Fit does *not* exist here

How Rock The Jive redesigns fitting in — same rigour, same craft, no costume.

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The Rock The Jive Records coin — a vinyl record minted as a gold coin.

I could never get in, despite being good with numbers, good at the reasoning, good at the CPA work. I went to a lot of places. That was not a talent problem. That was a fit problem.

In Canadian accounting, fit is not one question. It is three unspoken tests. Look the part. Sound the part. Endure the part.

> *If you have to shrink to belong, you do not belong. You just fit.*

THE PROBLEM

Three tests that have nothing to do with the work

Look the part

Look clean, neutral, buttoned up.

Sound the part

Sound measured, polite, deferential, no swearing, no strong opinions.

Endure the part

Endure busy season, long hours, last minute files, and do not complain about it.

Pass those three and you belong. Fail one and your competence never really gets tested.

Why fit and conformity are the same thing

That is why fit and conformity are the same thing in this profession. Accounting sells standardization, so firms take that logic and apply it to people. If the numbers cannot deviate, neither can you. The resume screen rewards the right school and the right firm name. The unstructured chat rewards sounding like the interviewer. And the fit veto arrives last and overrides everything, with no evidence required and no score to defend.

It does not make the work better. It makes the room smaller.

I flipped the equation

At Rock The Jive, I flipped the equation. The technical competencies of a CPA do not change. I agree with what I am learning and have learned through PEP. That standard stands. What I do not agree with is fit. So fit does not exist here.

Rigour comes first. The craft of accounting comes first. Standing out and being yourself is the point. You rock your jive at RTJ, you do not conform to fit in.

Here is how that redesign actually works, in practice, not just in words.

THE REDESIGN IN PRACTICE

How fitting in gets redesigned

1. Hire on work, not vibe.

When RTJ hires in the future, it will not start with a resume or a chat about whether someone sounds like an accountant. It starts with a paid, time boxed work sample, a real style messy file, scored blind before anyone sees a school or a firm name. Then the same questions for everyone, scored 1 to 5 on the spot. No fit veto. No one person can kill a candidate on gut feel. Values are tested by evidence, did they give a client bad news straight, did they catch the errors, did they own a mistake, not by whether they dress or talk like us.

2. Serve clients exactly as they are.

RTJ plays for musicians, creators, indie labels, and the people building something of their own. Bring the hats, the ink, the weird hours, the big plans. You will be taken seriously here, exactly as you are. No judging the hustle. Irregular income, gear, gigs, platforms, a career that does not fit a tidy salary box, that is the work, not a problem to hide. I translate the tax and accounting language into plain English second, after I speak your language first.

3. Design the practice for a life, not a grind.

Fit in a traditional firm is often just a willingness to suffer quietly through busy season. RTJ is built the other way. Tiered retainers and fixed fees instead of hourly billing. Systems so the work does not depend on one person remembering everything. A practice built to run without me while I keep ownership of it. Room to breathe, built in on purpose, because rigour should not require burnout to prove itself.

4. Make standing out the standard.

In most firms, being yourself is a risk you manage. At RTJ, it is the standard. The hats, the music, the direct talk, the no bullshit rule, none of that is decoration on top of serious work. It is how serious work gets done here, by real people, for real people. If you have to shrink to belong, you do not belong. You just fit.

FOR TWO ROOMS

This piece is for two rooms, on purpose

If you make music or create for a living

If you make music or make a living creating, you do not need an accountant who judges the hustle or bores you into silence. You need rigour you can trust, without having to shrink who you are to get it.

If you are a fellow accountant

If you are a fellow accountant, this is not an argument for being less serious. It is the opposite. Keep the competencies. Keep the standards. Keep the care. Lose the costume, lose the fit test, and let people be their true, honest selves while they do the work properly.

My mission is to bring more life to accounting through Rock The Jive Records. Same rigour, same craft, just with the life left in it.

"I Don't Judge the Hustle, I Manage It."

Rock The Jive Records does accounting, tax and bookkeeping for musicians, creators, indie labels and the people building something of their own — rigour first, fit never.

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