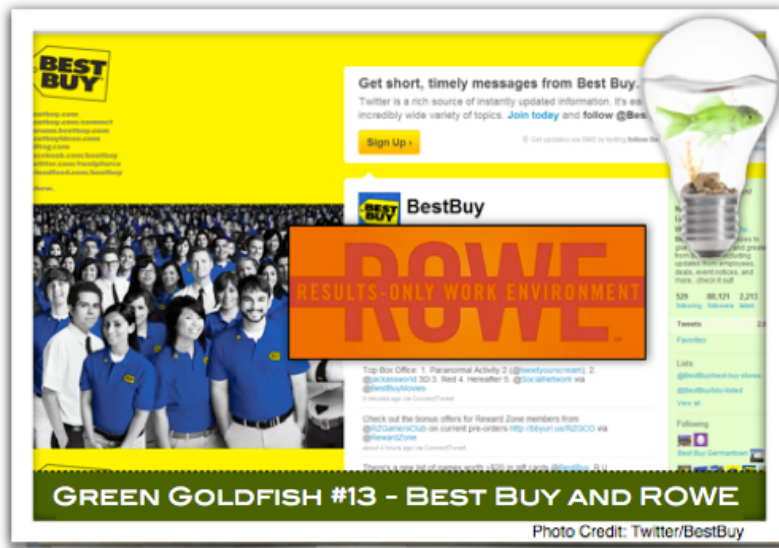
KEY STAT: 43% of highly engaged employees receive feedback at least once a week compared to only 18% of employees with low engagement. {Towers Watson}

#10. Team Building – A team that plays together stays together.



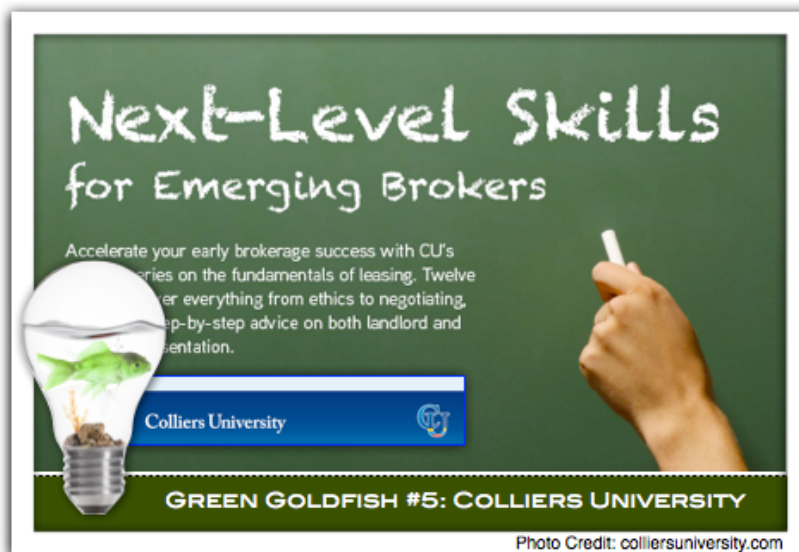
At Virginia company **Snagajob** (#62), the Culture Squad organizes the annual Office Olympics, during which employees [Snaggers] are divided into competing nations—and dress the part.

#11. Flexibility – No longer an extra, flexibility is an expectation.



Best Buy (#13) embarked on an experiment in 2005 to transform a culture once known for killer hours and hard riding bosses. The endeavor was called ROWE, for "**Results Only Work Environment**," sought to demolish decades-old business dogma that equates physical presence with productivity. The goal at Best Buy is to judge performance on output instead of hours. The program aims to weed out "presenteeism": the problem of employees warming their chairs all day but not getting much done. [Abolished by Best Buy CEO Hubert Joly in March]

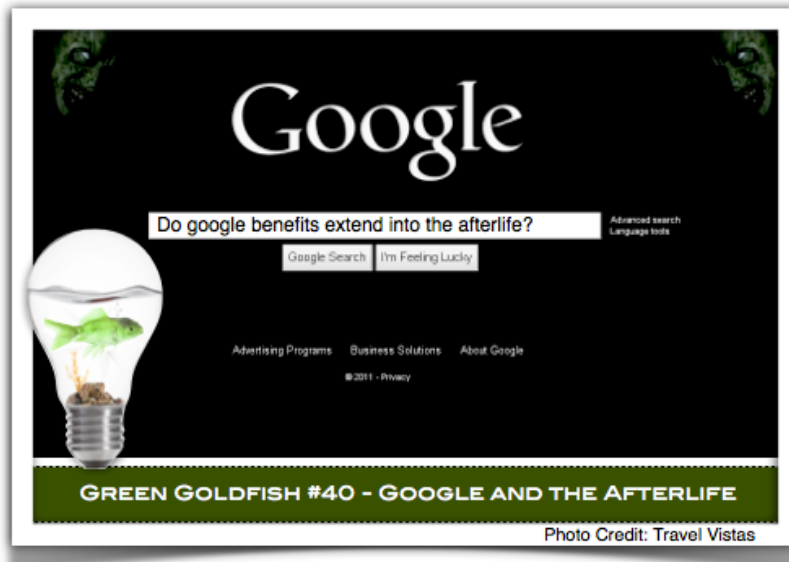
#12. Training – Investing in the development of your people.



Colliers (#5) founded Colliers University (CU) in 2002. Built on the premise that learning can be a competitive advantage, CU has grown to include more than 1,000 classes. CU is not only a culture driver for the company internally but also an outwardly competitive recruitment tool, raising the bar in terms of the expertise of their professionals. This expertise directly benefits clients through better results and memorable experiences.

KEY STAT: 75% of people voluntarily leaving jobs don't quit their jobs; they quit their bosses. Invest in management training.

#13. Retirement – Going the extra mile to prepare and take care of employees for life after work.



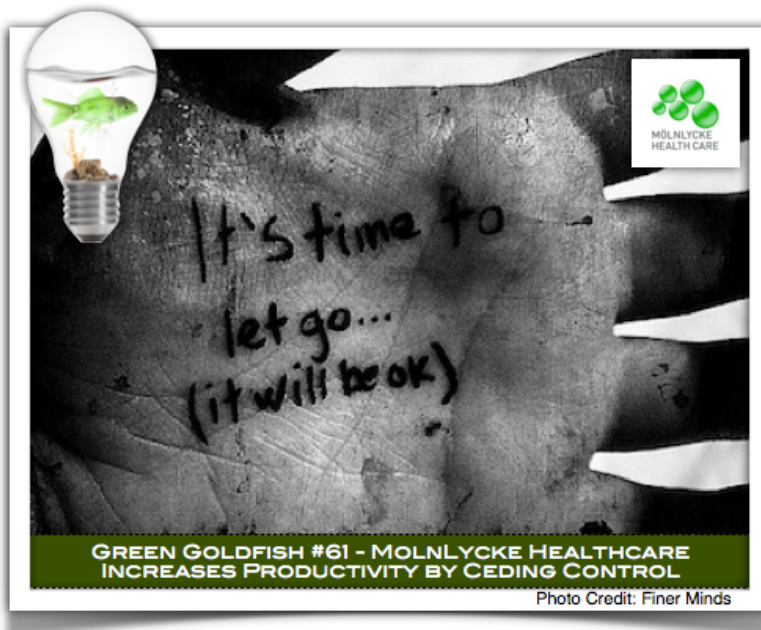
Should a U.S. employee pass away while under the employ of **Google** (#40), their surviving spouse or domestic partner will receive a check for 50% of their salary every year for the next decade. Even more surprising, a Google spokesperson confirms that there's 'no tenure requirement' for this benefit, meaning most of their 34,000 Google employees qualify."

#14. Pay it Forward – Giving back and reinforces a sense of purpose.



HP (#52) empowers employees to make a difference and give back. Let's do the math: 4 hours per month x 300,000 employees = 1,200,000 hours of HP social impact.

#15. Empowerment – Tapping into the creativity of your team powers innovation.



Molnlycke Health Care (#61) allowed production teams to decide how to meet their goals. With the responsibility for quality products moved to individuals on those teams, nearly 70% of the company's new products launch on time, compared with just 15% previously. As a result, the company will have quadrupled its shareholder value in only five years.

A few closing thoughts about Green Goldfish:

A Daily Regiment of Exercise vs. Liposuction

A green goldfish is not a quick fix or for those seeking immediate results. Translation: it's not liposuction. It's equivalent to working out everyday. Culture gradually builds and improves over time.

Authentic vs. Forced

A green goldfish is a beacon. It's a small gift or benefit that demonstrates you care. Green Goldfish need to be given in an authentic way. If it comes across as forced or contrived, you'll eliminate all of the goodwill and negatively impact your culture.

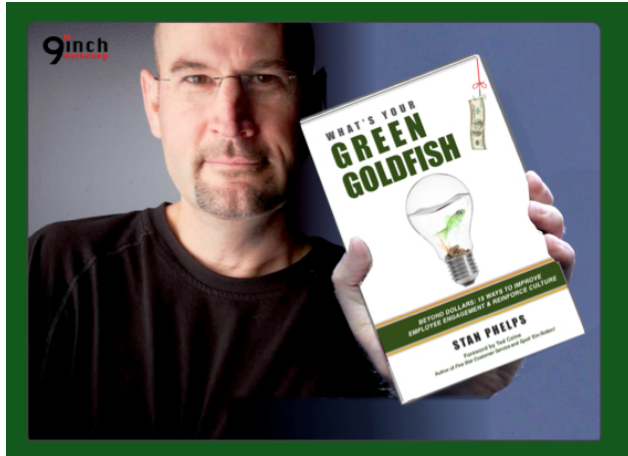
It's a Commitment, Not a Campaign

A green goldfish is different than a one off or limited offer. Add one or a school of green goldfish at your convenience; remove them at your peril.

About the Author

Stan Phelps

Stan Phelps is the founder of 9 INCH marketing -- a consultancy that helps clients win the hearts of both employees and customers.



His 20-year marketing background includes leadership roles with adidas, International Management Group, the PGA of America and Synergy Events.

Stan has created award-winning campaigns and larger than life events for leading brands. Those programs, although successful, weren't scalable or sustainable.

He now focuses on how brands can create meaningful differentiation and advocacy with customers and employees through small ongoing pieces of added value through "The Goldfish Principle."

To find out more about Stan's **strategy sessions**, **keynotes** and **workshops**, visit him at 9inchmarketing.com or e-mail him at stan@9inchmarketing.com.