

## Ajay Kaul of AgreeYa Solutions: Five Things Business Leaders Can Do To Create A Fantastic Work Culture

An Interview With Doug Noll



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*As a part of our series about how leaders can create a "Fantastic work culture," we had the pleasure of interviewing Ajay Kaul, managing partner at [AgreeYa Solutions](#), a leading global provider of software, solutions and services to small, medium and global Fortune 100 organizations. Thank you so much for doing this with us! Can you tell us a story about what brought you to this specific career path?*

*I have always had an intriguing mind and developed an interest in reading about new technology from early on. The very concept of automating things was a probing idea when I started my career. There was still a lot of doubt and vagueness around the 'what' and 'how' of IT and technology. This is when I realized that the customer needs answers to these questions and is seeking a capable vendor's support.*

*Fortunately, early in my career, I got an opportunity to develop solutions that made doing business easier. Soon, I became confident I would pick a career path that empowered me to work on innovative technologies and create transformational value for my customers.*

*Today, AgreeYa Solutions is a leading global provider of software, solutions and services to small, medium and global Fortune 100 organizations. Founded in 1999 and headquartered in Folsom, California, AgreeYa has over 2,200 professionals helping clients across the U.S., India, EMEA and Mexico. Leveraging a technology-enabled, consultative approach and diverse talent, we provide modern workplace, smart analytics, intelligent automation, AI/ML, cloud transformation, mobility and talent management solutions. Our work has led us to receive many recognition including certifications like Microsoft Solutions Partner, AICPA SOC Type 2, SEI CMMI and ISO 9001:2015; and awards including "Top 10 Best Companies to Work For," "Dream Company to Work For," "Best Employer Brand," "Top 5 Software Developers" and many more.*

**Can you share the most interesting story that happened to you since you began leading your company?**

It is not easy to pick one instance from a journey of 25 years. However, I want to share one of the most fulfilling aspects of my journey: witnessing the personal and professional growth of employees who have been with the company since its inception. Watching these individuals evolve and thrive professionally and personally has been a source of immense joy, pride and inspiration.

Our company experienced its fair share of challenges and triumphs as the years passed. Through it all, these committed AgreeYans remained by our side, weathering storms and celebrating victories. They exemplified devotion, resilience and an unwavering commitment to our shared goals.

Seeing each one of them evolve from junior positions to leadership roles, the proud feeling of witnessing them develop into seasoned professionals, hone their skills, expand their knowledge and contribute significantly to the company's growth has been a true honor.

I am forever grateful for their unwavering dedication and the indelible mark they have left on AgreeYa's story.

**Are you working on any exciting projects now? How do you think that will help people?**

While there are many, I am sharing two projects that will give you a strong idea of the kind of work AgreeYa Solutions is doing.

- We created an innovative mobile app for a public sector agency operating in four major counties. The app provides citizens access to essential air quality information through various receptors. Among other features, the app has alternate color palettes for users with color distinguishing difficulties. The solution earned the "Technology Innovation Award" in the citizen category from Government Technology Magazine's Special Districts program.
- AgreeYa created an app for an agency that delivers health treatment, recovery, employment, housing and other resources to more than 80,000 people in Detroit by improving direct access to healthcare providers. The principal goal of the application was to provide a convenient place for individuals to access information about the network of healthcare providers and staff. It provides comprehensive health-related information to end-users and dramatically expands access to critical data on the go. Most importantly, it helped bridge the gap between individuals needing healthcare providers through an integrated system. As an organization, we are honored to have been able to improve the quality of life for citizens.

While these are just two examples, AgreeYa is approaching 25 years in business and has a lot in the works! We are committed to creating solutions with emerging market trends and technologies to help businesses stay ahead of the curve. Therefore, we continue to invest in technologies including workplace solutions, intelligent automation, low-code and no-code solutions and more. We are also pleased to extend our robust solutions framework and proven delivery models to a broader base of customers and industry professionals. Our growth plans include investments in infrastructure, technology and top talent. These additional locations will create new job opportunities, enable collaboration with global customers and partners and reach new clientele that will benefit from our offerings. Our strategically placed offices and global delivery centers focus on providing the most innovative solutions to our customers.

**Ok, let's jump to the main part of our interview. According to [this study](#) cited in Forbes, more than half of the US workforce is unhappy. Why do you think that number is so high?**

Employee contentment is different across all organizations and is often a direct result of the quality of work, work-life balance, employee benefits, company culture and employer involvement but can also be indirectly impacted by personal relationships, mental/physical health and the financial situation of employees. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, employee contentment became a greater challenge than ever before due to external factors like job uncertainty, technology dependency, social distancing, constant market dynamic changes and more. Because of this, misalignment across roles and unfulfillment in positions have further exacerbated unhappiness across the workforce.

While there are many interesting statistics within this study, when we look at the 53% of Americans that are currently unhappy at work, I begin to consider all we do at AgreeYa to increase employee contentment. Though the unhappiness of employees is often in part a direct result of the factors mentioned above, there is a lot we can do as employers to motivate, support and encourage our team members. To be successful, there has to be a commitment from the top down and companies should take a people-first approach.

For example, at AgreeYa, we believe our people are our strongest asset. That's why we've made it our top priority to ensure we prioritize setting a clear business strategy, developing well-defined goals, aligning work with purpose and outcome and a shared vision of success among employees. We recognize and reward top talent through healthy competition and follow a program that includes team awards as well as monthly, quarterly and annual accolades. In doing so, our team members remain motivated and supportive of one another — creating a healthy workplace. Additionally, our workplace is founded on building a culture of respect, career progression, deep engagement and more importantly, fun. This effort has been recognized by [CEO Insights Magazine](#), [Sacramento Business Journal](#), [Asia's Best Employer Brands](#) and more.

Again, though every workplace differs, we have found success in our structure and commitment to creating an exceptional place to work!

**Based on your experience or research, how do you think an unhappy workforce will impact a) company productivity b) company profitability c) and employee health and wellbeing?**

When team members of any organization are unhappy, productivity and well-being are likely to be impacted. The old saying, "You are only as strong as your weakest link" is a direct parallel to this idea. When employees are not happy, they are not performing to their highest ability which can place more burden on team members. This can impact the overall company morale and result in a drop in teamwork, which can further decrease productivity. This creates a negative cycle and leads to higher turnover causing an increase in recruiting and training costs, customer dissatisfaction and a loss of customers and revenue. Continuous job dissatisfaction also impacts physical and mental health issues that can contribute to stress, anxiety and other ailments. Therefore, it is critical to keep the workforce engaged and motivated.

This is why at AgreeYa, we invest heavily in employee satisfaction initiatives, including competitive compensation and benefits, flexible work arrangements, professional development opportunities, wellness programs and efforts to create a positive workplace culture.

**Can you share 5 things that managers and executives should be doing to improve their company work culture? Can you give a personal story or example for each?**

1. **Focus on Diversity** — At AgreeYa, diversity is of great importance. Being a minority-owned business, we place a significant focus on developing a culture grounded in diversity and respect to ensure each one of our team members feels seen and heard.
2. **Commit to Equity** — Fair treatment of all individuals is non-negotiable at AgreeYa. We commit to equality through policies and practices that ensure identity is appreciated and recognized. For example, we get our team involved in a variety of celebrations including Christmas, Eid al-Fitr, Diwali, pride and more.
3. **Promote Inclusion** — When organizations promote inclusion, company culture improves. At AgreeYa, we place a strong emphasis on hiring talent that values inclusion. Each team member demonstrates inclusion day in and day out.
4. **Develop a Strong Value System** — By developing a strong value system, you can ensure your team members are all aligned. AgreeYa's integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect and excellence (I-CARE) value system is part of everything we do and at the forefront of our identity.
5. **Make Work Fun** — Work should be enjoyable! At AgreeYa, we work to give recognition where its due through a robust program that motivates employees and fosters healthy competition.

**It's very nice to suggest ideas, but it seems like we have to "change the culture regarding work culture". What can we do as a society to make a broader change in the US workforce's work culture?**

Though there is great effort being made by employees to create an improved company culture, I believe there are other factors at the helm of employee dissatisfaction. To create a strong company culture, a balance between employee well-being, company values, prioritization of business strategies, corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts and everything in between is needed. However, there are external factors like government regulations, employee relations, training and learning that also impact the overall culture of organizations. In circumstances in which such areas do not align with employee and employer needs, satisfaction is compromised.

If leaders commit to putting their team members first, a strong company culture and broader change across the U.S. workforce will take place. This won't happen overnight, but if everyone that can contribute to such changes make them a priority — we have the power to alter the trajectory for the next generation.

**How would you describe your leadership or management style? Can you give us a few examples?**

I would describe my leadership style as a blend of empathetic and results-driven servant leadership. At its core, my style is deeply rooted in empathy and genuine care for my team members. I firmly believe in putting the needs of my team first, fostering an environment that prioritizes their wellbeing, both personally and professionally. However, I balance this care with a strong commitment to achieving our objectives, ensuring we remain on track to deliver results that align with broader organizational goals.

I'm not a leader who stays distant from the action. I firmly believe in being hands-on, frequently working in the trenches alongside my team. For example, during a recent project that faced tight deadlines, I jumped in to help the team, which not only helped us meet the deadlines, but also gave me a more practical understanding of the challenges my team faces.

Innovation and new ideas are highly valued in my leadership approach. I strive to create an environment where diversity of thought is encouraged. I always say, we can all come up with ideas/recommendations/changes that we can discuss as a team and come to an agreement, but once we have agreed, then it doesn't matter whose idea it was, but we all work together to make it work.

Another crucial aspect of my leadership style that I am constantly working to improve is delegating tasks to my leaders based on their roles and capabilities. I aim to set clear expectations and provide a roadmap to success, holding them accountable for delivering results.

I am deeply committed to maintaining a culture that aligns with our organization's mission and I-CARE (Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence) value system. I lead by example in living these values and work actively to ensure our culture supports our team and drives our success. In practicing these five pillars and exemplifying them day in and day out, I find my fellow leaders exude the same qualities. I strive to continuously let my team know that I am committed to helping them grow, flourish and excel both professionally and personally. This not only helps individual team members, but the entire organization and customers as well. When it comes to respect, I believe this value is the foundation of all I do as it is respect that carries all relationships and without it, you have nothing. Building mutual respect amongst individuals is key to creating a dynamic, healthy and successful relationship in which both parties thrive. At AgreeYa, excellence means excelling as a team through individual achievements. When our individual achievements come together, everyone wins. To achieve excellence at AgreeYa, we encourage professional development and a variety of team building exercises to nurture and grow our teams. In summary, I lead with a combination of empathy and determination, ensuring my team feels supported and valued while keeping a steady eye on our goals and the results we need to achieve.

**None of us are able to achieve success without some help along the way. Is there a particular person who you are grateful towards who helped get you to where you are? Can you share a story about that?**

I have a lot of people who have been instrumental in my journey. Starting with some of my teachers and professors who not only taught me about technology and business but shared important life lessons throughout my school/college experience. My colleagues and mentors during my days in India and early days of working in the U.S., have played a large role in my career as they have provided the foundation critical for my success as an entrepreneur and the endless support that has helped me get to where I am today. My team members (current and past, we call them AgreeYans) are my second family and the existence of AgreeYa is unimaginable without them being shoulder to shoulder with me throughout the journey. Lastly, my family has always understood and adjusted to my work commitments. I thank each of them as they have helped me to achieve who I am and how far I have come.

**How have you used your success to bring goodness to the world?**

Though I feel we are doing our bit, a lot is yet to be accomplished. Throughout AgreeYa's existence, the company has placed a great deal of emphasis on its community engagement and enablement. We have worked to go beyond our core business activities and encourage our team to participate in CSR opportunities that make a positive impact on communities we are part of and support organizations focused on education, healthcare and social well-being. We work with a variety of organizations including, UCP of Sacramento and Northern California supporting

children and adults with developmental disabilities, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) supporting children in foster care around the Sacramento area, SCALE (Society to Create Awareness Towards Life & Environment) for supporting female child education in India, Rotary Foundation for providing medical amenities, PYCT for health care and educational support to children, Children's Charities of Sacramento, Society to Create Awareness Towards Life and Environment, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, American Cancer Society and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento's 'Build for Unity' Program. We also worked with Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank.

**Can you please give us your favorite "Life Lesson Quote"? Can you share how that was relevant to you in your life?**

I truly believe "Success is not solely defined by the profits you make, but by the positive impact we create on society." Following this mantra in my life has helped me every step of the way as it encourages me to empower others to reach their full potential. Success is not an individual pursuit; it is a collective effort. This approach has helped me remain focused on building a talented, diverse and inclusive team that thrives on collaboration and mutual respect.

Finally, the quote "The greatest risk in life is not taking risks at all. Embrace uncertainty, learn from failure and let your resilience guide you towards success" has guided my every action and business decision — resulting in AgreeYa's achievements and longevity.

**You are a person of great influence. If you could inspire a movement that would bring the most amount of good to the most amount of people, what would that be? You never know what your idea can trigger.**

This is our focus every day — enabling organizations with the latest technology to help them create a positive change in people's lives and the environment. Our commitment stems from the ideas of developing technology for all and the use of technology for the larger good of society. I have been privileged to work on many successful products over the years that have done just that. One movement I would love to see come to fruition is an educational technological advancement of assistive technologies for individuals with disabilities.

While there are technologies designed to assist these communities, I feel there is a great deal more that could be done. For example, technologies to enhance communication, mobility and promote independence. With this, I would encourage everyone to become more educated on the challenges that those with disabilities face and contribute newfound ideas and solutions to the movement in hopes of filling every gap needed for these individuals to have a fruitful and abundant life.

I believe this idea is just the tip of the iceberg and there is a lot more we can do to work with technology to improve our communities. If you are interested in working with us visit <https://agreeya.com/> or follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) to learn more!

**Thank you for these fantastic insights. We wish you continued success!**

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