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Tempe creative firm is all in with Navy SEALs training

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Navy SEAL training
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS / SHANE T. MOODY



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The [Zion & Zion](#) public relations and advertising agency in Tempe has gone all in with the Navy SEALs.

Employees and managers aren't required to crawl through mud or swim through frigid waters hours but Aric and DuGue Zion's Tempe-based agency has adopted many of the tenets touted by former U.S. Navy SEALs [Jocko Willink](#) and [Leif Babin](#) in their book "Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy SEALs Lead and Win."

The Zions like the message of communication, collaboration, quick decision-making and getting a better understanding of others' motives.

That includes employees and clients, Aric Zion said.

He said understanding that motives and solutions don't always mesh with others is one of the big takeaways he's gotten from working with Willink and Babin.

"Decisions on the fly, teamwork coordination, collaboration, awareness of your peers," Aric Zion said. "That's discipline."

Navy SEAL physical training is extreme with its physical demands but it also tests resolve.

The Tempe firm even had the former SEALs come in and talk to employees in addition to having new and existing staff read the book.

“They know our organization,” Aric Zion said.

Zion & Zion has 40 employees and its clients have included the likes of [DMB Associates](#), the Arizona Center development in downtown Phoenix, Barro’s Pizza and Goodwill Industries.

DuGue Zion said the Tempe agency doesn’t have the hierarchy seen in a lot of other PR, advertising and marketing companies.

Aric Zion said that makes problem-solving, teamwork and empowerment even more important.

“Our organization is flat. All our competition has hierarchy,” he said stressing that flat structure encourages creativity and innovation. “You can’t go run and hide under a manager.”

The Zions said they also try to set themselves apart from other communications firms by working with experts at Stanford University as well as [LunaMetrics](#), a top [Google](#) analytics firm.

The Zions said a lot of companies pay lip service to or try to implement cultural changes with limited success and longevity.

Sometimes they bring in speakers, hold conferences or training sessions that don’t really pay off in the end.

“They’re entertaining but nobody retains anything,” Aric Zion said.