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# The Foundation

## BEST PRACTICES

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The previous [best practices article](#) by Kirk Hoaglund focused two key principles that Clientek uses as its “beacon” of health. Transparency and Integrity, those two characteristics define Clientek in every aspect of how we run teams and execute projects. So instead of writing about a granular level of operational best practices this article will be about the foundation to which any operational best practices can be placed. By aligning the operations to transparency and integrity, we can build a culture of honesty, openness, and creativity which leads to efficiency and effectiveness.

### Honesty

Regardless of where we are in the project lifecycle it cannot be successful unless all parties are willing to sit down and have an honest conversation. The key result from honesty is trust and it is what each project team member needs to have with each other and their leaders. When the team can trust that they possess invaluable insight and talent, they

will simply smile and amaze us. Allowing the teams to learn without ridicule, punishment, or scrutiny allows that insight and talent to grow and the team will continue to astound.

### Openness

Some see this to be equal to that of honesty, and while there is truth in that, it is meant to be reflective. Our teams and our leaders all must be open to a better idea and to someone else's point of view, definition, or understanding. Working across time zones, cultures, lifestyles ...etc. is extremely difficult. Even when we all have the same native language, language is difficult, language is interpretive in our understandings and how we feel about those understandings. Mix language differences across time zones, cultures, and upbringings, and the challenges magnify. Having a solid process in place to flatten the language barriers along with executing patience in understanding and possessing the ability to reflect is key to operating efficiently.

One may wonder, “How does Clientek flatten the language barrier?”, well, that is a bit of our secret sauce and some of us would say it has a strong dependency on the drink of the month! But seriously, I think after you finish this article the secret sauce is obvious. It’s not a word, it’s not a thing, it’s a mindset. The process to deliver and build that mindset, may just be a future article... or you come and learn firsthand, having the drink of the month with us here at Clientek.

### Creativity

Everyone must be willing to look silly! Combined with the honesty and openness we must be willing to take the risk of sharing “ridiculous” ideas or thoughts. The most amazing of ideas are ridiculous when first thought of, spoken, or heard; and as history has taught us, they are easily shunned. Could you imagine if we still lived on a flat earth and if the sun and the entire solar system revolved around earth? We cannot have creativity and great ideas without vulnerability, and that cannot occur without the Honesty and Openness baked into the operational culture. I ran across a statement someone made in an article about 20 years ago and it resonates with me: “I risk humility because I have a genuine interest in participating...”.

### The Result

Once transparency and integrity are embraced and the resulting behaviors of honesty, openness and creativity have taken hold, problems become smaller. Creative, open, and honest minds allow us to deliver solutions quicker and with greater quality. It also creates an environment where everyone wants to work and that is an incredible achievement. It is a secret sauce that is not easily replicated. It requires tending to your garden often, individually, as a team, and as a company to ensure your crop doesn’t have any invasive species that will upset the output and quality of your harvest.

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