# Kitchen combines coffee shop, creative agency and charity in Fitzrovia



In the bustling district of Fitzrovia, London, a unique establishment named Kitchen has emerged as a combination of coffee shop, creative agency, and charity. Tucked beneath the towering presence of the BT Tower, Kitchen invites patrons not only to enjoy a cup of coffee but also to engage with a purpose-driven initiative. This innovative concept is operated by Send Coffee, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to providing training and opportunities for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including autism, to become baristas.

The duality of Kitchen is made evident by a glass wall that separates the cafe from the agency section, marked by a sign reading “creativity this way.” Behind this partition operates a boutique creative agency, a space reminiscent of London’s advertising scene, where creativity is a driving force. Tim Clyde, the founding partner at Kitchen, articulated the evolution of agency culture, noting the shift from creating intimidating environments to fostering welcoming spaces. "I still get quite excited when I see a table football table personally, but the reality is that it feels in the culture now like a corporate trying to make it all sound fun," Clyde stated. This transformation has been underscored by the realities brought forth by the Covid-19 pandemic, which prompted agency owners to reconsider the environments they offer clients.

The driving force behind Kitchen extends into an ambitious intention to channel the traditions of Parisian salons, as described by Vaila Robertson, the head of strategy at the agency. “Back in the day, coffee houses were the places where all the revolutionaries got together, and they had great new ideas for how to change the world," she remarked, highlighting the less intimidating nature of casual conversations over coffee compared to formal boardroom meetings. The design of the agency incorporates accessibility and openness—the boardroom is devoid of a door, with only a curtain for modesty.

From its inception, Kitchen has maintained a commitment to its size and operational philosophy, resisting the urge for major expansion. Clyde noted an unwritten rule that the agency would not grow beyond 30 employees, a testament to their focus on client relationships rather than corporate growth. He expressed a disdain for the hierarchical structures present in larger firms, asserting the importance of loving the craft of creativity rather than merely pursuing business success.

Adding to the agency's unique positioning in the marketplace is the recent hiring of comedian Alex Macqueen as its head of comedy. With a background in UK comedies such as "The Thick of It" and "The Inbetweeners," Macqueen has immersed himself in the creative processes at Kitchen, viewing the intersection of advertising and comedy as a fulfilling endeavour. “I’ve always had a real fascination with adverts,” Macqueen told The Drum, explaining that the collaborative and rapid nature of advertising work reignites his creative impulses.

Clyde underscored the significant role humour can play in advertising, noting that previous award shows, such as the Cannes Lions, have highlighted a renewed interest in comedic content in marketing. He pointed out research indicating that humorous advertising can substantially enhance brand recall and consumer preference. Despite this potential, Robertson lamented that the industry has not fully tapped into the transformative powers of comedy, questioning why it remains underutilised in advertising strategies.

Clyde's aspiration is for the larger advertising industry to embrace humour once more, filling a perceived void in creativity. He reflects on a time when working in advertising was seen as thrilling and fulfilling, contrasting it with a contemporary perception that often regards the industry unfavourably. "They [his children] have no idea why I would choose this job," he said, reflecting a generational disconnect regarding the advertising profession's current standing.

Kitchen's multifaceted approach—merging creativity, social responsibility, and a focus on humour—positions it uniquely within the competitive London market, inviting patrons and clients alike to partake in its distinct cultural and innovative offerings.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://kitchensoho.com/blog/kitchens-coffee-partnership-celebrates-inclusivity-and-a-new-way-of-working-for-employees/> - This URL supports the claim about Kitchen's partnership with SEND Coffee, highlighting their joint initiative to promote inclusivity and provide training for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in the coffee industry.
* [https://www.google.com/maps/place/Kitchen/@51.5183684,-0.1346703,17z?entry=ttu](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Kitchen/%4051.5183684%2C-0.1346703%2C17z?entry=ttu) - This URL can be inferred to support the location of Kitchen in Fitzrovia, near the BT Tower, although the exact link is not provided due to Google's dynamic content nature.
* <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2023/03/14/comedian-alex-macqueen-joins-kitchen-as-head-comedy> - This article likely discusses the hiring of Alex Macqueen as the head of comedy at Kitchen and his background in UK comedies.
* <https://www.canneslions.com/> - This URL pertains to the Cannes Lions advertising festival, which highlights the importance of creativity and awards innovative advertising strategies, supporting the discussion on humour in advertising.
* <https://www.sendcoffee.co.uk/> - This URL would support the not-for-profit organisation SEND Coffee's mission to provide training and employment opportunities for individuals with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.