

2016

Which places in this world can the little guy compete with the big guy? Sports? Rarely. Wall Street? Good luck. Politics? Let's not go there.

Here's one answer: Counselor's annual Best Places to Work list, where small industry companies routinely soar. This year is no different, with small distributors and suppliers occupying the entire Top 10 and outnumbering both the mid-sized and large companies combined on the list.

These companies have certainly achieved this lofty honor on their own merits. Their employees (like that of every company on our list) fills out the same intensive survey, which rates their companies in 10 different categories – everything from team effectiveness to trust in senior leaders.

Surveys are administered and scored by research firm Quantum Workplace, with companies ranked from highest to lowest. Counselor has chosen to honor the 75 companies with the highest scores this year, and we've provided a list that ranks the companies from top to bottom.

But this year, we've gone further by grouping companies by their respective sizes: small (10-49 employees), medium (50-99) and large (100-plus). We've identified the challenges inherent to each size bracket, and present strategies to maintain effective employee engagement as both small and mid-sized companies grow.

Lastly, we've asked our winners what makes them special, and spotlighted their most unique policies and philosophies. We even identified six popular perks (from profit sharing to pet-friendly offices) and recorded what each company offers. If inspiration is what you're seeking, we've got 75 examples of how to make your company great.

Gifts By Design, Inc. asi/82498 Eyevertising asi/57371 HP2 Inc. asi/217284 Superior Promos asi/62088 Icon Blue asi/229398 Wizard Creations, Inc. asi/362528 Dri-Duck asi/50835 Proforma Albrecht & Co. asi/116308 Partners N Promotion Glazer Promos asi/208261 Corporate Imaging Concepts, LLC asi/168962 asi/300790 Printable Promotions asi/299458 Target Marketing asi/341741 tain Marketing asi/303131 Pop! Promos asi/45657 SanMar asi/84863 Sunrise Identity NewClients asi/282470 Show Your Logo, Inc. asi/326179 Pride Products Distributors LLC asi/299307 Concord Marketing ing Solutions Simba asi/87296 Indoff asi/231011 Zorch asi/366078 Tic Toc asi/158990 MANNES, INC asi/259100 Genumark Promotional Merchandise Inc. asi/204588 Brand Inc. Signet Inc asi/326636 PROMO SHOP, INC. asi/300446 Midnite Snax asi/71685 A+ Wine Designs Inc. (Attachmentville) asi/62860 Cleggpromo asi/45450 Overture Premiums & Promotions asi/288473 Broken Arrow T-Shirt iClick asi/62124 Successories.com asi/338635 Chamberlain Market-Alliance asi/145037 Bright Ideas LLC asi/146026 CSE asi/155807 NPN360, Inc. asi/285252 Axis Promotions asi/128263 Greater China Industries Inc. asi/302967 Stran Promotional Solutions asi/58135 Quality Logo Products, Inc. asi/337725 ePromos Promotional Products Inc. asi/347714 eCompanyStore, Inc. asi/78140 White Paper Office Solutions for Business Column-Addition asi/202515 Showdown Group asi/337500 Picnic Time Eyevertising asi/57371 HP2 Inc. asi/41010 IDProductsource Dri-Duck asi/50835 Proforma Imagination Specialties Inc. asi/208261 Corporate ImagialExpress asi/47204 Promotional Target Marketing asi/341741 asi/300094 Quintain Marketing asi/339206 AIA Corporation New-asi/299307 Concord Marketing Custom Logos asi/173183 MAC Brand Fuel asi/145025 JH Specialty Inc. Signet Inc asi/326636 PROMO SHOP, INC. asi/300446 Midnite Snax asi/71685 A+ Wine Designs Inc. (Attachmentville) asi/62860 asi/288473 Broken Arrow T-Shirt sories.com asi/338635 Cham-ance asi/145037 Bright Ideas LLC

asi/217284 Superior Promotions asi/379023 The Book Company asi/41010 Duck asi/50835 Proforma Albrecht & Co. asi/116308 Partners N Promotion Glazer Promos asi/208261 Corporate Imaging Concepts, LLC asi/168962 asi/300790 Printable Promotions asi/299458 Target Marketing asi/341741 tain Marketing asi/303131 Pop! Promos asi/45657 SanMar asi/84863 Sun-asi/326179 Pride Products Distributors LLC asi/299307 Concord Marketing Custom Logos asi/173183 MAC MANNES, INC asi/259100 Genumark Promo-Inc asi/326636 PROMO SHOP, INC. asi/300446 Midnite Snax asi/71685 A+ Inc. (Attachmentville) asi/62860 Cleggpromo asi/45450 Overture Premiums iClick asi/62124 Successories.com asi/338635 Chamberlain Marketing Group NPN360, Inc. asi/285252 Axis Promotions asi/128263 Greater China Industries Inc. asi/302967 Stran Pro-

The Icebox asi/229395 ePro-asi/188515 Trost Marketing LLC asi/185782 Pinnacle Office Solutions asi/359726 ness Columbus Regional asi/202515 Showdown asi/74710 Stowebridge Pro-nic Time asi/78065 Gifts By LLC asi/82498 Eyevertising Superior Promotions asi/41010 IDProductsource Wizard Creations, Inc. Proforma Albrecht & Co. asi/350153 Imagination Spe-Promos asi/208261 Corpo-rate Imaging Concepts, LLC asi/168962 asi/300790 Printable Marketing asi/341741 Walker-Clay, Inc. asi/354530 Competitive Edge asi/166085 Marketing asi/303131 Pop! Promos asi/45657 SanMar asi/84863 Sunrise Identity NewClients asi/282470 Show Your Logo, Inc. asi/326179 Pride Products Distributors ing Solutions Simba asi/87296 Indoff asi/231011 Zorch asi/366078 Tic Toc asi/158990 MANNES, INC asi/259100 Genumark Promotional Merchandise Inc. asi/204588 Brand Inc. Signet Inc asi/326636 PROMO SHOP, INC. asi/300446 Midnite Snax asi/71685 A+ Wine Designs Inc. (Attachmentville) asi/62860 Cleggpromo asi/45450 Over-asi/288473 Broken Arrow T-Shirt iClick asi/62124 Successories.com ing Group asi/160501 BrandVia LLC asi/146026 CSE asi/155807 NPN360, Inc. asi/285252 Axis Promotions asi/128263 Greater China Industries Inc. asi/302967 Stran Pro-

Displays asi/87188 Numo Mfg asi/78065 Gifts By Design, Inc. asi/217284 Superior Promo-asi/62088 Icon Blue asi/229398 Albrecht & Co. asi/116308 asi/230166 Stackable Sensa-ing Concepts, LLC asi/168962 Consultants, Inc. asi/300790 Walker-Clay, Inc. asi/354530 Com-asi/303131 Pop! Promos asi/45657 Sa Clients asi/282470 Show Your Logo, Inc. asi/3261 Solutions Simba asi/87296 Indoff asi/231011 Zor MANNES, INC asi/259100 Genumark Promotio cialty Inc. Signet Inc asi/326636 PROMO S asi/30223 BamBams asi/38228 Brandinc U Cleggpromo asi/45450 Overture Premiums & Promotions Printing & Embroidery asi/146656 iClick asi/62124 Succes-berlain Marketing Group asi/160501 BrandVia Alli-asi/146026 CSE asi/155807 NPN360, Inc. asi/285252 Axis Promotions asi/128263 Greater China Industries Inc. asi/302967 Stran Pro-

Counselor honors the top industry workplaces through an exclusive survey and rankings.

Research by Quantum Workplace

BEST PLACES TO WORK

2016 BEST PLACES TO WORK

- 1 Gifts By Design Inc. asi/205947
- 2 RiteLine LLC asi/82498
- 3 Eyevertising asi/57371
- 4 HP2 Inc. asi/217284
- 5 Superior Promotions asi/379023
- 6 The Book Company asi/41010
- 7 IDProductsource asi/62088
- 8 Icon Blue asi/229398
- 9 Wizard Creations Inc. asi/362528
- 10 DRI DUCK asi/50835
- 11 Proforma Albrecht & Co. asi/116308
- 12 Partners N Promotion asi/350153
- 13 Imagination Branding asi/230166
- 14 Stackable Sensations asi/332999
- 15 Glazer Promos asi/208261

- 16 Corporate Imaging Concepts LLC asi/168962
- 17 Image Source asi/230121
- 18 CredentialExpress asi/47204
- 19 Promotional Consultants Inc. asi/300790
- 20 Printable Promotions asi/299458
- 21 Target Marketing asi/341741
- 22 Walker-Clay Inc. asi/354530
- 23 Competitive Edge asi/166085
- 24 Proforma asi/300094
- 25 Quintain Marketing asi/303131
- 26 Pop! Promos asi/45657
- 27 SanMar asi/84863
- 28 Sunrise Identity asi/339206
- 29 AIA Corporation asi/109480

- 30 NewClients asi/282470
- 31 Show Your Logo Inc. asi/326179
- 32 Pride Products Distributors LLC asi/299307
- 33 Concord Marketing Solutions asi/166445
- 34 Simba asi/87296
- 35 Indoff asi/231011
- 36 Zorch asi/366078
- 37 Tic Toc asi/158990
- 38 Custom Logos asi/173183
- 39 MAC MANNES INC. asi/259100
- 40 Genumark Promotional Merchandise Inc. asi/204588
- 41 Brand Fuel asi/145025
- 42 JH Specialty Inc. asi/232445

- 43 Signet Inc. asi/326636
- 44 PROMO SHOP INC. asi/300446
- 45 Midnite Snax asi/71685
- 46 A+ Wine Designs asi/30223
- 47 BamBams asi/38228
- 48 Brandinc US Inc. asi/145212
- 49 IRIS Ltd Inc. (Attachmentville) asi/62860
- 50 Cleggpromo asi/45450
- 51 Overture Premiums & Promotions asi/288473
- 52 Broken Arrow T-Shirt Printing & Embroidery asi/146656
- 53 iClick asi/62124
- 54 Successories.com asi/338635
- 55 Chamberlain Marketing Group asi/160501

- 56 BrandVia Alliance asi/145037
- 57 Bright Ideas LLC asi/146026
- 58 CSE asi/155807
- 59 NPN360 Inc. asi/285252
- 60 Axis Promotions asi/128263
- 61 Greater China Industries asi/58135
- 62 Quality Logo Products Inc. asi/302967
- 63 Stran Promotional Solutions asi/337725
- 64 The Icebox asi/229395
- 65 ePromos Promotional Products Inc. asi/188515
- 66 Trost Marketing asi/347714
- 67 eCompanyStore LLC asi/185782
- 68 Pinnacle Designs asi/78140

- 69 White Paper Office Solutions asi/359726
- 70 American Solutions for Business Columbus Regional asi/120075
- 71 Brand Addition asi/202515
- 72 Showdown Displays asi/87188
- 73 Numo Mfg asi/74710
- 74 Stowebridge Promotion Group asi/337500
- 75 Picnic Time asi/78065


HAPPY HOURS


PET FRIENDLY


FLEXIBLE HOURS/WORK FROM HOME


WELLNESS PROGRAM


COMPANY OUTINGS


PROFIT SHARING

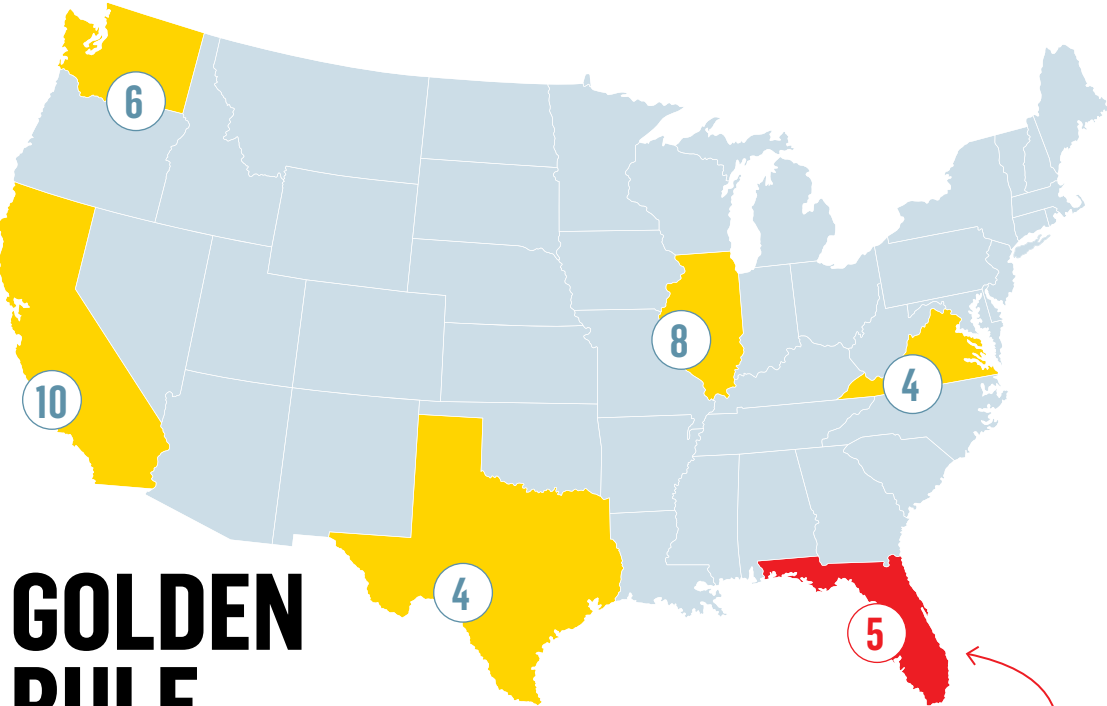
COMPANY PROFILES – PERKS & BENEFITS LEGEND

TOP 10 DISTRIBUTORS

- 1. Gifts By Design
- 2. HP2 Inc.
- 3. Superior Promotions
- 4. Icon Blue
- 5. Wizard Creations Inc.
- 6. Proforma Albrecht & Co.
- 7. Partners N Promotion
- 8. Imagination Branding
- 9. Stackable Sensations
- 10. Glazer Promos

TOP 10 SUPPLIERS

- 1. RiteLine LLC
- 2. Eyevertising
- 3. The Book Company
- 4. IDProductsource
- 5. DRI DUCK
- 6. CredentialExpress
- 7. Pop! Promos
- 8. SanMar
- 9. Simba
- 10. Midnite Snax



GOLDEN RULE

California may have the most companies from the list, but **Florida has the highest quality** – four of its five reside in the overall Top 10.

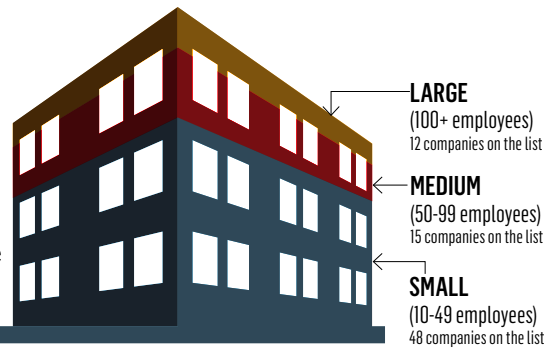
FAMILY DYNAMIC

We combed through our survey responses to find how many companies used the most common culture buzzwords.

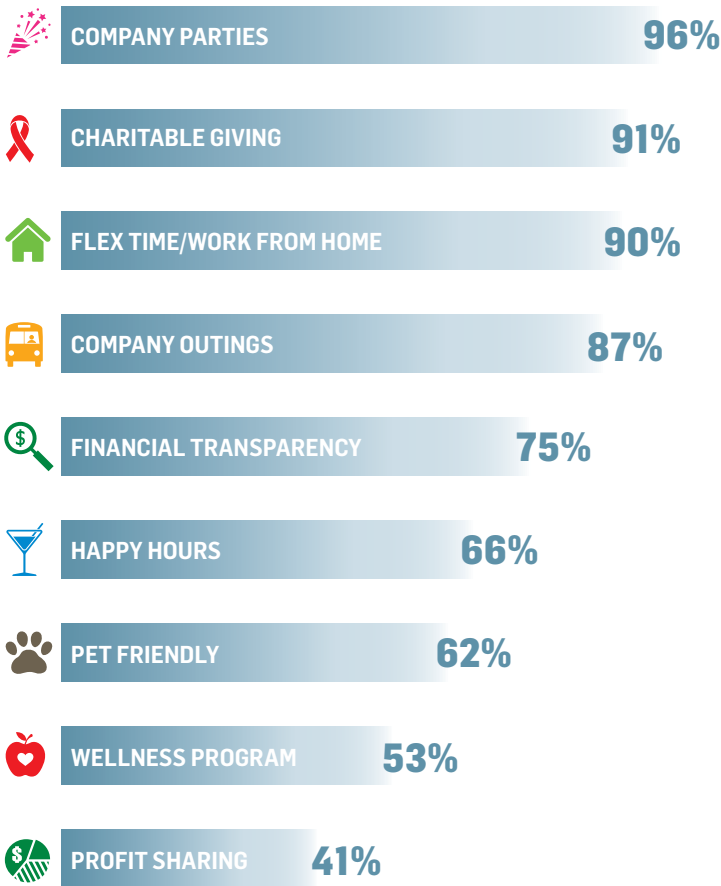


SMALL WONDERS

Small companies dominate the list, outnumbering medium and large combined.



MOST POPULAR COMPANY PERKS



SMALL (10-49 EMPLOYEES)


RANK: 1

GIFTS BY DESIGN (ASI/205947)

Seattle
Employees: 12


How do you spell workplace harmony and success? R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

Jamie Stone has learned a lot in the 26 years since she started Gifts By Design (asi/205947). Like other distributors, she motivates her employees with rewards, sales contests, happy hours and time off. But the company president finds that one quality looms above them all: a safe workplace is a motivated one.

When it comes to sensitive issues like religion, race, gender and politics, hang-ups must be left at the door. “We respect all of our

employees, vendors and customers, no matter what, so prejudices have no place here,” says Stone, whose company is based in Seattle. In her mind, the cornerstones of employee creativity, collaboration and teamwork are created by making work “a safe place where you feel good,” she says, “where everybody has the opportunity to be successful on his or her own merit.” Stone knows from previous experience, having worked for an employer who “exposed their personal preferences and prejudices toward their employees,” she recalls. “I have vowed never to allow such a thing in our workplace.”

She makes that fact clear to applicants during interviews, and facilitates one-on-one supervised meetings between staff members when issues arise surrounding communication between employees. Stone feels so strongly about respect for all, and that positive communication is the key to corporate success, that two years ago she hired a consultant to provide training on the subject of “confrontation without conflict.” Stone found that better communication resulted in greater productivity, a more desirable workforce and happier employees. The 12 full-time staff members learned “you can confront people without having to be negative,” Stone says. Not only did sales rise dramatically after the training, but the lessons spilled over into the personal lives of employees, improving

conversations between workers and their families and friends.

And Stone makes sure that the employees at Gifts By Design have time to see those people. Rather than working 90 hours a week like Stone did as a corporate interior designer, she insists her employees leave right when their shifts are over. “I let people know from the beginning that overworking isn’t something I admire,” she says. “I don’t want them to martyr themselves by saying, ‘I was here until 11 o’clock at night.’” Instead, Stone admires workers who ask for help in, say, fulfilling orders when 10 suddenly pour in the door at 4 p.m. and have to be completed before the day is done. “By 5:05 it’s a ghost town around here,” Stone boasts. And for good reason, she adds: “When you use people as workhorses, they’ll get burned out and leave.”

By the same measure, Stone wants to make sure every last employee feels important and vital to the company’s success. As opposed to isolating one or two people as the idea makers, Gifts By Design treats everyone as enlightened entrepreneurs. “If they have an idea about how to improve a process or even for a fun event, they know that their ideas are going to be listened to and considered,” Stone says. “We’re a small company, and everybody’s input is really important.”

That kind of respect in the office makes it easy to leverage out-of-the-office camaraderie as well. Rarely do holidays pass without an office celebration, whether it’s Cinco de Mayo or Halloween. Impromptu incentives aren’t infrequent either, such as \$200 gift cards for a big sale, or 10% across-the-board bonuses for all staff after exceeding sales goals for a quarter. Employees are allowed to work from home when possible, and the distributor stays closed between Christmas and New Year’s each year, giving each employee an extra week of paid vacation. The dog-friendly office policy, says Stone, eases concerns about bored, abandoned pets at home.

All of this leads to high retention, with several employees having company tenures over a decade or more. Says Stone: “We look at our office as a small community that depends on one another.” — *Betsy Cummings*

SMALL COMPANY RANKINGS

1. Gifts By Design Inc.
2. RiteLine LLC
3. Eyeverting
4. HP2 Inc.
5. Superior Promotions
6. The Book Company
7. IDProductsSource
8. Icon Blue
9. Wizard Creations Inc.
10. Dri-Duck
11. Partners N Promotion
12. Stackable Sensations

13. Glazer Promos
14. Image Source
15. CredentialExpress
16. Promotional Consultants Inc.
17. Printable Promotions
18. Target Marketing
19. Walker-Clay Inc.
20. Competitive Edge
21. Quintain Marketing
22. Pop! Promos
23. Show Your Logo Inc.
24. Pride Products Distributors LLC
25. Concord Marketing Solutions

26. Zorch
27. Tic Toc
28. MAC MANNES INC.
29. Brand Fuel
30. JH Specialty Inc.
31. Signet Inc
32. A+ Wine Designs
33. BamBams
34. Brandinc US Inc.
35. IRIS Ltd. Inc. (Attachmentville)
36. Cleggpromo
37. Broken Arrow T-Shirt Printing & Embroidery

38. iClick
39. Successories.com
40. Bright Ideas LLC
41. NPN360 Inc.
42. Greater China Industries
43. Stran Promotional Solutions
44. Trost Marketing
45. Pinnacle Designs
46. American Solutions for Business Columbus Regional
47. Stowebridge Promotion Group
48. Picnic Time



RANK: 3
EYEVERTISING
(ASI/57371)
Miami
Employees: 10

RANK: 2
RITELINE LLC (ASI/82498)
Dallas
Employees: 32

“Our company is casual and laidback while being laser-focused on our growth targets and customer service. When we hit a certain sales target, the entire company gets gift cards as a reward. We have broken sales records several times this year.”
– Kim Lehere, VP of marketing



RANK: 5
SUPERIOR PROMOTIONS
(ASI/379023)
Medford, MA
Employees: 16

This distributor is intimately involved in charity work, both in monetary donations and, as the company says “actually rolling up sleeves and getting involved.” It works with a whole variety of A+ rated charities, including St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, United Way, American Cancer Society and much more.

RANK: 7
IDPRODUCTSOURCE
(ASI/62088)
Port St. Lucie, FL
Employees: 24

“This year, we instituted the CSR of the Quarter incentive, which is specifically for our Customer Service Representatives (CSR) to provide excellent customer service to receive an ASI or Sage rating from the client. For every rating, the CSR receives a gold coin. At the end of the quarter, the CSR with the most coins receives a certificate, trophy and cash bonus for their efforts.” – Audrey Cobb, executive assistant

RANK: 4
HP2 INC. (ASI/217284)
Phoenix
Employees: 16

“As a company, we participated in a charity walk to fight bladder cancer after our owner was diagnosed over a year and a half ago. The employees, vendor and clients all rallied to support the cause. The result was that HP2 was the number-one company/contributor/fundraiser at the walk.”
– Bob Newquist, marketing consultant

RANK: 6
THE BOOK COMPANY (ASI/41010)
Delray Beach, FL
Employees: 14

“We have never limited or tracked time off. To gain respect, you have to give respect. I expect very high levels of performance, personal responsibility and commitment. In return, I respect that personal life is as important as work life and, to me, putting limits on time off undermines that balance.”
– Doug Greenhut, president



RANK: 10
DRI DUCK (ASI/50835)
Overland, KS / Employees: 15

“Every year, our company holds a spirit week on our anniversary. The week has a different theme every year, and each day is full of fun activities, dress-up events and food. On the very last day of the week, the employees take the second half of the day off to participate in a fun activity outside of the office. This year, the week was Vegas-themed, and the Friday activity was a dodgeball tournament.” – Abby Young, sales and marketing coordinator



RANK: 9
WIZARD CREATIONS INC.
(ASI/362528)
Fort Lauderdale, FL
Employees: 12

“For the holidays, we give the entire staff two weeks paid time off to enjoy the time with their families. We have company retreats where we will take the entire staff on a cruise or exotic vacation with their significant others. We also have sponsorships with pro sports teams and music venues that give us tickets to events, and we give our employees access to these to use with their families, friends and clients.”
– Luke Freeman, president

RANK: 11
PARTNERS N PROMOTION
(ASI/350153)
Olathe, KS
Employees: 22

“We have a great work environment where any employee can feel free to ask another for help or assistance on any projects or with their workload when needed. Each employee knows their particular duties in the company and is also cross-trained to assist in other areas when needed. We are very versatile, which works great for our company and the growing business.”
– Kelly Skinner, account executive

RANK: 12
STACKABLE SENSATIONS
(ASI/332999)
Parsippany, NJ
Employees: 11

“Our people receive little surprise gifts sometimes, and it’s so thoughtful and brings a bright spot to their day and week. Our team loves having their birthday off as a paid day. Time to relax and get paid – so much fun!” – Shari Verrone, president

RANK: 13
GLAZER PROMOS
(ASI/208261)
Mahwah, NJ
Employees: 15

“We often surprise employees with early dismissal before holidays and summer Fridays, and even did a surprise closing Christmas week. If feasible, they can work from home when circumstances require that, allowing them to save their time off for true vacation time. We celebrate all birthdays, and sometimes we celebrate with lunch or happy hour for no reason at all.”
– Trish Glazer, president



RANK: 8
ICON BLUE (ASI/229398)
Los Angeles
Employees: 11

“We all honor a ‘healthy only’ food rule, which means we no longer bring in cakes and cookies to share. Instead, we only share fruits and vegetables, and the company provides fresh fruit in our kitchen. Our birthday and anniversary parties are now celebrated with strawberry shortcake instead of a cake from a bakery. Health tips are shared at every staff meeting, and we have walking groups that take a walk around the block during their 10 minute break. Our staff has collectively lost about 55 pounds so far.” – Eden McClellan, vice president/COO

75 Best Places to Work

SMALL (10-49 EMPLOYEES)

RANK: 15

CREDENTIAL EXPRESS (ASI/47204)

Greenwood, SC

Employees: 30

This South Carolina supplier passes around a stuffed Wookiee to a deserving employee who does a good deed and goes above and beyond to help.

RANK: 16

PROMOTIONAL CONSULTANTS INC. (ASI/300790)

Chesterfield, MO

Employees: 13



"The company purchased everyone Fitbits to promote wellness and keep everyone active. Everyone has become very motivated and focused on staying active and getting their steps in!" – Linda Heckman, controller

RANK: 18

TARGET MARKETING (ASI/341741)

Ashland, VA

Employees: 21



"We've put FROG in place: Focus, Reinvent, Optimize, Grow. Each employee is to look at their job and use these words to see if they are doing their job in the most efficient way. We encourage them to make changes to save time." – Tammy Kolanko, operations manager

RANK: 19

WALKER-CLAY INC. (ASI/354530)

Hanson, MA

Employees: 15



"One of our favorite yearly events is our annual Summer Cookout. We invite all of our preferred vendor partners to come and hang out in the coolest parking lot party of the year. It's a great chance to see all of our reps outside of a formal meeting or trade show. This business is all about relationships, and it's really nice to have an opportunity to spend a few hours getting to know our reps better." – Michelle Peebles, vice president, sales & marketing



RANK: 14

IMAGE SOURCE

(ASI/230121)

Kirkland, WA

Employees: 38



"We do fun things throughout the year, including a cart service that comes by with treats, a company trip when we hit our goal, BBQs put on by different sales teams, hug-off competitions, company March Madness tournament with prizes and sporting event outings where we rent a suite and invite the whole team and their significant others." – Jowed Hadeed, marketing manager



RANK: 17

PRINTABLE PROMOTIONS

(ASI/299458)

Chicago

Employees: 11



"Bowling, zombie escape room, ping pong tournament, holiday dinners, architectural boat tour, neighborhood scavenger hunt, trivia night, Halloween costume contest, Office Olympics ... we have fun!" – Stacie Long, operations manager

75 Best Places to Work

SMALL (10-49 EMPLOYEES)



RANK: 22
POP! PROMOS
(ASI/45657)
Philadelphia
Employees: 14

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“We have this program we call the ‘Fun Fund’ in which the company puts money every time we hit certain goals. With this money, the team gets to do whatever it wants. So, every few weeks, we all get together and go to a happy hour, a Phillies game or some other local venue that we can all enjoy together.” – *Kelly Shermer, director of marketing*



RANK: 23
SHOW YOUR LOGO INC.(ASI/326179)
Oswego, IL
Employees: 13

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“We take pride in our space and provide each individual with a full private office and at least two large computer monitors along with just about anything else an individual requests in order to provide the space to work comfortably.” – *Don Forsell, president*



RANK: 26
ZORCH (ASI/366078)
Chicago
Employees: 45

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“Last year, we started an annual survey to learn about how employees feel about their jobs, what could make their jobs better and how they feel about the culture. For example, employees wanted more interaction with other departments, so we have a ‘mandatory’ all-company party every first Friday. We’ve seen a dramatic improvement in morale and culture.” – *Catherine Kingery Scare, VP supply chain*



RANK: 30
JH SPECIALTY INC.
(ASI/232445)
Fort Wayne, IN
Employees: 29

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“We realized that our IRA retirement plan was not being utilized as much as it could be. To improve this, we made the determination to move to a more attractive 401(k) plan with a fully guaranteed 3% company contribution, regardless of whether or not the individual contributes his/her own dollars to the plan. Participation in team member contributions is now 97%.” – *Jason Knothe, COO*

RANK: 20
COMPETITIVE EDGE
(ASI/166085)
Stevenson, MI
Employees: 21

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“Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, our office closes at noon on Fridays so our staff can spend that time with friends and family and take advantage of the summer weather in our beautiful community. Let’s face it, everyone would rather be at the beach on a sunny Friday afternoon!” – *Sarah Hadley, account executive*

RANK: 21
QUINTAIN MARKETING (ASI/303131)
Annapolis, MD
Employees: 10

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“We offer employees the ability to work remotely and we have an unlimited vacation policy. Some call this a ‘results only

work environment’ or ROWE. Basically, our focus is on the results or work product, and not on the schedule people follow or whether they do their work in the office, at home, on a beach, or in a foreign country.” – *Kathleen Booth, CEO & owner*

RANK: 24
PRIDE PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTORS LLC
(ASI/299307)
Springfield, NJ
Employees: 12

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“We held a Nutrition and Wellness month in June where we had a nutritional expert speak to us once a week, and then we asked everyone to exercise or at least get up and move around three times each day for 5 minutes. People were doing planks and squats in the conference room and walking around the building. In addition, Pride Products supplied healthy snacks like carrots, hummus and fruit.” – *Wendy Ferber, owner*

RANK: 25
CONCORD MARKETING SOLUTIONS (ASI/166445)
Glendale, IL
Employees: 44

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“At last year’s holiday party, our CEO Kirk Graves went around the room and recognized each and every single employee. Without any notes, he acknowledged every employee by name and added a unique contribution or quality that employee adds to the company. He recognized almost 70 people that night, and appreciated their influence in making Concord the best company to work for. The moment was so impactful for so many employees.” – *Emily Roskens, marketing analyst*

RANK: 27
TIC TOC
(ASI/158990)
Dallas
Employees: 19

This advertising agency features a fun and cavernous “living room” that serves as both party and conference space, featuring cozy couches, a pool table and creative décor.

RANK: 28
MAC MANNES INC.
(ASI/259100)
Bethesda, MD
Employees: 17

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“Our employees like the fact that we can dress casually, work from home, get vacation/personal days and get treated to lunch and merchandise every now and then. Our company also has meetings every other week with everyone to discuss and share ideas and experiences.” – *Patty Schlesinger, VP of operations*

RANK: 29
BRAND FUEL (ASI/145025)
Morrisville, NC
Employees: 23

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“A few unique perks include flex and remote work options, Valentine’s Day off, the ability to volunteer in the community without using PTO, and Wednesday’s 4

Hours of Silence for productivity. We also have the requisite lunches, parties, beer, music and the like, yet it is our mission to try and include Fuelians in the planning and execution of whatever we do.” – *Danny Rosin, co-owner and co-president*

RANK: 31
SIGNET INC. (ASI/326636)
Memphis, TN
Employees: 45

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“Our annual holiday store is likely our employees’ favorite perk. Everyone in the company is able to purchase discontinued sample apparel from brands like Nike, Adidas or Under Armour, which we have deeply discounted to prices around \$5 to \$10. It’s a great way to let our company get a head-start on holiday gifting while saving a lot of money.” – *Katie Smart, director of marketing*

75 Best Places to Work

SMALL (10-49 EMPLOYEES)



RANK: 32

A+ WINE DESIGNS (ASI/30223)

San Diego

Employees: 15



"We just recently took the entire company on an overnight wine tasting trip to Temecula, which is the local wine region in Southern California. We had behind-the-scenes tours and tastings at a couple of restaurants, then had a company 'retreat' at the local casino. It really tied in well with what we do because it combined some educational elements with a whole lot of fun."

– Jim Ristuccia, COO

RANK: 33

BAMBAMS (ASI/38228)

Manassas, VA

Employees: 27



"As a company, we regularly attend Washington Nationals baseball games in D.C., which are paid for by the company; the employees love attending and bringing their spouses or family members. We have weekly Monday morning meetings that cover important changes and information, and also offer motivational aspects for the employees."

– Katharina Naciri, marketing manager

RANK: 35

IRIS LTD INC.
(ATTACHMENTVILLE)

(ASI/62860)

Fleetwood, PA

Employees: 29



"We opened up a three-week happiness advantage initiative to the company. We asked everyone involved to journal, exercise, identify three grateful things, practice random acts of kindness, meditate, etc. We had weekly meetings to discuss what we had done and how it changed how we interacted with both coworkers and customers. Many were able to reconnect with people they have lost touch with and felt more grateful for what they have in life. The first round was so positive, we ran through the process two more times." – Bill Banks, director of technology

RANK: 34

BRANDINC US INC. (ASI/145212)

Los Angeles

Employees: 11



"We have created an amazing team environment – we have a great group. The flex time is most compelling to our employees. It's important when working in LA!"

– Tad Webster, vice president

RANK: 36

CLEGGPROMO (ASI/45450)

Los Angeles

Employees: 20



"We're flexible on personal time, and we serve monthly catered lunches with prize raffles. Also, for each expectant mother, the

company gives nice gifts and a company luncheon. It is a very fun atmosphere and is enjoyed by all." – Chris Hodge, president

RANK: 37

**BROKEN ARROW T-SHIRT
PRINTING & EMBROIDERY**

(ASI/146656)

Des Moines, IA

Employees: 39



"If our employees are happy, that will radiate to our community and to our customer base. We offer employee incentives and rewards for things like fast customer callback, best customer service, etc. We have discovered that the more training we do, the more comfortable and secure our employees are, which makes for better customer service." – Jackie Deppe, art manager

75 Best Places to Work

SMALL (10-49 EMPLOYEES)

RANK: 43

STRAN PROMOTIONAL SOLUTIONS

(ASI/337725)

Quincy, MA / Employees: 43



“Our president Andy Shape owns a nice fishing boat, and throughout the summer and early fall he offers to take team members out on fishing trips. Many members of the team have taken advantage of this opportunity to get out on the water and try their hand at some fishing.” – *Howie Turkenkopf, director of marketing*



RANK: 39

SUCCESSORIES.COM

(ASI/338635)

Delray Beach, FL

Employees: 24



“We offer flexibility with work, a birthday wheel, service projects, 25 cent vending machine, company lunches and more. We believe that families come first, and by being flexible with schedules, it helps to ensure that we can enjoy them and work.” – *Mike Cochran, VP of sales & customer service*

RANK: 40

BRIGHT IDEAS LLC

(ASI/146026)

Troy, VA

Employees: 13



“We held an incentive for using our preferred suppliers, and when we reached our goal, we had a spa day/group lunch at one of the nicest restaurants in town.” – *Janet Baellow, owner*



RANK: 41

NPN360 INC. (ASI/285252)

Wheeling, IL

Employees: 44

When Northern Printing Network rebranded itself NPN360, it reinvigorated the dynamic of its workforce. “The biggest change since our rebranding might be the ability to attract young energy,” CEO Artie Collins told Print Solutions magazine. “We’re hiring people who embrace technology and can offer it to our client base. Our rebranding has led to a cultural shift that has helped to validate the decision. There is a great vibe around here.”

RANK: 42

GREATER CHINA INDUSTRIES

(ASI/58135)

Bellevue, WA

Employees: 41



“Our sales goals are set collectively and aggressively, and sales, production and support all work together to achieve results and make our clients happy. Lots of teamwork and lots of incentives, contests and outings for achieving goals.” – *Mark St. Peter, import executive*

RANK: 38

IClick (ASI/62124)

Seattle

Employees: 46



“The best way to describe our culture at iClick is collaborative. Our place of business has no offices, except for meeting rooms, and our executive management team also has no offices. Our open flow-through workstations allow creativity, collaboration and very fun exchanges during the work day.” – *Reggie Gonzalez, vice president of sales & marketing*



RANK: 47

STOWEBRIDGE PROMOTIONAL GROUP

(ASI/337500)

Chandler, AZ

Employees: 18



“We have worked together as a team to intentionally define the type of culture we want to have as well as the principles that guide how we work with each other. These are printed on a cup that every employee has and uses daily. Job candidates go through a series of interviews to determine if they are a good cultural fit. Skills can be taught – but not passion, attitude and teamwork. Jobs are created to fit the skills and whatever each employee excels at.” – *Kathy Thomas, owner*



RANK: 44

TROST MARKETING

(ASI/347714)

Tulsa, OK

Employees: 11



“We’ve produced thank-you cards and encouraged our team to handwrite notes to customers and people they interact with. It was a simple small act that helped communicate our mission to serve others. Personal handwritten thank-yous have almost disappeared because of emails and text messages, but they speak volumes when they are actually sent. Employees love to send them, and our customers feel appreciated every time they get them.” – *Evan Uyetake, president*

RANK: 45

PINNACLE DESIGNS (ASI/78140)

San Fernando, CA

Employees: 49

When a bomb threat forced the closure of all Los Angeles schools for a day in December, this supplier set up a child care center for employees in a conference room and stocked it with hot chocolate, coloring books and board games. “That way, people don’t have to worry about their kids,” Alayna Nord, director of human resources, told the Los Angeles Times.

RANK: 46

AMERICAN SOLUTIONS FOR BUSINESS COLUMBUS REGIONAL

(ASI/120075)

Columbus, OH

Employees: 29



“Being part of the ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Program) is very compelling

to our employees. We all pitch in and work together, and the better year we have revenue- and profit-wise, the more each employee receives. Employees take this very seriously because we all have skin in the game to do a better job and get rewarded for it.” – *Dean Manzetti, regional director of business development*

RANK: 48

PICNIC TIME

(ASI/78065)

Moorpark, CA

Employees: 49



“We recognize and reward employees for excelling in the company’s core values of collaboration, productivity, integrity, service, passion, fun, innovation and growth. Many employees now choose to display colorful charts around the workplace that show their progress in each of the core values.” – *Amanda Davis, marketing manager*

MID-SIZED (50-99 EMPLOYEES)

RANK: 1
Nashville, TN
and Dallas, TX
Employees: 50

IMAGINATION BRANDING
(ASI/230166)



Things are just ducky at this distributor, thanks to its emphasis on recognition and trust.

The first time Chris Blocher received a “Kudo Quacker,” it meant everything. The hand-sized rubber ducks, molded into one of eight super hero characters (Blocher has collected the Flash, Green Lantern and Batman), are handed out to employees at Imagination Branding (asi/230166) who are recognized by peers as going above and beyond in their work efforts.

The duck-based peer recognition program not only allows everyone to receive credit for a job well done, but allows each and every employee a say in who’s most deserving of recognition – regardless of their position or contribution. The company’s egalitarian leadership and reward system fosters a feeling that everyone’s efforts mat-

ter, as do the opinions of their nominating peers. Even the program’s slogan (“One Team, One Dream”) is all-inclusive. Every employee who receives a duck is also entered into a series of drawings for Visa gift cards. “It’s really important to show that you’re taking a little extra time for recognition,” says Blocher, the company’s web team leader, though he is reluctant to give a title – “We really don’t have titles,” he says. “Everybody has a job requirement, and people are expected to do it.”

With all of the recent success for Imagination Branding, there have been plenty of ducks to go around. The company has grown rapidly (around 200%) in the last three years, and has doubled its workforce. Meanwhile, company cofounders Becky Link (near left in photo) and Jan Nathanson (far left) have preserved an egalitarian approach to staff responsibilities and work ethic that continues to entice employees – Blocher included, who, after 10 years of high-growth sales jobs at Fortune 100 companies, says he would never leave Imagination Branding.

Link’s and Nathanson’s experiences early on inspired them to become more thoughtful and introspective about what a quality workplace entails so they could cement the loyalty of their employees. “When Jan and I first started this adventure, we were hanging on for dear life most days, so we were working hard and having fun at the same time,” says Link, who met Nathanson as a coworker at a distributorship and started Imagination Branding in 1989. “As we brought people on, we just wanted them to have fun along with us.” Certainly those employees were expected to work hard, but Link and Nathanson valued empathy and solidarity above all else as a way to engage and motivate their staff. “I think we’ve always tried to look at it from the perspective of the employee – what is it like to work here?” Link says.

Among the multitude of reasons why Imagination Branding is such a desirable

place to work is that the company inspires employee input and creativity at every turn. Ideas are not only encouraged but solicited with a fierce open-door policy.

And then there is the constant recognition – peer or otherwise. “One thing Jan and Becky do extremely well is the recognition piece,” Blocher says, noting that the company’s leaders have been known to drop candy bags on staff desks during Halloween or slip a sticky note unseen on a worker’s desk when she’s not looking, with praise for a job well done.

More to the point, Imagination employees talk of how they are not only given opportunities to learn and grow personally and professionally, but are expected to do so. When Blocher left a previous sales job to come to the Dallas-based company, he did so by switching gears to the company’s web-based strategy – an area of expertise that he explained to the company’s execs he wasn’t necessarily well versed in. “That’s part of the trust and growth thing here,” Blocher says. Rather than hire someone who fit the job perfectly, Nathanson and Link recognized Blocher’s potential, even more than Blocher believed in himself.

That management approach creates crossover conversations among staff members and inspires staff to be curious about what others do and how they can integrate services and skill sets to work more effectively. By constantly recognizing such efforts, employees say, they are perpetually motivated to do more, and connections are maintained across the company’s two main office locations in Nashville and Dallas.

That corporate culture, which drives “open, honest trust” among employees split across two office locations, is key to the company’s ongoing success. Says Nathanson: “If you hire the right people, they just fall right in step with you and realize, this is a kick-ass place.” – *Betsy Cummings*

- MID-SIZED COMPANY RANKINGS
1. Imagination Branding
 2. Corporate Imaging Concepts LLC
 3. Sunrise Identity
 4. AIA Corporation
 5. NewClients
 6. Simba
 7. Custom Logos
 8. Midnite Snax
 9. Chamberlain Marketing Group
 10. Axis Promotions
 11. Quality Logo Products Inc.
 12. The Icebox
 13. eCompanyStore LLC
 14. White Paper Office Solutions
 15. Brand Addition



RANK: 7
CUSTOM LOGOS
(ASI/173183)
San Diego
Employees: 63



“Our company motto is ‘Have Fun, Make Money,’ and we are truly dedicated to doing both. We have quarterly company-sponsored events that this past year included a mountain hike, a roller-skating party, a bowling party and many others. Our next scheduled event is a southern-themed after-work party that will feature a live blues band and home cooking including red beans and rice, jambalaya and the like.” – *Ryan Kaback, partner*

RANK: 2
CORPORATE IMAGING
CONCEPTS LLC (ASI/168962)
Northbrook, IL
Employees: 59

“We have had 30% annual growth rates for each of the past five years. Our culture is all about growth. As we grow as a company, we provide new opportunities (including advancement opportunities) to our staff. So, while we do like to have fun together, the most fun we have is by winning together as a team!” – *Jeff Gilfand, president*

RANK: 4
AIA CORPORATION (ASI/109480)
Neenah, WI
Employees: 80



“At the end of the year, a bonus was rewarded to all employees for recognizing their hard work, even though we did not meet all criteria of the bonus plan. The power of the element of surprise.” – *Wendy Eiden, human resources director*

RANK: 5
NEWCLIENTS (ASI/282470)
Richmond, VA
Employees: 60



“Some of our most popular incentives are contests to help consolidate vendor purchases, which build our relationships with our top vendors. NewClients rewards associates financially for assisting with these initiatives.” – *Jeff Hall, co-owner*

RANK: 6
SIMBA (ASI/87296)
Oxnard, CA
Employees: 69



“We sponsored a *Biggest Loser*-type competition among the employees with cash incentives. This was to promote a healthy lifestyle for our employees. It was a success, with the weight loss averaging between 10%-20%.” – *Casey Schechter, president*



RANK: 3
SUNRISE IDENTITY
(ASI/339206)
Bellevue, WA
Employees: 96



“We engage our team by showing them our budget at the beginning of the year and then we show them our P&L statement each month so they can see how we are doing. We have found that our team wants to know how we are doing – they want to win! Opening our books and showing the results has had a major impact on our culture.” – *Mitch Mounger, CEO*

RANK: 8
MIDNITE SNAX (ASI/71685)
Bethpage, NY
Employees: 50



“We do team-building exercises from time to time right here in the office. At one of the more recent ones, we broke the office into random teams and played nine holes of miniature golf on a mock course that was elaborately designed and laid out the night before after everyone left. So besides having a hysterical time, we were able to relieve some of the pressure of everyday life while re-energizing the spirit to move on.” – *Margaret Dengler, director of sales & marketing*



75 Best Places to Work

MID-SIZED (50-99 EMPLOYEES)

RANK: 10

AXIS PROMOTIONS (ASI/128263)

New York City
Employees: 62



“Our most compelling benefit is our peer-to-peer recognition program. Funded by the company, this online system allows employees at all levels to award each other points for going above and beyond in performance or reaching certain milestones. When granting points, categories are chosen in conjunction with our core values, thus further emphasizing daily culture.” – *Drew Goldberg, director of human resources*

RANK: 11

QUALITY LOGO PRODUCTS INC.

(ASI/302967)

Aurora, IL
Employees: 98



“Not everyone can be a ‘QLPer.’ When researching and hiring new employees, we place a lot of importance on personality and much less on skill and education. In most cases, this has paid off in spades.” – *Bret Bonnet, co-owner*

RANK: 12

THE ICEBOX (ASI/229395)

Atlanta
Employees: 69

The distributor’s offices are positioned right next to Atlanta’s two-mile long Eastside Belt-line trail, and the company takes advantage with Fitness Fridays, where employees walk together outside or rent bikes for a group ride.



RANK: 9

CHAMBERLAIN MARKETING GROUP

(ASI/160501)

Taylor, MI
Employees: 99



“We do several fun things, including annual company canoe trips, an ongoing co-ed softball team, several BBQ lunches during the summer and chili cook-off contests. Our annual Christmas parties include picking employee names from a hat and giving away cash and extra PTO days to employees.” – *April Campbell, HR administrator*

RANK: 13

ECOMPANY STORE LLC

(ASI/185782)

Alpharetta, GA
Employees: 80



“For those in support roles, we offer a sabbatical of three weeks paid leave, in addition to their regular vacation time, to recharge their energy levels. We also pay for a class during this time that furthers their career or education.” – *Heather Heebner, EVP, human resources*

RANK: 15

BRAND ADDITION (ASI/202515)

St. Louis, MO
Employees: 51



“Perks and benefits include floating holidays, PTO in advance, 401(k) match and, our favorite, Employee Appreciation week! Every year we have a week dedicated to our employees, filled with BBQ, games, prizes and endless treats!” – *Taylor Hiller, U.S. marketing associate*



RANK: 14

WHITE PAPER OFFICE SOLUTIONS (ASI/359726)

Delta, BC / Employees: 53



“We have a U-Matter reward program which rewards everyone with bonuses for hitting our quarterly budgets. Other benefits include up to 4 weeks of vacation, RRSP [Registered Retirement Savings Plan] matching program and more.” – *Agata Webster, marketing & sales*



RANK: 1
Milford, OH
Employees: 114
PROFORMA ALBRECHT & CO.
(ASI/116308)



The greatest gift at this perennial Best Places to Work member is a top-notch workplace – or a ukulele.

Fred and Suzette Albrecht, husband-and-wife owners of Proforma Albrecht & Co. (asi/116308), host several holiday-themed events each year where their employees can relax from the daily grind and have fun with their coworkers. They turn the Milford, OH-based office into a haunted house in October, set up a secret cupid gift exchange for Valentine’s Day, and even rent a suite for the Cincinnati Reds’ opening day. But last Christmas, Suzette outdid herself. The company exceeded \$30 million in sales for the year, and Suzette wanted to congratulate her workers for the milestone in Oprah-like fashion. She asked all of the employees to write up a Christmas wish list and without them knowing, she planned to get the number-one item on everyone’s list within the next two days. “Someone wanted a donation to charity, another person wanted a COACH purse,” Suzette says. “I even went to a music store to get someone a ukulele.” Disguised as the company’s annual Chinese auction, everyone gathered as Santa Claus handed out wrapped presents from

his giant sack. Suzette then told everyone to open the presents at the same time. “People were crying and squealing,” Suzette says. “They stood in line to hug us and thank us. That feeling I get from helping people is why I got into this business.” The Albrechts’ appreciation for their employees is why Proforma Albrecht & Co. has been a perennial top-10 contender on Counselor’s Best Places to Work list, ranking first place in 2012. Fred attributes his company’s success to the Best Places process – he reads the comments that voters make and focuses on areas that need improvement. “If middle management doesn’t get as high praise as Suzette and I do, then I want to know how we can fix that,” Fred says. “People are our most important asset. We treat them with the same respect as the day we recruited them.” Fred and Suzette formed their company and joined the Proforma (asi/300094) network in 2000. In 2014, they became the first Proforma member to surpass \$25 million, with total sales of \$26.9 million. They now have a total of 85 sales representatives in 27 states and almost 40 employees at their headquarters.



“Our company IQ grows every time we add a new person,” Fred says. “We usually add people internally before I recruit a new salesperson. I like to build our customer service base and support first, and then grow sales into that.” The Albrechts breed a sense of loyalty within their sales representatives: Lisa Gilreath has worked with them for 23 years. “I’d follow them anywhere,” Gilreath says. “They provide training and resources for your professional career and personal support for life outside the office.” Gilreath says that when she had an extended illness several years ago, Fred actually made sales calls for her. Whenever an issue arises, he’ll respond to emails and phone calls right away, even at 1 a.m. “They’re very committed to giving their sales reps all the support they need,” says Peggy Johns, who retired in June after 30 years in the industry. “My only regret is that I only started working for them six years ago.” For the sales team, Fred sends weekly emails on industry trends. For internal staff, Suzette hosts “lunch and learns,” where a supplier brings in lunch and talks about their new product line to employees, who are paid time and a half to attend the sessions during their normal lunch break. From comfortable sofas inside the conference room to company picnics for, the Albrechts have their employees’ best interests at heart. “Invest in employees – that’s what makes it happen,” Suzette says. “You can do a lot of fun things, but if they don’t think you’re doing it from the right place, it seems like you don’t truly care about them.” “When you own a business, it becomes part of you,” Fred adds. “This is like our child.” – *John Corrigan*

- LARGE COMPANY RANKINGS**
1. Proforma Albrecht & Co.
2. Proforma
3. SanMar
4. Indoff
5. Genumark Promotional Merchandise Inc.
6. PROMO SHOP INC.
7. Overture Premiums & Promotions
8. BrandVia Alliance
9. CSE
10. ePromos Promotional Products Inc.
11. Showdown Displays
12. Numo Mfg

Q&A

How Growing Companies Can Maintain Their Culture



Jason Lauritsen admits the deck is stacked when it comes to identifying the Best Places to Work. “Small employers have a natural advantage when it comes to employee engagement,” says the director of client success for Quantum Workplace, which helps companies improve their company culture and also independently administers Counselor’s Best Places to Work list. Their advantages? High trust in senior leaders (since employees often have a personal relationship with the CEO) and employees who feel valued and connected to their peers. The challenge? How to maintain those qualities as small companies grow. Lauritsen, a noted speaker and writer, shares some strategies. **Q: Why is it harder for mid- and large-sized companies to drive employee engagement?** **Jason Lauritsen:** When you get to 50-plus employees, and certainly when you get over 100, you have to start making an effort. What you used to do naturally, now you have to start building that in to how you do business. Too often, organizations get wrapped up in other stuff, like the scaling and operations of their business. They tend to forget to build structure around what’s really important – maintaining that leadership connection, maintaining the sense that every employee matters. It’s hard to scale things like relationships. You have to be more intentional about it. **Q: So how do you maintain those connections as you grow larger?** **JL:** The larger companies in Best Places to Work do a couple things. As companies get

larger, communication gets more challenging. So they might implement an intranet or blog, or social technologies like SLACK where you create more avenues for communication. They’ll also start to do things like regular town hall meetings with the executive leadership. You also see that organizations recognize they need to formalize socialization. They’ll ask that teams do certain things together, or give them a budget and recommendations around that. I’ve seen companies with large dispersed workforces fly everybody in to headquarters or somewhere twice a year for meetings to be together. They’ll also use technology to supplement efforts like recognition and appreciation and make it easier for all employees. **Q: When companies get large enough, can’t teams replicate the camaraderie found in smaller businesses?** **JL:** I think they can, but the key is ensuring values and mission consistency. The right guardrails need to be put in place. It can become divisive and cause fragmentation when one team does a whole bunch of stuff and is really engaged, and another team doesn’t. That’s part of the complexity as you get bigger – you have to be thinking about alignment and consistency so employees aren’t having wildly different experiences, because that can cause disengagement too. **Q: As companies grow and formalize processes, it seems like they would run the risk of alienating long-term employees who liked the company’s initial culture. How do you guard against that?** **JL:** Company leaders have to be really open, transparent and honest about the fact that their companies can’t grow and scale by doing things the way they’ve always been done. Leaders have to sell it to employees as they’re doing it. It doesn’t mean that every decision is up for a vote, but they need to bring employees along in this journey. There’s also a reality that some people want to work in a small business. They like that small environment. If your business is changing, there might be people who are no longer a good fit. You need to be open in that conversation and treat those employees with respect and dignity and honor their service. Help them transition and find a place that’s a better fit for them, so you can find people who are a good fit for your growing organization.



RANK: 4
INDOFF (ASI/231011)
St. Louis
Employees: 132

“We provide a list server/discussion board where our partners can discuss solutions to job problems, and our corporate office can easily provide information. The water cooler nature of the list server allows work-from-home sales partners to feel like they are part of a family that can all benefit from each other’s previous sales experience.” – *Jim Malkus, president and CEO*

RANK: 7
OVERTURE PREMIUMS & PROMOTIONS (ASI/288473)
Vernon Hills, IL
Employees: 115

“We believe at Overture that weird is cool, so we accept people for who they are and embrace their weirdness, because that’s what makes us a creative, innovative, great place to work!” – *Shannon Berkman, HR manager*

RANK: 2
PROFORMA (ASI/300094)
Cleveland
Employees: 698

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“A group of Team Members, elected by their peers, serve on a Support Center Advisory Council (SCAC). This group helps continually improve the culture of the Support Center by planning fun activities from ice cream socials to ‘Proforma Olympics,’ while also advocating for ongoing training, health and educational opportunities.” – *Kendra Smith, manager of public relations*

RANK: 3
SANMAR (ASI/84863)
Issaquah, WA
Employees: 1,338

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“What stands out first to most people is just how nice we are! From how we engage with each other to how we respond to customer challenges, we’re always nice. Like Marty Lott always says: ‘Be Nice is one of the first things you learn in kindergarten, and if we’re all nice all the time, it’s a much better place to be.’” – *Sandy Garner, director of HR*

RANK: 5
GENUMARK PROMOTIONAL MERCHANDISE INC. (ASI/204588)
Toronto, ON
Employees: 102

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“Our company culture is casual, empowering, entrepreneurial and collaborative. We also pay well.” – *Mark Freed, president and CEO*

RANK: 6
PROMOSHOP (ASI/300446)
Los Angeles
Employees: 103

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“We rolled out a truly integrated wellness plan to refocus our energy on bettering the whole lives of our employees. We provide opportunities to join in football games, various exercise practices, a sponsored meditation class at no charge, as well as a weight loss opt-in program called Naturally Slim where different employees worked together as support buddies to work on their weight goals.” – *Katy Alavez, human resources manager*

RANK: 10
EPROMOS PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS INC. (ASI/188515)
New York City
Employees: 131

“One of ePromos’ core values is that work doesn’t have to feel like work. We strive to create a culture in which team members can be creative and live up to our reputation of being the Promo Know-How People.” – *Jason Robbins, CEO*

RANK: 8
BRANDVIA ALLIANCE (ASI/145037)
San Jose, CA
Employees: 122

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“BrandVia’s Halloween extravaganza is a ‘scary’ team-building event where teams work together to build the best Halloween-themed work spaces or facilities. Teams spend days – and some nights and weekends – creating, designing and building their themed ideas. Winners are chosen in several categories, but in the end everyone is a winner with a huge potluck lunch and many prizes. The creativity, teamwork and collaboration are amazing!” – *Jim Childers, president*



RANK: 9
CSE (ASI/155807)
New Berlin, WI
Employees: 106

“We had a \$200,000 mistake incentive program where the winnings were split evenly among all employees. Mistakes declined by 64%!” – *Mark Ziskind, chief operating officer*

RANK: 11
SHOWDOWN DISPLAYS (ASI/87188)
Anoka, MN
Employees: 333

The supplier was also named one of Minnesota’s Best Places to Work by the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal last year. “It reflects the fact that our employees are engaged, passionate and energetic,” said John Bruellman, president of Showdown Displays.

RANK: 12
NUMO MFG. (ASI/74710)
Kaufman, TX
Employees: 187

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“Since our quarterly lunch-and-learns started, our employees feel more knowledgeable about the direction the company is going and the types of products we plan to offer. These meetings have also helped employees feel more comfortable approaching management with any ideas, questions or comments. The Numonian communication lines have improved drastically.” – *Jessica Weidler, HR assistant*

