




# Building the people firm in the digital world

Will Farnell FCCA



**We live in a digital world...**

A photograph of two young women with blonde hair in ponytails, smiling and talking to each other outdoors at night. The background is dark with some blurred green foliage. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Discuss with your  
neighbor the most  
fascinating stat from  
the video

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# About today's speaker



Will Farnell FCCA  
@willfarnell

Founder Farnell Clarke Limited

Author of 'The Digital Firm'

Supporting accounting firms with digital transformation

# Agenda

1. The changing digital landscape
2. The Digital Firm
3. The importance of people
4. Who are you, Who do you want to be?
5. Culture
6. Challenges in creating great culture
7. Questions

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# The landscape is changing

Chicken and egg...which came first?

Tech or society...which came first?

Is it shifting client/societal drivers leading to tech being developed?

**Or** is tech capability the driver for societal/client expectations shifting?

The philosophical question...

## What is driving change?





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# Evolution of the Digital Firm



# What is the Digital Firm?

A practice that utilises a mix of digital technology and digitally aware staff to deliver first class services effectively and efficiently through maximum levels of automation.

*Will*  
**FARNELL**

# The Digital Firm



# The Digital Firm - Today's Focus



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# Why is a focus on people so important?



We are in the midst of the biggest generational shift....ever!

75% of the workforce by 2025 will be Millennial

Today it is one third of the workforce

2/3rds of Millennials will leave their current job in next three years



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# Importance of identity...

1. What do you want your firm to be famous for?
2. Why do you exist?
3. Millennials buy brands and values.
4. When we all use the same tech, it is our identity that is our advantage in the market?
5. Culture eats strategy for breakfast...

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# What is culture?



**Charles Handy:** The way we do things around here

**Culture =**

Values +

Traditions +

Beliefs +

Interactions +

Behaviors +

Attitudes

# Why is culture so important?

Culture stems from values

Values and beliefs create personality

Firms need a personality and a unique and clear brand

Millennials buy into brands

**Great culture = great workplaces, great workplaces = great teams and great team creates amazing client experiences**

# What makes a great culture and what can you do now to create one?

1. Clarity around your vision, mission, purpose and values.
2. Ensure your team feels pride and ownership in your values, what do they want 'their' firm to be famous for.
3. Alignment - does every aspect of your firm reflect point 1.
4. An environment where your team are happy to spend almost half of their waking hours!

THE TAX AND POUNDS





# What does a good culture deliver?

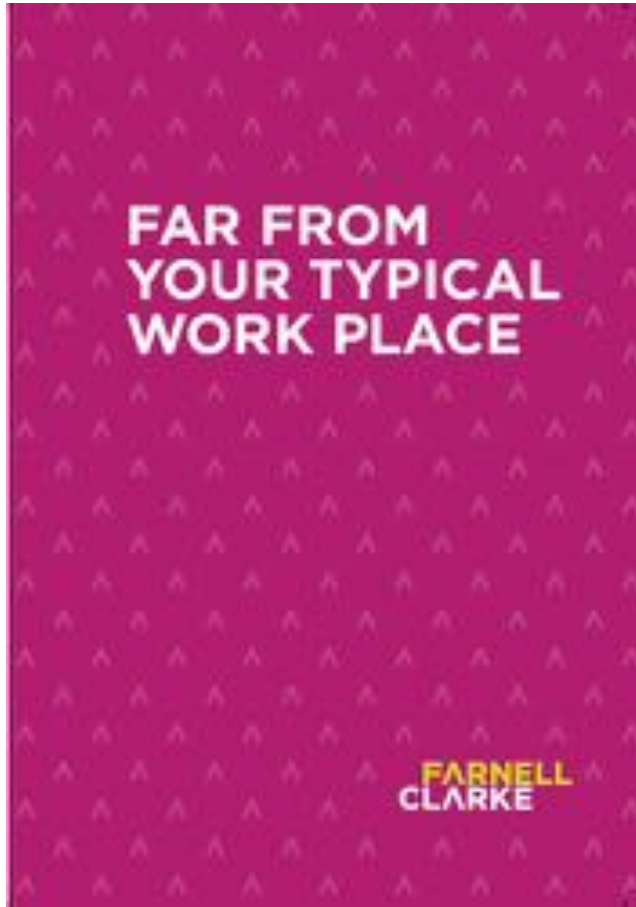
1. Great teams of engaged, motivated loyal people focused on delivering your firms vision
2. True client experience
3. A clear firm personality leading to brand identify and competitive advantage
4. A steady flow of people wanting to work for your firm
5. Reduction in recruitment costs and greater retention

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# Challenges in creating Great Culture

1. We have always done it that way!
2. Change is difficult
3. Too many multiple personalities
4. Lack of vision



- 1 Focus on the client and the rest will follow
- 2 Trust and transparency
- 3 Simple is better than complex
- 4 Work hard and be nice to people
- 5 Aim to make a positive difference
- 6 Witty and fun over boring and formal
- 7 You can be serious without a suit
- 8 Show me, don't tell me
- 9 The things we work hardest for are the things that reward us the most
- 10 Good just isn't good enough



<http://bit.ly/QBC2019>

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# Questions?

# Key takeaways

1. Identify your values, build them with your team, share with clients.
2. Think about 3 things that are unique to you, do you communicate them to your clients?
3. Consider your 'environment' does it reflect who you want to be as a firm?



# Connect with me



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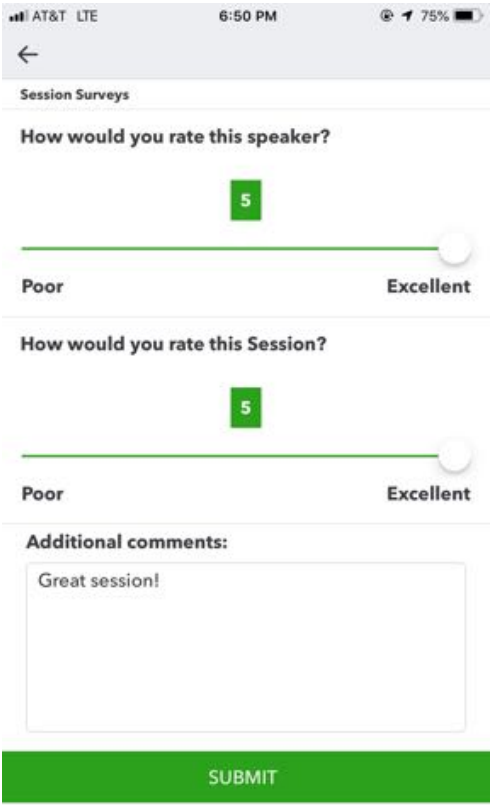
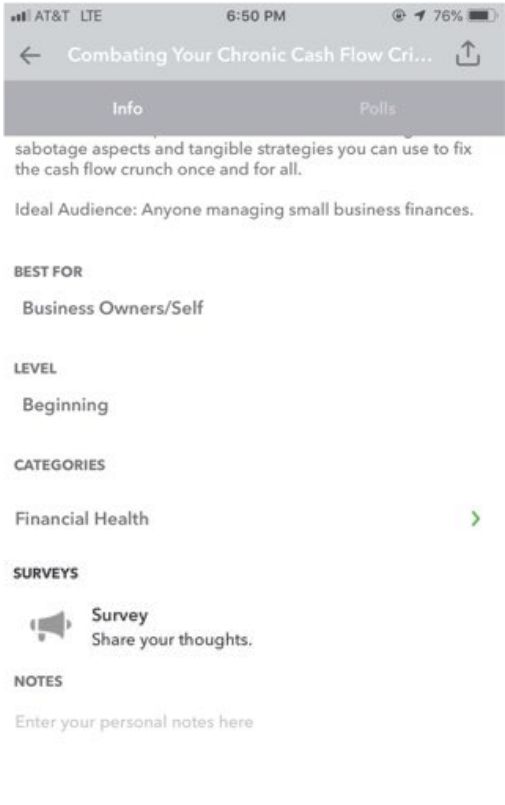
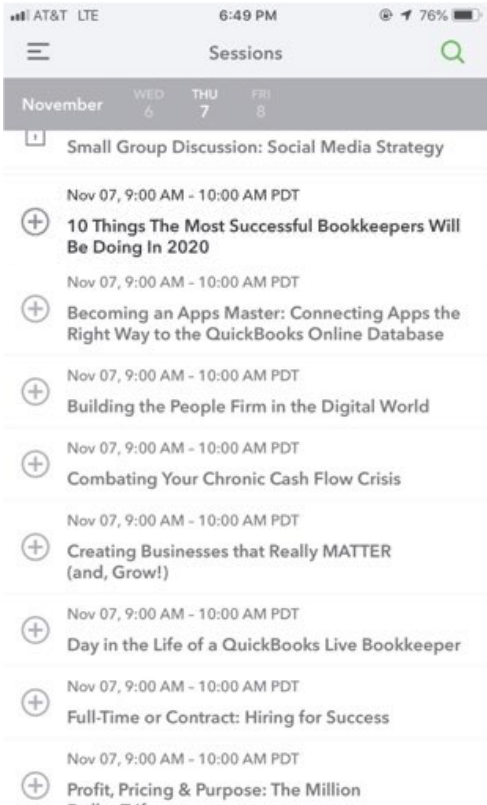
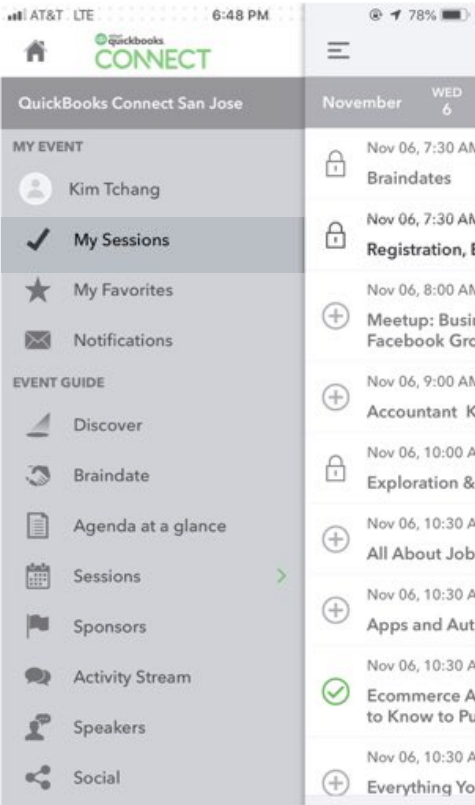
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The screenshot shows the QuickBooks Connect agenda page for November 7. The header includes the QuickBooks Connect logo, navigation links (Why Attend, Agenda, Speakers, Pricing, Sponsors, Travel, FAQ), and a 'Register now' button. The date 'November 7' is highlighted, with 'November 6: Accountant Day' and 'November 8' also visible. A 'Print Agenda' link is in the top right. A paragraph describes the event: 'Get new insights from experts in business growth, organizational culture, financial health, technology and life skills. Book a Braindate with peers and expert consultant for one-on-one learning. Unwind in the evening with our legendary celebration.' Below this is a 'Search for sessions' input field. A 'Filters' section contains buttons for 'Business Growth', 'Life & Business Skills', 'Organizational Culture', 'Technology Training', 'Advisory', and 'Financial Health', with an 'Expand all +' link. The agenda list shows sessions for November 7:

- 7:30-7:00 am: Registration, Breakfast & Exploration
- 7:30-10:30 am: Braindates (New this year, you can use Braindates to book time with fellow attendees, expert consultants and the QuickBooks support team. [Learn more](#). Best for: All Audiences. CPE Hours: not eligible)
- 8:00-8:30 am: Yoga
- 8:00-8:45 am: Breakout Sessions
  - Small Business Meetup: Relationship Marketing and the Power of Human Connection
  - Small Group Discussion: Social Media Strategy
  - Small Group Discussion: Showing up - Why What You Wear Matters
  - Small Group Discussion: Build Your Dream Bookkeeping firm



OWN  
THE  
FUTURE