

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF NOT BEING NORMAL

40

SPIRO ASSOCIATES
A BRAND ARCHITECTURE BOUTIQUE

Normal
Normal

SASSCULTURE



WELCOME!

Hey, you found us, great job! We would like to officially welcome you to pretty much the most amazing full-service branding agency in town and beyond, Spiro & Associates Marketing, Advertising, Public Relations, and Brand Architecture. Can you see why it's SASS for short? You have joined a group of misfit marketing mavericks that have been around for over 40 years. Again, welcome to this dysfunctional family that comes together when it really matters. More like *workaholics* and less like *succession*. We do have a dash of *Shameless* and go to bat for our SASS family like *The Sopranos*. Capisce?

We are here because we are the most creative and innovative agency since sliced bread.

Disclaimer: We are not politically correct, and our clients beg us to be that way.



If this shirt offends you, you might want to reevaluate your job offer and going any further.

OFFICE SPEAKS ☺

10-4 ← Gabe

Chlamydia is not a flower
- Don.

Requigitation - Eww - Mark

She speaks in SEO
(about ~~business~~ ~~marketing~~) ← Len.
Kamala Harris or Kamal-Toe.

Suck a bag of Richards - April.

THE RANDALL ~~Insert w/e we want~~
Sarah → Len → Gabe research
"I feel threatened" ☹️

I call it blowing Chunky Soup
- MARK

"I don't care if you deliver them
by air or by pigeon"
Kendall.

BLOCK FEAT!
Can't you read my mind??

STAB HUG PUNCH (?)
Fuck / Mary I kill
Saks Edition
→ CHUG ?
Cuz we drink
& do drugs?

GO HOME! BOB
- Savannah **SAGET!!!**

You guys get paid to
be here?
- Savannah

This guy folded like
a lawn chair
- Don

Don't you
know what we
do here?
Him: No!

Mark's sister says
"Meet is the best"
- MARK

Don does the ABC

This guide is to get you hyped up to work here, but with that said, there are some normal practices we must address first, such as policy and procedures since the law requires it.

This Culture Manual belongs to EVERYONE here.

Read it. Own it. Add to it (like our wall of *Office Speaks*). Improve it.

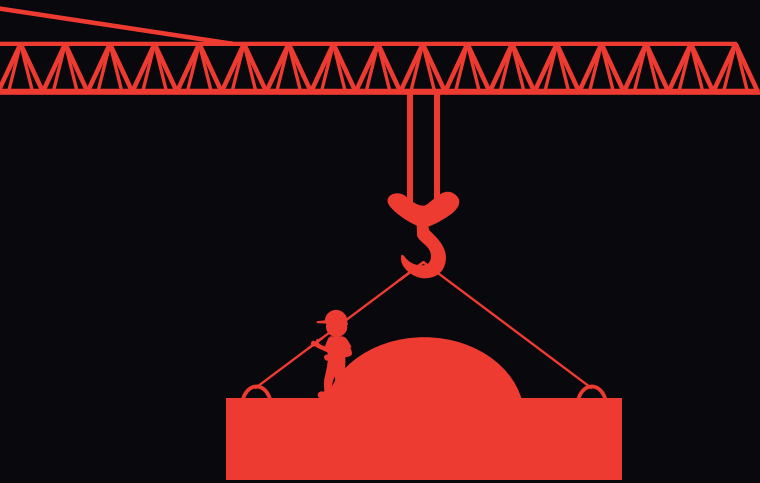
It's time for the good juice.



The Building Blocks Of Sass (a.k.a. our core values)

- **We place the highest value on ideas (our product) and great, quality work.**
- **We put family first.**
(If it's not right at home, it's not going to be right here.)
- **We value mutual respect.**
(We insist on honesty & integrity in all we do.)
- **We value teamwork.**
(Internal, external, and influential)
- **We value relationships.**
(Internal, external, and influential)

Boiled down,
the soul of SASS is...



IDEAS.

FAMILY.

RESPECT.

TEAMWORK.

RELATIONSHIPS.

1

WE'RE NOT NORMAL

CLM!

Creative Lives Matter.
(or, career limiting moves.)

We are here for one reason: to do phenomenal work that makes a positive difference for our clients. If that's not you, then our interview process obviously needs some revamping!

Our collaborative, creative culture allows us to produce that phenomenal work. Each of us is responsible for helping to nurture this creative culture, so be sure to pitch in. If you don't add to it, you may get left behind.

So, now what?

Glad you asked...because your first deadline is upon you.

Done yet? No? What do you mean you don't read minds?

Okay, since you just got here, we'll give you a break. But in all seriousness, this brings up two important points:

- 1.** This is a deadline-driven business.
- 2.** There will be times when you'll be asked to create ideas without the 'ideal' amount of intel.

Clients come to us for solutions, sometimes client input is thin or non-existent. That doesn't mean we don't try to get it. It means sometimes clients just honestly don't know. A pessimist will say, "that sucks." However, an optimist sees this as an opportunity. An opportunity to re-write the rules and do something people in most lines of work can only lust for...to get creative and make a difference.



We are oftentimes a client's first experience working with an ad agency. Yeah, of course they have some distant cousin who has an uncle who worked at a shop in a major market. But we periodically have "rookie" clients. This means they are new to this, don't understand what we do, don't yet understand our value to their team, or how long things can take.

Our creative methodology runs the gamut of **"Proof > Review > Comments > New Proof > Review > Comments..."** until the work is finally approved and presented to the client. We must set the client's initial expectations in accordance with this process.

So, now that you've got your big kid pants on, read on.

Not everyone is the same.

No, that doesn't mean some people are more important than others, it just means we all have our own style. What works for you might not work for the next person, and vice versa. Be respectful of this.

Being creative means we exist outside the proverbial box, so trying to make you operate inside one makes no sense at all. There are rules, though:

- 1.** Be on time. (Around here, 15 minutes early is "on time.")
- 2.** Give us your all. If you don't, we'll know it and call you on it.
- 3.** Respect each other at all times. No questions asked.
- 4.** You have a question? Ask it! You cannot be shy around here. Things move quickly, and you need access to answers to help you be successful. Just ask!

NOTHING IS TOO NUTTY...

Work it. Own it.

Things move pretty fast around here, so finding a balance between getting things done and making everyone happy is part of life in an agency.

We hired you to think for yourself, so don't be afraid to speak your mind. You won't be scolded if you do. Now, you won't always win every debate, but that doesn't mean you keep your opinions to yourself. The exchange of all ideas is healthy and often sparks something new and exciting as a result. If it moves things forward, that's a good thing.

It's not always filet mignon.

Award-winning work is great, but not everything wins awards. In fact, most of the things you'll do in your career won't. Much of what a client needs is more "meat and potatoes" than it is sexy. This is a reality many may struggle with. There will always be opportunities to swing for the fence, but games can be won on a string of singles and doubles, too. Always do the best job you can, and we'll be guaranteed to put points on the board for our clients.

We are here to make our clients successful and if, along the way, we win a few awards, so be it. Trust us, do right by the client and awards WILL come. We have proof in our lobby, and in a storage unit if you want to see more.

This is a business, not a cause.

Many people who enter this business do so with a wide-eyed enthusiasm that is truly one of the most precious things in life. The balance you've got to work toward is realizing that brand building is not an altruistic thing. It's commerce. Brands are built to move merchandise, sell services, and make our clients (and us) money. Keep that in the front of your head and it will have a greater chance of not exploding. And, yes, we do this for money... money we earn to pay you, keep the lights and water working, and keep a few pennies for the guy in the back office as well.

Each endeavor should have at least two of the above factors for us to choose to work on them.

Now, do we believe in causes? Yes. Do we support and work with causes? Absolutely, yes! However, in the realm of our daily business, we focus 100% on what is good for the agency from a business standpoint. Don't worry; when we're working on a worthy cause, you'll know it and you'll be involved!

**When we consider which client to work with,
we think of three main things:**





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TOSS YOU IN THE DEEP END

Teamwork works.

We're passionate individuals who are fueled by our unique insights, but we're all in the same boat. There are no heroes here. Those who are successful here understand this and want to be part our team.

On large-scale deadlines where we're up against the clock, and often throughout "season," EVERYONE jumps in to help! This means you may be designing a new website one minute, and then you're binding a Marketing Action Plan the next. When we call for "all hands-on deck," we mean ALL hands on deck.

Everyone pitches in around here, and that includes taking out the trash and answering the phone.

Trust the system.

The dichotomy of a branding agency has always been balancing creativity with productivity. Account service team members are different from creative team members. Creatives are different from media, PR, and social media team members. Web coders are...well, different altogether. But all in a good way.

The common ground is our system. The system is our way of doing things around here. It's our process. It's how we get from A to Z, and all points in between. It's the synergy amongst all our team members. It's how our creativity flourishes through open, candid discussions. The system keeps us all on the same track, working toward a common goal. Respect that, and each other, always.

"Promise vs. Fulfillment. I promise the client and it's your responsibility to fulfill what I promise." – C. Spiro

Ideas can come from anyone.

Our business is chock full of lore about everyone from the brand-new team member to the CEO coming up with the spark of a great idea. We applaud and encourage that.

If you're a creative person, keep your eyes and ears open...you never know when someone might utter an unwitting gem. It's your job to recognize them. If you're not in the creative department, don't be afraid to contribute during meetings. Your idea might not win, or it might not be ultimately executed exactly how you envisioned. That's okay. The main thing is you contributed. Jump into the deep end with us. You won't regret it.

Time manages to fly...so manage it.

Deadlines are like death and taxes; they can't be avoided. And, as part of a team, your deadline affects those of others. So, give yourself deadlines to get things done, and never be afraid to come in ahead of deadline. Don't be that person who lets the job expand to fill the time you have, because there will always be a surprise "attack" by a client who needs something yesterday.

Also, we are pretty cool about working with you when you need time off for a doctor's appointment, or to see your bail bondsman, or your therapist. We believe in work/life balance, as we all know how important our families are to us. We work our schedules out to facilitate this, and we simply ask that you do the same. Everyone has negotiated their own deal, so there is no standard "contract." Some are 1099, others hourly and most are salary, etc.

Your mother doesn't work here.

Hands are made for working, not holding. This means you'll sometimes be on your own to figure things out. We're not saying not to ask for help, but don't expect others to hold your hand. Again, asking questions is vital to your growth and our success.

However, not carrying your share of the load leads to poor morale.

If you see something you think can be organized better or done better, speak up. Or, you might be tempted to say something such as, "It would be nice if someone would organize the [storage, kitchen, furniture]." At Spiro & Associates, you ARE that someone. If you see supplies are running low on items, make a list and discuss it with team members, rather than just ignoring it. We all clean the kitchen, and we all take out the trash. There are no magical kitchen fairies that visit our sanctum overnight to clean your dishes. We repeat: your mother doesn't work here. Clean up after yourself.

And, if you want to update, change, or fix something, talk to Chris. Seriously. Every awesome thing you see here is like that because someone like you decided to speak up. Don't be shy. Make the magic happen. Just don't call him Mr. Spiro.

"When I hear Mr. Spiro, I turn around looking for my father."



In loving memory of Pops. 1941-2023

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**WHO MOVED
MY CHEESE?**

Guess what? Change happens.

The only thing constant in life is change. And the only person who likes a change is, well, a baby. So, embrace this fact... it affects us all. Everything in life is either growing or dying. Let's make everything grow.

Sometimes you'll find the bigwigs affect change simply to get a reaction out of you, or to make sure that you're still breathing. Be open to it. It's going to happen.

Technology can be an awful/good thing.

Few things change as quickly as technology in today's world. And, in our business, this affects us all. New tech, new ideas, new methods. We all have a responsibility to ourselves to stay aware of this. We don't all have to be experts in it; just know that the ability to adapt is key to surviving and not tearing your hair out.

And while we do control a certain amount of technology, recognize that we own neither the wheels, nor the hamsters... so, sometimes speed and convenience are beyond our control. Learn to accept what you can't control. It's hard, but it's a big key to mental health.

Clients change their minds.

We try to manage this, but it doesn't always work that way. He who writes the check can also write the rules. It's not fair, but it is life. Speaking of "fair," that's where people give a blue ribbon to a pig. It's not reality. If the request is reasonable, no problem. If it's insane, we'll push back and counsel our clients where we can. It's one thing for a client to change his/her mind. What we don't want is for them to change agencies— unless we want them to.

"Technology hates me."

Change your approach.

If something isn't working... an idea, a system, your hairstyle... change it. It's amazing how changing a few small things or how you look at them can open your mind up in new directions. We are in a business that demands breaking new ground, so dig deep.

Oftentimes the only feedback you will receive from the team is a simple "dig deeper" ...or "REALLY?" These are meant to say, "Dear valued staff member, creative genius, art direction diva, we know you are working hard and slaving away on multiple unrealistic deadlines for clients who do not respect or understand the value of what you bring to the table, but could you please give this concept, design, layout, paragraph, hairstyle another look and see if, perhaps, even you can top your own creative genius?" Never take feedback personally. It is given to help you grow, not to beat you down. We are all continuously learning.

"There's no crying in advertising."



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WHAT THE FAQ?

We know we covered the big stuff, but as the saying goes, "It's the little things." So, here they are.

Why Brand Architects?

Why not? We design and build brands for our clients. Our business is about differentiation, and we're our own favorite client.

Do I have to raise my hand to ask a question?

Don't you dare...just don't interrupt people...unless they're saying something stupid or talking negatively about the Florida Gators. Also, don't yell across the room to get someone's attention. It won't kill you to get up and walk the three steps to their desk. And, why do you think every desk is armed with a Nerf gun? If you need someone, ping them with a Nerf bullet.

Can I work late, come in early, or on weekends?

Yes, you have a key for both doors...use them on the way in and out. And, obviously, turn the lights off when you leave.

If there's food in the fridge, can I eat it?

Only if it says "CTS" on it...(it's short for "Consume This Soon"). Respect the "Client Zone" fridge. If the "Client Zone" fridge is near empty, let us know, or refill it yourself if you can. There is nothing more embarrassing than offering a visitor water when there is no water.

What's this no walls thing?

We have no walls, which means we have no secrets. We don't need to hear your bar room whisper and we don't all need to be a part of your conversation. Just speak at a normal volume, or as normal as you can in a not normal environment.

No walls also means collaboration. We love to hear about creative, and we love to all give a piece of our mind so be prepared to receive all the input.

Do I need to stay at my desk?

If the seatbelt sign is off, feel free to move about the office. Collaborate with others as often as possible. Utilize the Conference Room for group meetings and brainstorming. We have no walls for a reason. This office is the incubator in which great ideas grow and come together.

Cameras? Is this a reality show?

No, we're not watching you... They are there for your safety, and for expanded security. Smile!

Can I wear headphones?

Yes, but just don't shut yourself off to others entirely...this is a team. And, if you're playing a really good jam you think everyone would enjoy, unpair the earbuds and share. We all like music here.

Again, we do not have walls, so just make sure you use your inside voice when wearing them. We don't all want to be part of a one-sided conference call; we've got work to do and it gets hard to focus.

Also, be prepared to get Nerf-gunned if someone has a question and you can't hear them because your music is too loud. Yes, we have Nerf guns, and no, we are not afraid to use them.

Who is responsible for answering the phone?

We do not have a receptionist, which means, you guessed it, we are all responsible for answering the phone. Yes, even the guy with the big desk in the back answers the phone. Don't get caught not doing your part.

Can I eat at my desk?

Yes, but make sure you clean up. This is Florida, and that means bugs who love leftovers. It also means you are willing to share with your co-workers. We have been known to steal a French-fry on occasion.

Who takes out the trash?

Guess what? You guessed it. We are all responsible for taking out the trash. It's a team effort that we do on Fridays.

What is the story behind the wheel?

You will quickly learn that the man with his name on the door has some favorite words and phrases. The rules are simple: catch him in the act, yell "SPIN" and spin to win...or lose! This game can only be played in production meetings or debriefs - and there is only one spin per meeting. So listen closely; it's the only time you will be allowed to interrupt him.

What's the dress code?

Evaluate your wardrobe. You will need everything from sportswear to evening wear with this crowd. We go to a lot of events and have a lot of high-end clients, so look your best when you go to meetings. During day-to-day business, dress business casual in the office. Don't ever look like a bum, as some clients stop by without calling.

Wait...I have to go to events?

This is an ad agency, what did you expect? To be a hermit? No, we network, we go to award shows, we do team bonding events, in which you better be good at cornhole. We are sick of getting eliminated in the first round.



THE MEETING OF THE SPIRO

There once was a man named Christopher Spiro,
Who started this company a long time ago.
He met a man, who mentored his hand,
And Spiro & Waites became an ampersand.

In the beginning there was Chris, a young aspiring art director, who met the iconic ad man, Bill, from Ogilvy & Mather. After working on a few pivotal projects together, the two paired up creating such a cleverly dashing name of Spiro & Waites, the surnames of the gentlemen, if you must. They began their journey in the marketing realm in 1988, where they became one of the most formidable shops in all Southwest Florida.

Waites retired soon after when Spiro finally grew hair on his chest in 2000. Spiro then became partners with Steven Nance and Steve Martin (not the comedian, but an average Joe), in which the Agency became the world-renowned Spiro & Associates.

Eventually Nance retired to pursue his amateur golf career and Martin pedaled off into the sunset and now Spiro is the sole owner.

"Text them. That's how grownups do business."



SPIRO ASSOCIATES
A BRAND ARCHITECTURE BOUTIQUE

**ADVERTISING
MARKETING
PR**

**WE'RE NOT
NORMAL**
and proud of it.

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CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF NOT BEING NORMAL

40 **SPIRO ASSOCIATES**
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