

The top-left portion of the page features a complex, abstract graphic composed of several thin, black, overlapping lines. These lines form a series of irregular, nested shapes that resemble a stylized, multi-layered 'V' or a series of overlapping triangles and polygons. The lines are thin and black, set against a plain white background.

2025 CULTURE AND PERFORMANCE TRENDS FACING YOUR AGENCY

JENNEINK, LLC

WHAT'S IN HERE?

Introduction

Key Trends and Predictions You Can't Ignore

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Summary

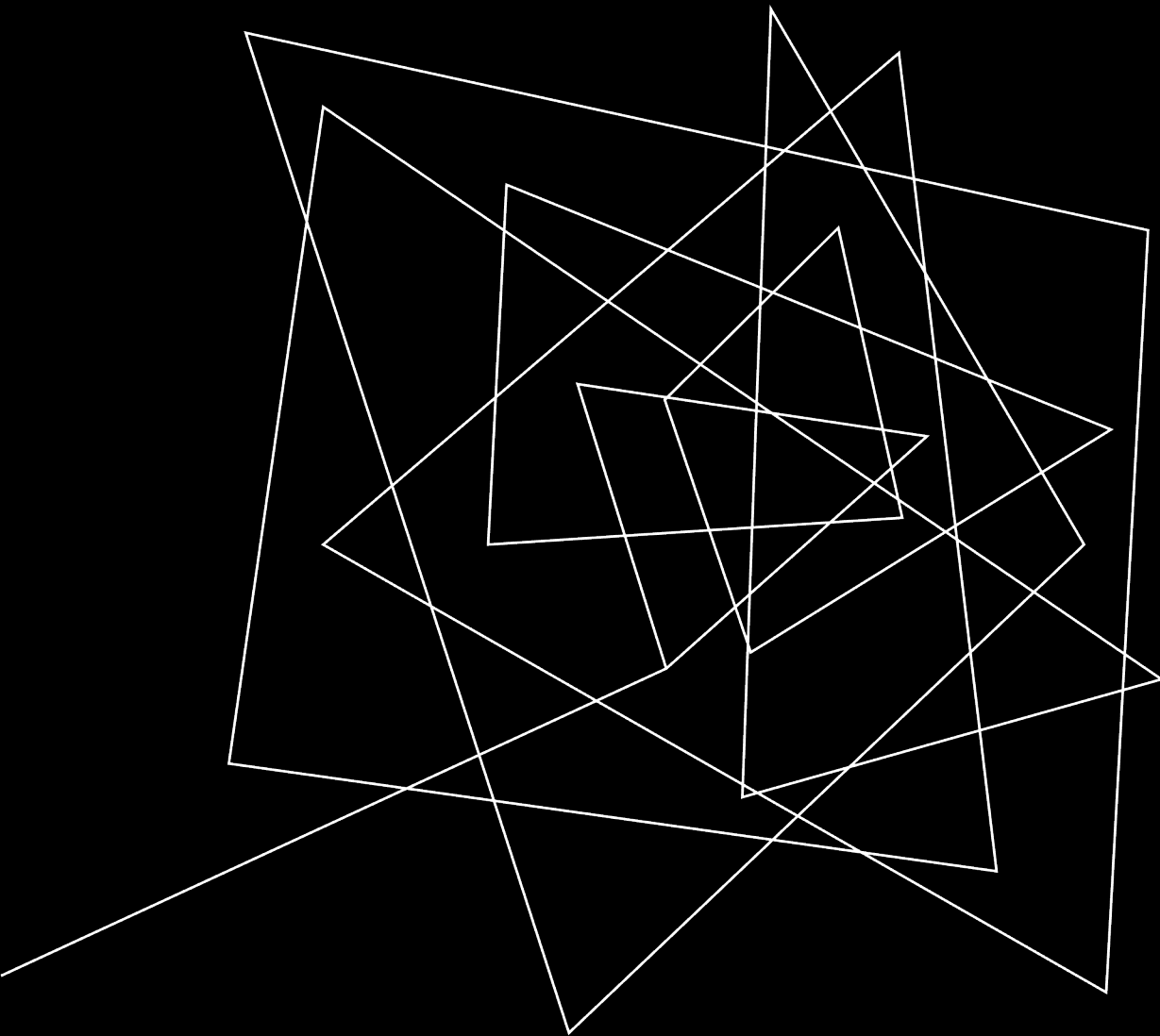
How I can help

INTRODUCTION

Every day, I work with growing agencies to help them navigate the challenges of balancing culture and performance. I've seen firsthand how leaders grapple with creating workplaces where people feel valued and supported, all while driving high-impact results.

As we step into 2025, the landscape for agencies continues to shift, presenting both challenges and opportunities. Balancing culture and performance, navigating workplace expectations, and adopting new measures of accountability are just a few of the pressing issues leaders face.

Regardless of the landscape, your agency has the chance to innovate, redefine what success looks like, and build more resilient teams and processes. This report highlights key trends and predictions for the year ahead, offering insights to help agencies thrive in a rapidly evolving environment.



KEY TRENDS AND PREDICTIONS

Paying attention to these trends will help you stay ahead and avoid being blindsided by the challenges they bring. It's easy to shrug off or ignore these issues, especially when the solutions aren't clear—but being proactive is key. By understanding and addressing these trends now, you'll position your agency to adapt and thrive in 2025.

THE KEY TRENDS THAT WILL IMPACT YOUR SUCCESS

1.

The Frustrating Tug-of-War
Between Culture and Performance
Will Continue

2.

Anxiety Over Losing Flexibility Will
Accompany the Return to Office
(RTO)

3.

Employee-Agency Friction Will
Heighten as the Perception Gap
Widens

4.

Belonging Will Eclipse Engagement
as the Key Driver of Performance

5.

Compensation Transparency May
Slow, But Demand for Pay
Communication Remains High

6.

Traditional Accountability Metrics
Will Evolve

KEEP READING TO LEARN MORE

KEY TRENDS FOR AGENCIES IN 2025

1. The Frustrating Tug-of-War Between Culture and Performance Will Continue

Leaders will persist in struggling to balance building a strong culture with driving high performance. This perceived conflict often leaves CEOs and leadership teams feeling stuck between competing priorities.

However, leading agencies will break this stalemate by recognizing that culture and performance are interdependent. By aligning their culture-building efforts with measurable performance outcomes, they'll position themselves for sustainable success

“The erosion of culture doesn't come from holding people accountable or introducing structure—it comes from avoiding those things. High-performing teams thrive on fairness, clear expectations, and consistent follow-through. Building structure and enforcing accountability are not threats to culture; they are the backbone of it.”

Jenné Fromm, Life Cycle of Culture and Performance in a Growing Agency

KEY TRENDS FOR AGENCIES IN 2025

2. Anxiety Over Losing Flexibility Will Accompany the Return to Office (RTO)

As more agencies push for a return to in-office work, employees will feel increasingly anxious about losing the flexibility they've grown accustomed to. Flexibility has shifted from being a perk to an expectation, and organizations risk alienating employees by enforcing rigid policies.

Forward-thinking agencies will find ways to balance in-person collaboration with flexible work arrangements, focusing on clear communication and prioritizing results over presence. This will help ease tension while maintaining productivity.

“High-performers, women and millennials, three groups that prize flexibility, are the biggest flight risks.

High-performers may feel especially resentful about mandates, particularly if they maintained performance or over-delivered during the pandemic. They may perceive RTO mandates as a signal of mistrust from management.”

Garter, 2024

KEY TRENDS FOR AGENCIES IN 2025

3. Employee-Agency Friction Will Heighten as the Perception Gap Widens

Misaligned views between leadership and employees on key issues—such as well-being, inclusion, and purpose—will exacerbate frustration and disengagement in 2025. While 90% of executives believe their organizations positively impact workers' well-being, less than 60% of employees agree.

Blaming generational differences or work ethics for dissatisfaction will no longer suffice. Leaders must proactively align with their employees' needs and demands, fostering open communication and trust. Agencies that fail to close this perception gap risk losing top talent and damaging their credibility.

“Our research found that around 90% of executives believe that working for their company has a positive effect on worker well-being, skills development, career advancement, inclusion and belonging, and their sense of purpose and meaning. However, just 60% (or fewer) of workers agree.”

Deloitte, 2024

KEY TRENDS FOR AGENCIES IN 2025

4. Belonging Will Eclipse Engagement as the Key Driver of Performance

While engagement has long been seen as paramount, a growing body of research suggests that fostering a sense of belonging is even more critical to individual and team success. Belonging encompasses feeling valued, included, and aligned with an organization's mission—elements that go deeper than traditional engagement metrics. Belonging stems from the emotional connections leaders and managers create with their teams, which help individuals feel valued, included, and aligned with an organization's mission.

Leading agencies will prioritize initiatives that make employees feel they truly belong. By embedding belonging into their culture, agencies will drive stronger performance and loyalty.

“Leaders who foster emotional connections and build cohesive teams will be in high demand. Key attributes include empathy, facilitating human-machine collaboration, and focusing on talent development. This shift represents a fundamental change from task management to nurturing teams through rapid change. Leaders who adapt to this model will be crucial in balancing technological advancements with human needs in the AI age.”
Forbes, 2025

KEY TRENDS FOR AGENCIES IN 2025

5. Compensation Transparency Might Slow, But Demand for Pay Communication Remains High

The future of pay transparency laws remains uncertain, with progress likely to vary based on regional legislation. As federal momentum slows, inconsistent regulations will frustrate multi-location agencies.

Despite these challenges, employees will continue to demand clear communication about compensation. Agencies that proactively address pay transparency will gain a competitive edge in talent acquisition and retention, positioning themselves as trustworthy and employee-focused.

“Pay transparency adds a level of trust to the candidate/employer interaction. When compensation is shared early in the process, we avoid mismatched expectations. Companies are more likely to attract the right candidate for their job openings. Employees feel like they’re well paid for their new role, and companies know they’ve acquired a needed talent for the right cost.”
Kristen Howe, Chief Product Officer at Linkage

KEY TRENDS FOR AGENCIES IN 2025

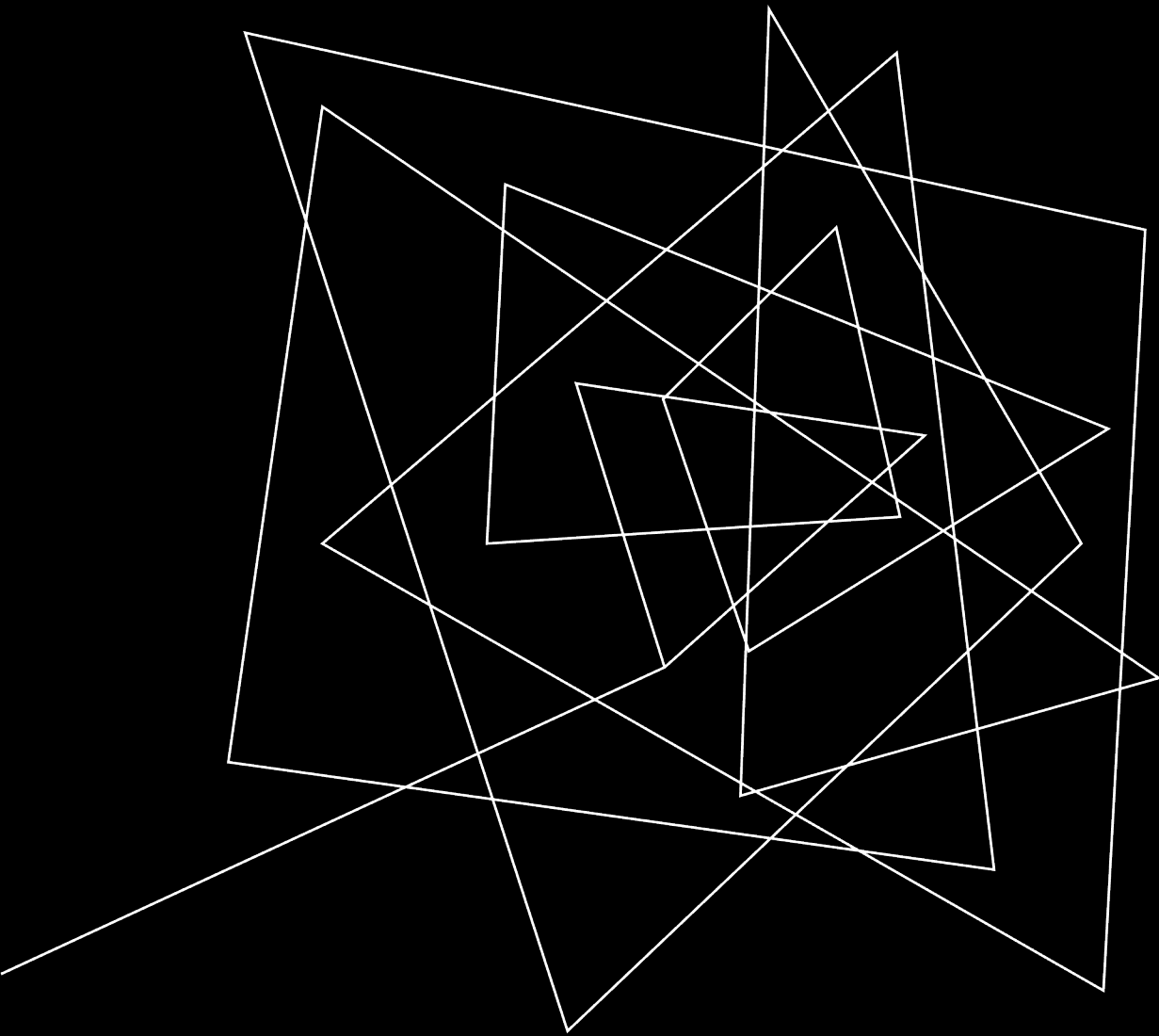
6. Traditional Accountability Metrics Will Evolve

Forward-thinking agencies will continue to move away from outdated metrics like billable hours and in-office presence, recognizing that these measures often fail to reflect true productivity or performance.

The shift toward value-based pricing will accelerate this evolution, encouraging agencies to adopt metrics tied to outcomes and performance. By focusing on meaningful measures, agencies can build accountability systems that align with both client priorities and employee goals.

“While most agency executives nod their heads in agreement with the point that agencies are compensated for the wrong thing, they also wring their hands in exasperation, thinking that the solution is hopelessly complex. Actually, the solution is startlingly simple. Stop billing for inputs (time) and start charging for outputs (deliverables), which is what clients actually buy. When you charge for the solution rather than the time that went into developing it, you’re able to recover the value of the experience, expertise, contacts, and industry knowledge.”

Tim Williams, Founding Partner, Ignition Consulting Group



POSITIVE TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

You already have strengths within your agency—capitalizing on these positive trends is an opportunity to match them with what you do best. By leaning into these opportunities and aligning them with your unique strengths, you'll set yourself up for even greater success in the year ahead.

POSITIVE TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. Flexible Work Policies Will Lead to Greater Innovation

Agencies that embrace hybrid models will unlock new ways to collaborate and innovate, fostering creative breakthroughs and improving overall efficiency.

2. Focus on Career Growth Will Elevate Employee Loyalty and Performance

Investing in upskilling and professional development will create clear pathways for growth, boosting morale and building stronger, more capable teams.

3. Purpose-Driven Work Will Attract Top Talent

Agencies with clearly defined missions and values will become magnets for high performers seeking to make meaningful contributions, enhancing both culture and outcomes.

4. Technology Will Enhance Team Collaboration

AI and automation will streamline workflows, freeing employees to focus on strategic and creative tasks. Agencies that adopt these tools effectively will improve both efficiency and satisfaction.

5. Agency Cultures Will Become More Human-Centered

Leaders will increasingly prioritize empathy, connection, and well-being, creating workplaces that are not only productive but also supportive and enjoyable.

“A good job is a vital part of a life well-lived, and it can provide meaning, social connection and community. By changing how people are managed, employers can address engagement and wellbeing simultaneously, creating a new foundation -- especially in uncertain times -- for consistent performance, retention and organizational growth.”

Gallup, 2025



SUMMARY

As we head into 2025, agencies are facing some big challenges but also exciting opportunities. On the challenging side, there's the ongoing tug-of-war between culture and performance, employee concerns about losing flexibility, and a growing disconnect between leaders and workers. Add to that the need to rethink outdated accountability metrics and shift focus from engagement to belonging, and it's clear there's a lot to navigate.

But it's not all uphill! Agencies that embrace flexibility, foster belonging, and invest in career growth will find new ways to innovate and strengthen their teams. Purpose-driven work, empathetic leadership, and advancements in technology offer exciting opportunities to stand out, build loyalty, and create workplaces where people thrive.

The good news? You don't have to tackle this alone.

NOW WHAT?

Navigating these trends requires clarity, strategy, and alignment—and that's where I come in. I specialize in helping growing agencies identify the root causes of cultural and performance challenges, enabling leaders to make informed decisions and drive meaningful change.

Whether you're tackling one of these challenges or need help addressing all of them, let's work together to position your agency for success in 2025 and beyond.



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