



Leaders who use mindfulness at work: Case study 5

Kristen Stancik: Client Service Manager: Citizen Relations

Job role and business background

Kristen is a Client Service Manager with global public relations firm [Citizen Relations](#). Citizen Relations, comprised of more than 200 professionals in eight cities across North America and Europe and partners in more than 60 cities across the world, delivers large-scale campaigns only on a worldwide level as well as on a regional and local scale. Citizen Relations' unique vision is to meet the new realities of the digital age with collaboration, imagination, agility and boldness.

"Public relations is a multifaceted and constantly evolving communications discipline. We strive to provide our clients with the highest quality of communications strategy and tactical executions, from global campaign launches to social media platforms to crisis response. This requires us to be deeply in tune and highly responsive to consumer and cultural trends while also being completely accountable to our clients and their needs. As a result, public relations professionals may be the busiest people you know. In fact, according to a recent study, [PR is the second most stressful industry](#), behind air-traffic controllers. Even I was surprised by this at first, but after reflecting for a moment on my workday, it started to make sense."

How did you become interested in mindfulness?

Like many others, Kristen was introduced to mindfulness practice in a therapy setting and immediately saw how practicing presence could and should extend to the workplace.

How does mindfulness help you in a work context?

"Mindfulness has been invaluable in all areas of my work: actively listening to my clients, developing wise and innovative strategies, fostering creativity, supporting my team and colleagues with compassion, providing space for open communication, maintaining focus amid a sometimes chaotic schedule and environment, responsibly managing budgets and timelines, and finding a healthy balance between work and life in general."

How does mindfulness help your organisation?

"We are currently in the early stages of promoting mindfulness in a structured way, through weekly 'Brain Building' (mindfulness) sessions, a monthly 'Workplace Wellness Wire' e-newsletter and a dedicated section of our corporate intranet that houses wellness resources. We are hearing powerful feedback from participants that engagement with these tools facilitates increased focus, stress-management and appropriate responsiveness. I've also observed a general trend toward the prioritization of physical and mental health among participants, and we'll be taking steps to more accurately measure this and other outcomes through formal program evaluation."

If a colleague asked you if it was worth finding out more about mindfulness, what would you tell them?

"Actually, I am often asked to account for my positive attitude and calm demeanour, which some people find curious. Here's what I say: There was a time when I felt that I wasn't demonstrating productivity unless I was visibly stressed out and working around the clock. I also thought the only way to gain respect was to share my opinion loudly and complain openly about perceived injustices. But when I learned about mindfulness and started living my life and doing my work on a moment-by-moment basis, and approaching the people and situations around me with openness and interest rather than opposition, that all changed. If I seem happy or peaceful today, it's because I'm working very hard at not getting lost in the madness of daily life. It's the simplest idea, to stay fully present, but the most difficult thing I've ever done. It's also been the most rewarding."