

HOUSTON'S TOP WORKPLACES

2012



HOUSTON★**CHRONICLE**

Sunday, November 11, 2012

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The list has been expanded

More than 72,500 Houston-area employees weighed in with opinions for this year's Top Workplaces section — rating their companies in such areas as opportunities for advancement, the value of their pay and benefits, and their bosses' communication and management skills.

Pennsylvania-based research firm WorkplaceDynamics invited 1,383 local companies to participate and surveyed 244 of them, then tallied the results to determine winners.

For the first time since its debut in 2010, the list has been expanded to the top 150 companies. Last year, it included the top 100 companies plus another 42 companies that met a na-

tional standard for top workplaces. In total, 44 employers earned spots on the list all three years, including five that met the national standard last year.

The local survey participants employ 154,398 people in the area; 125,503 of the employees received surveys, and 72,517 responded. The organizations on the list included public and private entities and nonprofit groups.

The Houston Top Workplaces rankings show:

▶▶ Top 35 Large (out of 51 participants with 500 or more employees in the region)

▶▶ Top 45 Midsize (out of 75 participants)
List continues on E8

TOP WORKPLACES *About the survey*

Survey factors

The statements on the employee survey were divided into the following factors. Percentages shown indicate how strongly each factor correlates with how employees in the Greater Houston area rate their workplaces. The closer to 100 percent, the more important the factor.

Connection	75%
Direction	73%
Execution	70%
My work	67%
My manager	60%
My pay and benefits	47%

Survey statements

The survey factors above were determined by employees' responses to a variety of survey statements, ranked on a seven-point scale, and an analysis of the way the responses correlated with each other. Again, the closer to 100, the more important the statement is to employees.

Factor: Connection

I feel genuinely appreciated at this company. **67%**

I am confident about my future at this company. **66%**

My job makes me feel like I am part of something meaningful. **63%**

Factor: Direction

I believe this company is going in

the right direction. **69%**

I have confidence in the leader of this company. **65%**

This company operates by strong values and ethics. **60%**

Factor: Execution

Senior managers understand what is really happening at this company. **61%**

At this company, we do things efficiently and well. **59%**

New ideas are encouraged at this company. **56%**

I feel well-informed about important decisions at this company. **55%**

Factor: My work

This job has met or exceeded the expectations I had when I started. **57%**

I get the formal training I want for my career. **50%**

There is not a lot of frustration at my workplace. **48%**

I have the flexibility I need to balance my work and personal life. **45%**

Factor: My manager

My manager cares about my concerns. **58%**

My manager helps me learn and grow. **54%**

My manager makes it easier to do my job well. **54%**

Factor: My pay and benefits

My pay is fair for the work I do. **44%**

My benefits package is good compared to others in this industry. **34%**

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Cruises, elder care and free visits to the gym: Companies offer an array of valued perks

By L.M. Sixel

Some companies host employee picnics. ARC Specialties takes its 65 employees and their families on annual trips, including cruises to Mexico, weekend getaways to San Antonio and deep-sea fishing expeditions in Port Aransas.

In June, employees and spouses spent a few days at a resort in Cozumel, with all expenses paid.

"I like the people who work here," said ARC Specialties' president, Dan Allford, who started his robotics company in his garage in 1983. "I enjoy watching them having a good time."

The annual trips — along with gifts of a Rolex watch after 10 years of service and catered lunches every Friday — are wildly popular. That means Allford can focus on the business of making robots for oil field equipment manufacturers rather than worrying about staff turnover.

"This is the best place I've ever worked," said Noe Trevino, a welder who started at ARC Specialties as a janitor's helper.

Through Allford's urging, Trevino started taking welding classes, paid for by the company, and hopes to get his associate degree next year.

ARC Specialties is one of the area's best places to work, according to the annual Top Workplaces survey conducted for the Chronicle by WorkplaceDynamics. It's one of many com-

Black Elk Energy engineers Ben Golson, top, and Charlie Dineen work out. Black Elk pays monthly dues for employees who go to the gym at least eight times a month.

James Nielsen / Houston Chronicle



Johnny Hanson / Houston Chronicle

Trey Hoover, left, shares a laugh with his co-workers during a weekly free lunch at ARC Specialties.

panies on the list that offer generous and sometimes unusual benefits.

Some perks are fun. Others go right to the employees' bottom line, making it easier to save for retirement or receive health care when companies are picking up 100 percent of the cost.

Many of the companies make it easier for employees to juggle their personal lives or improve their health through diet and exercise programs.

The Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa enjoys holiday time, and one of its cherished traditions is its annual Turkey Toss.

A few days before Thanksgiving, employees are summoned to an out-of-the-way service corridor that has been cleared so it sort of resembles a bowling alley. Each employee is announced with much fanfare and presented with a frozen turkey.

The waiters, cooks and housekeepers then fling their frozen poultry carcasses down the hallway, trying to hit a line of soda cans. Distances are marked with sticky notes and the informal contest — which has been going for two decades — has been launched.

"We have some real athletes," said Anne Nolen, training manager

for the Houstonian.

In a two-hour window, 450 to 500 frozen turkeys fly down the hallway, she said. It's more of a "turkey scoot," she said, because none of the frozen birds actually gets airborne.

At the end of the corridor — after the distance has been measured and recorded — employees bag their birds and take them home for Thanksgiving dinner.

Virtually all of the 275 employees at Texas First Bank participate in its 401(k) plan. It's not hard to figure out why.

The bank matches employees' contribution dollar-for-dollar up to 8 percent of their salaries, said Scott Owen, human resources director in La Marque. After six years, the employer's portion is 100 percent vested.

Texas First Bank launched the attractive match in part because it

Perks continues on E10

New CEO still follows philosophy that values ‘servant leadership’

By L.M. Sixel

When Anadarko Petroleum Corp. took the top spot as the best large company to work for in the Houston area during the past two years, many employees pointed to the leadership and management style of its then-CEO, James Hackett.

The challenging and empowering environment Hackett created during his eight years at the helm is still a core part of the company’s culture, according to Anadarko’s new CEO, Al Walker.

“My job is to perpetuate the strategy and culture we’ve developed up until now,” said Walker, who took over the top job in May. “I’m not here to be a change agent.”

And it seems to be working. For the third consecutive year, Anadarko was named to the top of the Chronicle’s Top Workplaces survey, as selected by WorkplaceDynamics.

One of the toughest jobs of a CEO stepping into the shoes of someone who’s known as a rock star — especially someone who is so closely tied to the success of a company — is keeping alive the magic. Think Southwest Airlines after the legendary Herb Kelleher. Or Microsoft after Bill Gates stepped down from day-to-day operations.

Their successor CEOs did it, and Walker, who worked alongside Hackett since joining the company in 2005 as its chief financial officer, figures he can, too.

Walker was careful to emphasize when he was promoted that he wasn’t changing the strategy or core values, which seemed to put employees at ease.

But it’s still no easy task, said Walker, who describes himself as a “more behind-the-scenes” type of leader.

“Getting to the top is easier than staying at the top,” Walker said. One of the biggest challenges is to keep getting better. That means encouraging employees to be innovative, encourage entrepreneurship and make it fun to come to work.



Dave Rossman

Anadarko CEO Al Walker says “servant leadership” focuses on the needs of others rather than the leader.

And carrying on the tradition of values such as “servant leadership,” which focuses on the needs of other people rather than the interests of the leader, as well as Hackett’s financial legacy.

“My challenge is to perpetuate that and, where I can, to make it better,” said Walker, who uses monthly birth-

day celebrations, periodic updates and casual conversations over lunch in the company cafeteria to make sure the culture stays employee-centered.

The philosophy of servant leadership encourages empowerment and support of colleagues, and it differentiates Anadarko from other energy

companies, said Rory Madden, planning and commercial manager for the Mozambique region.

It’s also different because it doesn’t create a hierarchical pecking order that divides the workforce into the in group and the out group.

“Every company has its rainmak-

Anadarko continues on E8



Brett Coomer / Houston Chronicle

A second Anadarko tower is going up in The Woodlands, just west of the company's headquarters at 1201 Lake Robbins.

Anadarko from page E6

ers, the golden people, the gods of their companies," Madden said. "We don't get that at Anadarko."

That, in turn, makes the 1,999 employees feel as if they're co-owners in the company and that everyone's contribution — from the reception desk to finance — is important, Madden said.

Senior geologist Lauren Peschier worked for other exploration and production companies before she got to Anadarko. She said she really appreciates the ability to change jobs every two to three years.

"You can get a wide range of experience," said Peschier, who is focused on East Texas but is looking ahead to Africa, Brazil and other far-flung places with oil and gas reserves.

Walker refers to the process of changing and expanding responsibili-

ties as "re-potting" employees.

"People can only grow as big as the pot they're in," Walker said. Making sure employees have a steady diet of new challenges and opportunities makes it less likely they'll change companies. It's great for the company, he added, and is a big contributor to the annual turnover rate of less than 5 percent.

Peschier also appreciates that the culture promotes family-friendly flexibility that allows her to attend "Donuts with Mom" and other school-related functions as well as work from home when one of her children gets sick.

"There is no penalty to say family is first," she said. "Anadarko really recognizes the happiness of the whole individual." ❤️

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List from page E3

pants with 150-499 employees in the region)

▶▶ Top 70 Small (out of 118 participants with 149 or fewer employees in the region)

Notes about the survey

WorkplaceDynamics required a response rate of at least 35 percent for employees based in the Houston metro area.

For employers with 85 or fewer employees, at least 30 responders were required.

For larger employers, surveys could be sent to employees in a random sample.

For employers with 2,500 or fewer employees, surveys were sent to at least 500 employees.

For employers with more than 2,500 but fewer than 5,000 employees, surveys were sent to at least 20 percent.

For employers with 5,000 or more, at least 1,000 surveys were sent.

Employers are ranked by size bands because smaller employers tend to score higher than midsize employers, which in turn tend to score higher than large employers. ❤️

Large companies

Here are top workplaces in the Houston area based on surveys of employees at companies with 500 or more workers. The survey was conducted by Workplace Dynamics. These are the top 35 companies out of 51 participants.

Rank	Company	Founded	Ownership	Sector	Area locations	Local employees
1	Anadarko Petroleum Corp.	1985	Public	Oil and natural gas exploration and production	1	1,999
2	TransCanada Corp.	1951	Public	Energy infrastructure	2	505
3	Plains All American Pipeline	1998	Public	Pipelines	2	668
4	Whole Foods Market	1980	Public	Food/grocery	7	1,300
5	Insperity	1986	Public	HR and business performance solutions provider	8	1,129
6	West Houston Medical Center	1985	Parent company	Health care	3	853
7	Enbridge Energy Partners	2001	Partnership	Energy	1	602
8	Noble Energy	1932	Public	Oil and gas exploration and production	1	760
9	Wood Group Mustang	1987	Parent company	Energy engineering and contract management	2	2,473
10	Statoil	1972	Public	Oil and gas	1	572
11	The Menninger Clinic	1925	Nonprofit	Health care — hospitals	1	506
12	Spectra Energy Corp.	2007	Public	Gas processing, storage and distribution	2	911
13	Superior Energy Services	1989	Public	Energy industry services	17	810
14	Occidental Petroleum Corp.	1920	Public	Oil, gas, chemicals	1	1,746
15	Gillman Automotive Group	1938	Private	Auto dealership	3	557
16	Landry's Corporate Office	1986	Private	Restaurant and hospitality	65	526
17	Enterprise Products	1998	Public	Petroleum, gas and petroleum products	4	1,625
18	Memorial Hermann Healthcare System	1907	Nonprofit	Hospitals	14	19,144
19	Sun Coast Resources	1985	Private	Wholesale fuel and oil distribution	1	917
20	Kinder Morgan	1996	Public	Pipeline transportation and storage	18	1,504
21	The Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa	1980	Private	Hospitality, entertainment, recreation and travel	1	727
22	Southwestern Energy Co.	1929	Public	Energy/oil and gas	5	821
23	Clear Creek Independent School District	1948	Public	Primary/secondary school	47	5,482
24	Nexus Health Systems	1992	Private	Specialty Hospitals	4	586
25	Energy Transfer Partners	2002	Partnership	Gas and oil industry	5	554
26	CenterPoint Energy	1866	Public	Utility	43	4,840
27	Stage Stores	1925	Public	Family apparel stores	32	682
28	Accenture	1989	Public	Consulting	1	1,086
29	University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center	1941	Government	Comprehensive cancer care center	5	18,900
30	Universal Weather and Aviation	1959	Private	Aviation services	1	615
31	KPMG	1897	Partnership	Certified public accountants and consultants	1	749
32	IHS	1959	Public	Business information and analytics	5	672
33	Beaumont ISD	1983	Government	Primary/secondary school	34	3,151
34	Texas Dow Employees Credit Union	1955	Nonprofit	Credit union	6	521
35	UT Health Science Center at Houston	1972	Government	College/university	1	5,981

Perks from page E4

wanted to reinforce the role the bank plays in financial planning, Owen said. It's also a selling point for recruiting new employees and retaining existing ones.

But it's not the only perk. A week or two before Christmas each year, top bank officers fan out to its 23 locations with special envelopes. Each employee who has been on board for at least a year gets an extra month's salary.

It's very exciting, said Owen, describing the tradition begun in 1973 as employees cluster around when the officers arrive with their fistful of good cheer. Everyone shakes hands, or gets a big hug, and employees are thanked for their hard work.

Other perks help working parents.

One of the biggest problems these moms and dads face is scrambling when the baby sitter calls in sick or their school system celebrates a holiday and there is no one to watch the kids. Some companies have launched backup child care with center-based or in-home services.

Microsoft, which has about 200 employees in the Houston area, has added backup elder care. Each em-



Johnny Hanson / Houston Chronicle

Noe Trevino works at ARC Specialties, a robotics company. "This is the best place I've ever worked," said Trevino, a welder who started at ARC as a janitor's helper. ARC takes employees and their families on annual trips.

ployee receives up to 100 hours of care per employee per calendar year. For a nominal cost of \$4 an hour, a certified nursing assistant, home companion or other trained professional will provide in-home care.

Adults who need care are not required to live with the Microsoft employee or even reside in the same state.

Care can be scheduled up to 30 days in advance or on the same day.

"We wanted to provide a nationwide program that would assist our employees with a safety net for those days when regular care arrangements fell through, as this tends to be a very stressful time for employees," Microsoft representative Tracey L. Shavers

Jr. wrote in an email.

Health and fitness programs are popular at many companies. To make sure employees actually use the workout facilities, Black Elk Energy launched an incentive program. Black Elk will pay the monthly membership fee for employees who use one of the health club locations eight or more times each month.

It was a Christmas gift to employees last year, human resource specialist Hilary McVay said. The CEO took a tour of the workout facilities and figured everyone would benefit.

So far, about 80 employees, or 67 percent of the 120 employees who live near one of the gyms, are going often enough to take advantage of the perk. That, in turn, has contributed to a reduction in health insurance premiums, McVay said.

Black Elk, which pays 100 percent of the premium cost, saw its rates fall 8 percent starting in June, she said. They've never dropped that much in one year, she added.

Nor have employees ever looked so slim and trim. ♥

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NO. 2 LARGE COMPANY *TransCanada Corp.*



Thomas B. Shea

TransCanada Corp. lead gas controller Kevin Wager, foreground, monitors pipelines with Howard Earl, supervisor of gas control.

Rewards large and small go a long way with employees

By Zain Shauk

As TransCanada Corp. has worked to build the disputed Keystone XL pipeline from Canada to the Texas coast, it has kept its focus on its employees.

"Yes, we've got a lot more name recognition than we did five years ago, for instance," said Lee Hobbs, the company's top executive in Texas and its senior vice president over U.S. pipelines. "But it's not translating, as we can see, into employees being unhappy. I think part of that is because we're very open with them about where we are. ... We're not afraid to talk about the issues."

The company's Houston office, with 600 full-time employees and contractors, earned praise from workers for its efforts to reward and engage them.

Much of that may have been a result of the company's system of regular bonuses for overall performance and

small thank-you gifts for individuals who volunteer for difficult projects or stand out on an incremental goal, Hobbs said.

TransCanada also encourages collaboration and input from all employees, he said. "When we have those team meetings, my expectation is that everyone will contribute," Hobbs said. "And I don't care what level you're at. You will have good ideas."

Employees responding to the survey said they felt appreciated at TransCanada.

"It is challenging, and I feel that I am a valued team member as a person as well as for my skill set," one employee said in a response to the WorkplaceDynamics survey.

For another, the company stands out for a simpler reason: "It pays very well." ♥

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NO. 3 LARGE COMPANY *Plains All American Pipeline*

Keeping workforce in loop helps the flow of success

By Simone Sebastian

To foster a stable and transparent work environment, Plains All American Pipeline holds quarterly staff meetings to discuss financial and operational progress with the 668 people working in Houston.

CEO Greg Armstrong said he puts a lot of trust in those workers to handle most of the daily decision-making.

“Once they understand the mission and have the right information, the rest is on them to make the right decisions,” Armstrong said. “We empower the employees with a lot of authority.”

Not only was Plains ranked among the area’s top workplaces this year, its CEO received the leadership award in the large-company category.

“Plains All American has best-in-the-industry people in senior management,” one employee wrote. They are “very honest and caring for

the growth of the company.”

The pipeline company, which has more than 4,600 employees, stores and transports crude oil, refined fuels and natural gas liquids.

Armstrong has been with Plains since 1981, when he joined the staff as comptroller. He rose to chief financial officer and was named CEO in 1992.

The office has a business-casual dress code and flexible schedules that allow employees to adjust the beginning and end of their workdays by a couple of hours. The headquarters staff has Friday afternoons off.

Armstrong said he is a strong believer in pay-for-performance and recognizing employees for their individual accomplishments.

“People really value knowing where they stand,” he said. ♥

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Plains All American Pipeline

Larry Durr, a Plains All American Pipeline driver, prepares to load crude oil gathered from area wells into a Plains station in northwestern North Dakota. The Houston-based company has more than 4,600 employees.



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NO. 4 LARGE COMPANY *Whole Foods Market*

Grocer's core values inspire a notable bag of benefits

By Katherine Feser

The 20 percent discount on groceries could be reason enough to make employees of Whole Foods Market smile.

But that's only one of the things the Austin-based grocer does to help the work environment. Its core values include an explicit commitment to its workers' "happiness and excellence." It touts several benefits to empower these workers to build careers:

▶▶ Employees who work at least 20 hours a week can become eligible for benefits.

▶▶ Employees can vote on benefits every three years.

▶▶ They can earn a share of the profits based on factors they can control.

▶▶ They have stock options and training opportunities.

"Our success is dependent on the collective energy and intelligence of

our team members," company spokeswoman Mary Langdon said. "Each and every team member is a valued contributor to the success of Whole Foods Market."

She said the employees, much like the company itself, volunteer, help raise funds and otherwise support community and global causes.

From a single store in Austin in 1980, Whole Foods has grown to a \$10 billion publicly traded company with 335 stores worldwide. The first expansion outside Austin was to Houston in 1984, when the chain opened its third store in the hometown of co-founder John Mackey.

Whole Foods employs 1,300 in the Houston area in six stores and a bakehouse. It plans to open at least three more stores over the next two years. ♥

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J. Patric Schneider

Whole Foods employee Knicole Rink checks out Jean and Jim Eldridge in Sugar Land. Whole Foods started with one store in Austin in 1980 and now has 335 worldwide. Six of those locations are in the Houston area.

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TOP WORK PLACES 2012
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NO. 5 LARGE COMPANY *Insperty*

Service starts by serving employees 'very well'

By Kiah Collier

Business plans usually begin with a revenue model. Insperty began with a list of "key tenets" that co-founder Paul Sarvadi and his partner developed before even incorporating.

The list outlined "what kind of business would we want it to be," including how to reward employees for good work, said Sarvadi, chairman and CEO of the human resources management company based in Kingwood.

Before "corporate culture" became a buzz concept, Sarvadi said, it was laying out "what kind of workplace we would have that made a big difference" at the company.

"It was really kind of a weird way to start a business, but it has really served us well because it's all about the people at the end of the day," Sarvadi said.

Insperty, formerly Administaff, has

grown from a two-employee, three-client firm founded in 1986 to a publicly traded company with \$2 billion in revenue last year.

It has 2,100 corporate employees in 56 offices nationwide and 100,000 clients.

Some of the company's creeds include charitable giving and encouraging volunteerism among its 1,129 local employees by paying them up to 12 hours a quarter to do good deeds.

Beneficiaries range from the American Heart Association and Habitat for Humanity to various autism charities and homeless shelters.

"We feel like that always leads to more volunteerism ... and demonstrates one of the key components of our values," Sarvadi said.

Sarvadi said an annual "detailed culture survey" measures how the company is doing in that regard.

One employee wrote in response to



Jerry Baker

Maria Cady, a graphic designer, and Matt Loftiss, a design manager, work in marketing for Insperty, a human resources management company. "It's all about the people at the end of the day," co-founder Paul Sarvadi says.

this year's WorkplaceDynamics survey: "If more people across the country had the opportunity to work at a place like Insperty, there would be a much happier and productive workforce in America."

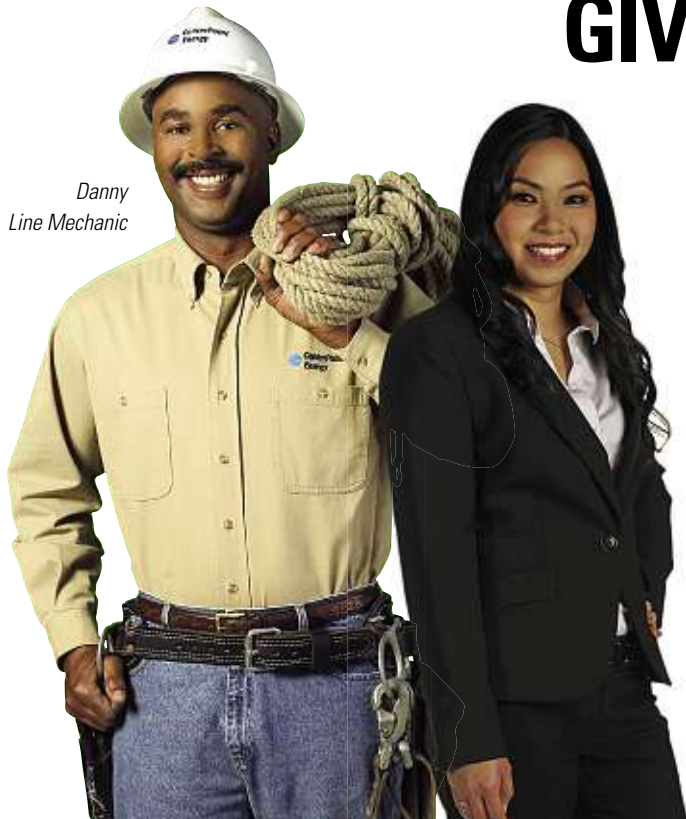
Sarvadi said the company attempts

to practice what it preaches.

"We're a service company," he said. "You can't expect that if you're not serving employees very well." ❤️

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Chairman says reality, hope build staff loyalty



By Nancy Sarnoff

When David Weekley Homes had to cut staff during the housing downturn, the company's founder started getting notes from some of the employees who were let go. But their words weren't written out of anger or bitterness.

Their messages were sympathetic: "I got notes from people who got laid off saying, 'It must be so hard for you,'" said David Weekley, chairman of the Houston-based home building company.

Weekley, a native Houstonian who founded the company at 23, said he tries to approach leadership with a level of authenticity that helps employees feel valued.

"A good leader defines reality and gives hope," he said, reciting his favorite definition of leadership.

That philosophy helped the builder earn the best workplace spot among midsize companies in the Houston

Brett Coomer / Houston Chronicle

David Weekley says the home-building company he leads "is a high-performance organization."

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Weekley attributes a lot of the success to John Johnson, the company's CEO.

Johnson has been with the company since 1990. During his tenure, the business has expanded into new markets and earned a spot on Fortune magazine's list of "100 Best Companies to Work For" seven times.

Visiting employees

While Johnson is often traveling to other cities where the company builds homes, he makes a point to visit each employee in the corporate office about every two weeks.

"He walks around to everyone's desk, shakes your hand and says hi," said Sarah Springer Leone, who works in marketing for the company.

The company employs 276 people in its two Houston offices and 801 across the country.

Besides the feel-good environment, there are very tangible perks at David Weekley Homes.

Employees receive profit sharing, as well as a discretionary quarterly 100 percent match for up to the first 8 percent contributed to their 401(k) plans. The health plan provides house calls from nurse practitioners. And workers have access to chaplains who visit the company weekly.

Charitable giving is a big part of the company's culture.

Over the past 20 years, the Weekley Family Foundation has given more than \$70 million through philanthropy and community involvement.

"Doing things for others helps us gain a sense of balance," Weekley said.

Mark Mostaert, a senior project designer, has been with the company for almost 15 years. When asked what's kept him there that long, he mentions the leadership.

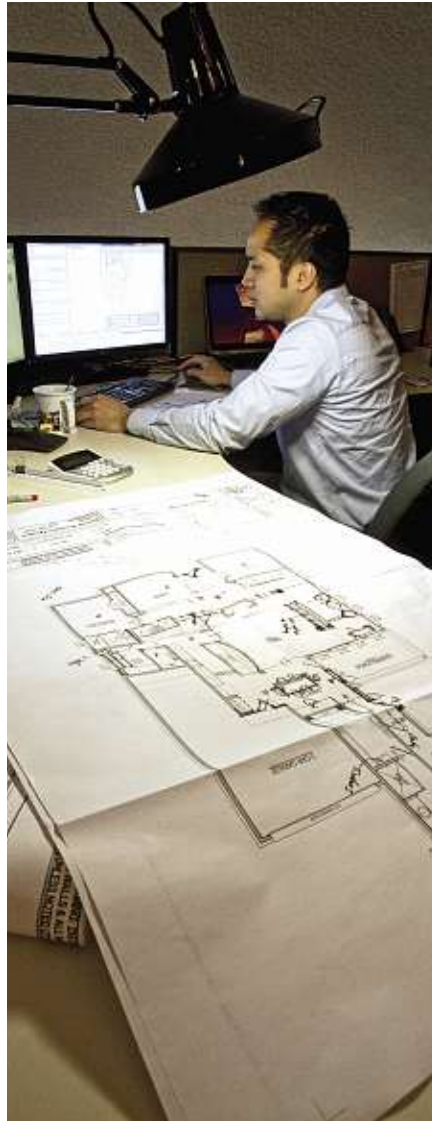
"When we went through the hard times, we saw companies folding. The decisions David and John made kept us afloat," he said. "I can't imagine being anywhere else."

Not singing 'Kumbaya'

Each division of the company holds quarterly meetings that center around themes. There's been the "office Olympics," the "fall festival" and the "'70s psychedelic party." Managers pass out peer and performance awards.

Financial results are also presented at the meeting — for all to see.

"We don't want everyone to think we sit around and sing 'Kumbaya,'"



Brett Coomer / Houston Chronicle

Designer Randy Delpilar works on plans for new residences at the offices of David Weekley Homes.

Weekley said. "This is a high-performance organization."

Since the downturn, David Weekley Homes has been hiring and ramping up revenue from when it went into the red during the recent housing crash — one out of two times the company lost money. The first time was in 1985.

Sales are expected to come in at just under \$800 million this year, and the company's goal is to be a \$5 billion company by 2025.

With many managers in their 50s, plans are being put in place for the future. The main focus: employees, the company's brand and financial sustainability and growth. ❤️

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David Weekley Homes

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- Hank Rush
President & CEO
Star of Hope Mission

“David Weekley is a distinguished leader and supporter who has tremendous vision to help us grow Scouting.”

- Thomas O. Varnell
President / Scout Executive
Sam Houston Area Council

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SPECIAL AWARDS

WorkplaceDynamics selected 15 categories of special awards for companies that scored highly on employee responses to certain survey statements. Employees rated these statements on a seven-point scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Excerpts of employee comments provide a glimpse into the various workplaces.

Leadership, large company

- ▶▶ **Greg Armstrong**, chairman and CEO, Plains All American Pipeline
- ▶▶ **Sector:** Pipelines
- ▶▶ **Headquarters:** Houston
- ▶▶ **Greater Houston employees:** 668
- ▶▶ **Criteria:** I have confidence in the leader of this company
- ▶▶ **Comments:**

What does the leader of this company do well?

♥ “Communicates and make employees truly feel they are a part of the success or failure of the company.

♥ “Evaluating and determining the strategic direction of the company for growth.”



Hilcorp

Gary Coker, a supervisory control and data acquisition technician, prepares for a new SCADA system at Hilcorp's plant in Sweeny.

Leadership, midsize company

- ▶▶ **Jeffery Hildebrand**, chairman and CEO, Hilcorp
- ▶▶ **Sector:** Oil and gas exploration and production
- ▶▶ **Headquarters:** Houston
- ▶▶ **Greater Houston employees:** 380
- ▶▶ **Criteria:** I have confidence in the leader of this company
- ▶▶ **Comments:**

What does the leader of this company do well?

♥ “Our leaders are good guides in that they know when to stand back

Midsize companies

Here are top workplaces in the Houston area based on surveys of employees at companies with between 150 and 499 local workers. The survey was conducted by Workplace Dynamics. These are the top 45 companies out of 75 participants.

Rank	Company	Founded	Ownership	Sector	Area locations	Local employees
1	David Weekley Homes	1976	Private	Home building	2	276
2	Hilcorp	1989	Private	Oil and gas exploration and production	2	380
3	The Container Store	1978	Private	Storage and organization	3	179
4	Mattress Firm	1986	Public	Furniture, home furnishings and accessories	100	425
5	Atria Senior Living Group	1998	Private	Assisted living	5	253
6	Alvarez & Marsal	1983	Private	Professional services	1	187
7	EOG Resources	1985	Public	Exploration and production	1	499
8	St. Regis-Houston	1904	Public	Hotel	1	211
9	Edward Jones Investments	1922	Partnership	Financial advisers	198	434
10	Shell Federal Credit Union	1937	Cooperative/Mutual	Credit union	10	209
11	Medcare Pediatric Group	1991	Partnership	Pediatric rehabilitation center	3	284
12	Linn Energy	2003	Public	Oil and natural gas exploration and production	1	290
13	Microsoft	1975	Public	Enterprise software	1	202
14	Amoco Federal Credit Union	1937	Cooperative/Mutual	Credit union	6	172
15	Houston Freightliner, Western Star	1996	Partnership	Motor vehicle dealership	200	197
16	Idera	2004	Private	Systems management software	1	201
17	Stress Engineering Services	1972	Partnership	Engineering	2	250
18	Houston Zoo	1922	Nonprofit	Nonprofit	1	370
19	EnerVest	1992	Partnership	Oil and gas company	1	287
20	Cornerstone Mortgage Co.	1988	Private	Mortgage lending	9	317
21	Burns & McDonnell	1898	Private	Engineering/architecture/construction	1	211
22	Custom Air Products & Services	1999	Private	HVAC	1	179
23	Cyberonics	1987	Public	Medical devices and products	1	381
24	Money Management International	1958	Nonprofit	Nonprofit	8	297
25	M. Arthur Gensler Jr. & Associates	1965	Private	Architecture	1	258
26	UHY Advisors TX	1971	Private	Professional services	2	403
27	Primrose School of The Woodlands & Spring	2001	Private	Private school/preschool/childcare	4	160
28	RiceTec	1990	Private	Agriculture	2	322
29	MEI Technologies	1992	Private	Advanced technology	1	329
30	CBRE Houston Central Operations	1906	Public	Commercial real estate	2	445
31	Legacy Community Health Services	1981	Nonprofit	Community health center	6	317
32	John L. Wortham & Son	1915	Partnership	Insurance consultants and brokers	1	248
33	Hunton Group	1981	Private	Industrial services	7	289
34	The Lanier Law Firm	1990	Private	Law	2	167
35	Hercules Offshore	2005	Public	Services	1	193
36	MyFitFoods	2006	Private	Healthy food industry	29	398
37	EagleBurgmann	1884	Private	Mechanical sealing devices	135	181
38	Newfield Exploration Co.	1988	Public	Petroleum, gas, and petroleum products	2	372
39	Texas First Bank	1973	Private	Commercial bank	23	259
40	Star of Hope Mission	1907	Nonprofit	Human and social services	1	193
41	Rowan Cos.	1923	Public	Oil and gas drilling and exploration	2	304
42	EDP Renewables North America	1998	Parent company	Renewable energy	1	192
43	Berkeley Eye Center	1959	Private	Health care	14	209
44	AMEC Oil & Gas Americas	1980	Public	Engineering	2	459
45	Valassis Communications	1970	Public	Direct marketing	2	227

and let their team shine and do the work — not micromanage the situation.”

♥ “Provides extra incentive rewards, such as bonus program, giving program, etc., instead of just a paycheck. Provides open book policy, which is informative.”

Leadership, small company

- ▶▶ **John Schiller Jr.**, chairman and CEO, Energy XXI
- ▶▶ **Sector:** Oil and gas exploration

and production

- ▶▶ **Headquarters:** Houston
- ▶▶ **Greater Houston employees:** 143
- ▶▶ **Criteria:** I have confidence in the leader of this company
- ▶▶ **Comments:**

What does the leader of this company do well?

♥ “Appreciates personnel commitment; exposure to employees; compensation towards employees is generous; very good leadership.”

♥ “He has done a phenomenal job of growing the company, providing his

employees with job security and benefits, giving us confidence that he knows what is going on within his company, and promoting his vision to investors in continuing his vision of growth.”

Managers

- ▶▶ **David Weekley Homes**
- ▶▶ **Sector:** Home building
- ▶▶ **Headquarters:** Houston
- ▶▶ **Greater Houston employees:** 276

Special awards continues on E30

Incentives and rewards go well beyond pizza parties

By **Tanya Rutledge**

Greg Lalicker had just landed from a business trip to Alaska, and he was tired.

Lalicker, president of Hilcorp, wasn't there to close a big business deal. He was in Alaska to carry out one of the company's monthly "Lifting Cost" meetings. During the meetings, the privately held oil and gas exploration and production company's financial and operational results are shared in an open format, and questions about where Hilcorp stands on any given topic are discussed candidly with employees.

Each month, the information is shared with employees in the corporate office on one day, then Hilcorp executives fan out across the country the next day to meet with field employees.

Lalicker believes it's worth the effort.

"I get just as much out of these meetings as the employees do," he said. "You can only really understand how they are feeling about their work if you go there and open up dialogue and focus on getting better."

The meetings are just one piece of a multifaceted employee recognition and reward program that started out as a loose collection of incentives when the company was founded in 1989 and has now become part of Hilcorp's culture.

Last year, each of Hilcorp's 1,000 employees (380 in Houston) received their choice of a \$50,000 voucher for a new car or \$50,000 in cash after Hilcorp met three targets — doubling the company's value, its oil field production rate and its net oil and gas reserves — over five years.

The program was rebooted last year with a new five-year plan called Dream 2015. If the targets are doubled



Hilcorp

Hilcorp plant operators Robert Wilson, left, and David Tarver attend a meeting at the Old Ocean Plant in Sweeny. Both have nine years of service.

again, each employee will receive \$100,000.

"You hear about offices that have pizza parties and margarita machines — this is not that kind of place," Lalicker said. "What we do for a living is hard, and we don't succeed all

the time. But we understand what it takes to win, and we reward those efforts." ♥

Tanya Rutledge is a Houston-based freelance writer. tanyarutledge@gmail.com

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Retail chain doesn't put its employees in a box

By Tanya Rutledge

When employees take on a full- or part-time retail job at The Container Store, they aren't necessarily looking to one day move up into management.

That's because if the employees' primary interest is in dealing with customers, the company makes it rewarding and lucrative for them to remain in that position. The average annual salary for a full-time store employee at The Container Store is \$46,000. The company says it pays full- and part-time wages that are 50-100 percent above the industry average.

John Norman, regional director at The Container Store, with 179 employees in three Houston stores, said part-time employees are called "prime-timers," a term they coined themselves. "They are the ones there in front of the customers during busy retail times when customers need them the most," said Norman, who started as a part-time employee 20 years ago.

Norman said some prime-time employees have been with the company for 15 years or more. And more than 80 percent of the company's workforce is part time.

"We spend as much in training and development on them as on any employee," Norman said.

Prime- and full-timers alike are honored at the Coppell-based company's annual "We Love Our Employees" Day and given gifts from cupcakes to goody boxes filled with about \$100 worth of products donated by vendors.

The company also offers medical benefits and even pet insurance.

The Container Store's practices and business philosophies are featured in national marketing textbooks and are included in a best-practices study in a class at the Texas A&M University Center for Retailing Studies.

Norman said the 5,000-employee company's priority is to let workers forge their own career paths.

"People don't love working for us because there's a pingpong table in the back room — there's not," he said. "They love it because they are good at their jobs, and they are comfortable knowing that they are part of something bigger than a retail store." ❤️

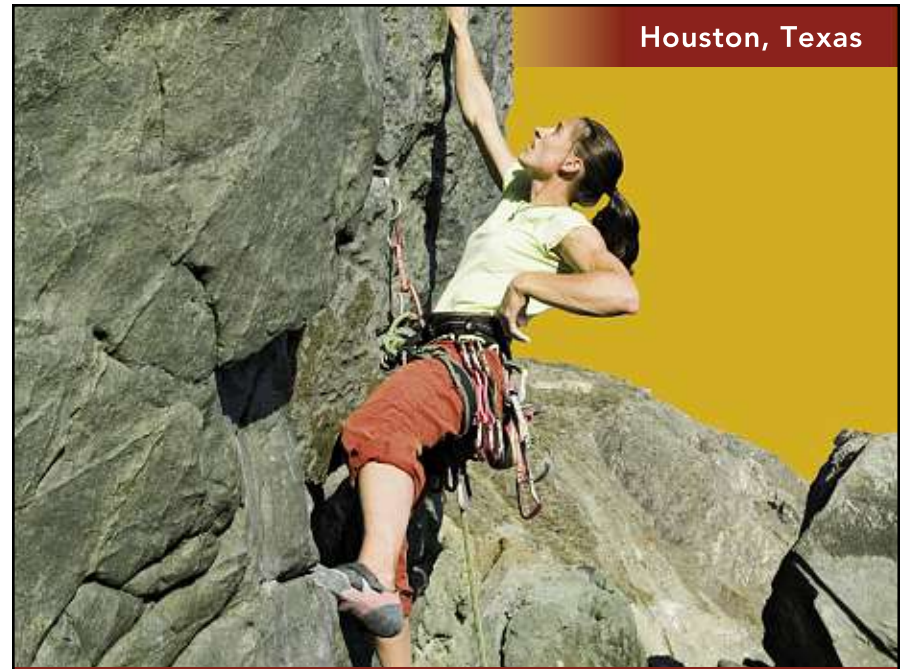
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Dave Rossman

Carol Koszela and Cavana Mewborn stack storage bins at The Container Store on Post Oak. The company's practices are featured in textbooks.

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Headquarters staff stays alert to needs on front line

By Tanya Rutledge

Every department at Mattress Firm's headquarters is staffed with at least one employee who got his or her start in one of the company's 1,000 retail bedding stores across the country.

That strategy is very much by design.

"The field sales and operations teams are on the front line making it happen," said Abby Ludens, director of talent acquisition and retention for the publicly traded mattress retailer. "We put a lot of importance on that team, and we promote from within, so that the overall feel and culture of the company is connected."

Mattress Firm, which completed its acquisition of competitor Mattress Giant in May, finds other ways to keep corporate employees and field employees connected.

The company has its own internal

YouTube site with thousands of videos demonstrating best practices, whether it be techniques for greeting guests as they enter a store or understanding how the company's financing program works.

Mattress Firm also sets aside a section of its internal communications portal, called the BedPost, for employees to offer shout-outs to co-workers for helping them with a task or for putting forth other positive gestures.

"We realize that we have a talented group of people that can teach each other," Ludens said. "Learning and development doesn't just come from the corporate headquarters, it goes on companywide. All across the country, we have great ideas. We think it's important to share them."

And because many of the corporate employees in Houston got their start in the field, that line of communication between the executives and the field



J. Patric Schneider

Mattress Firm manager Christopher Wilson helps customer Windi Pastorini. The company wants executives and field employees to feel connected.

and sales operations employees stays open at all times.

"Our leadership team came up within the organization," Ludens said. "That creates a consistent culture where people feel connected."

The company has 3,000 employees nationally. That includes 518 employees locally — up from 425 since the survey was done. ❤️

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Bingo with snappy prizes among the bevy of benefits

By **Tanya Rutledge**

Bingo games with big prizes aren't reserved for the residents at Atria Senior Living Group. The employees at Atria Westchase have regular bingo tournaments of their own, with prizes that include laptops, Kindles, televisions and gift cards.

The quarterly employee bingo tournament was started after employees saw the residents enjoying their own bingo games, said Kim Parnell, executive director of Atria Westchase. She said off-duty employees even show up to take part.

The only staff members not eligible for the bingo prizes are managers. They embark on adventures of their own, including a recent fishing charter on Lake Conroe.

Parnell said the Louisville, Ky.-based Atria Senior Living Group — with 253 employees in four facilities across the Houston area and one in Beaumont — makes it a priority to reward employees for their efforts.

"What we do is hard. It's serious business, caring for the elderly," Parnell said. "So we do everything

we can to make it a fun place to work."

It also provides financial incentives. For example, Atria, which has 9,500 employees, also offers Atria Cares, an employee-funded 501(c)3 that provides grants to hourly employees in times of financial crisis. So far, the fund has paid out \$919,000 in grants to 1,200 employees.

The Atria Rewards program recognizes long-term hourly employees with tenure and performance bonuses — more than \$25 million worth so far.

And three Atria Westchase employees are using the company's tuition-reimbursement program to attend college.

Parnell, who has been with Atria for 13 years, said the positive working environment has enabled the company to gain industrywide attention for its employee tenure. In her facility, for example, half of the 61 employees have been there five years or more.

"That's pretty unusual in the health-care industry," she said. ♥

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Gary Fountain

Kim Parnell, executive director at Atria Westchase, says Atria Senior Living Group has made rewarding employees a priority.

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Drawing on lessons learned over a career



Dave Rossman

Geologist Allen Berlin, left, and geophysicist Ross Saunders compare notes at Energy XXI. Empowerment is a theme at the company, which has grown rapidly over the past half-dozen years.

By Jeannie Kever

Many of John Schiller's friends went to work for major oil companies after graduating from college in 1981.

Schiller headed to Lafayette, La., and one of the independents, Superior Oil Co.

From there, he moved through a who's who of independent energy companies before founding Energy XXI in 2005, and he says that experience, and especially his work for three influential managers while still in his 20s — Joseph Reid, James Hackett and Richard Hebert — shaped his management style.

This year, his exploration and production company was named best workplace among small companies in the Houston area by WorkplaceDynamics.

As a young petroleum engineer at Superior, Schiller was allowed to make decisions and cut deals.

"You were empowered the day

you walked in," he said.

He found the same environment when he followed Reid to Burlington Northern, where he also worked with Hebert and Hackett, who later went on to run a number of other companies, including Anadarko Petroleum Corp.

"When you're 26 and you're around all these powerful executives and you realize they're willing to come into your office and tell jokes and go to lunch ... they worked hard, but they played hard, too," Schiller said.

That is a mantra around Energy XXI, where many of the employees previously worked with Schiller and other members of the management team.

"I signed right up," said production supervisor Wesley Stout, who had worked with Schiller and several other executives at Ocean Energy before that company's merger with Devon Energy.

"We move fast. We don't have to go through a lot of red tape, other than the government and BSEE," Stout

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Energy XXI CEO John Schiller says the company's discounted stock plan for employees "gives everybody the feeling we're all competing for the same team."

Dave Rossman

said, referring to the U.S. Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement.

Melissa Castro, an engineering tech, also worked at Ocean and then Devon.

"When they started Energy XXI, as soon as I could come back, I came back," she said. "I love the management style, the freedom to do other things besides your normal day-to-day operations. If I want to learn something, all I have to do is ask."

With about 230 employees, including 143 in the Houston area, the company is focused on the Gulf of Mexico, although it also has some assets


in south Louisiana.

After aggressive growth during the past six years, Energy XXI has become "more choosy," Schiller said, although it continues to look for new assets.

Schiller said the company meets with employees every quarter to update them on the business, and he eats lunch every other month with employees who have had birthdays, an idea he says he picked up from Hackett.

The company offers a discounted stock plan for employees, which he said "gives everybody the feeling we're all competing




Energy XXI continues on E28



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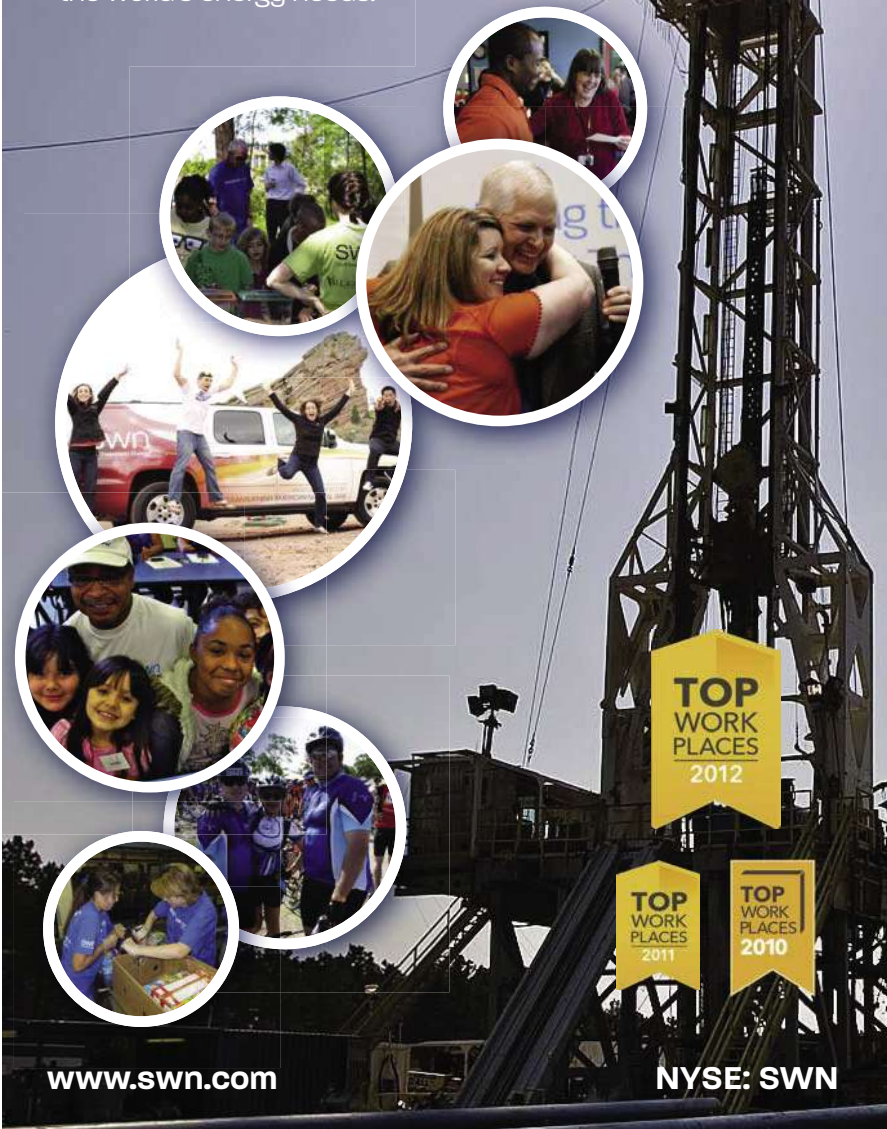
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Dave Rossman

Energy XXI focuses on the Gulf, though it also has some Louisiana assets.

Energy XXI from page E27

for the same team.”

Mark Fanning, a reservoir engineer who joined the company almost five years ago, said he was impressed by the fact that Schiller takes Energy XXI's geologists and engineers to New York to talk directly with investors about their projects.

In larger companies, Fanning said,

“you never even saw the CEO and upper management.”

Castro said more traditional perks — a 9/80 workweek that lets workers take off every other Friday, for example — are great, but not the true allure.

“For most of us,” she said, “I think it's being able to work with each other that's the best part.” ❤️

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Firing on all cylinders via a happy workplace

By Tanya Rutledge

Katie Rohr has done a lot of job-hopping over the last few years. But because of her employer's flexible structure, all three of her most recent jobs have been with Christian Brothers Automotive.

Rohr started with the company in 2008 as a franchise performance consultant, later took on the role of executive assistant to the CEO and is now a legal assistant for the auto repair company.

"The company takes the time to recognize what you are good at and skilled at," Rohr said. "Because of that, I have found my niche."

Rohr is one of about 50 employees who operate from Christian Brothers' corporate office in Houston.

On any given Monday, many of those employees can be found participating in the company's weekly

morning prayer meetings. On Fridays, the departments take turns bringing in homemade or restaurant-prepared breakfasts as the centerpiece of an hourlong social networking session, which is closed with a prayer. The sessions are heavily attended.

Lewis Ten Have, Christian Brothers' chief operating officer, said such meetings are often followed by impromptu miniature golf tournaments in the hallways. And recently, one vacationing employee returned to find her office decorated in bubble wrap.

Ten Have believes that comic relief in the workplace goes a long way in making employees happy and committed to their jobs.

"We bring in good people, and then we help them gravitate to what they like to do," Ten Have said.

That philosophy extends to the company's franchisees as well.



J. Patric Schneider

Christian Brothers departments take turns bringing in breakfast on Fridays. The weekly event is part of a social networking session that lasts an hour.

There are more than 100 Christian Brothers auto repair locations across the country (20 in Houston), mostly run by franchisees. If the company and franchisee agree the business is not a good fit, Christian Brothers takes over the store and works to return

as much of the franchisee fees as possible.

"The culture of a company starts out with how you treat people," Ten Have said. ❤️

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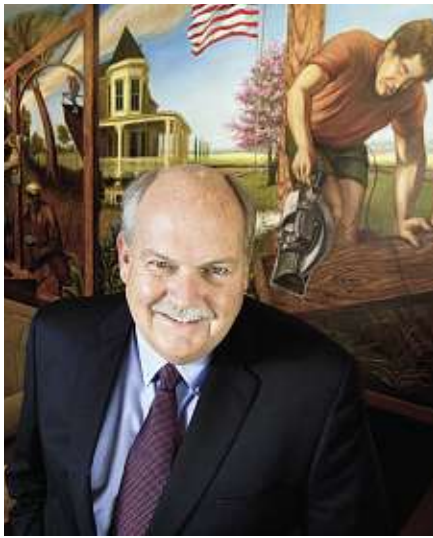
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Small companies

Here are top workplaces in the Houston area based on surveys of employees at companies with 149 or fewer local workers. The survey was conducted by Workplace Dynamics. These are 1 through 35 of the top 70 out of 118 participants.

Rank	Company	Founded	Ownership	Sector	Area locations	Local employees
1	Energy XXI	2005	Public	Oil and gas exploration and production	1	143
2	Christian Brothers Automotive	1982	Private	Complete automotive repair	20	51
3	Encompass Home Health	1999	Private	Home health care services	5	129
4	Brookstone	1963	Partnership	Commercial building construction	1	60
5	Hotze Health & Wellness Center	1989	Private	Health and wellness center	1	76
6	Chesmar Homes	2005	Private	Home builder	15	59
7	Neighbors Emergency Center	2009	Private	Health center	4	104
8	Harbor America	1997	Private	Professional employer organization	1	80
9	Hospice Compassus	2006	Cooperative/Mutual	Health care	2	58
10	Planning Design Research Corp.	1977	Partnership	Architecture	1	78
11	Brady, Chapman, Holland & Associates	1983	Private	Insurance and risk management	1	75
12	Texas Emergency Care Center	2006	Partnership	Health care	4	116
13	Oil & Gas Solutions	2007	Private	Engineering	1	52
14	Stream Realty Partners	2006	Private	Leasing, property mgt., tenant rep.	1	73
15	2H Offshore	1998	Parent company	Global engineering contractor	1	108
16	Trendsetter Engineering	1996	Private	Subsea design and manufacturing	1	58
17	Colliers International	1957	Private	Agents/brokers	3	64
18	Pariveda Solutions	2004	Private	Information technology	1	56
19	Pieper-Houston Electric, Houston Office	1958	Private	Electrical	1	60
20	Gallagher Benefit Services	1961	Public	Health and welfare consulting	3	103
21	Recreational Equipment, Inc - REI	1938	Cooperative/Mutual	Outdoor retailer	1	65
22	St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School	1943	Private	Primary/secondary school	1	55
23	Blinds.com	1996	Private	Home improvement	1	127
24	Geriatric Associates of America	1996	Private	Physicians practice	1	54
25	Lasco Enterprises	2003	Private	Restaurant and wine bar	5	53
26	SouthWest Electronic Energy Corp.	1964	Private	Manufacturing	1	66
27	Fred Haas Toyota Country	2002	Private	Auto dealership	1	132
28	Simmons & Company International	1974	Private	Energy investment bank	1	118
29	Congregation Beth Israel	1854	Nonprofit	Religion	1	55
30	ESCAPE Family Resource Center	1983	Nonprofit	Nonprofit private	1	72
31	Southwest Infiniti	1988	Private	Auto dealership	1	67
32	Employer Flexible	2003	Private	Human resources	2	72
33	SpawGlass	1953	Private	Building construction	1	92
34	Ryan	1991	Private	Corporate tax advisory firm	1	80
35	Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld	1945	Partnership	Legal services	1	99



Brett Coomer / Houston Chronicle

David Weekley leads David Weekley Homes, which also took top honors for midsize companies.

Special awards from page E18

►► **Criteria:** My manager helps me learn and grow

My manager makes it easier to do my job well

My manager cares about my concerns

►► **Comments:**

How does your manager make it easier to do your job well?

♥ “No micromanagement tactics.”

♥ “She sets up weekly meetings to go over any concerns or new projects.”

What does your manager do to demonstrate that they care about your concerns?

♥ “Weekly planned encounters to discuss goals, ideas and tasks. My commitment to Weekley Homes and work ethics are respected — numerous verbally and written acknowledgements. Given the opportunity to put programs in place and manage the procedures/tracking. No doubt my

manager is the go-to for revising a procedure ... always improving is the way of heart. Always open-minded. LISTENS to those that are impacted. Fully aware that many can bring ideas to the table. Again ... listens.”

What does your manager do to help you learn and grow?

♥ “I am constantly being given new tasks and responsibilities with growing complexity that help me gain more understanding about how everything connects and fits together. Questions and discussions over items/issues are also highly encouraged, especially if it is an issue that hasn't

been encountered before.”

New ideas

►► **Anadarko Petroleum Corp.**

►► **Sector:** Oil and natural gas exploration and production

►► **Headquarters:** Houston

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Small companies

Here are top workplaces in the Houston area based on surveys of employees at companies with 149 or fewer local workers. The survey was conducted by Workplace Dynamics. These are 36 through 70 of the top 70 out of 118 participants.

Rank	Company	Founded	Ownership	Sector	Area locations	Local employees
36	Allegiance Bank Texas	2007	Private	Financial institution-bank	7	114
37	Newmark Homes Houston	2009	Partnership	New homes construction	15	68
38	Home Health Resources	1997	Private	Home health care services	1	100
39	The Kilburn Law Firm	2008	Private	Law	1	86
40	Jetco Delivery	1976	Private	Trucking industry	3	102
41	Black Elk Energy	2007	Private	Energy industry services	1	96
42	Stallion Oilfield Holdings	2002	Private	Oil and gas field services	1	123
43	Cadence Bank	2010	Private	Retail and commercial bank	1	93
44	Brookfield Office Properties	1923	Public	Integrated development, construction, management	5	105
45	APQC American Prod. & Quality Center	1977	Nonprofit	Consulting	1	60
46	Binkley & Barfield	1972	Private	Consulting engineers	1	69
47	Easter Seals Greater Houston	1947	Nonprofit	Full spectrum disability assistance	1	80
48	Children's Assessment Center	1994	Government	Local government	1	51
49	ARC Specialties	1983	Private	Robotics	1	65
50	EEPB P.C.	1987	Private	Certified public accountants, consultants	1	72
51	Briggs & Veselka Co.	1973	Private	Certified public accountants, consultants	2	148
52	OCuSOFT	1986	Private	Vendor serving health care industry	1	88
53	TechTrans International	1993	Private	Language and logistics services	1	101
54	AmCap Mortgage	2002	Partnership	Mortgage lending	4	82
55	Kirksey	1971	Private	Architecture	1	97
56	Myron F. Steves & Co.	1955	Partnership	Insurance wholesaler-property and casualty	1	148
57	Robbins Brothers, Engagement Ring Store	1921	Private	Destination engagement ring store	2	55
58	Burleson	2005	Private	Law	1	64
59	Insource Technology Corp.	1992	Private	Infrastructure, systems, managed support	1	68
60	Applus RTD	2002	Private	Non-destructive testing, inspection services	1	101
61	Accelerate Energy	2003	Private	LNG importer, regasification services	1	76
62	Surveying And Mapping (SAM)	1994	Private	Surveying, photogrammetry, SUE, LIDAR	1	53
63	Protiviti	2002	Parent company	Consulting	1	95
64	Community Resource Credit Union	1935	Cooperative/Mutual	Credit union	4	117
65	JV Industrial Companies	1998	Private	Turnaround Services	4	146
66	Jack Henry & Associates	1976	Public	Vertical industry software products, services	1	127
67	City of West University Place	1924	Government	Local government	1	115
68	Benchmark Hospitality International	1980	Private	Hotel	1	52
69	InterMoor	2004	Parent company	Oil and gas	1	64
70	Greenberg Traurig	1967	Partnership	Law	1	87

▶▶ **Greater Houston employees:** 1,999

▶▶ **Criteria:** New ideas are encouraged at this company

▶▶ **Comments:**

How does this company encourage new ideas?

♥ "We nurture an atmosphere of

positively questioning how we can do things better. We don't penalize people for good ideas that result in failure."

♥ "It is a core value to be commercially focused and take measured, intelligent risks."

♥ "I'm allowed to experiment, and I go to conferences/follow blogs to see

how other people are doing things."

Doers

▶▶ **Neighbors Emergency Center**

▶▶ **Sector:** Health center

▶▶ **Headquarters:** Houston

▶▶ **Greater Houston employees:** 104

▶▶ **Criteria:** At this company, we do things efficiently and well

▶▶ **Comments:**

What impresses you most about how this company does things efficiently and well?

♥ "Quality of care provided to patients; it is easy to treat your patients, as patient care is the primary focus of the entire team."

♥ "The way everyone works together to get things done as efficiently, quickly and the best way possible."

Meaningfulness

▶▶ **Hotze Health & Wellness Center**

▶▶ **Sector:** Health center

▶▶ **Headquarters:** Houston

▶▶ **Greater Houston employees:** 76

▶▶ **Criteria:** My job makes me feel like

Special awards continues on E37



J. Patric Schneider

Hotze Health & Wellness Center receptionist Becky Diaz meets with a client.

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Employees get extra time off so they can be rejuvenated

By Tanya Rutledge

April Anthony understands that caring for elderly patients in their homes can be emotionally taxing. So she makes sure Encompass Home Health employees get the time off they need to recharge.

All Encompass employees earn four weeks of paid time off each year, and they are able to start taking it after just 90 days of employment. Encompass makes sure that any unused time doesn't go to waste. As much as 40 hours of unused time per year, up to 400 hours total, can be socked away to use in case of an extended employee illness.

Anthony, CEO of Encompass, which has 129 local employees who are spread out over five Houston-area offices and are deployed daily to client homes, said the company's generous time-off policy is based

on the demanding nature of the job.

"Our employees know that it will never be OK for them to come in tired or spent or give a half-baked effort," Anthony said. "That day, they are caring for someone's parent. They have to work hard every single day, so we give them lots of time off so they can be rejuvenated. It keeps them engaged, and presents a positive return to our patients."

Encompass also provides a car for any employee who drives more than 14,000 miles per year. The company, a Medicare-certified home-health care service provider that employs more than 3,500 people nationally, offers a Ford Escape.

Employees can take intensive training courses at the Encompass Development Center in Dallas. Some of the courses are taught by Anthony herself, as well as



Nick de la Torre / Houston Chronicle

Pam Pallera, a physical therapist with Encompass Home Health, does a shoulder exercise with Fay Allison, a client of Regal Estates of League City.

the company's chief operating officer.

The development and education center helps breed new career paths for employees, based on their areas of interest. Last year, 74 percent of the company's supervisory positions were

filled by existing staff.

"The idea is to create an environment that fosters professional development and gives them access to new opportunities," Anthony said. ❤️

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Newfield by the Numbers

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NEWFIELD



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Construction firm installs a culture that's connected

By Tanya Rutledge

Keeping lines of communication open between office and field employees in the commercial construction industry can be a full-time job.

Brookstone President Steve Dishman is up for the challenge.

"It's very common in our industry to have a field mentality and an office mentality," he said. "There is a gap in between, and if it's not bridged, it can cause a lot of frustration."

Efforts to do that include a companywide outing to a Sugar Land Skeeters baseball game and monthly meetings where employees share ideas on successes and mistakes to learn from.

On the third Wednesday of each month, Brookstone, a 60-person general contractor and construction management firm, takes a major step toward closing that gap with

its all-staff "lunch and learn" meetings.

In addition, the company's employees are provided as many as 10 training opportunities per month. The participants are required to return to the office and present the information to their peers.

"Not only does it help us leverage the education that our staff is getting, but it gives them the opportunity to practice their public speaking skills," Dishman said. "Standing up to practice public speaking helps give them a lot of confidence."

Despite the cyclical nature of the construction industry, Dishman said Brookstone has maintained its regular staff outings, including hunting and fishing trips, and kept annual raises and bonuses intact.

In addition, Brookstone recently hired outside consultants to work with an in-house steering committee to



Eric Kayne

One of Houston-based Brookstone's construction projects is at St. Martin's Episcopal Church near the Galleria.

establish a formal wellness program to help employees adopt a healthier lifestyle.

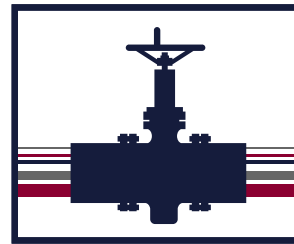
Less formally, Dishman said, three office smokers have all quit within the last few years based on peer pressure.

"There is a group movement behind wellness now," he said. "Everyone is very engaged in changing their quality of life both inside and outside the office." ❤️

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NO. 5 SMALL COMPANY *Hotze Health & Wellness Center*

Special first-day gifts set the tone for new employees

By Tanya Rutledge

When most people start a new job, they might get a welcome package that includes some paperwork and some cheap company swag. At Hotze Health & Wellness Center, the first-day package includes Waterford crystal.

Hotze employees get more Waterford as their tenure progresses with the health and wellness center. They receive two pieces at Christmas and another on each anniversary.

"We try to make the first day special," said Pat Phenix, director of talent, recruitment and development. "It sort of sets the tone."

While the Waterford gifts are a hit, Phenix said cash gifts are even more popular.

Birthdays are celebrated with flowers and a \$50 gift card to Zappos or a local spa.

A more formal program called 3Gs

(goals) allows employees to submit ideas each month for increasing efficiency or customer service or ways to make or save the company money. The reward for having an initiative implemented is a \$50 cash bonus.

Hotze, which offers patients a health program using bioidentical hormone therapy, also gives a "cut the fat" bonus to any employee who finds a way to save the company money. That person receives 10 percent of the company's savings during the first year.

Phenix said one employee took the initiative to renegotiate a deal with one of the company's vendors that ended up saving \$14,000.

Hotze's 76 employees pack all of this idea-sharing into a shorter work-week, since they are given a half-day each Friday to jump-start the week-end.

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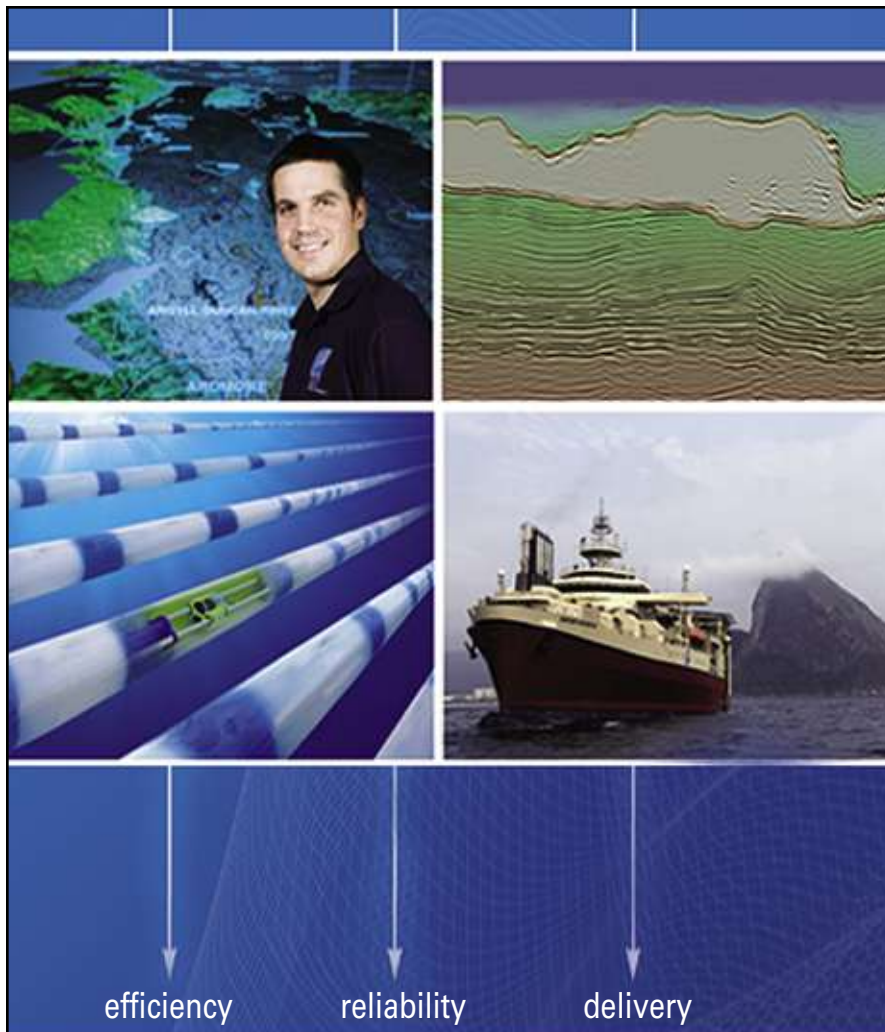
Hotze Health & Wellness Center employees stretch before a staff meeting. Hotze has a free wellness program for employees and their families.

events can include an ice cream party, in-house chair massages, a wine tasting or a bus trip to a Houston Astros game.

Especially popular, Phenix said, is the free company wellness program for employees and their families.

“That’s a huge benefit that pretty much everyone takes advantage of,” she said. “They’d be crazy not to. It’s what we are all about.” ♥

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TOP WORK PLACES 2012

HOUSTON CHRONICLE



Houston Chronicle file

Antonio Saldivar is a master tech in REI's bicycle department. REI, which has two stores in the Houston area, is among the companies that have been recognized for making the Top Workplaces list for three straight years.

THREE-PEATS

- » Akin Gump
- » Allegiance Bank Texas
- » Alvarez & Marsal
- » Anadarko Petroleum Corp.
- » Blinds.com
- » Brady, Chapman, Holland & Associates
- » Burns & McDonnell
- » Cornerstone Mortgage
- » EDP Renewables North America (formerly Horizon Wind Energy)
- » EnerVest
- » Enterprise Products
- » EOG Resources
- » M. Arthur Gensler Jr. & Associates
- » Gillman Auto Group
- » Greenberg Traurig
- » Hilcorp
- » Hospice Compassus
- » Hotze Health & Wellness Center
- » Kinder Morgan
- » Legacy Community Health Services
- » Linn Energy
- » Medicare Pediatric Group
- » Memorial Hermann Healthcare System

The following companies have made the list of Top Workplaces for three years straight:

- » My Fit Foods
- » Noble Energy
- » OCuSOFT
- » Plains All American Pipeline
- » Planning Design Research Corp.
- » Recreational Equipment, Inc. - REI
- » RiceTec
- » SouthWest Electronic Energy Corp.
- » Southwestern Energy
- » SpawGlass
- » Spectra Energy Corp.
- » Stage Stores
- » Stream Realty
- » Texas First Bank
- » The Menninger Clinic
- » Valassis

These companies made the National Standards list in 2011 and the Top Workplaces list in 2010 and 2012:

- » Briggs & Veselka
- » Houston Freightliner, Western Star
- » Kirksey
- » Ryan
- » UTHealth

Source: WorkplaceDynamics

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Special awards from page E31

I am part of something meaningful

► Comments:

What do you find most meaningful about working at this company?

♥ "Changing people's lives! That's something you can't find at most jobs."

Ethics

► Chesmar Homes

► Sector: Home builder

► Headquarters: Houston

► Greater Houston employees: 59

► Criteria: This company operates by strong values and ethics

► Comments:

What impresses you most about the values and ethics of Chesmar Homes?

♥ "All associates seem to be on the same track in living by the core values put forth by Chesmar leadership. It is a unique group that makes up a great support system."

♥ "Chesmar Homes does the right thing."

Clued-in senior management

► The Container Store

► Sector: Storage and organization

► Headquarters: Coppell

► Greater Houston employees: 179

► Criteria: Senior managers understand what is really happening at this company

► Comments:

The things I like most about my job are:

♥ "I work with great people. There is tons of training and support. Great

atmosphere. The customers are as nice as co-workers. It's pretty darn close to perfect!"

Communication

West Houston Medical Center

Sector: Health Care

Headquarters: Nashville

Greater Houston employees: 853



James Nielsen / Houston Chronicle

Seth Tobey, left, Vince Ruffino, Donna Newcomb, Scott Merovitch, Jana Blackburn, Ron Brooks and Terry Shakasizas take part in an enthusiastic moment during a weekly meeting at Chesmar Homes.

Criteria: I feel well-informed about important decisions at this company

Comments:

The things I like most about my job are:

♥ "Nurse-patient ratio is excellent. I get along well with my co-workers. My superiors are approachable and open-minded."

♥ "The director cares about my work and encourages all the staff to continue their education."

Appreciation

► TransCanada Corp.

► Sector: Energy infrastructure

► Headquarters: Calgary, Alberta

► Greater Houston employees: 505

► Criteria: I feel genuinely appreciated at this company

► Comments:

What makes you feel appreciated at this company?

♥ "People returning safely home after work. Rewards for work completed. Compliments when extra effort was made."

♥ "I have never worked for a company that I believed is as ethical as TransCanada."

Special awards continues on E46

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SATISFACTION

I love my job because ...

2H Offshore

"I feel appreciated, I feel my opinions do not go unnoticed, and my co-workers are all wonderful to work with."

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld

"The people. I think everyone, from the youngest file clerk to the most senior partner, are genuinely kind, caring people."

Clear Creek Independent School District

"Everyone is very accommodating and ensures that the teachers have what they need in order to give our students the very best education. It is a pleasure to work in such a positive environment, and I look forward to going to work each day."

Alvarez & Marsal

"One of our core values is 'fun,' characterized as like your work and

those with whom you work."

Kinder Morgan

"It demands that I give my best."

Memorial Hermann Healthcare System

"At the end of the day, I feel like I have made a difference in someone's life."

Amoco Federal Credit Union

"When I am at work, I still feel like I am with family. I feel my job is secure. I love what I do and feel confident in my work."

Beaumont ISD

"I have a passion for teaching, learning and I work with wonderful professional people who care about me!"

CenterPoint Energy

"It is vital to society to maintain a

way of life that is not enjoyed by other countries. Without the reliable delivery of electricity, the economy would flounder, society would be at risk to mutiny against authority and we would not be able to enjoy the advances in technology because almost everything relies on electricity in some form to operate."

Employer Flexible

"It allows me to be me. I can do my best at all times."

Spectra Energy Corp.

"We help the U.S. function."

St. Vincent De Paul Catholic School

"The support of the staff and families we serve."

Medcare Pediatric Group

"Seeing the smiling faces

of the kids every day."

Benchmark Hospitality International

"I can be myself. Whether it's time to have fun or be serious. There are many personalities throughout the office, but yet we all work as one unit and one family."

Briggs & Veselka Co.

"I have great co-workers, I love my job because it doesn't feel like a job. I have fun at work."

Easter Seals Greater Houston

"We make a difference in the lives of children and families. I also feel supported with my own children and family."

Accenture

"I love my job because of the people. Whether local or in a different state, I am connected to an awesome network



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of individuals that have not only Accenture's best interest at heart, but mine as well."

Cadence Bank

"I am challenged each day and have the opportunity to create the future."

Enbridge Energy Partners

"... of the friends I make here and the opportunity to move up the ladder even WITHOUT a college degree. My boss is very flexible and very fair."

Home Health Resources

"I love working with geriatric care. I always referred to the clients as my own parents or grandparents."

Congregation Beth Israel

"My ideas and perspective are valued. The kids and fellow teachers are great."

Robbins Brothers, The Engagement Ring Store

"How could I not! I work with diamonds and happy couples!"

Gillman Automotive Group

"Because working for a family

business that operates with the structure of a public company offers the best of both worlds."

EagleBurgmann

"Room to grow."

Houston Zoo

"I work with amazing animals and wonderful people."

John L. Wortham & Son

"I like solving puzzles."

Money Management International

"It allows me to help people pay off their debt and have a feeling of self-worth."

EOG Resources

"I can contribute."

Newfield Exploration Co.

"We are a family."

Rowan Cos.

"There is so much room for growth, and I'm being exposed to new areas of the world constantly."

I love my job because ... continues on E46

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SPECIAL AWARDS

WorkplaceDynamics selected 15 special award categories for companies that scored highly on employee responses to certain survey statements. We asked several companies what led to their awards.



By Louis B. Parks

Ethics, Chesmar Homes

» **Sector:** Home builder
» **Headquarters:** Houston
» **Greater Houston Employees:** 59
» **President:** Don Klein
We spoke with Donna Newcomb, Chesmar human resources administrator:
» **Q: What ethics issues come up in home building?**
» **A:** Not treating our vendors fairly or paying our bills on time. Not being respectful to our associates or not treating our customers in an ethical manner. Not dealing with a maintenance issue in a timely or effective manner. We have Realtors that are loyal to us and bring us buyers, and it's important that we deal ethically with them.

» **Q: How does an ethical approach make Chesmar a better workplace for your employees?**

» **A:** It makes for a happier environment all around. It gives everybody a framework to work within so you know what is expected. You are treated fairly, so you are expected to treat everyone in that manner.

» **Q: What does Chesmar do to encourage ethics in the workplace?**

» **A:** As we come on as an associate here, we take an oath that we are going to do our best. From that point on, our mission statement is at our core. We are careful to keep it in our culture.

» **Q: What is the mission statement?**

» **A:** I am dedicated to being the Builder of Choice for my Customers, Contractors and Chesmarians



James Nielsen / Houston Chronicle

It's almost a day at the beach for Chesmar Homes warranty administrator Christian Del Rio, with his tropical-themed cubicle.

(company employees) offering the Best New Home Value with Quality Workmanship. I do this with Chesmar Pride, Integrity, Warm Smiles, a Friendly Attitude and an Enthusiastic Spirit.

attitude foremost?

» **A:** Every Tuesday we have a leadership meeting. The very first thing we do is recite our mission statement; we take turns reciting it or we say it all together. We say it with a great deal of enthusiasm, and it's an important part of our meeting.

» **Q: How do you keep that**

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"It's challenging, motivating, and aligned with my skills, interests, and strengths. What I do at Cyberonics plays a role in helping to improve the lives of others, and that's important to me..."

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Training, Edward Jones Investments

- ▶ **Sector:** Financial advisers
- ▶ **Headquarters:** St. Louis
- ▶ **Greater Houston employees:** 434
- ▶ **Regional leader:** Ruben Hope

We spoke with Patti Ardoin, field trainer in Houston with Edward Jones Investments:

▶ **Q: Does Edward Jones in Houston have a formal training protocol?**

▶ **A:** We have the same training everywhere. It's a blended training that we get throughout our careers, if you are a new financial adviser or a veteran like me. We offer study online, they can participate in virtual-led courses, and they fly to Tempe or St. Louis, which are our home offices, for classroom training and role play.

▶ **Q: What training does a new recruit go through?**

▶ **A:** It's a strenuous interviewing process to become an Edward Jones financial adviser. When they hit the ground after they pass their test, they are sent to programs in St. Louis. Then they get "hands on" in the branches.



By Louis B. Parks

If anyone is uncertain about anything, they can call or go for more training. We have all kinds of help, because we want them to succeed. We consider training not an expense, but an investment in our future.

▶ **Q: So they are not in competition with other financial advisers in the office?**

▶ **A:** One of the things that Jones takes pride in is mentoring, which we call one of our most treasured traditions. We are set up individually. I am by myself and have an assistant. We don't compete with each other. In most firms, financial advisers in an office compete with each other. We mentor each other, because we want everybody to succeed. I may bring a new financial adviser in my office and they sit with me a day. They may sit in with my clients. I may show them things on reports. And they may have questions.



Cody Duty / Houston Chronicle

Edward Jones financial adviser David Carter listens as financial adviser and field trainer leader Patti Ardoin gives him a training session.

We have field trainers, mentors and office training.

▶ **Q: What about secretaries and assistants, do they also train?**

▶ **A:** Yes. All of us are learning the best way to serve our client. That's everybody's mission.

▶ **Q: What about**

continuing training?

▶ **A:** You've got your continuing education you have to keep up with, your qualification education. But we have our own training. Regulations change, you get more knowledge, new products come out with solutions for your client. The longer you've been here, the more you learn and the more in depth you are going to get.

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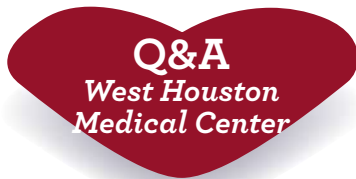


Communications, West Houston Medical Center

- ▶ **Sector:** Health care
- ▶ **Headquarters:** Nashville (Hospital Corporation of America)
- ▶ **Greater Houston Employees:** 853
- ▶ **CEO:** Todd Caliva

We spoke with CEO Todd Caliva:
 ▶ **Q: What is the importance of good communication in a medical facility?**
 ▶ **A:** Effective communication is vital to a patient-first mentality. I want all of our employees to be aware of what is going on, to understand what our goals are and how we are doing as a company, and what's important to us. It makes an impact on our culture. When you have strong culture in a health-care organization, turnover is a lot lower and patients benefit the most.

- ▶ **Q: How does West Houston Medical foster good communications?**
 ▶ **A:** First, I send out a mass email thought for the day every morning to all of our employees — inspirational quotes — so that they hear from me and know I am aware of what they do



By Louis B. Parks

every day. We have an employee advisory group that meets every month, and every department has a representative in that group. If you have an issue you think we need to address, you bring it to the employee advisory group. We have an open-door policy. We do have a chain of command, but every employee knows that if they don't think they've gotten an adequate response, they can go all the way up to me. The other piece, from a communication standpoint, is a commitment to have town hall meetings every quarter with all of our colleagues.

- ▶ **Q: So you are using communications to build a sense of family?**
 ▶ **A:** The thing that sets health care apart is that it can be very emotional. It's the most rewarding career because you make a difference in people's lives every day. It can also be very emotional when you see people who just got

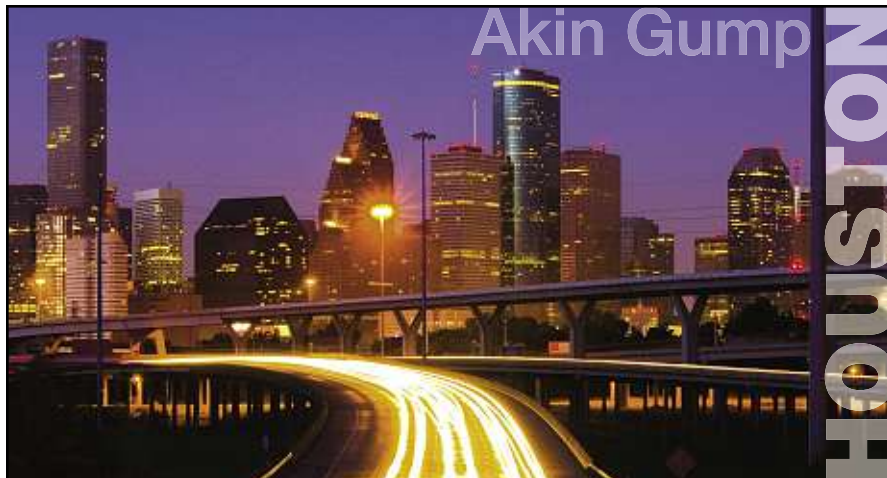


Gary Fountain

West Houston Medical Center CEO Todd Caliva, second from right, checks in with staff members in the emergency department. From left are Bubba Alford, Ken Wall, IJ Okoro, Mario Lopez and Stephanie Ross.

- news that they have cancer. You have to work side by side with people who share your values and in whom you can confide and who truly support you like family away from family.
- ▶ **Q: You have monthly employee parties and celebrations. Why?**

▶ **A:** It builds our morale, and it lets people celebrate the great things we are doing, and most importantly, lets them feel appreciated because what they do every day is hard work. We work hard, but we play hard and take time to smell the roses.



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ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

Joining a happy workforce

By Tanya Rutledge

How can a job seeker drill down into a list of top-ranked employers to land a job with one of them?

Prioritize the companies by your own interest in the company, their product or service, their reputation. Which ones would you be proud to work for? Do you know anyone who works for that company? You might be able to network your way in to the company and find out what it's like to work for the company from an insider's view by working your own contacts.

— **Mary Bass, executive search consultant, Spencer Stuart**

Begin with the list of your top three preferences and go from there. The top-employers list gives the job seeker an awesome advantage by allowing them the opportunity to dive in and find out what makes each company a top employer. Job seekers are able to gain insight into the culture, size and industry of each recognized

employer, as well as obtain employee perspectives. All of these components are very important to not only your approach in applying, but deciding if the potential employer and you would be a good fit. "Can I see myself working with this company ... as a part of their team?" If the answer is yes, then make sure your image reflects it.

— **Debbie Totah, senior manager, talent acquisition, Cyberonics**

If you have identified the company, but they don't have your dream job, look for similar positions and apply. Try to make a connection in that company through LinkedIn. Jobs that are posted on LinkedIn will have the name and title of the person who posted the job.

— **Nicole Van Den Heuvel, director of the Center for Career Development at Rice University**



Bass



Totah



Van Den Heuvel



Lee



Ramchand



Hawkins

In today's technological world, what role does face-to-face networking play in the job search process?

Face-to-face networking in a job search is imperative. Most people get this wrong, though — they wait until they need a job to begin to network. Networking should be a continuous development of relationships and not on an as-needed basis. You should start to build your network before you are in need of something. Always approach networking in terms of what you can do for someone, not what they can do for you. If you are building your network and asking what you can do to help instead of asking how others can help you, networking tends to be more effective.

— **Dustin Lee, human resources/organizational development consultant, Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center**

We live in a world of possibility, with many technological advances that were not available even five years ago. It is important that we give our students access to the latest technology, but perhaps even more so, it is critical that we continue to emphasize the importance of face-to-face networking. There is no substitute for in-person communication and knowing how to succinctly verbalize your professional goals, or as we call it in business school, the elevator pitch. We often find that if a student has the foundation of in-person communication, they can then apply

Face to face continues on E44

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"There's a great team environment."

"I think one of the things that makes Simmons unique is that we hire great people. We hire people who we know can do the job and we trust them to go out and execute."

— **Simmons & Company Employee**

"That's what makes a job enjoyable... in addition to the work product, is being able to work with great people. Simmons gives a unique flavor to what we do, in that, we only hire the best energy."

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Face to face from page E43

that skill set to all of the digital and online channels.

— *Latha Ramchand, dean of the C.T. Bauer College of Business, University of Houston*

Even in the age of online job boards and soft-copy résumés, face-to-face networking is still the best way to get people to connect a face with a name. Though opportunities for this personal interaction are more challenging, it is essential that people looking for employment actively seek ways to connect with others in person. Joining various work or industry-related groups is a great way to build relationships, network and hear about potential openings and opportunities.

— *James Hawkins, director of human resources, Anadarko Petroleum Corp.*

Despite online networking and job search tools, face-to-face networking is crucial to a job search, as a personal recommendation may make the difference between getting an interview and your résumé not making the cut. Successful CEOs

and entrepreneurs depend on their relationship and network. Good people contribute to a successful company, and assessing how you fit within the corporate culture can best be determined in person.

— *Gilbert Alba, practice leader, business advisory and executive search, SolomonEdwardsGroup*

What is the best way to use social media in looking for a new job?

Social media are excellent for four things:

- 1 Learning about organizational values and culture so that you know which employers are ones for whom you would like to work.
- 2 Learning about events such as conferences or other continuing education opportunities that will enhance your visibility and skills.
- 3 Finding out about job openings or recruiting events sponsored by employers.
- 4 Developing relationships with people who work in a

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chosen career field or for a particular company.

The key is to use social media to develop relationships, not to go online and start asking strangers for jobs. LinkedIn groups are one of the best ways to connect with hiring managers, but you have to use the same type of etiquette that you use in real life so that you are viewed as a desirable potential employee rather than as an obnoxious spammer.

— *Janet Scarborough Civitelli, Houston career coach, VocationVillage.com*

Be selective in deciding which sites to post your résumé to. Do research. Use sites that are reputable and professional. Use professional networking sites such as LinkedIn for a targeted search of hiring managers in your career field of interest. Be careful to not oversaturate your résumé by responding to multiple jobs within the same company.

— *Julia Liebelt, vice president of human resources, Landry's*

Utilizing social media can be a very dangerous process when searching for a job. You don't necessarily want to mix work with play. Using your



Alba



Scarborough



Liebelt



Lipari



Wright

Facebook profile or Twitter account might seem like a great way to get your message out to the masses very easily, but most times, it's more detrimental to your job search than not. When a potential employer is looking at social media, more often than not, they're looking for things to take you out of the mix, not things that will help you get an interview. Leave your social media for social situations, and let professional sites take care of your professional situations. Professional

sites only include pertinent information that employers need to see that can only help you get your foot in the door. When using professional sites, however, it's up to you to take charge and make things happen. You can't rely on people coming to you with job offers lined up. Ensure that your professional profile is updated and complete, and then start sending it out to appropriate individuals, whether that is for networking purposes, or applying directly to jobs.

— *Christopher Lipari, founder and CEO, Mach Interview*

LinkedIn is one of the most-used recruiting and job search social media tools, and it's vital to be on LinkedIn and have appropriate information shared. However, I suggest avoiding too much minute detail. Leave something to discuss in an interview. Also remember that you can likely do many more roles than your résumé or social info reflects, so be sure to keep it high level. You could leverage Facebook to get your friends to help find a new role. Twitter — not so much.

— *Greg Wright, director, IT acceleration, Houston Technology Center*



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I love my job because ... from page E39

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Pieper-Houston Electric, Houston Office

“I see it as a career and not a job.”

Southwestern Energy Co.

“My opinions matter.”

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Occidental Petroleum Corp.

“It provides a lot of autonomy.”

Brookfield Office Properties

“The people I work most closely with are of the highest quality and competency. The benefits are excellent with plenty of vacation, personal time, paid holidays, health insurance, compensation, event ticket drawings, summer hours, roundtable

discussions at pizza Friday, and complimentary beverages and snacks.”

Stage Stores

“I love merchandising and retail, period.”

Brady, Chapman, Holland & Associates

“Everyone here is interested in doing their part to make the whole succeed.”

St. Regis-Houston

“I have the power to spoil our guests.”

Star of Hope Mission

“It is Christ-centered.”

Superior Energy Services

“We go to places you never dream or imagine with equipment.”

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

“It is my hope to kill cancer.”

*Quotes compiled by
Katherine Feser*

Special awards from page E37

Work/life flexibility

▶▶ **Oil & Gas Solutions**

▶▶ **Sector:** Engineering

▶▶ **Headquarters:** Houston

▶▶ **Greater Houston employees:** 52

▶▶ **Criteria:** I have the flexibility I need to balance my work and personal life

▶▶ **Comments:**

What do you appreciate most about how this company supports work/life flexibility?

♥ “You determine what your work hours are.”

♥ “4-10 schedule and flexibility to work from home.”

Training

▶▶ **Edward Jones Investments**

▶▶ **Sector:** Financial advisers

▶▶ **Headquarters:** St. Louis

▶▶ **Greater Houston employees:** 434

▶▶ **Criteria:** I get the formal training I want for my career

▶▶ **Comments:**

What formal training have you found most valuable?

♥ “Face to face interactions with my peers.”

♥ “Product information/knowledge.”

Benefits

▶▶ **Insperty**

▶▶ **Sector:** HR and business performance solutions provider

▶▶ **Headquarters:** Houston

▶▶ **Greater Houston employees:** 1,129

▶▶ **Criteria:** My benefits package is good compared to others in this industry

▶▶ **Comments:**

What aspects of your benefits package do you find most valuable?

♥ “Education assistance, PTO, health benefits.”

♥ “Low deductible/100% coverage.”

Direction

▶▶ **Christian Brothers Automotive**

▶▶ **Sector:** Complete automotive repair

▶▶ **Headquarters:** Houston

▶▶ **Greater Houston employees:** 51

▶▶ **Criteria:** I believe this company is going in the right direction

▶▶ **Comments:**

What excites you about the direction this company is taking?

♥ “Growth is rewarding and challenging.”

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