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Online and ON POINT

Jason Lavin wears flip-flops to work. He also runs the successful Golden Communications, Inc.

Home Tour Coordinator: Lisa McDennon | Written By Ryan Ritchie | Photographed By Matt Fukushima

Florals: Tustin Florist, Tustin
All Accessories: Jonathan Adler, Fashion Island
Green Lotus Wood Panel: Studio Chameleon, Newport Beach
Reception Desk Custom Design: LRM Interior Design, Laguna Beach



“Young people have their fingers on the pulse of what is happening on the Internet, but they are too young to make business decisions. They can’t go on their own yet because they can’t get the clients. I couldn’t get clients when I was 23. “Energy is key,” says Golden Communications, Inc. CEO Jason Lavin. One step into his Costa Mesa office and you see he’s not joking.”

Visitors to Golden Communications, Inc.'s office are met with orange walls, which he says were chosen to represent Orange County. The reception area looks more like that of a spa than a company specializing in anything and everything online (ie, web design, programming, e-commerce, blogging and social networking) thanks to artwork adorning the walls, a plexiglass table with fresh oranges and lemons and a one-of-a-kind mesh orange divider that separates the front desk from a private meeting room.

The design aesthetic of Lavin's office is symbolic of the work he does and the way he runs his business. Golden Communications, Inc. employs 20 people in its Orange County office and another 12 worldwide. The 40-year-old USC graduate – a self-professed strategy guy – believes young people play a vital role in his business' success, and to accommodate fresh minds, he decided to give his employees an environment that promotes forward thinking. Since his office re-design five years ago, he says it's worked.

"We've got a few middle-aged guys," Lavin says, "but everyone else is in their 20s. Young people have their fingers on the pulse of what is happening on the Internet, but they are too young to make business decisions. They can't go on their own yet because they can't get the clients. I couldn't get clients when I was 23. Most employees stay here two years and in that time they're going to learn."

Lavin takes his youthful approach to business a step further by allowing his employees certain freedoms other jobs and bosses wouldn't. For starters, the CEO wears flip-flops to work and doesn't care how his employees are dressed. He says he doesn't mind wearing sandals to meetings with large clients because "I'm allowed to. I'm in tech." Finally and perhaps most importantly, is the way Lavin feels about scheduling. The Internet never closes, which means Golden Communications, Inc. doesn't either, so employees don't have a set start time. What matters more than appearances, Lavin says, is getting the work done on time and getting it right.

"People show up whenever," Lavin says. "It would not be abnormal for less than half the staff to be here by 10 in the morning. It all works. I really don't care about anything except for when the chips are down, you come to play."

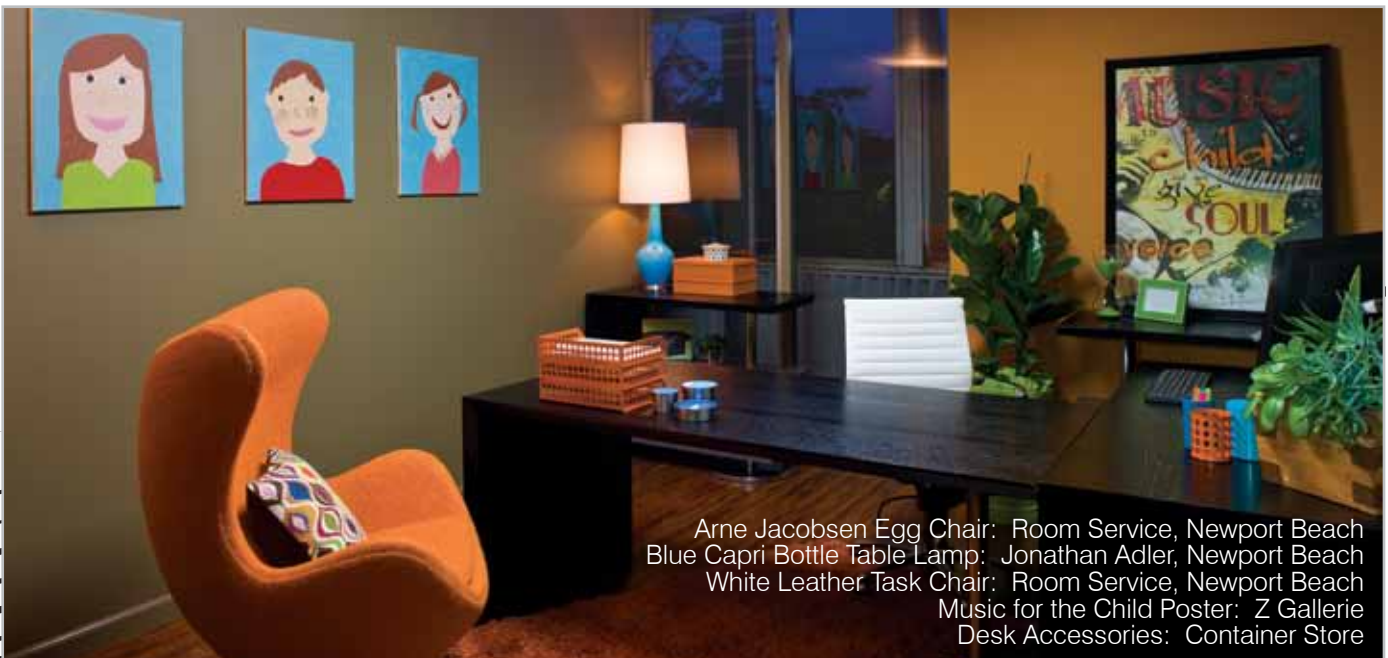
But this energetic working environment was not always the case, Lavin says. Golden Communications, Inc. started as a work-from-home business in 1996, but moved into its current location in a retail-heavy strip mall in 1999. Before meeting designer Lisa McDennon, the CEO says his office was nothing like the way it looks today and describes it as "kind of a gross combination of Ikea meets a dorm room." The furniture was whatever Lavin stumbled across and the carpets were cheap and showed stains. Lavin knew it was time to revitalize his office when more clients began requesting visits to his workspace, which he says he was "embarrassed" of because it did not reflect Golden Communications, Inc.'s quality services. These days, a free-flowing ambiance permeates the hallways at Golden Communications, Inc., which is exactly what Lavin wanted.

"People walk in from the hair salon and the juice bar all the time," Lavin says. "We have huge windows and in the summer there are all these beautiful people walking around. It's great energy."





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