

Winning employers give respect, appreciation, perks

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Ever wonder why some companies are perceived as being a great place to work?

There are a few common themes that run through the comments submitted by employees of Orlando Business Journal's 20 Best Places to Work winners: family-friendly, making employees feel valued and providing loads of perks, large and small.

Here are some of their employees' comments.

Small

FBC Mortgage LLC: "I have worked closely with my management team for a long time and find them to be the best leaders out there. Where good leaders go, good employees follow."

Tews Co.: "Our president always acknowledges when people go above and beyond, and does many little things to make a difference. For example, on a few occasions when people were working late, he has ordered pizza for the group. He always lets people know that the work can wait and that they should go be with their family. He also brings breakfast for everyone in the office on a pretty regular basis. We also offer flex time for our full-time employees. And we were awarded Blackberrys to help us have a more flexible work environment."

HomeBanc Mortgage Corp.: "My boss makes coming to work a joy every day. He shaved his head for a coworker going through chemotherapy; he cooks for us at almost every meeting; and he makes us take mandatory fun outings with our team."

Resource Consulting Group: "We have the best of both worlds -- the compensation and benefits of a large corporation and the job satisfaction and flexibility of a smaller corporation. I feel respected and appreciated. The managers genuinely care about all of the employees."

Mercantile Commercial Capital LLC: "MCC provides benefits that are extraordinary, including a quarterly profit-sharing program and a stock options plan. Above and beyond are smaller things that make all the difference in the world: company-paid lunches on the patio; celebrations of special events such as birthdays; impromptu happy hours; all the free sodas, coffee, juice and water you can drink; free snacks; large offices with a decorating allowance; and all employees have a say in company structure and are expected to make improvements and changes."

Medium

Williams Co.: "When a task needs to get done, everyone pulls together -- there are important times when there are not any department lines, we are one entire group focusing on achieving one common goal. There is also significant focus on bringing some fun in, which helps build strong personal bonds. We all feel valued and respected. This is the most stress-free environment I have ever worked in. They treat everyone here like family. They truly understand what runs a good business is its people."

Value Pawn and Jewelry Stores: "I feel that this is not just a job, but a family and a close-knit team. This company has all the ingredients of the recipe for long-term success, from the compassion of

the senior executives to the on-going development of our sales people. My bosses are very effective in both directing and motivating. I work someplace that is dynamic and challenging in every way."

Winter Park Construction: "We are allowed to laugh and enjoy our work. We have a wonderful working environment with all the latest and best technology. Special events are planned all through the year for the employees, such as paint ball, Ladies' Day Out, family picnic, fishing trip, Pepsi 400 and then some. WPC always looks to help individuals reach their potential. They give you the tools and training to become successful."

Mercedes Homes: "I have grown with the company and admire their honesty and their family values. Management listens to the needs and addresses employees' concerns. Mercedes Homes Orlando has a determined leadership with an ultra-friendly atmosphere that makes one feel at home and always welcome. My job is challenging and I look forward to coming to work. This is a happy place."

HuntonBrady Architects: This firm creates a very positive and enjoyable atmosphere. Little things like giving everyone a comfortable chair are noticed. This company does care about the people and not just the almighty dollar. I feel as though I am doing something of value that meets my skills. It is a very satisfying job."

Large

Wayne Automatic Fire Sprinklers Inc.: "The family-owned company takes extra steps to care about the extended family of employees. In 2005, the company matched 401(k) contributions \$1.25 for every dollar employees contributed. The owner and president know each and every individual by name. This company provides an opportunity for unlimited growth and advancement. It values its team members and communicates that well."

Welbro Building Corp.: "Welbro is always looking for an innovative way to get the job done, always open to new ideas and products. Welbro keeps its hourly personnel busy, moving from job to job, and always trying to help people advance with mentoring and tutoring. I have not seen an employer that is as constantly concerned as to employee satisfaction at all levels top to bottom. This company invests more finances towards employee development than any firm I have seen."

JHT Inc.: "The company genuinely cares about the employees and shows that in many ways, from Breakfast with the Boss, where the owner flips pancakes, to the feeling of trust and respect for all employees that trickles down from Jim Jardon to reach all of us. The philosophy of 'take care of employees and the bottom line will take care of itself' is both preached and practiced. I applaud the efforts of JHT to accommodate telecommuting and the commitment they have made to this initiative."

Wharton-Smith Inc.: "This is one of those very few companies that still believe that we must train and promote from within the company. There is always a family feeling in this company, whether you're in the office or out on any of our job sites. I enjoy that fact that management does not expect salaried employees to work overtime."

Universal Engineering Sciences: "I enjoy the family-owned nurturing environment and the big company benefits. I also enjoy the feeling of being trusted and empowered to my job. There is mutual loyalty and respect among owners, management and employees."

Giant

GrayRobinson P.A.: "This firm provides a strong work environment, encourages personal growth, acknowledges special achievements, willingly supports charities on a regular basis, encourages communication among peers and managers and works to resolve any work-related issues. Our pay scale is excellent. GrayRobinson provides extra events for the staff to enjoy, such as pizza parties, special lunches for anniversaries and end-of-the-year parties. They also have a beach party and picnic that all are invited to. We have so many little perks that even my family enjoys the fact that I work here."

Tri-City Electrical Contractors Inc.: "Professional and compassionate leadership, good benefits for

the industry, stable financially. More like a family than a large organization. Extra cash was given to every employee after hurricanes devastated Florida. Bonuses are paid to employees when company goals are met. Giving to community charities is high on the priority list. The company provides scholarships for employees' children and grandchildren. The apprenticeship program lets guys earn a living while their schooling is paid for. The company was established with the employee in mind as far as safety, advancement and family, and has continued along this policy. That is what has kept my loyalty here."

Fairwinds Credit Union: "Fairwinds Credit Union does an outstanding job with recognizing and compensating employees for their performance. Plus we get a 1 percent discount on loans! I think Fairwinds is very encouraging of career development and exceeds expectations in training. I have never felt that I have to choose between family and work. It's fun to come to work every day."

Dynetech Corp.: "The executive team goes to great lengths to ensure that all associates know the direction of the company in the coming year, and all are empowered to be part of the success. They have activities to keep families involved and offer flexibility when they can with respect to unique family situations. The attitude of our leader filters down among the whole company. Here is a guy who is not afraid of telling people how important they are and how necessary they are to the bottom line. And we have free Starbucks coffee in our break rooms."

PBS&J: "The senior leaders make it easy to want to stay here and grow and grow and grow. charitable nature and 'family matters' beliefs are a refreshing change. From the first day I walked in the door, I have been made to feel like I was critically important, valued and cared for. My pay and benefits reflect that. This company emphasizes an employee-based family culture unlike any other that I have experienced."

Compiled by Contributing Writer Troy Hillier.