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# Flexibility

## FEATURE ARTICLE

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### Bending without breaking.

At Clientek, we place a large emphasis on flexibility. Not just in how we approach the challenges presented by our clients, but in how we operate as a whole. While flexibility offers countless advantages throughout the duration of a project, it can quickly turn to chaos without the necessary structure.

The other night, I once again found myself deep within the YouTube rabbit hole. As I clicked through the never-ending list of video suggestions, I stumbled across a talented young bladesmith named [Will Stelter](#). I began watching a series of videos in which he was forging handmade knives to test for his Journeyman Smith Certification. The American Bladesmith Society has three levels of bladesmith: Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master.

To achieve Journeyman status, he needed to forge a blade capable of surviving their rigorous testing. One of

the most nerve-racking tests they perform is the bending test. To receive a passing grade, the blade must achieve a 90-degree bend without breaking. This test proves that the applicant has a clear understanding of heat treating a blade with a soft back and a hard edge. Heat treating incorrectly, can lead to a catastrophic failure. The blade must be flexible while still maintaining its structural integrity.

Much like [this](#) blade forged by Mr. Stelter, the key to flexibility is structure. There are three main structural facets that allow us to maintain organizational integrity while remaining flexible over the course of an engagement.

#### 1. Communication

Nearly all instability can be traced back to poor communication. It is a fundamental aspect of executing a successful project. Regular, scheduled conversations are not always enough. Keeping the door open for additional

discussions creates an invested, well-informed team that is nimble and prepared for change.

## 2. Planning

Plans are the backbone of every engagement. They provide the foundation for which a project is built on. The structure they provide is essential, but it is worthless if incapable of change. Plans must take new knowledge into account whenever it becomes available. If we are 6 weeks into an engagement, we have undoubtedly learned something new. Our plan must reflect that. While plans may change, their role and importance never do.

## 3. Review

Taking time to regularly review our past performance gives us the opportunity to directionalize our flexibility. What went well? Where did we fall short? What can we do to improve? Constantly asking these types of questions prepares us for whatever adjustments lie ahead.

Being flexible isn't about bending over backwards, it's about recognizing the elements that are within our control and doing everything in our power to prepare them for change.

***Stay limber.***

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