



Clockwise (from top left): Chase Bogan (graphic design coordinator), team members at work, Mike Miller (digital consultant) and Kass Botts (paid social account manager).

# HANAPIN MARKETING

Humble, Happy, Hard-Working 'Heroes'

By Symone C. Skrzycki



The legend of a dark-haired hero looms large at Hanapin Marketing, a digital marketing agency that specializes in pay-per-click (PPC) advertising.

Murals, figurines and posters tout the Bloomington-based company's popular "PPC Hero" blog mascot and the notion that greatness is always within reach.

Energy is evident. An open layout awaits. Green workstations abound. Walls are bathed in shades of blue.

"What I really like about the work we do here is, it's not all Bloomington companies," asserts digital consultant Mike Miller. "It's not all Indianapolis companies. We have Sprint, American Eagle, The Weather Channel. Huge clients. Huge names in a small town. It's refreshing to leave work doing great stuff for big companies and still have the benefit of not living in downtown New York or Chicago and (instead being a part of) that smaller, tighter-knit community."

Founded in 2004, Hanapin has approximately 70 employees. It's a place that empowers people to soar – professionally and personally.

"We believe a lot in decentralized authority making," remarks president Jeff Allen. "The way I think about it is, people closest to the information are the most impacted by it; they're the ones that should be making the decisions (as much as possible)."

Hanapin also gives employees a voice.

"Management is so accessible and easy to talk to," emphasizes senior accounting clerk Lauren Reiser. "You can bring up concerns or suggestions and they're actually considered."

Kass Botts, a paid social account manager, joined the company in 2017.

"Everyone feels really comfortable here – because we do a 'team of teams' kind of organization," reflects the 25-year-old. "We all have to rely on each other as resources. The open work environment contributes to that quite a bit."

The camaraderie continues after hours with activities such as bowling, cave tours and dinners.

"Those things help to build the rapport."

Botts laughs before adding a heartfelt, "I feel like – I don't know – I've never loved the people I work with so much as whenever I've worked here!"

### **'A rising tide lifts all boats'**

Each year, Hanapin hosts Hero Conf – the world's largest all-PPC conference – with events in both the United States and the United Kingdom.

"Our competitors come to the conference, speak at this conference," explains senior communications manager Jamie Newton. "We have a really good relationship with most of our competitors because they're the ones reading our blogs (written by the experts at Hanapin) or they're coming to learn from us."

Why is that so important?

"It's kind of this funny thing where we're training a lot of our competitors," Allen acknowledges. "But our thought is, 'A rising tide lifts all boats.'"

"(In) our industry – five, 10 years ago – there were a lot of people who were (so-called) PPC experts, agencies that just weren't very good at it. And if we went on a sales pitch, we spent a lot of time trying to convince the client, 'This is a good product. It's Google! It's Facebook! Look, it's legitimate.'"

"Part of it is, let's make everyone better at this so we can spend



Hanapin's high jinks have employees burning energy, enjoying a Yoga With Goats session and testing Star Wars virtual reality technology.





Team members hit the arts and crafts table to honor famous females on International Women's Day.



less time talking about why it's a credible industry and spend more time talking about why our approach might be the right approach for them."

Outside Allen's office, a wall displays the career journeys of several Hanapin employees. Among them are Miller, who started as an intern, and Newton.

"They're flexible in the career paths," Newton points out. "When I came in (four years ago), I was managing webinars and doing our content marketing type of pieces. But probably about a year-and-a-half ago, I was like, 'You know what? I want to focus on PR.' They've grown with me on that."

Hanapin paid for her to pursue training at a local PR agency.

"Now that's part of my main role," she declares. "That's a cool aspect. It's not a rigid, 'You have to do this, this and this' (path to advancement)."

Conducting stay interviews helps boost morale and job satisfaction.

"Everyone (other employers) does exit interviews. Someone quits. They find out all of the things they could have done differently to keep that person," Allen submits. "We do stay interviews. Once a year, we get with people and say, 'Why would you leave? What do you love? What skills do you have that we're not leaning on?' That's usually where it becomes obvious to someone that, 'Hey, maybe there's a different path for you.'"

## Time as a commodity

Hanapin is a proponent of "life-work harmony."

That philosophy resonates with Botts.

"One of the ways I relieve stress, surprisingly, is to volunteer in the community. I volunteer with Shalom Community Center (assists those in poverty) primarily right now. Hanapin gives me the opportunity to use paid hours (eight hours annually, with the option to donate time to colleagues) to do so, which is amazing. I found Shalom through talking about volunteer opportunities with my peers here. By being able to use those hours, that gave me an 'in' to decide whether I wanted to continue doing that regularly."

In addition, there's an opportunity for flexible scheduling after 90 days of employment.

"They can come in anywhere between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m., take anywhere from a 30- to 90-minute lunch," notes Becky Throckmorton, HR coordinator for benefits and policy administration. "And they can work more hours earlier during the week and take a half day on Friday, which is cool. It adds to the productivity of the team. People feel like they're valued and their time is valued, and that does a lot on both sides."

The Get Healthy Program helps prevent the spread of diseases by allowing staff to recover without using PTO.

"It goes a long way toward making sure that employees take the time they need to get better," Throckmorton comments. "If they're sick longer than two days, they'll just take PTO for the third day. There's no limit to that. There's no penalization for taking it as often as you need."

A perk especially close to Newton's heart is paid parental leave.

"That was a big one for me because they announced it a month before I went on maternity leave (in 2017)," she recalls. "I was like, 'Woohoo! This is exciting!' It's six weeks of paid leave at 100% of their salary for both mothers and fathers (under any new parent situation, including adoption)."

## Superheroes and Star Wars

Down the hall, a Jedi is battling the forces of evil.

In other words, marketing coordinator Bonnie Pogorelc is testing out a virtual reality *Star Wars* simulator that will be on display at Hero Conf (the theme is PPC Masters).

"It's a way to attract people to our booth and it's a way to start conversations," she explains, proudly proclaiming that she's working to add "Jedi Master" to her job title.

A moment later, Newton passes several meeting rooms with titles such as "The Fortress of Solitude" and "X-Mansion."

“All of our rooms have superhero names to them,” she confides.

“Have I told you about the talk box?” she asks as we near the center of the main office.

The sophisticated phone booth has deep red walls, a black stool and the latest technology.

“This is new,” Newton observes. “We needed more spaces where people could talk privately with their remote team or supervisors or what not (given the office’s open layout). It’s soundproof. It’s the first one in the Midwest. They actually flew here from Colorado to install this because nobody else in this region has one.”

### ‘Different in a good way’

Hanapin offers six health plans, with one that includes coverage at no cost to employees. The defined contribution is tenure based and the company has a simple IRA with a 3% salary match.

Kudos come in a variety of forms at Hanapin.

There’s an employee of the month designation and a monthly Living Our Values Everyday (LOVE) award. And don’t forget the appreciation station, stocked with thank you notes, designed to brighten a colleague’s day.

As if on cue, the sound of a monkey scream pierces the air.

“This is what our employees of the month get – a flying superhero monkey!” someone quips.

Around the corner, graphic design coordinator Chase Bogan tackles a project at his standing desk. Blue headphones are draped around his neck.

“He’s a former intern,” Newton says. “We’re excited to have him.”

“Once I spent some time here, I started learning that the people were different in a good way – like I’m different in a good way,” Bogan offers as colleagues burst into laughter. “There’s a lot of different personalities and there’s no one that I don’t get along with. It’s a lot of great, different kinds of people.

“One thing I’ve enjoyed is that I’ve been quote-on-quote ‘mentoring’ some of the interns. I haven’t had my own intern yet, but I’ve been mentoring them to help them ease into the role. ... I’m going through management training now so I can get my own intern soon.”



Happy to help: Preparations are underway for a Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration.

Miller swoops into the lounge and plops down in a comfortable chair before playfully announcing, “I have a call in 11 minutes!”

It’s clear how much he loves his job ... and the people.

“I was an advertising major in college, so it interested me that this is a direct application of what I studied – even though what I studied was like the old school form of advertising. Coming here, it was new in the *what* we’re doing, but the *how* we do it and the principles were all things I’d studied.”

He chuckles when talking about group happy hours.

“We all go to Brothers (Bar and Grill)! That’s the spot of choice here. It used to be a lot more frequent, and then we got bigger and we got busier, so it went from every Wednesday to maybe once a quarter now. We typically do it when we have our made up ‘2nd 2nd’ holiday – once a quarter, (we get) a free Friday off and we proceed with that (Happy Hour) on a Thursday.”

Amid the hard work and camaraderie, there are many “happy hours” indeed at Hanapin.



Wall art designed by president Jeff Allen’s wife showcases many of Hanapin’s clients.

**RESOURCE:** Hanapin Marketing at [www.hanapinmarketing.com](http://www.hanapinmarketing.com)