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## BEST PLACES TO WORK 2010

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### Everyone and No One Is 'Creative' at Big Spaceship

All Have Ability to Contribute to Any and Every Project at the Brooklyn Agency, Rendering Titles Meaningless

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YORK, Pa. (AdAge.com) -- Digital creative agency Big Spaceship doesn't have a single person on staff with the word "creative" in his or her title. That's because everyone is.

The freedom to contribute to any and every project and idea at the agency -- from intern to CEO -- tops the employee list of why they love working at the Brooklyn-based agency. General Manager Jason Prohaska calls it "unilateral autonomy."



Big Spaceship is comprised of six teams that have their own names, identities, logos and even songs. They shift to projects as needed.

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#### **BIG SPACESHIP**

**LOCATION:** Brooklyn, N.Y.

**EMPLOYEES:** 50

**GIVING BACK:** Charitable contributions are made based on staff input regarding what's valuable or personal to them, and has included donating office furniture and participating in NY Cares Coat Drives. A green committee was created to reduce the impact of work activities, and includes such things as recycling and supplying reusable plates and cutlery.

Chris Cocca, senior strategist, put it this way: "Everyone here has actively contributed to a million ideas that have turned into great projects." And that may or may not be hyperbole.

Because a million doesn't seem far off when Big Spaceship employees start talking: All of its 50 or so employees are encouraged to create and pursue "passion projects" at work that have ranged from stop-motion moviemaking to screen printing to origami. They also teach each other their skills formally, in designated agency sessions, or informally on a one-to-one basis, whether that's computer coding or design. Each of the six teams at the agency have created their own names, identities, logos and, in some cases, theme songs. Summer Fridays are called "IP Fridays" at Big Spaceship where everyone spends half a day working on the agency's own projects.

"There is a key recognition that people are here because they want to make great

things," said CEO Michael Lebowitz. "In order to make the best work, you have to work in the best place."

He credits the team system in helping to create a culture of cross-pollinated talents and good friends. "If all the designers sit together, you get a culture of departments. And departments, in my mind, lead to fractiousness," Mr. Lebowitz said.

The six agency teams are also not built around clients, but rather stay together as cross-disciplinary units, with the ability to lend out individuals to other teams when needed, and they travel from project to project. At least one person from each of its key disciplines -- design, technology, strategy and production -- are on each team.

"All that typical digital agency stuff like foosball tables or kegs every day or a masseuse or who knows what; all that stuff is nice and cool and one of the perks to this industry to begin with," said Jamie Kosoy, associate tech director. "But you could take all that stuff away and I still think Big Spaceship would be the coolest place to work. It's something else. It's an ethos."