

Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards and Best Practices Honors

2006



Psychologically Healthy
Workplace Awards

2006

FOREWORD



In today's challenging business environment, organizations are looking for the competitive advantage that will give them an edge in the marketplace and help them exceed their customers' expectations. Many employers now recognize that the key to success lies in their own workforce and understand that employee health and well-being and organizational performance are inextricably linked.

To showcase exemplary organizations, I am pleased to present the American Psychological Association's 2006 National Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award (PHWA) winners and Best Practices honorees.

The six National PHWA winners described in this publication have implemented a comprehensive array of programs and policies in an active effort to create a psychologically healthy workplace. These organizations represent the very best from among the award winners recognized by our affiliated state, provincial and territorial psychological associations.

The ten Best Practices honorees, also described in these pages, demonstrate a variety of ways that employers can creatively meet the unique needs of their organization and workforce.

We congratulate our winners and hope that they inspire other organizations to create a work environment where both employees and the organization thrive.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russ Newman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Russ Newman, Ph.D., J.D.
Executive Director for Professional Practice
American Psychological Association



Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award Program

The Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award program is designed to recognize organizations that make a commitment to programs and policies that foster employee health and well-being while enhancing organizational performance. The award program has both state- and national-level components.



The State-Level Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award

Since 1999, Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards have been presented to organizations by state, provincial and territorial psychological associations with support from the American Psychological Association. Participation in the state-level award program has grown to 43 associations across the U.S. and Canada that, collectively, have recognized more than 250 organizations at the state level.



APA's National Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award

Nominees for a National Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award are selected from the pool of previous state-level winners. Candidates are evaluated on their workplace programs and policies in the following areas:

- Employee Involvement
- Health and Safety
- Employee Growth and Development
- Work-Life Balance
- Employee Recognition

Additional factors that are considered include employee attitudes and opinions, the role of communication in the organization, and the benefits realized in terms of both employee health and well-being and organizational performance. Following a competitive evaluation and judging process, the top candidates are selected for national recognition by the American Psychological Association.



APA's Best Practices Honors

The Best Practices Honors is a national recognition that focuses on a single program or policy that stands out for facilitating a psychologically healthy workplace. Special attention is given to workplace practices that are designed and implemented in a way that creatively meets the specific needs of the organization and its employees. As with the National Award, nominees come from the pool of previous state-level winners and are selected through a competitive evaluation and judging process.

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ARUP Laboratories

A Culture of Respect

Utah – **ARUP Laboratories** prides itself on having established and sustained a work environment that supports family, health and education and promotes integrity, open communication, mutual respect, compassion, creativity and innovation. The result is a balanced workplace that not only promotes the health and well-being of employees and their families, but also enhances the quality of services ARUP provides its customers. According to ARUP's Chief Executive Officer, Carl R. Kjeldsberg, M.D., "ARUP recognizes that if our employees are to exhibit a caring attitude and strong commitment to patients and physicians, ARUP needs to set an example by showing a caring and respectful attitude to our employees."

Employee Involvement

ARUP engages its employees in a variety of ways, from surveys, suggestion boxes and an official open-door policy to town hall meetings and "brown bag" lunches where executives answer employees' questions. Since even the best workplace has opportunities for improvement, ARUP's Continuous Quality Improvement Program encourages employees to contribute to teams charged with addressing quality issues affecting both internal and external customers. Involving employees from all levels eliminates boundaries often imposed by organizational structure and fosters a vibrant exchange of ideas.

Health and Safety

ARUP's free on-site health clinic is just one example of the company's emphasis on employee health and well-being. Open six days a week, the clinic provides employees and their families with healthcare services that range from preventive to urgent care. Approximately 300 patients are seen each month at the clinic, where employees can typically get an appointment the same day they call. This saves employees both time and money and encourages them to seek treatment earlier, rather than waiting for the problem to become more serious. ARUP also provides a free 24-hour wellness center that offers the benefits of a full-service fitness center, including convenient "mini exercise classes" during breaks as well as formal courses on topics such as strength training, Tai Chi, yoga, cancer prevention, weight management, smoking cessation and healthy eating habits. ARUP offers low-cost medical, dental, vision and prescription drug insurance to employees who work more than 20 hours per week and life, disability and accidental death and dismemberment insurance at no cost to all employees. Benefits are also available to employees' family members and domestic partners.

Involving
employees
from all levels
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Employee Growth and Development

To help employees broaden their professional knowledge, ARUP's Institute for Learning (IFL) partners with the University of Utah's Department of Pathology to offer a broad range of continuing education opportunities including lectures, conferences, professional publications, on-site training, and academic fellowships. Regardless of their role within ARUP, employees can count on the IFL's career counseling resources to help them customize their individual career paths and design a sound strategy for developing competencies and moving up in the organization. ARUP also reimburses employees for 75 percent of tuition in any degree-granting program and 100 percent for degrees vital to ARUP's business operations. After an employee has been with ARUP for two years, the employee's spouse and dependents are eligible for 50-percent tuition reimbursement. Additional opportunities for personal development include life skills training in such areas as parenting, financial planning and debt management, and special interest clubs for various sports and recreation activities.

Work-Life Balance

ARUP offers a variety of flexible job schedules along with a number of innovative benefits, including free lab testing for employees' families and pets, supplemental newborn screening, a lactation room for nursing mothers, pet insurance, and personalized financial counseling. Employees may use Personal Time Off (PTO) for any reason and ARUP maintains a "catastrophic PTO pool" to which employees may donate extra time for co-workers in need.

Employee Recognition

ARUP offers a generous pension and profit-sharing plan as well as quarterly cash bonuses where excess profits are split 50/50 with employees. Employees who refer new technologies to ARUP receive cash bonuses, and any employee who generates a way to save money receives 10 percent of the savings for one year. ARUP regularly presents awards for both individual and team performance and service recognition and reinforces the company's emphasis on health and well-being with its monthly "Dr. Kjeldsberg Award," given to an employee who has made a significant healthy lifestyle change.

The Bottom Line

For ARUP, treating its employees well has paid off. High morale, improved health and well-being and employee satisfaction have translated to low absenteeism and increased productivity. Additionally, ARUP's employee turnover rate currently sits at a low 14 percent, which falls in the bottom quartile for the lab industry. In a recent survey, a majority of employees cited ARUP's benefits package as a strong influence on their decision to join and remain with the company.

As an employer of choice, with more than 14,000 job applications received last year, ARUP is able to selectively hire the very best employees. ARUP's outstanding efforts to foster employee health and well-being and enhance organizational performance have not gone unnoticed. ARUP was recognized in a recent G-2 Newsletter survey as having the best customer relations out of all the national reference laboratories, has been named as one of Utah's Top Ten Employers for five consecutive years and has appeared on Fortune's list of the 100 Best Companies to work for. When it comes to respect, there seems to be no question that ARUP is reaping what it has sowed.

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2006 Best Practices Honoree

NRG Systems

Going For the Green

Health and Safety

Vermont – Can going to work be good for your health? **NRG Systems** thinks so. The manufacturer of wind energy measurement equipment recently moved into a new 46,000-square-foot manufacturing facility that features many elements of “green design” — an approach that has been found to increase worker health and productivity while reducing the use of natural resources.

Powered primarily by solar panels and other energy-saving systems, the building makes extensive use of natural light through its ample skylights and windows. In addition to having outside views from all work areas, low interior walls and open spaces encourage interaction among employees. The facility is also designed to promote positive employee health behaviors and includes both indoor fitness equipment and outdoor recreation areas.

Although NRG’s new manufacturing facility is only two years old, the company is confident that the new building has already made a difference in its employees’ health. Building materials such as paint, stain and flooring were carefully chosen to protect indoor air quality, and employees report that they now experience fewer allergies and colds — a claim supported by a reduction in unplanned absences as a result of illness.

NRG also enjoys excellent customer satisfaction ratings, high levels of employee commitment and motivation and a retention rate of close to 97 percent last year. With more space to grow, the new facility allowed NRG to hire more employees and realize a 25 percent sales increase last year, while maintaining short lead times from customer order to fulfillment. NRG’s vision for a “green” workplace has yielded healthier employees, lower costs and greater use of renewable energy.

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Pacific Shipyards International – NISMO Division

The Eyes Have It

With the program now more than five years old, NISMO employees have accumulated more than 750,000 work hours without a lost-time accident.

Health and Safety

Hawaii – Hazardous materials, heavy equipment and cramped working conditions are a way of life for the employees of **Pacific Shipyards International's NAVSEA Inactive Ships On-Site Maintenance Office (NISMO) Division**. The implementation of a safety program nicknamed "An Extra Pair of Eyes" has helped employees at the marine industrial maintenance contractor face these challenges and achieve a perfect safety record.

The safety program utilizes statistical information, detailed task analysis and basic behavioral science concepts to develop safety protocols and run simulations before employees attempt a task. New staff members are paired with more experienced workers, and thorough training and mentoring facilitate the learning of, and adherence to, safety protocols.

Because safety is NISMO's primary concern, work teams always include an extra person whose sole responsibility is to monitor safety — the extra pair of eyes. This supervision is provided as an assistive device to protect NISMO employees rather than as a means of monitoring performance and ensuring production. The presence of a co-worker looking out for a colleague's well-being adds a level of emotional safety as well, reinforcing the value NISMO places on its employees.

With the program now more than five years old, NISMO employees have accumulated more than 750,000 work hours without a lost-time accident. Absenteeism has also decreased, while profits have soared. This visionary program is keeping the organization and its employees focused on the benefits of workplace safety.

Versant

Bringing Together Bright Minds

Wisconsin – As a marketing communications firm, **Versant** specializes in helping clients build positive relationships with their customers. When it comes to its own employees, this pioneer in “Employer Branding” leads by example. By applying marketing principles to the employment experience, Versant demonstrates its commitment to enhancing employee growth and well-being and fostering a culture that encourages every associate to reach his or her potential.

Employee Involvement

Recognizing that employee engagement and empowerment are crucial to business growth, Versant has designed a culture where all individuals have the opportunity to make important decisions, actively contribute to the organization's success and assume responsibility for results. Open, two-way communication between Versant's central management and associates, participative decision making, self-managed work teams and continuous improvement efforts contribute to a team-oriented atmosphere where creativity flows freely.

Health and Safety

Versant understands the link between stress and employee health and makes physical and emotional wellness a priority. Its health and safety initiatives include educational classes, structured walking activities, an Employee Assistance Program, access to an organizational psychologist, company-sponsored immunizations, ergonomic assessments and a comprehensive health insurance plan that includes mental health benefits.

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Employee Growth and Development

Versant approaches continuous learning as a strategy for both developing employees and improving client solutions. Opportunities for training and development include coaching and mentoring, roundtable discussions, funded membership in trade organizations, on- and off-site education and book discussions. All of Versant's associates are viewed as knowledge leaders and are expected to educate each other and share their learning experiences through written summaries, presentations or group discussions. This culture of shared learning is designed to foster organic growth, where employees can find the best career path within Versant through a variety of opportunities to explore their own goals and aspirations.

Work-Life Balance

Versant believes that its employees should live well-balanced lives and be at their best both at work and at home. Therefore, the organization strives to create a supportive, family-friendly environment that recognizes the "whole person" and helps employees balance multiple demands. Versant's programs and policies designed to promote work-life balance include flexible work schedules, telecommuting, paid time off and one-on-one coaching.

Employee Recognition

In Versant's culture of recognition, seldom do individual or team accomplishments go without acknowledgment. From the little things, such as verbal praise, written thank-you notes and rotation of prime parking spaces among all employees to more formal recognition efforts such as gifts, meals prepared and served by senior partners and monetary rewards, Versant's leaders frequently take the opportunity to express their support and gratitude. Additionally, individual and group achievements are highlighted at regular meetings, personal and professional milestones are celebrated with cards, gifts and parties and a company-wide program enables employees to recognize each other for a job well done.

The Bottom Line

Comprehensive efforts to continuously improve itself as an employer have branded Versant as an employer of choice and an organization that can attract and retain the best and the brightest — no small feat in the fast-paced marketing industry. A recent employee survey shows high levels of job satisfaction, alignment with organizational goals and trust in the company's leadership as well as low overall employee turnover risk. Additionally, employees feel valued, believe that their teams are effective, and are confident that they can make contributions to the organization.

Employees aren't the only ones taking note of Versant's positive work environment. Clients comment that they feel confident doing business with the firm because the staff is consistent and associates are committed, productive and focused. Additionally, Versant's employment practices have been recognized by *The Milwaukee Business Journal* and *Milwaukee Magazine/MRA (The Management Association)*. Along with employee and client satisfaction, Versant has realized larger, company-wide benefits. Since 2001, productivity has increased 36 percent and fees billed per full-time worker are up by 31 percent.



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Trihydro

Investment in Training Earns Rapid Returns

Employee Growth and Development

Wyoming – When employees at **Trihydro** spoke, leaders at this multidisciplinary engineering and consulting firm listened. Surveys conducted as part of the firm's 2004 strategic planning process indicated that employees wanted more formal training and professional development opportunities. Trihydro responded with a company-wide Operational and Service Excellence (OSE) program to enhance professional development, foster employee involvement and promote employee health and safety.

The training component of Trihydro's OSE Program focuses on helping employees build both technical and leadership skills. Along with a variety of in-house training courses available to all employees, the company conducts an extensive orientation for new hires and provides each with a mentor to help the new employee transition into the organization. Through its OSE program, Trihydro also helps offset the cost of participation in conferences and seminars and makes tuition reimbursement available to employees who are pursuing advanced degrees.

The health and safety education component of Trihydro's OSE program includes a dedicated Web site with informational resources and mandatory weekly quizzes on such topics as stress management, cold prevention, on-site hazards and workplace safety. Quiz results are used to assess further training needs and program effectiveness. To continue to build upon the success of its OSE program, Trihydro regularly seeks employee feedback, conducts periodic surveys and provides a mechanism for employees to submit opinions and concerns anonymously .

Trihydro's OSE Program has shown impressive results. In 2005, Trihydro reported the highest gross revenues in company history and was able to increase staff size by 11 percent, citing the OSE program as a valuable recruiting tool in a highly competitive market for engineering talent. The company's exceptional health and safety record also stands as a testament to Trihydro's commitment to its employees, with OSHA statistics and EMR ratings that fall far below industry averages.

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Highsmith

Developing a Healthy Culture

Highsmith reaps the benefits of low employee turnover and an average employee tenure of 14 years.

Employee Growth and Development

Wisconsin – Most companies offer opportunities for employees to develop their job skills. At **Highsmith**, a distributor of library and school products, employee development efforts go a step further to include a strong emphasis on health and well-being.

Highsmith's comprehensive employee development program begins during orientation. New employees attend a training that focuses on mental health, stress management and coping with relationship and drug and alcohol issues. New hires also meet with a learning and development manager to discuss personal well-being and learn about resources available through the company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Highsmith offers additional onsite trainings related to physical and mental health and provides other resources through the company's intranet.

Highsmith also recognizes that mental health is an important part of its employees' overall health and strives to eliminate the stigma often associated with mental health issues. An annual on-site health screening for employees and spouses includes a one-on-one meeting with an EAP counselor to discuss their emotional well-being. To help employees manage the multiple demands they face outside of work, Highsmith also offers a variety of work-life benefits, including flexible work schedules and access to financial, legal, elder care and dependent care services.

Highsmith's investment in employee health and well-being has enabled the company to maintain rich healthcare benefits without shifting costs to employees. While healthcare costs in the U.S. skyrocketed, Highsmith maintained a low 5.4 percent increase in health insurance costs from 2002 to 2005. Additionally, the company reaps the benefits of low employee turnover and an average employee tenure of 14 years. By providing resources and support to help employees lead healthy, balanced and productive lives, Highsmith has created a positive work environment that benefits employees and the organization.

The Comporium Group

Multiple Channels of Communication

South Carolina – **The Comporium Group's** telecommunications services have enhanced the quality of life for its residential and commercial customers, and its support of a variety of civic and non-profit organizations has contributed to the communities in which it is located. Along with its investment in the community, this family-owned group of companies places great emphasis on the health and well-being of its employees.

Employee Involvement

The two-way flow of communication at Comporium has yielded a true team-oriented culture that affords every employee the opportunity to contribute to the organization. From the ability to email suggestions, concerns and feedback directly to Comporium's president via the company's intranet homepage, to the "Pipeline," a joint employee-management committee that evaluates ideas for new products and services, every comment and suggestion receives thorough consideration and a personalized follow-up. Employees are also invited to participate in community relations activities and to serve on one of Comporium's many committees that address operational issues, customer satisfaction and workplace safety.

Health and Safety

Employee health and safety are a priority for Comporium, with safety programs and training that exceed OSHA requirements and include thorough assessment, training, investigation and prevention efforts. Comporium offers employees a wide variety of health and wellness programs, including health fairs, team sports, weight management groups, flu shots and "lunch-and-learn" sessions on a variety of health topics. In 2005, the company added "Wellness Works" to its existing health and wellness programs. This intensive program includes individual meetings with a nurse for a health and fitness evaluation and informational resources related to healthy lifestyle and behavior choices and disease prevention. Health insurance benefits include low deductible and co-pay amounts and coverage for mental health and substance-abuse treatment.

Employee Growth and Development

At Comporium, training and development begins with a comprehensive orientation and continues with opportunities for growth throughout the employee's career. A Personal Growth Plan ensures that employees fully utilize their skills and helps identify opportunities for further

growth. Comporium's Human Resources Review System Committee meets regularly to address issues including leadership succession planning, and identification and development of high-potential employees. Additionally, Comporium maintains an HR resource library available to employees interested in additional training, conducts quarterly supervisor trainings and provides tuition assistance to employees.

Work-Life Balance

The supportive atmosphere of Comporium extends beyond employees to their families as well. Family members are welcomed at holiday parties and company picnics and have access to Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services, including emotional, legal and financial counseling, parenting and elder care resources and college assistance. Paid Time Off at Comporium can be used in 15-minute increments for employees to attend to family needs such as medical appointments and school conferences, and upon approval, the company provides flexible scheduling and leave benefits beyond FMLA requirements.

Employee Recognition

A multifaceted internal communications program helps Comporium's management stay connected with its employees and recognize individual and group accomplishments. The weekly publication *Links* regularly honors employees for providing outstanding service to customers, co-workers, and the community. *The Connector*, Comporium's bimonthly publication, features "Focus on the Fabulous," a forum where employees can recognize their co-workers for extraordinary work. Another feature, "Thanks for Our Service," relays positive comments received from customers. Personal and professional news and milestones are also included in the publication. Service awards are also presented at an annual holiday party with employee highlights incorporated into a video that has become the centerpiece of the event.

The Bottom Line

Comporium's emphasis on promoting employee health and well-being has created an environment that feels more like a family unit than a workplace. Employees report high levels of satisfaction with HR services, benefits and workplace safety. Additionally, as a result of Comporium's wellness initiatives, health insurance premiums have increased only 14 percent over the past three years, compared to a 36-percent increase in medical costs during the same period. Comporium's safety efforts have helped the company achieve an OSHA Recordable Incidence Rate that falls below industry average for South Carolina. The company's stellar safety record translates to lower insurance premiums. Comporium has received safety awards from the South Carolina Occupational Safety Council and the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce.

Comporium and its employees have benefited in other ways as well. The average Comporium employee has been with the company for 10 years, and voluntary employee turnover is a low 2.3 percent. Despite large fluctuations in both the telecommunications industry and the regional economy in recent years, Comporium has never had a layoff. These factors have helped Comporium preserve the continuity of both its services and its culture, sending a welcome message of trust and commitment to its employees, customers and community.

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Secunda Marine Services

All Aboard

Health and Safety

Nova Scotia – The nature of work at **Secunda Marine Services** requires employees to report for extended tours of duty that can last as long as eight weeks. The company, which owns, operates and manages offshore supply vessels, recognizes that under such extreme conditions, it has an obligation to create a work environment that promotes employee health and well-being.

To address the unique demands placed on workers, Secunda initiated a comprehensive health and wellness program that focuses on nutrition, exercise and weight loss, smoking cessation and chronic disease prevention. During the first stage of the program's launch, Secunda employees had the opportunity to complete a voluntary health risk assessment. Participants received personal health profiles that helped them identify individual areas of concern as well as strategies for reducing their health risks.

To encourage exercise and weight loss, Secunda provides access to exercise equipment and distributes pedometers to help employees measure their daily walking activity. Information about health and wellness is shared through the company's quarterly newsletter, paycheck inserts, staff meetings and designated "Health and Wellness Corners" at various work locations.

Secunda's genuine interest in fostering health and well-being has helped instill a sense of personal commitment among employees. Additionally, employee morale is up, retention tops 97 percent, and the company reports no recent increases in premiums for health, dental and disability insurance.

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Stone Construction Equipment

Executing a Winning Game Plan

Employee morale and productivity have increased, and absenteeism, accident days off and average costs per hour are on the decline.

Employee Involvement

New York – The participatory culture inspired by a practice of conducting daily “huddles” has employees of **Stone Construction Equipment** feeling like champions.

Taking a cue from the sports world, each department and manufacturing cell conducts “huddles” — interactive meetings designed to involve all employees in running the business. The huddles, held at the beginning and end of each shift and throughout the day as needed, allow each supervisor to function as a coach, working with the team to set goals, develop work plans, monitor and analyze progress, make course corrections and recognize successes.

The enhanced teamwork and open communication generated by huddles foster a participative culture that maximizes the company’s efficiency and flexibility and creates positive relationships and trust between management and the workforce. The process also provides valuable cross-training experiences that help employees develop and apply new skills that can advance their careers.

The scoreboard shows that Stone Construction Equipment is gaining ground. Employee morale and productivity have increased, and absenteeism, accident days off and average costs per hour are on the decline. And when the team wins, employees win. In the past two years, performance-based bonuses have increased 57 percent and employee stock ownership plan distributions have risen 25 percent.

A review of 73 published studies of worksite health promotion programs shows an average savings of \$3.50 for every dollar spent, in terms of reduced absenteeism and healthcare costs.

Aldana, S.G., 2003

Great River Health Systems

A Prescription for Success

Iowa – Since 1999, **Great River Health Systems** (GRHS) has worked to become the healthcare employer of choice in its region and has launched many workplace initiatives to this end. Through exceptional benefits, opportunities for growth and a safe, healthy work environment, GRHS provides employees with the resources necessary to meet the needs of patients and other customers, and to effectively manage their personal and professional lives. GRHS's corporate culture is built upon an employee-developed customer service philosophy called EXCEL. Employees demonstrate the EXCEL values by "being Enthusiastically friendly, X-ceeding expectations, showing Care and compassion, displaying Energetic teamwork, and through Leadership and professionalism."

Employee Involvement

More than just a motto, EXCEL is the foundation upon which all employee policies, programs and activities are built. In addition to an EXCEL Task Force, comprising department representatives, that regularly meets with GRHS leaders to discuss employee concerns, present suggestions and plan activities, employees have many opportunities to participate in workplace and community outreach programs. Some examples include: GRHS's preceptor program, which trains employees to help new staff members transition into the organization; Junior Achievement, a program that allows employees to serve as classroom volunteers on paid company time; Trading Spaces, a cross-training program designed to improve services and workplace relationships; and a program where employees paint houses for low-income community residents.

Health and Safety

Along with its strong commitment to patient care and customer service, GRHS is equally dedicated to helping its employees maintain good health. The GRHS Wellness Center provides a multitude of programs and resources, including free access to fitness and aquatics centers, ongoing exercise and nutrition counseling, an annual health risk appraisal and strong preventive health benefits that support self-care and the development of a healthy lifestyle. Even casual exercise is convenient at GRHS, with a lakeside walking path right on campus. Additional

Along with its strong commitment to patient care and customer service, GRHS is equally dedicated to helping its employees maintain good health.

health and safety initiatives include ergonomic assessments, confidential medication regimen reviews for employees and their families and efforts to encourage non-punitive reporting of safety issues.

Employee Growth and Development

Education and training are an integral part of life at GRHS, with an extensive catalog of offerings that includes continuing professional education for clinical staff, leadership and customer service training, adult literacy courses and healthcare career seminars. Department budgets include funding for staff to attend conferences and offsite trainings and GRHS maintains ongoing educational loan, scholarship and tuition assistance programs for employees and their families.

Work-Life Balance

GRHS recognizes that employees have responsibilities outside of work and provides a variety of resources to help them manage these multiple demands. From adoption assistance, sick child care in the pediatrics department and a lactation room for nursing mothers to discounted homeowner's and auto insurance, interest-free loans to help with the purchase of a personal computer and onsite shipping and laundry services, GRHS helps employees better manage the demands of their lives. A flexible Paid Time Off (PTO) policy allows employees to accrue PTO without limitations and use the hours, cash them in or donate them to a co-worker in need.

Employee Recognition

GRHS's employee-centered culture fosters a positive work environment where both individual and group successes are acknowledged and celebrated. Recognition efforts range from formal programs such as the EXCEL Employee of the Year to "You Make the Difference" cards, which employees can use to spontaneously congratulate and thank their co-workers. Another coveted honor is the "Service Hero of the Month." This award for performing an exceptional act comes with accolades including a sandwich special named for the employee in the GRHS cafeteria. Additional recognition efforts include an open house for leaders to learn new ways to recognize staff, increase motivation and encourage teamwork, a gain-sharing program that rewards employees who help the organization attain financial and patient satisfaction goals, and *Stories from Our Heart and Soul*, a collection of stories that exemplify the daily contributions, commitments, and sacrifices of GRHS staff.

The Bottom Line

Perhaps the most telling evidence of its commitment to employees comes from the people GRHS serves. In recent years, GRHS has seen dramatic increases in patient satisfaction with the quality of care and services they received; and in 2002, Press Ganey Associates presented GRHS with an award for improvements in patient satisfaction.

The workplace programs and policies implemented by GRHS have truly made it an employer of choice, with a turnover rate of just 12.8 percent in 2004, compared to an average of 18 percent for hospitals in Iowa and 17 percent nationally. Additionally, productivity is up, health insurance claims are down and accidents at GRHS fall below industry average in terms of frequency and severity. For employees of GRHS, a psychologically healthy work environment may be the best medicine of all.



GRHS's employee-centered culture fosters a positive work environment where both individual and group successes are acknowledged and celebrated.

Downtown Honda – Spokane

Steering the Team in the Right Direction

Employee Involvement

Washington – Employees at some organizations may dread the thought of attending another meeting, but at **Downtown Honda**, it is a welcome part of the job. For more than five years, the automobile dealership has used professionally facilitated meetings to boost morale and improve the quality of its operations.

This group process takes multiple forms and may include various employee groups, including managers and cross-functional teams. The meetings, which have spanned issues from organizing family-oriented events to finding a viable way to create a new locker room for service technicians, encourage active employee participation, respect for differing perspectives and decision-making by consensus. Additionally, Downtown Honda's group process provides many opportunities to recognize individual and group performance and celebrate company successes.

A culture of participation wasn't always the norm at Downtown Honda. For decades, the dealership operated with little employee input, resulting in customer service problems, facilities in disrepair, and low employee morale. After acquiring Downtown Honda, the new owners worked with a consultant to create a more interactive culture built around group participation.

As a result of its group process and other efforts to engage employees, Downtown Honda now enjoys high employee morale and low rates of absenteeism and turnover. The dealership benefits in other ways as well. In addition to excellent customer service ratings and a reputation for being a great place to work, Downtown Honda's gross revenue has more than doubled over the past four years without a corresponding staffing increase. The dealership has also received American Honda Motor Company's most prestigious recognition, the President's Award, for three consecutive years, marking Downtown Honda as the only dealer in the northwest to accomplish this feat.

Each year, workplace stress costs U.S. industry \$300 billion or \$7,500 per worker, in terms of absenteeism, turnover, diminished productivity, and direct medical, legal and insurance fees.

American Institute of Stress



2006 Best Practices Honoree

Carl M. Freeman Associates

Cooking Up Something Good

Two-thirds of both men and women say work has a significant impact on their stress level, and one in four has called in sick or taken a “mental health day” as a result of work stress.

American Psychological Association, 2004

Employee Involvement

Maryland – A company-wide lunch has been a tradition at **Carl M. Freeman Associates** for almost 30 years. Four times a week, this real estate developer’s employees and their guests sit down together for a nutritious meal that helps promote teamwork and cross-departmental communication.

Started in the days before the Internet and voicemail, “Lunch Together” was designed as a way for employees throughout the company to build relationships, share information and improve communication. Over the years, “Lunch Together” has evolved into a forum for employee involvement through open exchanges that shape corporate values and provide opportunities for peer mentoring and relationship building.

“Lunch Together” has become so popular that Freeman worked with its corporate chef to incorporate a state-of-the art kitchen into its new offices. Additionally, the lunch room was specifically designed to accommodate a single large table, where all of the company’s more than 40 employees can sit and enjoy a professionally prepared, nutritious meal together during an otherwise hectic workday.

Freeman employees report that the company’s lunch program creates a family environment where employees at all levels feel comfortable sharing ideas, exchanging information and building camaraderie. In turn, the company benefits from enhanced teamwork, information flow and productivity as well as positive relationships in the workplace.

Green Chimneys School

It Takes a Village

New York – Unlike other facilities that provide services to emotionally disturbed children, Green Chimneys operates an open campus and invites the community to interact with the children and staff. **Green Chimneys School**, part of a larger residential and day treatment campus, is a year-round K-12 special education program that serves residents as well as day students. The program has stayed close to its family-run roots by encouraging its 250 employees to consider themselves more than just paid workers.

Employee Involvement

At Green Chimneys School, management regularly solicits employee suggestions regarding decisions that affect their jobs and is open to staff input about new ideas and methods. In fact, many of Green Chimneys' current programs were developed through staff grassroots efforts. Throughout the year, employees are involved in numerous work groups and task forces, including the school council and safety and social committees. Staff members also frequently volunteer to assist with weekend events, community outreach programs and fundraisers.

Health and Safety

In addition to standard health and safety training and educational seminars, Green Chimneys helps employees manage stress and maintain a healthy lifestyle by offering benefits that capitalize on its rural setting. Staff members are allotted time during the day to exercise, and free bottled water provides an extra incentive to use the campus walking trail. Many employees also visit the working farm, located on the campus, and take advantage of the therapeutic benefits of interacting with the animals before returning to work refreshed and revitalized. As part of a flexible benefits package, Green Chimneys also allows employees to contribute unused sick time to a "sick bank" that is available to co-workers with serious illnesses who have exhausted their sick time accrual.

Management regularly solicits employee suggestions regarding decisions that affect their jobs, and is open to staff input about new ideas and methods.

Employee Growth and Development

Green Chimneys School offers a variety of training opportunities designed to enhance employees' personal and professional development and provides support to employees who wish to attend off-site workshops and conferences. Employees are eligible for tuition assistance and receive a salary increase upon completion of their degree. Additionally, Green Chimneys participates in the Federal Student Loan Forgiveness Program and many employees are eligible for loan forgiveness after five years of service. Green Chimneys has also developed a relationship with Mercy College to extend significant tuition discounts to employees and offer some courses right on campus.

Work-Life Balance

Green Chimneys offers onsite daycare, before- and after-school programs and a summer camp at which employees receive discounted rates for their children and can make payments in installments on a pre-tax basis using the agency's dependent care spending account. Employees' children are also eligible for partial or complete scholarships based on need. True to its family-centered philosophy, Green Chimneys also provides support to employees during times of need. For example, the school sponsored a raffle to raise money for an employee who lost her house in a fire and makes temporary housing available to new staff just moving to the area.

Employee Recognition

Green Chimneys' rich tradition of hosting events and celebrations affords numerous opportunities to recognize employee achievements. One example is the annual Thanksgiving program, during which the school's children express their thanks to the staff. Afterward, members of the Board of Directors serve the staff, children, and guests. Employees also receive shirts for service recognition, restaurant gift certificates for going above the call of duty and cash recognition for service excellence. As part of its wildlife program, Green Chimneys rehabilitates injured birds of prey. As a unique way of acknowledging a staff member or resident's significant life event, the agency holds a special ceremony during which a rehabilitated bird is returned to the wild.

The Bottom Line

The sense of community fostered by Green Chimneys is evident in its highly committed employees, who truly believe they can make a difference in a child's life. Staff turnover has decreased by 50 percent over the past six years, employee grievances are rare and half of the school's new hires in 2004 came from employee referrals. By providing a work environment that brings out the best in its employees, Green Chimneys School demonstrates that working together, everybody wins.

Green Chimneys' rich tradition of hosting events and celebrations affords numerous opportunities to recognize employee achievements.

Abacus Planning Group

Time Is on Their Side

Work-Life Balance

South Carolina – When it comes to their financial goals, clients of **Abacus Planning Group**, count on the financial services firm to provide peace of mind. This small company knows that giving clients the service they expect begins with taking care of employees.

Abacus has a sabbatical policy that underscores the firm's commitment to a balanced work-life culture and provides one avenue to help employees flourish both personally and professionally. Abacus employees are required to take a paid one-month sabbatical every five years. The purpose of the sabbatical is to enable employees to pursue outside interests, rejuvenate and reflect upon their life and career.

Although Abacus hopes employees will return to work with a renewed sense of commitment to the firm, the company recognizes some employees will decide they are ready to chart new paths. One employee discovered that her true passion was to counsel women in crisis. She credits the sabbatical with helping her make the commitment to return to graduate school and pursue this lifelong dream.

Because the sabbatical policy requires close coordination and cross-training, Abacus employees have forged strong ties to support one another during extended absences. This, in turn, has allowed many of them to learn new skills and apply previously overlooked talents, resulting in opportunities for growth and a more fulfilling work experience.

Abacus has reaped substantial gains from investing in its employees. In addition to employee commitment and satisfaction, Abacus enjoys high morale and low turnover and has been able to improve efficiency by streamlining workflow processes. The company has found that promoting work-life balance through its sabbatical policy pays dividends that grow with time.

Almost four out of five employees (79%) believe their employers should encourage employees to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Towers Perrin, 2004



Coleman Professional Services

Drawing on Employee Expertise

Companies with higher revenue growth are better at motivating employees and provide more opportunities for growth and development. Employee engagement levels in these high-performing organizations are more than 20% higher than those of their counterparts.

Hewitt Associates, 2004

Employee Involvement

Ohio – **Coleman Professional Services** (CPS) believes that allowing staff to take an active role in planning and development is a mutually beneficial arrangement. When this behavioral healthcare organization decided to build a new facility for its senior day program, it looked to employees for guidance in creating an environment that would be functional, attractive and safe for both staff and clients.

In 1998, CPS acquired Portage Area Senior Services (PASS), a community-based program that serves older adults with multiple physical and mental health needs. Initially, PASS occupied a small, outdated building with inadequate work space and poor lighting. Staff safety was also compromised due to structural limitations that prevented the installation of assistive devices to help lift clients. Despite attempts to upgrade the facility, CPS continued to face low employee satisfaction and morale as well as high turnover at PASS. The organization realized that the program required a new building and knew that staff held the keys to success.

PASS employees worked hand-in-hand with architects as the design evolved from concept to construction. Regularly scheduled team meetings allowed for ongoing input throughout the construction stage. When employees suggested several additional improvements just one week before the scheduled move-in date, CPS was quick to make the changes, even though doing so delayed the opening.

The end result was a new 10,000-square-foot facility with ample space for client activity areas, staff workspace and outdoor courtyards. In addition to being comfortable and safe, the new building provides the flexibility to accommodate clients who require different levels of care. Since completion of the new facility, turnover at PASS has dropped by more than 30 percent, employee morale and satisfaction have improved and the number of clients served has grown by 60 percent. By drawing on employees to help create their new workplace, CPS found a blueprint for success.

IBM – T.J. Watson Research Center

Global Well-Being

New York – The future is in the hands of the employees of **IBM's T.J. Watson Research Center**, the headquarters for the largest industrial research organization in the world. Every day, they research and develop technologies that will transform businesses in a wide range of industries. At the same time, employees are also shaping their individual paths of personal and professional growth by taking advantage of programs and opportunities fostered by IBM's corporate commitment to the "whole employee."

Employee Involvement

By incorporating its values of client success, innovation, and trust in relationships into employee well-being programs, IBM creates a strong foundation for employee involvement. Add participative decision making, self-managed work teams and employee involvement on committees and task forces to the mix. The result: a work environment that encourages creativity and flexibility while simultaneously aligning employees with company goals and fostering a sense of personal accountability.

Health and Safety

Health and safety at IBM are everyone's responsibility. A network of representatives from every department oversees colleague safety. As additional safeguards, managers perform audits of their areas semiannually and the Well-Being Department performs annual audits of each area. IBM's T.J. Watson Research Center has been an OSHA Voluntary Protection Program Star Award Site since 1997. This cooperative relationship between management and OSHA reflects OSHA's official recognition of IBM's outstanding efforts with regard to occupational safety and health programs.

In addition to a comprehensive package of healthcare benefits, IBM maintains an extensive menu of employee wellness resources that includes online tools, classes on a variety of health-related topics, and access to a workout center and other sports and recreation facilities. Other opportunities available to IBM employees at the worksite include health screenings, wellness evaluations, immunizations and "lunch-and-learn" presentations. A special focus for IBM in 2005 was raising employees' awareness of workplace stress.

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Employee Growth and Development

The electronically connected world that IBM has helped create also enables employees to conveniently access a wealth of educational and training resources. IBM's Global Campus Web site features thousands of online training options on topics from nanoscience to business administration taught by experts at Harvard and MIT as well as by IBM colleagues from around the world. The training is available 24 hours a day to help IBM employees fit their professional development activities into their busy work schedules. IBM uses Individual Development Plans (IDPs) to shape the career paths of its employees. IDPs can be tailored to focus on developing a deep expertise or on gaining a broader set of skills and abilities. In addition to top-notch professional skills, IBM focuses on in-depth industry and technical training to keep employees up-to-date on emerging technologies and skills crucial to success in the evolving marketplace. Along with internal training opportunities, IBM provides assistance for employees to pursue relevant off-site education and, with approval, will reimburse 100 percent of each employee's tuition and other eligible fees for accredited education programs.

Work-Life Balance

To help employees effectively manage the competitive pressures of the technology industry, IBM looks for creative solutions that enable employees to achieve greater work-life balance. These tools include child care and elder care locators, issue-specific online resource rooms and consultants who are available by email or telephone to help employees with personal issues such as child care, financial planning and legal issues. IBM's flexible work arrangements include part-time work, job sharing, unpaid leave, compressed work week, individualized work schedules and work-at-home options.

Employee Recognition

In addition to its performance bonus, incentive award and stock option programs, IBM's recognition programs are another way that the organization's values shape the way it does business. "The Best of IBM" recognition program focuses on the times when passion and commitment merge to produce extraordinary results. Awards range from the Ovation! award, which allows managers to recognize personal dedication, exemplary service and selfless behavior on behalf of clients or co-workers, to awards for outstanding innovative and technical achievements that result in tangible additions to IBM in the form of patent royalties or applied technology.

The Bottom Line

By empowering employees and treating them with dignity and trust, IBM is able to attract and retain top-quality talent. IBM has received numerous honors for its workplace practices including designation as one of the 100 Best Companies to Work for in America, one of *Working Mother Magazine's* Best Places to Work, *Women in Technology's* Work/Life Balance Award, and *Business Ethics'* list of the "100 Best Corporate Citizens."

IBM's focus on employee health and well-being is also paying off in terms of cost savings. The company's U.S. health insurance premiums from 1999-2005 were on average 4.7 percent lower than the national average and 6 to 15 percent lower than industry norms. At the same time, IBM employees themselves paid 26 to 60 percent less than industry averages. IBM also reports that data from repeat assessments show a reduction in employee health risks and that savings from disease management efforts have grown to \$36 million in the past year.



To help employees effectively manage the competitive pressures of the technology industry, IBM looks for creative solutions that enable employees to achieve greater work-life balance.

2006 National Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award Winners



ARUP Laboratories



The Comporium Group



Great River Health Systems



Green Chimneys School



IBM – T. J. Watson Research Center



Versant

2006 Best Practices Honorees



Abacus Planning Group



Coleman Professional Services



Downtown Honda – Spokane



Carl M. Freeman Associates



Highsmith



NRG Systems



Pacific Shipyards International – NISMO Division



Secunda Marine Services



Stone Construction Equipment



Trihydro



About the American Psychological Association

The American Psychological Association (APA), in Washington, DC, is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 150,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 53 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare.

Cooperating Organizations

The National Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards and Best Practices Honors are presented by the American Psychological Association in cooperation with the following organizations:

American Association of University Professors

Health Enhancement Research Organization

Institute for Health and Productivity Management

International Society for Performance Improvement

Military Officers Association of America

National Association of Counties

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association of Government Communicators

National Business Group on Health

National Civic League

National Education Association

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

National School Boards Association





**Psychologically Healthy
Workplace Awards**



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