

**BEST PLACES TO WORK****COUNSELOR****Best Places to Work 2009****By Andy Cohen, C.J. Mittica and Dave Vagnoni****Research by Quantum Workplace****September, 2009****1. Sunrise Identity - Woodinville, WA (asi/339206)**

On the hottest day in the history of Seattle suburb Woodinville, WA, Josh Vargas and T.J. Vail got together to renew their video-game rivalry. While temperatures soared to 102 degrees outside, Vargas and Vail enjoyed the comfort of their shared air-conditioned lounge, super-accessorized with a bean bag chair, cushy couches, a flat-screen television and even hanging neon lights. Raiding a cabinet stocked with Xbox game titles, they first played a little Tiger Woods PGA Tour. Then, it was time for NCAA Football 2009. [Read the entire profile for Sunrise Identity here.](#)

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**2. Gifts By Design - Seattle, WA (asi/205947)**

it's not uncommon to see sales reps fighting over clients at some distributors. The back-and-forth at Gifts by Design (asi/205497) often goes a little differently. "Here, the arguments are, 'No you take it.' 'No you take it.' 'No really, you just go ahead,' " says President Jamie Stone. "We just don't have the kind of arguments you have in a lot of places."

The same applies for the staggering number of perks and benefits. What does it include? Sales and referral contests. Flexible hours. Profit-sharing. Surprise gift cards for going above and beyond. Karaoke parties and after-hours get togethers. Extra paid week of vacation between Christmas and New Year's. Paid days off to work at your favorite charity. Dog-friendly offices. Free parking in downtown Seattle. The list goes on and on.

What's most impressive is that employees in the 14-person company readily come up with ideas to improve practices. One example was a meeting last year to think of ways to reduce overhead. The staff came up with a recycling plan (including simple things like using paper twice) that saved \$60,000. "Everybody knows they're empowered here," Stone says, "and that if somebody has a good idea or something they really want to do that's going to better the company, they can present it and

make it happen.”

It hasn't always been that way in the company's 20-year history. “We went through the school of hard knocks,” Stone says. She regrets her initial mistakes of concentrating too much on being the primary seller and not enough on being an effective manager. “My head was buried in my own stuff for so long in the beginning because I wasn't really ever trained to be a manager,” she says.

Such mistakes have been relegated to the past, and to ensure so, the distributor keeps a business coach on retainer to help with communication and offer advice for client problems. And because Stone puts major emphasis on a “fabulous attitude” with employees, tensions rarely boil over. “Even in those crisis times,” she says, “we can also still laugh and have a lot of fun.” – CJM



### 3. The Book Company - Delray Beach, FL (asi/41010)

the Book Company (asi/41010) prides itself on open communication, but making the Counselor Best Places to Work list proved to be an exception: The supplier's staff nominated the company without President Doug Greenhut's knowledge. “Everybody expressed this idea that they really value what it's like to work here,” says Greenhut, who started the company in 1997. “They felt like this was something they wanted to get involved with. They feel like they want to speak up about working here.”

And there's no mystery why. The supplier revels both in its casual atmosphere (shorts and flip-flops encouraged) and the notion that everybody's opinion matters. The open forum even extends to the periodic one-on-one lunches Greenhut conducts with employees to get to know them on a personal level. “I'm a communicative person, so I wanted it to be a place that was very open and where people didn't feel uncomfortable talking, speaking their mind, giving their opinion,” he says, adding that many of the company policies are first suggested by employees.

Unsurprisingly, structured meetings don't go over big with the dozen employees. “More so, we hang out together,” Greenhut explains. Employees will have parties after work, go to concerts together and have monthly birthday lunches for all the staff. Gift cards and free airline tickets await when certain goals are met. And in a novel touch, “The Beat Goes On” is played in the office every time a large order is received, followed by an all-company e-mail that describes it.

“It's always been important for me to celebrate success,” says Greenhut. “We do that with lunches, we do that with the songs playing, we do it with parties and get-togethers. If we have a good year, I want everybody to be a part of that.”

But it's far from a party all the time; Greenhut describes the atmosphere as both laid-back and intense. Workers, in addition to being likeable, have to be self-motivated to get the job done and work as a team. And there are more perks to mention, things like cash incentives to quit smoking. Or a retirement plan with

corporate matching. Dogs allowed in the office? The beat goes on. – CJM

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#### 4. iPROMOTEu - Wayland, MA (asi/232119)

as just one of two Counselor Top 40 companies to make it into the top 10 in last year's Best Places to Work rankings, iPROMOTEu has set itself apart even further this year. The distributor now ranks within the top five of the rankings – and is the only Top 40 company within the top 10.

Ross Silverstein, president and CEO of the organization, has created a culture in iPROMOTEu's Wayland, MA, headquarters office and among the distributor's more than 600 affiliates of creativity and fun. Birthdays are celebrated constantly and in big ways. The company's meetings happen in places like Boston's Fleet Center, which Silverstein once rented out for his employees to play basketball in. And iPROMOTEu's parties are, of course, legendary and well attended by both the company's affiliates, salespeople, employees, and suppliers.

"We have a very pleasant, high-energy work environment," Silverstein says. "Our staff enjoys working with each other, and they frequently socialize outside of work hours. Everyone is held to a high standard of performance."

And it's obviously worked, as Silverstein's outfit has been climbing up the Top 40 rankings for the past two years, and has shown up on Counselor's list of the industry's fastest-growing distributors in each of the last two years. – AC

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#### 5. Albrecht & Co. - Milford, OH (asi/116308)

this large Proforma franchise with more than 50 employees is the only company to be in the top five of Counselor's Best Places to Work rankings for two years in a row. And its employees obviously appreciate the workplace atmosphere provided by owners Fred and Suzette Albrecht. "We believe people are our only asset," says Fred Albrecht. "We seek to affiliate with employees with a desire to develop a rewarding career. That basic principal is the guide that drives our success to motivate and retain employees and sales reps."

And the company does that through a variety of efforts. The family atmosphere and regular fun perks for employees include an annual Halloween costume contest, spring flings, company picnics, annual holiday outings, birthday off-days and awards ceremonies that spouses are invited to. Plus the company has a comfortable lounge for employees to gather in, and it even has a mascot: a company golden retriever named Lark who greets people in the office every day.

And for Albrecht, communication with employees through everything is the key to

success. In fact, the company regularly has Web-based meetings, teleconferences and in-person meetings to share ideas and hear each other out. “We believe our most unique benefit is the respect we show each employee and sales representative,” Albrecht says. “Personal, day-to-day and hour-by-hour communication with our employees and outside sales reps is the key.” – AC

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#### 6. Metromedia Marketing - Calgary, AB, Canada (asi/268940)

the Olympics haven't been held in Calgary in over 20 years, but medals are still being handed out in at least one place in the Canadian city: Metromedia Marketing (asi/268940). The north-of-the-border distributor doles out MetroMedals to employees who earn three nominations (from vendors, customers or fellow employees) for demonstrating one of the company's six core values. And of course, there's an elaborate and highly-anticipated ceremony where each winner gets to hand out the next medal. It's part of what makes MetroMedia unique.

“I have had vendors come in and very candidly say ‘When I come into this office, it feels so different from other offices. There's something very light-hearted and happy and welcoming about this place,’” says Sandra Black, Metro's biggest medal winner with 10 total. “It's a huge stroke to the ego because you feel you're doing something right.”

Black's title is manager of STN – Soup to Nuts, naturally. It's just part of the fun the distributor has with titles, where other employees are known as CEOs – Customer Exhilaration Officers. “It gives us an opportunity to have a conversation, especially with customers,” Black says about the titles.

Unique benefits have been de rigueur since President Nick Thompson took over the 24-year old business from his father. And the benefits range far and wide, from basics like health benefits and paid-for industry education to perks like Slurpee Day and a Wii in the showroom. Travel is a constant too, from industry trade shows to parties and retreats located all over the province. Employee input with ideas like these is held at a premium. “Nick is very employee-driven,” says Black, who has been with the company for eight years. “He never, ever admits that he's the one who comes up with all the ideas. He always says he knows a good idea when he sees one, so he always opens up his door to hear from us.”

That makes sense for a company whose one core value is “Silence is Compliance” (translation: if you disagree, speak up). Employees have quarterly reviews so they constantly know how they are faring. And twice-a-year new employee orientations allow rookies to get a grasp on the ins and outs of MetroMedia's culture. Usually, though, the results are apparent immediately. “If it's the right hire,” Black says, “we know right away because they fit in right away.” – CJM

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## 7. NewClients Promotional Marketing - Richmond, VA (asi/282470)

Even the best places to work had to face the harsh reality of the economy this past year. But perhaps this is what makes them the best: the compromises they strike in the wake of the sacrifices. NewClients Promotional Marketing (asi/282470), for example, had to axe its matching 401(k) program. “The flipside,” says President and CEO Jeff Hall, “is we initiated a profitability program, so if there are profits at the end of the year, we’re taking a big chunk of it, and that’s being paid back to the staff.”

It’s one of the few areas where NewClients employees have had to do without. Otherwise, it’s hard to fault a company that took the addresses of its 27 employees into account when it moved its corporate offices; the move saved the average associate 20 minutes of commuting time per day. Bringing everybody closer together, after all, is the whole idea. “We’ve always had a very family-oriented environment where everybody works well together,” says Hall, who purchased the company in 2000. “We definitely have a team approach, even more so this year from a communication standpoint.”

Communication is indeed one of the hallmarks of the Richmond, VA-based distributor. NewClients allows for sales reps to send out “Creative Calls” to the whole company to solicit unique ideas for a project. Each employee gets a morning blast that details everybody’s whereabouts for the day – if they’re in the office, on vacation, traveling to meet a client and so on. And a quarterly “State of the Union” company address was instituted this year to open up the communication from the top down. “It’s really no holds barred,” says Hall. “They get the good and the bad on how we’ve done in a bunch of key areas.”

They also get a host of enjoyable events, thanks to a “Fun Time Committee” that plans contests, outings, luncheons and more throughout the year – all paid through a special company-funded budget. It’s supplemented by a self-described “low-key” environment that Hall feels is a reflection of his temperament. “There’s a lot of deliberateness,” Hall admits, “that comes with the way we operate our business.” – CJM



## 8. Dacasso - Gainesville, FL (asi/48125)

Discipline and fairness often have fine lines (just ask a parent). The same is true in business, and Dacasso (asi/48125) knows that better than most. In its six years, the supplier has veered from practically letting go of the reins to instituting a keystroke program that monitored computer use. “At times we have been loosey-goosey with our employees and things have sort of run amok. And at other times we’ve been too hardcore and too strict, what didn’t really make a great work environment,” says President John Farrell. “And it’s only in the past three or four

years that we've found a happy medium for everybody.”

Clearly, though, the supplier has found its sweet spot – especially after finishing as the industry's second fastest growing supplier in Counselor's June Awards issue. Finding the right people (Farrell touts maturity and a team attitude as key elements) was part of it. An open-door policy and regular brainstorming meetings, coupled with a consistently positive environment, have helped foster that growth. “From day one we've had an open door policy,” Farrell says. “We have always said if there is any issue whatsoever – if you have a complaint, problem, anything – come in and let us talk about it.”

Of course, it's hard to find much to complain about. The company's Simple Retirement Plan is vested and fully matched from the first day of work. Bonuses and tuition reimbursement are also included, as is the annual holiday party with fun activities (the company went to watch drag racing last year). There's even a workout room with a computer-outfitted treadmill so employees can check e-mail while they walk; the computer can also be removed for normal running.

That's not to mention the personal day flexibility (10 personal days per year in addition to vacation). It's emblematic of this leather and desk accessories company that tries not to make it all about work. Says Farrell: “We wanted this to be a place where people wanted to come to work. And we also wanted it to be a place when they leave for the day, they can leave it here. Work is such a small part of somebody's life. We believe that family comes first and that our employees have a life outside Dacasso.” – CJM



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#### 9. Bullpen Marketing - Houston, TX (asi/150076)

**Retention Rate:** The 10-employee company has had only two firings since its inception 10 years ago.

**Corporate Culture:** Bullpen Marketing's small staff allows the company to foster a family atmosphere and strong relationships with group happy hours, sporting events and weekly luncheons.

“We also celebrate many holidays together, including birthdays that are an all-day production of decorations, gifts and plenty of food.”

**Unique Perks:** Sales incentives, college tuition reimbursement and educational business trips. Plus, a fully-stocked kitchen at all times. “We like to make our company as professional as possible, but with the most comfort and support for our employees.”



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#### 10. BrandVia Alliance - San Jose, CA (asi/145037)

**Retention Rate:** 83% of employees over past six years



**Unique Benefits:** BrandVia provides a 401(k) Safe Harbor Plan with a 3% match for all employees, whether they participate in the plan or not. The company also provides a \$1,000 incentive for purchasing an eco-friendly automobile, as well as offering monthly, quarterly and annual recognition awards for employees nominated by their peers.

**Corporate Culture:** The company provides tickets to local sporting events, sponsors a family night at a minor league ballpark, has ice cream bars delivered to employees on the last Friday of each month in the summer, and offers donuts and bagels every Friday and cinnamon bread every Wednesday to staffers.

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11. Image Source - Kirkland, WA (asi/230121)

**Recognition Tricks:** Image Source constantly honors employee success. Awards are given to sales teams for sales volume, account growth, etc., and monthly sales awards (yes, trophies are involved) are given to each sales team that reaches certain milestones. The top-producing team each month receives the "Silver Slugger" award, which is flaunted by the winning team for the month.

**Corporate Culture:** Image Source has two employee committees: the community committee and the culture club, and each employee must participate in at least one of them. Also, the company offers a wellness program where group bike rides and team walks are the norm. And company golf outings, bowling events and in-office chair massages could break out at any moment.

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12. Identity Marketing - Tempe, AZ (asi/229857)

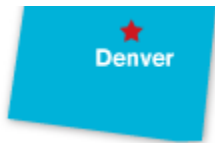
**Fun Perks:** Identity Marketing provides a loose atmosphere for employees, which includes dress theme days, blue jean Fridays (which benefit the company's foundation), monthly birthday parties and potluck lunches.

**Recognition Tricks:** In addition to paid holidays and medical benefits, the company honors an employee of the year annually and provides a holiday bonus based on length of employment. It's a "small company with a fun, family-type environment. Our team takes care of each other."

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13. L W Barrett Co. - Denver, CO (asi/133000)



**Retention Rate:** Near 100%. The newest employee has been with the company for almost three years and the next newest is a 15-year veteran of L W Barrett.

**Recognition Tricks:** The company has a weekly star program where it honors and rewards two employees for exceptional contributions during that week and a monthly star program that recognizes one employee who receives a star bag filled with promo products, gift certificate and preferred parking.

**Corporate Culture:** L W Barrett has birthday lunches (plus a full-fledged birthday party and lunch at every decade change), a holiday party and weekly “bonding” breaks. “Our employees are family and we truly treat each other with respect. We recognize employees and create a positive atmosphere in the office.”

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14. Devara - Macedon, NY (asi/49470)

**Recognition Tricks:** At Devara, every employee can wear slippers to work if the company beats the prior week’s sales goals. Plus, the company has a big gong in the middle of its customer service department that gets rung when large orders come in and daily sales goals are met.

**Corporate Culture:** In addition to food (there are bagels every Friday morning, pizza parties at the end of good months and food trays during the holidays), Devara has a completely open communication system where every employee has access to the daily sales reports. “Our people know that the better Devara does, the better they do.”

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15. Pingline - Chicago, IL (asi/78137)

**Retention Rate:** The supplier has had to replace only two employees since beginning of 2007.

**Corporate Culture:** Pingline has a fun work environment that includes theme days where employees can wear silly outfits to the office, and there are several all-company outings throughout the year.

**Unique Benefits:** While Pingline doesn’t have a company-sponsored insurance plan, it does pay for individuals to have their own plans.

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16. GO USA Inc. - Wenatchee, WA (asi/208784)

**Retention Rate:** 92% over the last five years

**Corporate Culture:** The company offers many of the same programs that it markets to its corporate customers as ways for team building, retention and motivation. In addition to providing events and sports tickets to employees, as well as free and discounted clothing, GO USA has a family-oriented environment that allows employees the flexibility in scheduling to make family a priority. "We live by the adage that it is a choice to come to work, so why not make it a good place to be?"

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17. iClick - Seattle, WA (asi/62124)

**Retention Rate:** Greater than 95%

**Recognition Tricks:** Last year's number one Best Place to Work does a lot of public recognition for providing exceptional internal service at the company. The company's motto is "Happy Clickers Equals Happy Customers," and management believes that being recognized for one's accomplishments is the most effective motivator.

**Corporate Culture:** Besides the free yoga that's offered in the office every day at 3 p.m., there's an all-company meeting every Friday morning. A different department hosts the meeting each week and plans a team-building activity. There have been treasure hunts, Olympics, and an event called Build The Tallest Structure Possible Out of 75 Yards of Aluminum Foil.

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18. eCompanyStore - Alpharetta, GA (asi/185782)

**Recognition Tricks:** eCompanyStore rewards employees on an annual and regular basis for exhibiting the company's core values. Staffers receive unique pins throughout the year from peers and managers for practicing the core values and then can redeem the pins for gift cards when a certain number is reached.

**Corporate Culture:** The company has a summer half-day program, gym reimbursements up to \$25 a month, employee appreciation day and regular employee outings. Plus, the Top 40 distributor has a charity day program where all employees can get a paid day off to volunteer at the charity of their choice.



### 19. LogoVision - Troy, MI (asi/255309)

**Corporate Culture:** LogoVision recently went through what it called Enrichment Day, which gave every employee the opportunity to envision and create a happier, more peaceful and more productive way of life. It was a 45-day program that everybody participated in together; the company now has a partnership with the organization that lead the program.

**Fun Perks:** Every Thursday, there are bagels, pastries and other baked goods for all employees. And the company staff goes to trade shows, concerts, off-site training programs and other events as a group.

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### 20. CustomInk - McClean, VA (asi/173408)

**Retention Rate:** 97% in 2008 (with six involuntary departures) and 99% in 2009 (with three involuntary departures)

**Fun Perks:** With the motto of "Well-fed Inkers are happy Inkers," CustomInk provides breakfast for employees every Monday (including a hot breakfast once a month) and catered lunches every Friday. There is also fresh fruit delivered three times a week and snacks on hand such as oatmeal, soup, granola bars and pretzels.

**Unique Benefits:** The company has an event series so that employees have a schedule of offsite events to look forward to throughout the year. There are sporting events, art nights, happy hours, a holiday party, summer barbecue and theme days in the office. Plus, every full-time employee receives ownership in the company, which can increase with promotions during one's career.

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### 21. Crystal D - St. Paul, MN (asi/47759)

**Recognition Tricks:** Each Crystal D employee fills out a recognition profile twice a year, which helps determine how the employee would like to be recognized and what types of rewards they'd like to receive.

**Corporate Culture:** The supplier has a formal Years of Service ceremony in conjunction with its annual golf tournament. Employees are split up into teams of four during the golf outing, where they receive lunch, golf shirts and other Crystal D merchandise. The company also has an annual barbecue, informal

lunches, monthly company meetings and a holiday lunch. Last year, the company gave out monthly gas cards to employees while gas prices were high.

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22. J H Specialty - Ft. Wayne, IN (asi/232445)

**Fun Perks:** While J H Specialty provides a staff lunch every other Thursday (catered in winter and barbecue during the summer), the perk that probably gets the most attention is the "loft" that includes a ping-pong table, putting green, dart board and pool table. The company also provides bonuses on a quarterly basis.

**Corporate Culture:** Multiple employee events throughout the year (holiday party, pool party, sports outings) foster a team atmosphere. And, the company pays toward monthly membership costs at a local gym to promote physical well-being.

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23. Bluegrass Promotional Marketing - Charlotte, NC (asi/141964)

**Fun Perks:** On their birthdays, company employees receive Bluegrass Bucks that they can use to purchase a variety of merchandise on the company's Web site. At corporate headquarters, employees can enjoy lunch in the Bluegrass Diner, a 50s-style lunch room with widescreen TV and Nintendo Wii. On Fridays before NFL Carolina Panthers football games, the company has tailgate events for employees.

**Corporate Culture:** Bluegrass involves its employees and salespeople in many of the decisions the company makes. It recently restructured how it supports its salespeople and asked for input on how to do it from reps and support personnel. And, employees throughout the country can easily communicate through a VOIP system where they can dial anybody anywhere with a four-digit extension.

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24. Tic Toc - Dallas, TX (asi/158990)

**Corporate Culture:** This Top 40 distributor fosters a comfortable environment with peer recognition programs, a family atmosphere, company outings, frequent executive interaction with employees, community service projects and team outings.

**Fun Perks:** Tic Toc provides first-class upgrades and nice travel accommodations for travelers, and concert tickets, lake trips and birthday lunches keep people motivated.

Oh, the Friday “wine-down and beer cart” doesn’t hurt the atmosphere either.

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25. Halls & Co - Brooklyn Park, MN (asi/59080)

**Retention Rate:** 100%

**Recognition Tricks:** The supplier says that retention and motivation aren’t an event, but an everyday mindset. Management has a clear belief in treating all employees with dignity, clear expectations and like family. It also has a formal Thanks Program, where internal employees can thank each other for going above and beyond.

**Unique Benefits:** Halls will work with employees to create a flexible schedule or work-from-home program if necessary. The company also has barbecues, provides lunches and offers other team events.

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26. SnugZ/USA - Salt Lake City, UT (asi/88060)

**Fun Perks:** The supplier has barbecues, company picnics and team retreats, but management says the efforts differ from other companies because they truly want to do these things. “We love taking care of the people around us,” says Charley Johnson. “We do it because we want to.”

**Corporate Culture:** From management down, the company’s philosophy is to take care of each other. In fact, when SnugZ moved its factory a couple of years ago, it paid for all of the moving costs for its employees. And the company’s employees now will always take care of each other. “You can’t imagine the people who come forward to take care of their friends here at work, not just from their own teams, but from everybody from reception to production.”

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27. Overture Premiums & Promotions - Vernon Hills, IL (asi/288437)

**Retention Rate:** 100% for sales staff since opening the company in 2001; about 80% for support staff

**Fun Perks:** A regular “Lunch and Learn” event for all staff where each person receives a lunch bag and participates in a training session. The company

also has a 401(k) match, as well as quarterly and holiday celebrations.

**Corporate Culture:** A team atmosphere is fostered with things like a Stop Smoking campaign and a Walk At Lunch event. The company also celebrates the holidays with its annual Ugly Sweater Contest, where a prize is awarded to the employee wearing, yes you guessed it, the ugliest sweater.

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28. Sonoma Promotional Solutions - Sonoma, CA  
(asi/88188)

**Retention Rate:** 97%

**Recognition Tricks:** At Sonoma sales meetings, they do random drawings of gift cards, gas cards and event tickets. It does the random drawings because it doesn't want to reward only the salespeople with highest sales – it fosters a team atmosphere in which support staffers and people in the research and accounting departments deserve recognition as well.

**Corporate Culture:** The supplier hosts brainstorming sessions over company-paid lunches and barbecues where employees can bring family along.

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29. The Vernon Company - Newton, IA (asi/351700)

**Retention Rate:** More than 99%

**Fun Perks:** Vernon's employee-run activity committee plans regular events, fundraisers and family outings. The company also has an annual United Way campaign and a Relay For Life Committee, and provides employee appreciation gifts on a regular basis. Plus, there's a Christmas in July celebration, casual Fridays, a Halloween party and participation in a Habitat For Humanity project.

**Corporate Culture:** The Top 40 distributor has a family atmosphere with many employees who have had long careers at the company – and each payday, the senior VP of finance personally hands out direct deposit slips to all employees.

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30. PilgrimPage - Lawrence, KS (asi/295819)

**Corporate Culture:** Management motivates employees by keeping everybody informed on the finances – good or bad. And it works hard at ensuring every employee and every department knows how they fit into the

big picture of the company.

**Fun Perks:** Two annual parties, plus dress-up events for Halloween and local sporting events. There are also monthly gatherings at local restaurants and bars, and a holiday decorating contest that every employee participates in.

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31. 14 West LLC - Pewaukee, WI (asi/197092)

**Retention Rate:** 100%

**Recognition Tricks:** Every year, the company reviews personal and professional goals with each employee and talks to them throughout the year to ensure they are on track to meet the objectives.

**Corporate Culture:** The company firmly believes in open communication with its employees. And staffers have an important role in company decisions. For example, each new hire is interviewed by several team members and all opinions are heard before deciding to offer a job to anybody.

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32. Indoff - St. Louis, MO (asi/231011)

**Retention Rate:** The company has over 250 employees who have been with the organization for more than five years.

**Recognition Tricks:** Indoff views clearly-defined expectations and the tools to meet those goals as its best motivational technique. Of course, it also recognizes five- 10- and 20-year employees, as well as salespeople of the month, million dollar sales reps and a salesperson of the year.

**Unique Benefits:** All salespeople are W-2 employees, which gives them access to health insurance, 401(k) and life and disability insurance.

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33. Made To Order - Pleasanton, CA (asi/259540)

**Retention Rate:** More than 90%

**Corporate Culture:** At MadeToOrder, the senior sales partners are owners of the company. This ownership culture drives everything the company does – and gives employees a say in the direction of the firm.

**Unique Benefits:** The company funds 80% of the medical and dental premiums for employees and has a 401(k) program with a dollar-for-dollar match up to the full amount allowed under IRS guidelines.

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34. Cavanaugh Marketing Network - Pittsburgh, PA  
(asi/159262)

**Fun Perks:** The company makes a big deal out of employee anniversaries, and one staffer always creates a humorous Top 10 list of reasons why the employee has managed to last another year at the company. There are also quarterly company outings, holiday parties (Christmas, Halloween, St. Patrick's Day) and summer lunchtime cookouts – there's a grill on the side porch of the building.

**Corporate Culture:** An anonymous suggestion box invites employees to share opinions about the organization and a large public calendar tracks daily, weekly and monthly sales and profit goals.

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35. Mid-Nite Snax - Mineola, NY (asi/71685)

**Retention Rate:** Only one employee has left the company in the past eight years.

**Recognition Tricks:** Mid-Nite Snax recently instituted a Smile Campaign, in which employees are rewarded for spreading smiles and adding to the overall positive atmosphere of the company.

**Corporate Culture:** The supplier firm builds camaraderie through Wednesday morning breakfast meetings, quarterly cocktail parties and events called Marvelous Mondays and Fabulous Fridays – specially ordered breakfasts are delivered to each employee on Mondays and lunch is catered for the company on Fridays during the company's busiest season.

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36. The IceBox - Atlanta, GA (asi/229395)

**Retention Rate:** 98%

**Fun Perks:** The distributor sponsors softball and tennis teams for employees, offers employee cookout competitions, evening workouts and multiple charitable efforts.

**Corporate Culture:** The laid-back environment of The IceBox can be seen in the dress code and the many dogs that roam the offices. Plus, every employee gets their

birthday off from work.

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37. Genumark Promotional Merchandise - Toronto, ON, Canada (asi/204588)

**Retention Rate:** 97%

**Fun Perks:** In addition to the profit-sharing bonus plan that even administrative employees are included in, the distributor provides a summer barbecue, a holiday party with Secret Santa program, car washing days provided by various departments and shorter summer hours.

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38. BamBams - Lorton, VA (asi/38228)

**Retention Rate:** The company has had one employee leave – on good terms – in the past three years.

**Fun Perks:** The supplier randomly surprises employees with tickets to concerts and sporting events, and it purchases lunches for staffers on a more-than-monthly basis.

**Corporate Culture:** In addition to annual staff incentive plans and company contributions to employee 401(k) accounts, the owners will randomly thank employees with personal notes and gifts sent to their homes.

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39. CSE - New Berlin, WI (asi/155807)

**Retention Rate:** 90%, and 62% of employees have been with the company for more than five years, including a quarter of the company that has worked there for more than 15 years.

**Corporate Culture:** CSE shows off its employees' creativity with a Graffiti Wall that everybody is encouraged to leave their mark on. The company also has theme lunches for July 4th, Cinco de Mayo and Halloween where raffles and prizes are handed out. Of course, free soda and coffee in the office enhance the atmosphere, as well.

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40. Walker-Clay - Hanson, MA (asi/354530)

**Recognition Tricks:** Whenever the distributor does a self-promo, all employees receive the items too. And, sales contests are always accompanied by



visual aids – think of a poster of a giant turkey with tail feathers added for each accomplishment.

**Corporate Culture:** The company celebrates birthdays every month with a cake party, and has an annual Halloween party where everyone in the organization dresses up in costume and a prize for best outfit is awarded.

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41. Proforma - Cleveland, OH (asi/300094)

**Fun Perks:** Every Friday is casual day in the Proforma support center, and during baseball and basketball seasons, the Cleveland company hosts Indians and Cavs days for its employees. There's also a workout room on site and the company hosts Halloween and holiday parties.

**Corporate Culture:** Greg and Vera Muzzillo, co-CEOs, work hard to create a family atmosphere at Proforma. This includes personally-signed birthday cards mailed to each employee's home and public acknowledgment of employee anniversaries.

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42. Chamberlain Marketing Group - Taylor, MI (asi/160501)

**Retention Rate:** 94%

**Fun Perks:** The management team cooks barbecues and breakfasts for employees several times a year, and the company sponsors cook-off contests for all staffers. In addition to Halloween and holiday parties, the company also has a softball team and group outings for charity events.

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43. Kaeser & Blair - Batavia, OH (asi/238600)

**Retention Rate:** The Top 40 distributor has virtually 100% retention.

**Fun Perks:** Employees get their birthdays off as an additional paid holiday, and the company does a raffle of holiday gifts in which every employee receives a gift.

**Corporate Culture:** The company's annual convention is called the "family reunion," where dealers show up with flowers and other thank-you gifts for the company's employees. The relaxed atmosphere and consistent positive feedback are also draws for staffers.

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44. Tri-Mountain/Mountain Gear - Irwindale, CA (asi/92125)



**Retention Rate:** Over 98%, and half of the employees have been with the supplier for more than 10 years.

**Fun Perks:** Quarterly luncheons and an end-of-year holiday party are joined by an annual Halloween contest. Also, the Top 40 supplier nominates two employees each month for its Tri-Mountain All Star Team.

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45. Boundless Network - Austin, TX (asi/143717)

**Fun Perks:** The distributor has a weekly happy hour for employees, complete with unique invitations every week. The company also has its Founders Circle celebration where the whole company gets together for a three-day meeting that includes Skit Night and karaoke outings. Plus, employees can bring pets to work.

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46. MediaTree - Parsippany, NJ (asi/70303)

**Retention Rate:** 90%

**Corporate Culture:** Performance incentives, internal contests, company outings and cookouts contribute to the fun, high-energy atmosphere for this supplier.

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47. PromoShop - Los Angeles, CA (asi/300446)

**Fun Perks:** While free sodas and lattes are the norm at this Top 40 distributor, the company also offers an updated employee lounge and an in-house workout facility.

**Unique Benefits:** An employee purchase program is coupled with a college savings plan and education tuition reimbursement to further employees' loyalty to the company.

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48. Motivators Inc. - Westbury, NY (asi/277780)

**Corporate Culture:** The distributors gets its employees involved in all of its marketing efforts – including online marketing. It has a channel on YouTube and employees are constantly adding new product demos and other fun videos to its efforts.

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49. HDS Marketing - Pittsburgh, PA (asi/216807)

**Retention Rate:** No employee has left this company for another job in more than two years.

**Recognition Tricks:** When the company reaches sales goals, it celebrates with fun outings such as bowling parties, baseball games, lunches and happy hours – with the whole staff and sometimes their families.

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50. Leashables by Oralabs - Parker, CO (asi/66715)

**Retention Rate:** 96%

**Fun Perks:** The supplier holds annual summer picnics and holiday parties for employees, complete with games, raffle prizes and catered meals. Also, employees are paid for their time at these parties.

**Unique Benefits:** Leashables pays 97% of eligible employees' health insurance, which includes life and long-term disability. It also offers paid funeral leave in addition to flex time.

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51. Pinnacle Designs - San Fernando, CA (asi/78140)

**Retention Rate:** 91%

**Recognition Tricks:** The company's "You've Been Caught Doing Good" campaign calls on peers and managers to nominate others for extra effort.

**Corporate Culture:** Exceptional sales periods are honored with theme parties. One was a carnival with popcorn stands, ice cream and various games set up in the parking lot – yes, even a dunk tank with the owners on the hot seat was involved.

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52. Immediate Sales Agency - Waterloo, ON, Canada  
(asi/230189)

**Retention Rate:** 97%

**Corporate Culture:** The company has its own social networking site so employees can keep up on each other's activities. It also offers social events, flex time, summer barbecues, happy hours, a company golf tournament, scavenger hunt, movie night and pot luck lunches.

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53. Magna-Tel - Cape Girardeau, MO (asi/68480)

**Fun Perks:** The supplier has an in-house training academy where all employees can get education through Webinars, books, DVDs and live training sessions. Magna-Tel has also hired a personal trainer and offers health screenings for all employees.

**Unique Benefits:** The company has a vegetable garden onsite that employees help keep up. All staffers get to enjoy the veggies.

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54. Creative Concepts - Edmonton, AB, Canada (asi/170480)

**Corporate Culture:** There are employees who have been with the firm for more than 20 years and the company has a years of service incentive plan.

**Fun Perks:** There are annual golf tournaments, holiday parties and other fun events throughout the year – but the Friday Socials where drinks begin every Friday at 3 p.m. are the real kickers.

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55. Gemline - Lawrence, MA (asi/56070)

**Retention Rate:** More than 90%

**Fun Perks:** Co-ed softball team, weekly barbecues in the summer and themed events throughout the year.

**Unique Benefits:** The Top 40 supplier offers ongoing training for employees, an onsite cafeteria with subsidized meals, tuition reimbursement and 100%-paid life and disability insurance.

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56. SanMar - Preston, WA (asi/84863)

**Corporate Culture:** The Top 40 supplier is committed to its motto: "Have a Career. Keep Your Life." Its At Home program allows employees to work from home every day.

**Fun Perks:** Monthly themed barbecues during the summer, plus holiday parties and Cinco de Mayo celebrations.

**Unique Benefits:** Clothes, obviously. Employees can purchase discounted items and the company runs sales events a few times a year.

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57. Halo/Lee Wayne - Sterling, IL (asi/356000)

**Retention Rate:** 93%

**Fun Perks:** Ultra-casual dress code (jeans, shorts, flip-flops), random treat days, free popcorn on Fridays, weekly rotation of reserved parking and free lunches several times throughout the year.

**Corporate Culture:** The Top 40 supplier, which was recognized as one of the Healthiest Companies in America by Interactive Health Solutions, has a wellness program that includes gym reimbursements and free health screenings.

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58. Touchstone - Mason, OH (asi/345631)

**Fun Perks:** "Wear what you want" Fridays, celebration of every employee milestone, monthly and yearly awards, a fitness center and company teams for just about every sport possible.

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59. Bob Lilly Professional Promotions - Dallas, TX (asi/254138)



**Recognition Tricks:** The company gives out Rolex watches, big-screen TVs and trips as awards to high-performing employees.



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60. Bag Makers - Union, IL (asi/37940)

**Recognition Tricks:** The Top 40 supplier provides attendance and hiring/referral incentives, and it posts production records for everyone in the company to see.

**Corporate Culture:** In addition to spirit days throughout the year and a company picnic, the supplier hosts a major Halloween party where departments decorate their offices and prizes are awarded.