BRINGING THE BANKING + FINANCE OATH TO LIFE AT KODA CAPITAL

KODA CAPITAL CEO PAUL HEATH SHARES HOW THE BFO SUPPORTS THEIR FOCUS ON CULTURE

Ever since the early days of Koda we have had a strong focus on culture. In the process of turning a business plan into an established firm we knew culture would take form and evolve as the team grew - and if we didn’t pay attention to it along the way there was a chance we’d come to work one day and find ourselves in conflict with the culture we had let materialise. With this in mind, the decision to proactively hold the reins on culture from the beginning was an easy one, and it was something the whole team got behind and owned collectively. To bring the concept of culture from the abstract to something more tangible we got together as a group and agreed on three values (Quality, Courage, Integrity) that we felt united us as a team as well as with our clients. We then came up with symbols and behaviours that brought those values to life in the day-to-day, and 100% commitment to the BFO was a perfect match for Koda’s commitment to Integrity. Importantly, each person at Koda takes The BFO pledge as an individual – and when those individual commitments are aggregated across the whole team it aligns us all and creates something pretty special.

"WE HAVE SYMBOLS AND BEHAVIOURS FOR EACH ONE OF OUR THREE CORE VALUES TO MAKE SURE THEY STAY TANGIBLE. AT A HIGH LEVEL THOSE INCLUDE HIGH FIVES FOR QUALITY (TO MAKE SURE WE SHOW APPRECIATION WHEN HIGH QUALITY WORK IS DONE), ELEPHANTS FOR COURAGE (THE ONLY ELEPHANT ALLOWED IN THE ROOM) AND THE BFO FOR INTEGRITY." - PAUL HEATH, CEO, KODA CAPITAL
**KODA CAPITAL AND THE BFO Journey: Awareness and Engagement**

Q. How did you and your team at Koda Capital first get to know about The Banking and Finance Oath (The BFO)?
A. The Koda team had heard about the BFO through its reputation in the industry, and our knowledge of the BFO and what it stood for was strengthened by the fact that Koda’s Chairman (Steve Tucker) is on the BFO Board.

Q. Who was first driving/ advocating for The BFO within Koda Capital?
A. As the Chairman of Koda and a founding Director of The BFO Steve Tucker had a key role in planting the BFO seed within the Koda team – but right away the alignment between Koda and The BFO felt natural and we very quickly all became advocates.

Q. What groundwork was required across the organisation to get buy in to get it embedded at a broader organisational level?
A. The 100% Commitment between Koda and The BFO went from idea to reality very quickly, in part because the alignment was so strong but also because of how decentralised Koda is when it comes to these sorts of decisions.

We get together as a full team at least once a year to talk about culture – including what’s working well and also areas for improvement – and the commitment to The BFO came out of one of these ‘culture days’ (now called ‘Koda Days’). There’s real power (and efficiency) in the ability to bring everybody together in person, put ideas on the table for discussion, and then commit (or otherwise) as a group to a plan or strategy.

Q. What sort of activities did you do to bring your people on board The BFO/ Koda Capital journey and what it means to be a signatory?
A. The most powerful thing we did at first was to involve everybody in the discussion and ultimate decision. It wasn’t mandated from the top down – it was a collective commitment where everybody had a voice. The people that have joined Koda since then obviously weren’t there for that initial conversation, so these days it’s about taking them on the journey and making sure they understand not only the ‘what’ but also the ‘why, when and how’. We also still hold an annual Koda Day where the discussion is centred around culture, so although the specific topics we talk about today have evolved the newer members of the team still have an understanding of how the various parts of Koda’s culture were ‘born’.

Q. What sort of activities/ reminders/ touch points do you have in place to keep ethics and The BFO top of mind?
A. As mentioned we have symbols and behaviours for each one of our three core values to make sure they stay tangible. At a high level these include high fives for Quality (to make sure we show appreciation when high quality work is done), elephants for Courage (the only elephant allowed in the room) and the BFO for Integrity. We also have our commitment to The BFO on Koda’s website, in our email signatures, in reception and throughout Koda’s offices – so while it’s not ‘in your face’ it’s also not easy to forget.

Q. What would be your top tips for teams and organisations wanting to bring The BFO to life internally?
A. Involve people in the conversation. For someone to get behind an idea they really have to understand the ‘why’ – and simply mandating something might get short term results but it’s not a pathway towards genuine commitment.

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