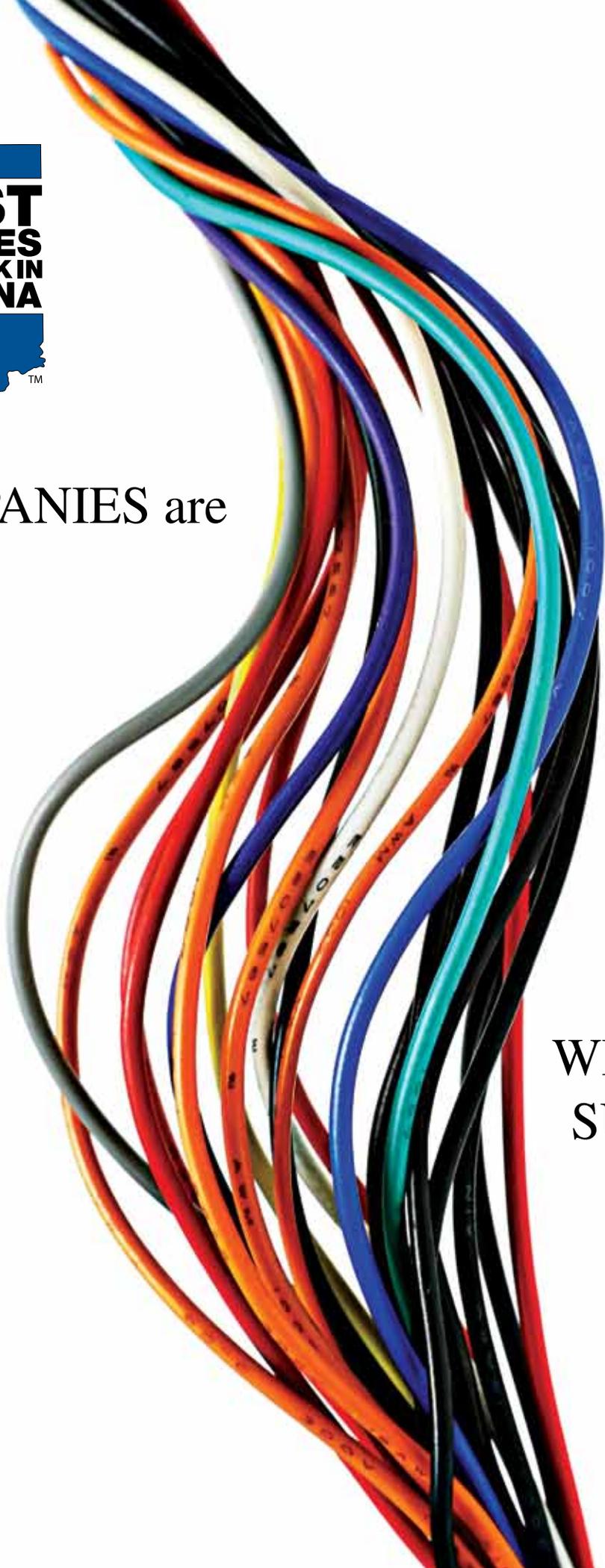




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# Microsoft Corporation

## Making a Difference for Employees and Beyond

By Rebecca Patrick

**T**heir software products are used by most of us daily in the office or at home. Their co-founder and chairman, Bill Gates, is a modern business and philanthropic icon. Indeed, it seems, Microsoft is everywhere.

For more than 20 years, that pervasive presence has also included an office in Indianapolis. Everything from business consulting on software and technology solutions to sales, partner relations and community involvement is funneled through this location.

While there is some autonomy in day-to-day activities, the backing of such a large corporation naturally runs deep – and has its advantages. In talking with the local employees, this influence is particularly felt in three areas: charitable endeavors, overall benefits and career development.

### Giving back

The emphasis Microsoft places on being active in the community is one of its hallmarks says John Holton, who as sales manager for the Midwest district is based in and runs the Indiana branch.

The United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs and March of Dimes are among the national organizations supported by Microsoft corporate and through the Indianapolis office.

“We do a lot of charitable activities and engagements, and are focused very heavily on that. We are responsible for these activities that we get involved with, but certainly corporate has some direction in that as well,” he notes.

“They have a good sense of community and really focus on enabling us to do things that help locally – even outside of work. And it gets driven a lot by what everyone here finds passionate.”

At Thanksgiving time, that means volunteering at the Mozel Sanders Dinner.

“The whole team comes together and works together at the event; it’s a lot of fun. We also participate in other activities like that throughout the year,” shares Kim Towle, a solutions sales professional. “Right now, one thing we are doing is ‘Hugs and Kisses,’ so we are collecting stuffed animal donations.”

Adds Craig VanAntwerp, a health care technology specialist: “One of the things I’ve got coming up in May is the Riley Prom; it’s for teenagers at Riley Hospital who can’t go and participate in a prom so they put on a prom there. My family and some other people from Microsoft will be helping.

“We also do a lot of going out and helping – whether it’s a Day of Caring or other



John Holton says working with his “phenomenally talented” staff – one that is interested and invested in the community – is the best part of his job.



**“The work environment here is fun, but there’s also a lot of focus on what we need to get accomplished. We get serious when we need to get serious.”**

– Shital Patel

community activities. We try to do those on a regular basis. They are very big on supporting the community, and I greatly appreciate that,” he acknowledges.

### Taking care of employees

According to Holton, Microsoft’s community philosophy is part of a broader commitment to treating its workers well.

“The company truly cares about the people and has put things in place that enable us to have a great work/life balance,” he remarks.

That translates to a supportive and flexible work environment.

“If there’s something you need to do for your family, they expect and want you to take the time to spend with them,” VanAntwerp stresses.

Shital Patel, an enterprise account executive, finds reassurance in being part of the Microsoft family.

“With the economy where it is and the downsizing of benefits, Microsoft has stayed true and pretty much the same. The benefits are wonderful, and I believe the opportunities are plentiful.

“Obviously you have to perform and do your job, but at least that comfort and security is there from the Microsoft standpoint.”

The scope of the corporation is also apparent in what Towle terms “phenomenal benefits.”

For one, employees receive a discount on the extensive offering of Microsoft products and services for both themselves and family and friends.

Another example: Patel recently took a vacation to Miami and was able to utilize Microsoft Travel for her own personal use.

“All the discounts that apply to Microsoft as a whole you can actually use for your family as well; you can get a great deal.”

Each worker also receives a yearly fitness reimbursement of up to \$800 to cover expenses for gym memberships, equipment and activity classes.

One big benefit for employees is having their health care

covered at 100%. But it’s more than just premiums being paid says Leticia Boochée, facility coordinator.

“You can choose different options for what best suits you. Most companies I’ve worked for have a standard package across the board. Here, you are able to pick different options and more tailor it to your personal situation as opposed to taking something that is one-size-fits-all.”

Some of Microsoft’s other family-friendly perks: a 24-hour hotline to call a nurse with questions; backup care for children, adults and elders; a child care subsidy at several national child care providers for children of all ages; and financial assistance and paid time off for adoption.

### Climbing the ladder

Cultivating talent from within the organization is another cornerstone of Microsoft’s focus on employees.

This is done through formal and informal channels, with several distinct efforts in place. On the structured side, there is a High Potential Employee Development Program as well as a Manager Excellence Curriculum.

“There are so many different avenues and opportunities that are available. The majority of the team has been here for a long time – and doing different roles. Whether you want to stay in Indianapolis or if you want to be able to move, you have those opportunities available to you,” Patel enthuses.

The office also has an open-door policy and regular manager/employee meetings that reinforce that commitment.

“My local manager here expects to meet with me every week, but it’s more about my career development and how am I doing – not so much about the business. It’s more what can he do to make things easier or better or help my career go, and where do I want to be in the next one to five years,” VanAntwerp relates.

“This is one of the few companies where I’ve worked that I feel like I’ve got a commitment for a career path. They are really trying to invest in me and want to keep me here long term. I hope to retire with Microsoft.”



**“We’ve got a really great and diverse group of people here who have different sets of life experiences that they can draw upon to kind of help us get through whatever it is we’re trying to accomplish.”**

– John Holton