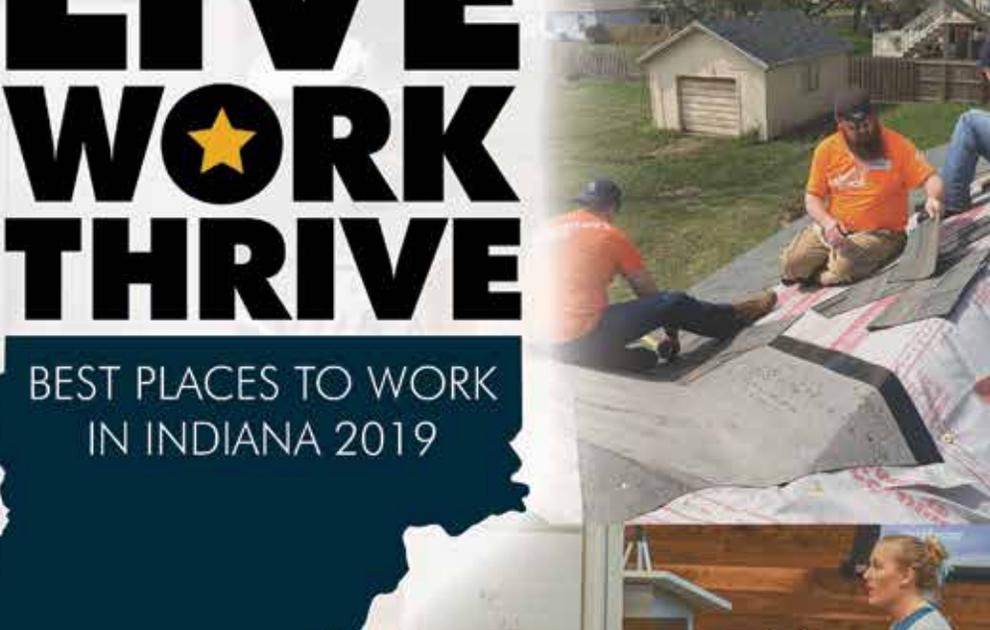
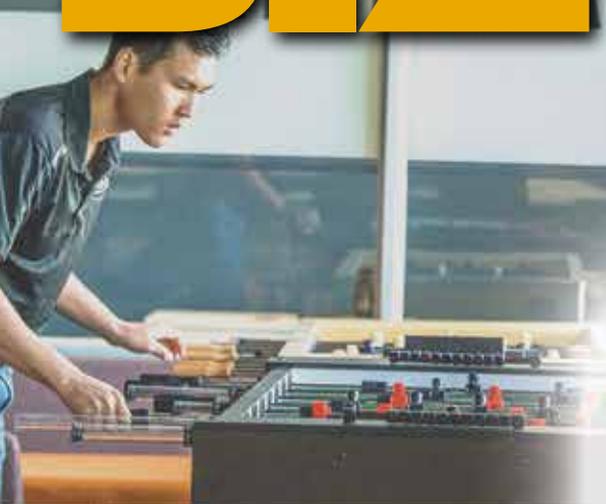


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# Capturing the Business Climate Successes

*Indiana Vision 2025* has been the driving force behind the Indiana Chamber's advocacy efforts since its formation in 2012. That focus carries over to this publication with now hundreds of stories profiling and documenting what it takes for Indiana to be a "global leader in innovation and economic opportunity where enterprises and citizens prosper."



The economic development plan and the annual Best Places to Work in Indiana program come together in this issue. The second driver of *Indiana Vision 2025* is Attractive Business Climate. It is the most broad based of the four drivers (see bullets below), focused on making sure Indiana is providing a good environment for potential success.

And what do Best Places to Work winners do? They take that strong overall environment, supplement it with outstanding internal workplace cultures and make the last four words of the *Indiana Vision 2025* mission statement – enterprises and citizens prosper – come to life.

Congratulations to all 125 Best Places winners. I hope to see even more applications and more winners in the years ahead!

As noted, the Attractive Business Climate of *Indiana Vision 2025* is complex. It measures:

- Government efficiency and effectiveness
- Legal and business regulatory environments
- Tax policies and user fee models for government services
- Health care, including costs and rates for smoking and obesity. A new goal measures opioid and other drug deaths and the efforts to combat that epidemic

We've said it many times in recent years – and will continue until action is taken: Our state fares well in many of these Attractive Business Climate metrics with the glaring exception of health care. Many programmatic efforts to reduce smoking and obesity are taking place. They require some common-sense policy changes to supplement those initiatives.

The next *Indiana Vision 2025* Report Card, evaluating Indiana's progress compared to the 49 other states, is coming in June with coverage in the July-August issue.

Thank you, as always, for reading *BizVoice*®.

  
 Kevin Brinegar  
 President and CEO



### Indiana Chamber Mission:

Cultivate a world-class environment which provides economic opportunity and prosperity for the people of Indiana and their enterprises.

# BIZVOICE

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## COVER STORY

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### Best Places to Work in Indiana

For the second consecutive year in the now 14-year history of the program, 125 companies are being recognized for their outstanding workplace cultures. See key stories at the right and the full index on Page 20.

## FEATURE STORIES



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### Power of the Purse(s) ...

... and backpacks, luggage and more. Vera Bradley is this issue's feature in the Indiana Icons series. The company becomes a business powerhouse and its brand helps establish global connections.

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**80**

### Fighting Back in the Workplace

The opioid epidemic takes its toll on individuals, families, communities – and companies. What can employers do to protect themselves and provide assistance to their associates?

**Third of a yearlong series:** **INDIANA WORKFORCE RECOVERY**

**Cover photos:** Clockwise (from top left): Best Places to Work winners Blue Horseshoe, Formstack, E-gineering, Ash Brokerage, Zylo and Starin Marketing.



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### INDIANA WORKFORCE RECOVERY

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- **Guest Column:** The hidden costs, in money and culture, of behavioral health challenges and the employer role . . . . . 86

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# What's Chirping on Tweet Street?

The Indiana Chamber has over 18,900 followers on Twitter. Are you on the list?

## @IndianaChamber

What brought @60Minutes to Indiana? To hear from CEO Steve Long about @HancockRegional's response to a cyber attack (which included hiring @pondurance) + how the hospital is sharing what it's learned with others. [bit.ly/2VCn8q3](https://bit.ly/2VCn8q3)

Our statement on the final passage of the bias crimes bill, which will now head to @GovHolcomb: [bit.ly/2lwFxAC](https://bit.ly/2lwFxAC) #INLegis

Today marks the 35th anniversary of the @Colts coming to #Indy. We delved into our magazine's archives for this summer of 2007 BizVoice feature on the "Deal That Changed the Landscape." [bit.ly/2Z5S2ZS](https://bit.ly/2Z5S2ZS)

"We should never do good to be seen (that is bragging), but we should always be seen doing good." @RyanMcCarty breaks down the @CultureofGood in this episode of the #ICCEchoChamber: [bit.ly/2X0cRnK](https://bit.ly/2X0cRnK)

Read about seven ways #entrepreneurs find inspiration on today's #blog: [bit.ly/2Z210tl](https://bit.ly/2Z210tl)

#ICYMI: @arthurbrooks addressed our 2019 #INChamberDay Dinner audience of nearly 800 Hoosier business and community leaders and legislators. He offered his thoughts on how to solve the problems of division in America: [bit.ly/2URWUTd](https://bit.ly/2URWUTd)

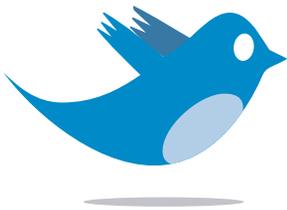
## What others are saying to – or about – the Indiana Chamber:

@IndianaCCT: "Even the word 'college' means a lot of different things to a lot of different people... I think we need to redefine 'college,' so everyone sees a place for them." - Jason Bearce, VP of Education and Workforce Development for @IndianaChamber #Weldon19

@onebridgetech: We are honored to be recognized as one of @IndianaChamber's Best Places to Work in #Indiana. What makes a company a great place to work? First, understand that perks and culture are not the same thing: [bit.ly/2UD9tS6](https://bit.ly/2UD9tS6) #BPTWIN #Indy #CompanyCulture

@FSSAIndiana: Today we are in Bloomington for the last in a string of tremendous events convened by @IndianaChamber to help businesses understand the opioid crisis and how it affects them, including how they can support their employees in recovery. More may be scheduled. #KnowTheOFacts

@WIBC\_EricBerman: @IndianaChamber was the lone group lobbying for #HateCrimes bill to support final version, calling it a "big step forward" and, while imperfect, the most that was politically achievable. It's urging @ADL to reassess its initial dismissal of the bill.



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- **Employee Benefits Seminar, June 12:** This training will cover qualified plan game changers, the DOL's proposed overtime revisions, navigating COBRA and Medicare, voluntary exit incentive programs and much more.
- **ADA Seminar, June 19:** The Americans with Disabilities Act can be difficult to navigate and can result in lawsuits. This conference will help you better understand the ever-expanding list of disabilities covered under the act, what reasonable accommodation is, recent ADA cases and additional intricacies.
- **FMLA Seminar June 20:** This seminar will help you to find your way through the complex and murky waters of FMLA laws. Learn strategies, tips, tricks, case studies and more to ensure your organization is protected against legal backlash.

The Chamber-member discounted price for each is \$399, with list prices of \$499. All sessions are at the Indiana Chamber Conference Center. Register online at [www.indianachamber.com/conferences](http://www.indianachamber.com/conferences) or call Nick at (800) 824-6855.



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### Environmental Permitting and Reporting Conference

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### ADVANCE Leadership Series: Work of Leaders

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### Advanced HR Management Seminar

**July 11-12**

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### 2019 Indiana Wage & Hour Law Seminar

**July 25**

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- List price: \$499

### Supervising and Managing People Workshop

**September 11-12**

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Schedule subject to change. To view the latest program listings, please visit [www.IndianaChamber.com/conferences](http://www.IndianaChamber.com/conferences)

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The Indiana Department of Labor just released an updated Teen Work Hour Restrictions posting that is part of our all-in-one 28"x42" color poster. The new Indiana law permits 14- and 15-year olds to work until 10:00 p.m. on days not followed by school days as well as work more than three hours on Fridays when school is in session. Be sure to update your postings immediately. Price: \$48

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# Gig Economy

## Don't Believe Everything You Hear



**John Qualls**

What is the gig economy?

The gig economy is the growing shiny object of the business world. To really understand what it is, we need to define it. Although there are many definitions out there, I believe that the gig economy means organizations are using platforms to hire short-term or freelance talent to complete projects efficiently, at a lower cost and just in time. Meanwhile, the individual workers manage their time and expertise as they maneuver between promised unlimited projects.

Why do I think the gig economy is a lie?

According to today's wisdom, if you have a car and a smartphone, an extra bed or just an internet connection and some basic skills, the new gig economy promises freedom, independence and flexibility while earning good money. However, the reality is far different. When Intuit and Emergent surveyed gig workers in 2016, 62% of respondents stated their top challenge is getting enough work and nearly half (47%) said they'd like to increase the amount of work they do on the platform. Trouble getting enough work may be due to the increasing number of people competing for gigs.

Just like open concept offices (cubical farms) weren't the workplace promise that we were told they would be 20 years ago, I believe we're being led astray when it comes to the gig economy.

### Why do I believe this?

During the last four years, I was president of a nonprofit coding academy. I was in a unique position to take an alternative look at education providers, employers and employees throughout the state of Indiana. I spent time in 25 different communities meeting with presidents, deans and professors of public and private colleges around the state, as well as mayors, economic development boards, school superintendents, teachers and parents.

And when I look at those four years, I didn't see anyone that was particularly excited about the promise of the gig economy. If anything, I saw a lot of anxiety about what skills employees will need and what is the mindset they will need in order to be working for companies going forward. There is a lot of angst between all parties not only in the education space but also in the workforce. Right now, employers, educators and the workforce are somehow not meeting each other's needs, which creates a real challenge. The gig economy just brings an amplifying impact on these challenges going forward.

To illustrate these challenges, let's look at how one industry has been impacted by this pay-only-what-you-need-when-you-need-it approach to labor.

### Building trades

Over the last 18 months, I had the opportunity to restore a 1930s-era farmhouse. I convinced myself that being my own general contractor would save me money and be fun.

As my own general contractor, I probably went through 40 different contractors at various levels, trying to get them to quote, start and finish work on my project. I don't think I saved any money, it was mildly entertaining and I sure learned a lot about the state of the trades in central Indiana!

Throughout the renovations, I noticed an interesting trend emerging in the best companies to work with. These were the ones that just had their act together. Timely and accurate quotes, fair price, clear expectations, timely start, courteous staff and a quality finish (in workmanship and schedule).

I was on a mission to figure out what it was about these companies that was making them different. In the end, there was one question I would ask their leadership over and over with the same response.

The question was, "Did you start your company in 2010 or 2011?"

"Yes" was the answer 100% of the time. I asked a childhood friend, who has been in the trades his entire career, what was going on? He explained that during the housing bubble collapse in the 2006 to 2009 time period, all the family-owned businesses got crushed and disappeared.

Previously, tradesmen would work for the same company, with the same crew every day. My friend said that he used to have 11 teams that he managed, and it was the same group of people working on projects together year in and year out.

No longer.

Now, he's not sure who is going to show up on any given day. Each worker is a subcontractor who primarily cares about the price they make per hour. As a foreman, he only makes 50 cents more to herd cats basically – with new cats every day. This type of work environment is just not something he enjoys anymore, and he says it's difficult to have a career to be proud of in the trades.

So, somewhere between 2010-2011 people got fed up with that type of work environment and decided they were going to create their own company. And now they are seeing the fruits of their labors by building an organization that is based on people. Investing in their employees, establishing teams, creating culture, values and consistency. All these things are what I believe people really want when they go to work.

When we look at what's happened to the trades over the last 10 years and the rise of subcontractor employees, we gain insights to what the gig economy approach is doing or going to do to other industries.

### What do employees really want?

I believe that employees want to do work that matters to them and makes a difference.

This is especially true in the millennial generation. So often I hear about these millennials and how they don't want to work, they're lazy, etc. I think millennials are fabulous. They're great. The problem for some

employers is that millennials are holding companies accountable for their culture and values.

Millennials want to work in a place that has a great culture. They want to work at a place that has values. They want to work at a place that gives them consistency, and they want clarity about what their value is and what they bring to the organization. Why is it that we are making millennials out to be so bad because they're holding us accountable for what really great companies should be?

### What companies really want?

Companies want loyal, skilled labor.

Skills training? Isn't that higher education's problem? Nope. They teach people how to think. It's still the companies' job to train their employees how to do it their way, in their culture. Somewhere that was forgotten, and too often it's the taxpayers' job to pay for the fix. We stopped creating companies that employees want to be a part of. Which leads me to think: How do companies get back to creating a culture worth being a part of?

The first thing I think of when I hear culture, particularly from a leadership standpoint, is that there's the culture that you allow and there's the culture that you craft.

To me, the companies that are failing, or maybe succeeding due to luck, have cultures that they allow. The winning companies are crafting their culture.

Let's stop thinking culture is about ping pong tables and kegerators. Culture is strategic, or as the old saying goes, "Culture eats strategy for lunch."

I think the way to impact the workforce is to create a company with a strong culture that will attract the people who want to be part of that culture. That will, in turn, provide loyal employees. Crafted cultures will give people the experiences that they want, because at the end of the day it's all about the people.

### Why work is important

With all the challenges going on in the world, I've always felt that an individual's worth is tied to their life having meaning or purpose. Studies show that employees who find their work meaningful are three times more likely to stay at their company, have higher job satisfaction and are more engaged at work.

For those of you who have read this far, I have a question for you. If you have a five-day workweek – are you excited to go to your job four or five days out of the week? Are you excited by the work that you are doing and the opportunity to work with people that have a shared interest and passion for accomplishing things together?

Or are you one of those individuals who dislikes their job, who waits until the absolute last moment to clock in?

I would rather be looking forward to working, and the purpose that gives me, versus the latter option.

That's not living, that's just existing. We are worth more than that.

---

**AUTHOR:** John Qualls is CEO of Purpose.ly. Learn more at [www.purpose.ly](http://www.purpose.ly)



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# PURSES and POSITIVITY

## Inside Vera Bradley's Success

By Symone C. Skrzycki

It was not on the job, but in a random get-together when a new employee at Vera Bradley saw a side to one of the company's co-founders that would stay with her for years to come.

She was babysitting the grandchildren of Barbara Bradley Baekgaard. The youngsters were riding bikes, feeding ducks in a pond when one of them exclaimed, "Let's go to Grandma Birdie's house!"

Nervous about showing up uninvited, Holly Davis – just out of college – walked with the kids to Baekgaard's home.

Opening the door, Davis recalls Baekgaard smiling and saying, "Shoot! You just missed waffles. You'll just have to come in for a cup of coffee and sit in the porch."

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Third of a 2019 series on people and organizations that have made a dramatic impact on Indiana.*



Timeless – and ageless – appeal. Customers range from ages 8 to 80.

Nearly 15 years later, it's one of Davis' favorite stories to tell. The two have remained close and join *BizVoice*<sup>®</sup> for a phone call just days before Vera Bradley's epic Annual Outlet Sale (more on that later).

The recollection is just one example of Vera Bradley's "person-first" employee culture. Baekgaard emphasizes positivity in the office, in the community and in the company's business philosophy.

What started as a small business in Baekgaard's home in 1982 has grown into a \$500 million enterprise specializing in bags, fragrance, luggage and accessories. She co-founded the company with friend Patricia R. Miller.

Vera Bradley partners with powerhouses such as Disney, Macy's, Barnes & Noble, Starbucks and others. Celebrities have helped bring the colorful, bold patterns into the limelight. Fans of the *Grey's Anatomy* television show may have noticed characters brandishing the bags. Taylor Swift has been photographed carrying products.

Vera Bradley breakdown:

- Over 150 full-line and factory stores
- Roughly 2,800 stores carry merchandise
- Approximately 3,000 employees
- Over \$32 million raised by the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer
- Outlet sale brings over 45,000 people to Fort Wayne
- Ranks No. 3 (industry wide) in backpacks sold

"Vera Bradley has something special. Call it a sisterhood or ... when people are carrying Vera Bradley products, it's like a wink," Baekgaard reflects. "You know they get it and you get it. I received many letters from people about connecting them with someone because they were carrying a Vera Bradley bag."

### Fashion and function

Vera Bradley was named after Baekgaard's mother, a former model. Her father worked in the gift industry.



Pat Miller (left) and Barbara Baekgaard began raising money to fight breast cancer in 1998. One of Vera Bradley's signature events is Ticked Pink, a "gathering of girlfriends" at Vera Bradley's headquarters.

Baekgaard's childhood was full of sibling fun (she's the second oldest of six), summer camp and social gatherings.

"I always loved anything visual. I remember going to dinner parties with my parents or something and everybody was talking about the food. I was always looking at the décor!" she notes, chuckling. "I could tell you everything about the house and what the lady's bedroom looked like and the furniture. I'm still kind of that way. I'm all about ambiance."

That's evidenced at Vera Bradley's corporate headquarters in Roanoke, about a 15-minute drive from Fort Wayne. Sunlight streams through the open layout. Bold colors bathe the walls.

In fact, when I remark on the beautiful orange walls on a tour with Davis (who's grown her career to community relations and media manager), she grins.

"We laugh because Barbara likes change. So this will change in no time! She's a big fan of change. She does not like things to stay the same. She doesn't like to get bored."

Meeting rooms showcase pattern names (Baroque, Animal Kingdom, Zebra among them). Photos of past marketing campaigns are on display. The building houses sales, customer service, accounting, marketing and design. There's also an on-campus distribution center. Across both facilities, there are approximately 650 employees.

A bright pink phone booth bearing these words – "Getting in tune with the voice of the customers" – stands outside the customer service center.

"You can hold the phone and listen in on calls that are actually happening in our customer service area," Davis explains. "For us to all know what the customer needs, what she's (collective term for the typical Vera Bradley customer) wanting, we actually physically go and listen in. It's cool.

# Our story

continues in Fort Wayne, IN

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“You’re not calling in and being transferred to some call center. It’s right here. We have all of the digital signage on the wall, which helps us know, ‘How long are the phone calls taking? How many calls are in the queue? How long are the calls in the queue waiting?’”

Jenna Leffers joined the organization nine years ago as a store associate. Since then, she’s advanced to her current role as public relations specialist. She calls members of the leadership team, who sought to find the perfect job fit for her by allowing her to explore different positions, her “cheerleaders.”

Her eyes light up when talking about Vera Bradley’s Annual Outlet Sale. “I’m an identical twin. We’ve carried the brand our entire lives,” she shares. “It’s fun to be here in Fort Wayne and have the memories that it’s still as much of a brand as it was back then. You were pretty much the coolest person if you had anything that was Vera Bradley when we were younger . . . when the brand was still new.”

The products have a timeless appeal.

Backgaard credits the 1982 college crowd with helping to launch the business as her two daughters at their respective universities shared the bags with friends.

“I’d send the bags and they would say, ‘Everyone loves these bags. Send more! Send more!’”

“That’s where we got the inkling that this could be something,” she declares. “(Even though) we weren’t thinking this could be something huge. In those days, I was doing it to have fun! Every penny we made we were putting back in the company.”

### **Patterns: Keeping the pace**

A trip to Atlanta served as a catalyst for Vera Bradley’s inception.

As Backgaard and Miller looked around, “We didn’t see beautiful, pretty luggage. Everything was dark. All very masculine. Nothing feminine. That was part of the lightbulb going on, saying, ‘Well, we’re not the only ones missing this in our life. Nobody has it.’ ”

Today, thousands upon thousands of people do.

Vera Bradley is known for its colorful, floral prints. Along with pink, blue and purple hues, Davis points out that mainstays also include “some of the fun and whimsy.”

“Typically, our flowers never look like how a flower would actually look,” she differentiates. “It has that little bit of fun in it. We know it’s florals and it’s going to be paisleys. She (customer) loves paisleys from us. We’re known for it, but now it’s a matter of . . . how can we make it different?”

Solids are also popular. There was even a period when black was the company’s No. 1 color.

All of the pattern work takes place at Vera Bradley’s headquarters. An expansion two years ago doubled the building in size.

What a contrast to the early days, when Backgaard and Miller set up shop on a ping pong table in the former’s home.

Backgaard cites moving the business out of her house as a defining moment.

“I liked it there. It was in my basement and I could put on a load of laundry. Watch dinner. Walk the dog. Now all of a sudden, I’m going to an office every day and that was life changing to me.

“That was the second or third year of Vera Bradley – maybe the second year. I’d been a stay-at-home mom for all of those years. Actually, Vera Bradley was the first real job I ever had.”

### **Believing in Vera**

Additional milestone moments involve two early supporters.

The first caught Backgaard off guard during dinner at a couple’s home.

“Somehow the conversation turned to what I was doing and (after the meal, the gentleman) called me into his office and said, ‘I really

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Fashion frenzy: The Annual Outlet Sale, first housed in a 10-foot-by-10-foot tent in 1983, features retail store items and made for retail pieces. Shoppers receive a color-coded map to navigate aisles of savings.



think you have a good idea.’ He opened a big checkbook and said, ‘I’m going to give you some money. If you’re successful, I want to be paid back. It’s a loan. If you’re not, it’s a gift. Just forget it. But I believe in you.’

“It was very *Shark Tank*-esque where they believe in the person maybe more than the product even. That was a really good vote of confidence. Positivity is the greatest encouragement you can tell anyone. I’ve always believed in that, and he was certainly the big vote of confidence. We were friends until the day he died and he was proud of us.

“Most of the career lessons are from positivity like that.”

Another encounter was almost a case of mistaken identity.

“We went to New York and somehow I end up in the office of the vice president of VIP Fabric, which is a huge thing. He thought I was there to buy for another company, which would be thousands of yards. I was there to buy 25 yards, if that, at wholesale because (at that time) we were buying from JOANN Fabrics.”

He also believed in Vera. It paid off.

“We were so tiny and we became their largest customer! We (ultimately) printed millions of yards and he could have so easily said, ‘I’m not selling it.’ But we got along. It was a relationship. For some reason, he knew I wasn’t bullshitting him. I was there in a very honest way. He knew I wasn’t in there to con

him or anything.

“Again, until the day that man died, I became friends with him and his wife,” Baekgaard emphasizes. “We have quite a history.”

### Giving back

Vera Bradley employees are encouraged to donate eight volunteer time off hours each year toward a service project.

“They want us to be out and to be good corporate citizens, which is so cool,” Davis observes. “That’s becoming a little more (common) across a lot of organizations, but it’s always been special about us. It’s always been encouraged. Obviously, we make great products that I love and that I stand behind, but I’m proud to say where I work.”

Signature events include Quilt with a Cause; Tickled Pink (inviting 500 of “our closest girlfriends into our home office”); and Turn the Town Pink.

The Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer Classic® brings together 2,500-plus people for golf, yoga and pickleball. It generates \$1 million in funding.

Another cause is Blessings in a Backpack, which helps provide food on the weekends for elementary school children across America who might otherwise go hungry. Vera Bradley donated 25,000 backpacks in 2018. This year, it plans to double that number.

Kathy Miller joined the faculty at the

Vera Bradley Foundation Center for Breast Cancer Research at the Indiana University School of Medicine in 1999.

“This is very much an international company, but they are still really invested in Indiana where this company started,” she asserts. “That’s very much how we feel about the Vera Bradley Foundation Center – the work we do is in Indiana, but it impacts women around the world with the new treatments we develop, the new understanding of the disease that we find from the research we do here that is shared with researchers around the world.

“I spend a lot of my time in the clinic. I take care of patients. But a lot of my research is in clinical trials. (Vera Bradley’s support) allows us to focus on research without fear of failure. Nobody likes to fail, but not all of our ideas work. We’ll never know what’s helpful and what works if we’re not able to test it.”

Mayor Tom Henry, a Fort Wayne native, asserts, “To me, the one thing about Pat and Barbara and Vera Bradley that stands out is that they made a deliberate decision to give back to the community where they grew up. That speaks volumes about them as individuals. Not everyone does that. They could have taken their profits and run. But they didn’t. Not only did they stay in the community, but they gave back to the community.”

Reflecting on breast cancer research,

Continued on page 78



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# BEST PLACES: HOW IT WORKS

Best Companies Group operates 26 statewide Best Places to Work programs, as well as city, regional, international and industry initiatives. The assessment is a two-part process designed to gather detailed data about each participating company. All that apply receive a comprehensive employer feedback report.



Each company must complete the Employer Benefits and Policies Questionnaire. This is where important information is captured about company policies, practices and demographics.

The Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey (employee survey) consists of approximately 78 statements that employees respond to anonymously on a five-point agreement scale. The survey also includes two open-ended questions and seven demographic questions. Up to 400 randomly selected employees in a company will be surveyed.

The results are analyzed and categorized according to eight core focus areas:

- Leadership and Planning
- Corporate Culture and Communications
- Role Satisfaction
- Work Environment
- Relationship with Supervisor
- Training, Development and Resources
- Pay and Benefits
- Overall Engagement

## SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

### Best Places to Work Pinnacle

**Criteria:** Companies that finished first in their respective categories three or more times within a five-year span during the 14-year history of the program.

- Edward Jones (2006-2008)
- Microsoft Corporation (2011-2014, 2016-2017, 2019)
- Hollingsworth & Zivitz, P.C. (2012-2014)
- Sikich (2013-2015)

### Best Places to Work Hall of Fame

**Criteria:** Companies recognized this year that have made the list nine or more times.

- Apex Benefits
- Blue & Co., LLC
- Centier Bank
- Cripe
- Edward Jones
- E-gineering
- Elements Financial Federal Credit Union
- FirstPerson
- FORUM Credit Union
- Horseshoe Casino Hammond
- Indesign, LLC
- Katz, Sapper & Miller
- Salesforce
- Software Engineering Professionals (SEP)
- WestPoint Financial Group

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# KSM INTRODUCES 'TIME & TALENTS'



Like many Best Places organizations, Katz, Sapper & Miller finds ways to properly balance office fun with getting the job done.

Katz, Sapper & Miller (KSM), one of two organizations to be named to the Best Places to Work in Indiana list in each of the 14 years of the program, introduced a new “Time & Talents” initiative in late 2018.

The certified public accounting firm is donating \$500 to any not-for-profit organization at which its employees volunteer 24 hours or more of their time during a calendar year.

“Time & Talents is an addition to our commitment to community that encourages

our employees to give of their time,” says managing partner David Resnick. “We are proud to enhance the value of our employees’ volunteerism with these matching financial contributions.”

One of the goals of Time & Talents is to encourage more millennial giving. More than 50% of KSM’s employees are millennials. Research shows millennials are far more likely to donate clothes, food and other supplies as well as willingly volunteer their

time and talents as a way to supplement monetary donations. Additionally, more millennials give to charity than other generations, according to the Case Foundation’s Millennial Impact Report.

Not only does KSM encourage individual volunteerism, it matches individual employee charitable donations up to \$500 annually. It also donates to the United Ways in each of the cities in which KSM is located.

## Key Drivers of Engagement

Best Companies Group uses a stepwise linear regression to produce a list of Key Drivers with employee engagement as the dependent variable. The regression compares these workplace attributes to all questions asked in the Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey and communicates, on average, which attributes have the greatest impact on overall engagement within the organizations named to the 2018 Best Places to Work in Indiana list.

### These are the top 10:

1. I feel I am valued in this organization
2. I have confidence in the leadership of this organization
3. I like the type of work that I do
4. Most days, I feel I have made progress at work
5. This organization treats me like a person, not a number
6. I like the people I work with at this organization
7. Overall, I'm satisfied with this organization's benefits package
8. There is room for me to advance at this organization
9. Quality is a top priority with this organization
10. My supervisor handles my personal issues satisfactorily



Indiana Soybean Alliance



J.C. Hart & Company



Ash Brokerage

## Small Companies (15-74 employees)

Rank	2018 Rank	Total Years Ranked*	Company	Primary Indiana Location	Indiana/U.S. Employees**
1	21	7	JA Benefits, LLC	Bedford	22/22
2	N/A	1	Artisan Electronics	Odon	42/42
3	1	7	Hanapin Marketing	Bloomington	66/66
4	7	5	Lakeside Wealth Management	Chesterton	34/36
5	37	3	DK Pierce & Associates	Zionsville	15/18
6	N/A	1	Renovia	Indianapolis	45/45
7	6	3	University High School of Indiana	Carmel	50/50
8	19	2	The Garrett Companies	Greenwood	52/52
9	N/A	1	Spectrum Technology, Inc.	Indianapolis	21/21
10	N/A	1	DemandJump	Indianapolis	34/34
11	9	10	Indesign, LLC	Indianapolis	71/71
12	N/A	1	Centerfirst	Indianapolis	33/36
13	14	7	Magnum Logistics	Plainfield	19/19
14	N/A	1	Alerding CPA Group	Indianapolis	31/31
15	4	2	That's Good HR	Indianapolis	15/15
16	40	4	BLASTmedia	Fishers	18/18
17	N/A	1	Indiana Spine Hospital	Carmel	36/36
18	13	4	Visit Indy	Indianapolis	58/58
19	N/A	1	eGov Strategies LLC	Indianapolis	15/15
20	N/A	1	iRiS Recruiting Solutions	Carmel	26/26
21	33	2	Hamilton County Tourism, Inc.	Carmel	23/23
22	N/A	1	Sponsel CPA Group, LLC	Indianapolis	35/35
23	36	2	Greenlight Guru	Indianapolis	47/47
24	8	9	Cripe	Indianapolis	46/46
25	57	2	RESOURCE Commercial Real Estate, LLC	Indianapolis	46/46
26	15	3	mAccounting	Indianapolis	36/36
27	11	9	Apex Benefits	Indianapolis	59/59
28	38	3	Guidon Design	Indianapolis	40/40
29	N/A	3	Indianapolis Indians	Indianapolis	45/45
30	N/A	1	KBSO Consulting LLC	Carmel	16/16
31	18	3	T&W Corporation	Indianapolis	32/32
32	N/A	1	North Meridian Surgery Center	Carmel	20/20
33	N/A	1	Zylo	Indianapolis	38/42
34	N/A	1	Ultimate Technologies Group	Fishers	32/33
35	N/A	4	Luther Consulting, LLC	Carmel	22/22
36	48	3	General Insurance Services	Michigan City	60/60
37	N/A	1	Indiana Soybean Alliance	Indianapolis	19/19
38	28	3	Peepers by PeeperSpecs	Michigan City	30/30
39	30	5	Community First Bank of Indiana	Kokomo	73/73
40	12	8	Leaf Software Solutions	Carmel	42/42
41	26	4	LHD Benefit Advisors	Indianapolis	41/41
42	17	5	Goelzer Investment Management, Inc.	Indianapolis	24/24
43	47	5	netlogx LLC	Indianapolis	41/41
44	49	4	Bloomerang	Indianapolis	71/71
45	39	2	Nix Companies	Poseyville	56/56
46	20	9	FirstPerson	Indianapolis	63/63
47	N/A	1	Starin Marketing, Inc.	Chesterton	57/57

\*14th year of the program

\*\*Provided by companies on employer questionnaire

## Small Companies (15-74 employees)

Rank	2018 Rank	Total Years Ranked*	Company	Primary Indiana Location	Indiana/U.S. Employees**
48	43	2	Sigstr	Indianapolis	63/63
49	N/A	1	Caldwell VanRiper	Indianapolis	37/40
50	24	7	Jackson Systems	Indianapolis	65/65
51	27	4	OfficeWorks	Fishers	63/63
52	N/A	1	Alliance Bank	Francesville	69/69
53	3	5	eimagine	Indianapolis	49/49

## Medium Companies (75-249 employees)

Rank	2018 Rank	Total Years Ranked*	Company	Primary Indiana Location	Indiana/U.S. Employees**
1	4	7	Moser Consulting	Indianapolis	141/185
2	7	3	American College of Education	Indianapolis	48/189
3	3	7	Oak Street Funding LLC	Indianapolis	78/78
4	1	9	E-gineering	Indianapolis	81/81
5	N/A	1	MemberClicks	Carmel	34/104
6	5	4	Blue Horseshoe	Carmel	112/225
7	54 (small)	3	OrthoPediatrics	Warsaw	77/77
8	2	6	Formstack	Fishers	53/94
9	18	2	Parkview Wabash Hospital	Wabash	162/162
10	25 (small)	2	RQAW	Fishers	87/87
11	20	9	Elements Financial Federal Credit Union	Indianapolis	177/177
12	N/A	5	National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies	Indianapolis	86/107
13	N/A	1	Renaissance Electronic Services	Indianapolis	141/141
14	29 (small)	7	The Skillman Corporation	Indianapolis	63/78
15	6	6	Gregory & Appel Insurance	Indianapolis	140/140
16	24	6	Morales Group, Inc.	Indianapolis	123/153
17	9	3	Lessonly	Indianapolis	102/103
18	11	10	Software Engineering Professionals, Inc.	Carmel	133/133
19	13	8	J.C. Hart Company, Inc.	Carmel	160/163
20	N/A	1	Scale Computing	Indianapolis	73/108
21	N/A	1	Oliver Winery	Bloomington	99/99
22	N/A	1	OneCause, Inc.	Indianapolis	109/134
23	52 (small)	2	Springbuk	Indianapolis	95/95
24	14	4	HWC Engineering, Inc.	Indianapolis	100/100
25	N/A	1	Shrewsbury	Indianapolis	55/83
26	16	7	Visiting Nurse & Hospice of the Wabash Valley	Terre Haute	90/90
27	8	5	First Internet Bank	Fishers	185/196
28	23 (small)	2	Probo Medical	Fishers	47/82
29	45 (small)	5	VOSS Automotive	Fort Wayne	81/82
30	16 (small)	7	Wessler Engineering	Indianapolis	79/81
31	23	5	Butler, Fairman & Seufert, Inc.	Indianapolis	159/159
32	12	5	Weddle Bros. Construction Co., Inc.	Bloomington	84/84
33	15	2	CREA, LLC	Indianapolis	73/104
34	41 (small)	4	Accutech Systems Corporation	Muncie	75/75
35	N/A	1	Rehab Medical, Inc.	Indianapolis	71/240
36	N/A	1	Unified Group Services, Inc.	Anderson	130/130
37	19	6	IDSolutions	Noblesville	49/81

\*14th year of the program

\*\*Provided by companies on employer questionnaire

## Large Companies (250-999 employees)

Rank	2018 Rank	Total Years Ranked*	Company	Primary Indiana Location	Indiana/U.S. Employees**
1	N/A	1	Group Management Services, Inc.	Indianapolis	17/325
2	3	5	Onebridge	Indianapolis	40/407
3	5	6	Hylant	Multiple locations	99/732
4	N/A	2	Impact	Indianapolis	47/550
5	11	13	Centier Bank	Merrillville	871/871
6	12	12	WestPoint Financial Group	Indianapolis	180/259
7	1	3	Blue 449	Indianapolis	18/299
8	N/A	1	PROLINK STAFFING	Indianapolis	16/290
9	9	5	IPMG	West Lafayette	312/317
10	N/A	1	Conga	Indianapolis	49/387
11	6	9	FORUM Credit Union	Fishers	345/350
12	8	14	Katz, Sapper & Miller	Indianapolis	310/332
13	16	2	Parkview Noble Hospital	Kendallville	260/260
14	13	2	Carbonite	Indianapolis	66/771
15	N/A	7	Traylor Bros., Inc.	Evansville	71/282
16	15	10	Blue & Co., LLC	Carmel	209/386
17	22	5	Ontario Systems	Muncie	317/466
18	N/A	2	SkillStorm	Indianapolis	30/300
19	28 (medium)	4	Merchants Bank of Indiana / Merchants Capital Corp.	Carmel	192/250
20	18	7	American Structurepoint, Inc.	Indianapolis	334/407
21	20	2	Parkview Huntington Hospital	Huntington	269/269
22	N/A	2	MCM CPAs & Advisors LLP	Jeffersonville	96/331
23	N/A	9	Ash Brokerage	Fort Wayne	269/428

## Major Companies (1,000 or more employees)

Rank	2018 Rank	Total Years Ranked*	Company	Primary Indiana Location	Indiana/U.S. Employees**
1	N/A	9	Microsoft Corporation	Indianapolis	70/80,283
2	1	14	Edward Jones	Statewide	1,251/42,505
3	2	9	Horseshoe Casino Hammond	Hammond	1,638/56,672
4	N/A	1	Busey Bank	Carmel	25/1,353
5	N/A	3	CLA	Indianapolis	80/5,066
6	4	8	Aerotek	Multiple locations	147/8,500
7	3	12	Salesforce	Indianapolis	1,821/20,113
8	10	2	Kronos Incorporated	Indianapolis	242/3,694
9	7 (large)	6	The Kendall Group	Fort Wayne	66/1,001
10	9	6	Colliers International	Indianapolis	53/4,716
11	7	7	Total Quality Logistics	Indianapolis	251/5,000
12	12	2	First Merchants Bank	Muncie	1,555/1,743

\*14th year of the program

\*\*Provided by companies on employer questionnaire

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#1 - Small Company

# J A BENEFITS

Insuring  
Clients Starts  
With Ensuring  
Culture

By Charlee Beasor

"If you've come to find out what the secret sauce is, you let us know if you figure it out," jokes JA Benefits CEO Chris Johnson.

It's understandable Johnson would assume that was the purpose of a BizVoice® visit to the Bedford-based benefits consulting company in early March. It is the seventh time JA Benefits has been named to the Best Places to Work in Indiana list. The company employs 24 people.

There's also a mention of leaders not sure if they should be "nervous or excited" about the fact that BizVoice was there, wanting to know who or what makes the company tick.

What we discovered, as for that secret sauce? There's nothing secretive about it. The company's mission is to insure people. Leadership and employees take that mission to heart.

"It's not commercial insurance, where we're insuring a building. We're insuring people," Johnson asserts.

"Our goal is to help our clients serve their team members. There are real people walking around with real cards in their wallets and when they have a challenge, it's not an automobile or a car. It's real people. I think our family orientation comes from that place."

Financial consultant Mike Fidler started at JA Benefits when it was founded by Doug Johnson in 1988. He says the public recognition from continual involvement in Best Places to Work reaffirms what he already knew.

"Everybody's got each other's back and we know that comes from the top on down and we push that back up. It gives you enough confidence to really talk to whomever you need to speak with and go boldly after what you want to accomplish," Fidler offers. "The big goal is to help the client and I see that every day, no matter who it is."

### About that other shoe ...

Danielle Hitchcock and Jenni Beeler get choked up when they talk about the impact JA Benefits has had on their personal and professional lives.

Both account managers at the firm, they have personal stories to tell about how they've been supported by their co-workers and the executive team.

"Just two weeks ago, these people jumped in and supported me personally," Beeler offers, gesturing to those around her in the



Recognition is crucial at JA Benefits, from the peer-to-peer “Red Rocks” program to the anniversary Pandora charms given to each woman at the company.

company’s conference room. “I have a stepparent that’s going through some really difficult times and these co-workers, these family members, pitched in and donated a bunch of things to help my stepmom. It’s very touching to me.”

Hitchcock also recently felt the care from her work family when her grandmother passed away.

“These people – almost every single one of them – showed up at the funeral home and gave me a hug. I even brought (their) cards,” she shares, picking up a stack of well wishes.

“This is something we do for the loss of someone, but also birthdays, anniversaries and each one of them sign it and we get to look back together and keep it forever.”

The cards weren’t the only items Hitchcock brought to show off. In front of her was a Mason jar filled with (plastic) rubies. Those are the “red rocks” that team members use as a form of peer recognition.

“It seems silly to give a piece of plastic to someone,” Beeler concedes. “But it’s really cool. Like, yes! I got one today!”

Another favorite recognition method is the annual Pandora charm that the women of JA Benefits earn each year to go with the Pandora bracelet awarded on their one-year anniversary. Alternatively, men receive engraved gifts or gift cards.

Mary Fisher, lead solutions advocate, recently celebrated her 25th year working with the company. She received an all-expense paid trip (a cruise to the Bahamas with her daughters) and has several bracelets worth of charms on her wrists.

“My daughter just finished up playing high school basketball, (a sport) she has been playing since she was five. And I can say I’ve never missed a ballgame because (company leaders) were willing to work with me. . . . That is humongous to me.”

Employees have a voice in the company’s direction and culture through the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) Team, which also ensures an open-door policy.

In Fisher’s experience, the feedback and recognition efforts at JA Benefits have truly evolved over her 25 years.

“When I first started, I got a metal suggestion box that was locked. I can tell you we’ve come a loooooong way,” she recalls, to bursts of laughter around the table.

Account manager Tatiana Ritter puts it bluntly: “It’s like waiting for the other shoe to drop. I’ve said that from the first month I started and it’s two years in and it still feels like that.”

“We aren’t just a number here,” Beeler asserts. “They care for us like we are their own kids. I don’t know how else to put it; I’m going to start crying!”

### Young leaders

Doug Johnson, founder, partner and vice chairman, is proud of how the company’s leadership has transitioned over the last few years.

His son Chris took over as president five years ago and was recently named CEO. Clint Parker is the company’s new chief operating officer; he’s been with JA Benefits for 11 years.

“It gives me a lot of pride to look around and see what we’ve been able to do over the years. The formal transition took place recently, but this has been going on for 15 years. Clint and Chris have been involved in the organization since right out of college,” Doug Johnson offers.

“We’ve got good, pipelined individuals that have been groomed to be the next leaders in the industry. . . . It gives them a really bright future career-wise that they might not be able to get somewhere else.”

Jaren Hornbeak, business development associate, graduated from college in May 2018 and joined JA Benefits one month later. He was drawn to the company precisely for those career development experiences.

“Even in my interview, Clint and I sat and talked about ‘Where do we want to end up?’ and worked our way back. Knowing I had the investment from the leadership in my growth professionally is helpful,” he says.

Another strategy is being an “incubator” to know what really works, so the company can more effectively recommend benefits to clients.

“We try to lead by example in what we do and try things out ourselves first. So, we are a little bit of an incubator, if you will. We try it first, see if it works, see if it makes sense,” Doug Johnson adds.

One that’s stuck – and helped JA Benefits stick out – is the near-site clinic access for all employees, spouses and dependents, whether the employee is on the company’s insurance plan or not.

### **In a collaborative way**

Part of the executive team’s strategy at JA Benefits is ensuring employees know what great culture is so they can help assist their clients in attaining it in their companies.

“They know what exceptional can look and feel like, so they know how we want to deliver that to our clients,” Chris Johnson contends.

Parker says the employee-client connection is critical.

“Our balance comes simply from listening to our employees and the feedback they bring,” he explains. “They work with clients every day; they see things we don’t see. They’ll suggest (ideas), and we’ll review and work through and sometimes implement those ideas.”

Sandi Brinson, director of HR solutions, points out frequent touchpoints with staff and an emphasis on communication.

“Everybody feels very comfortable giving feedback. Creating that environment is not easy to do and JA has done an excellent job with it,” she reveals.

Parker recently facilitated individual touchpoints with staff members. He was delighted by the results.

“I asked the question about what they’re most proud of or their biggest achievement in the last six months. And two different people, their biggest achievement was something somebody else did. That speaks to the culture that we have,” he shares.

Keeping the company’s mission and values top of mind is critical. Each workspace, office, open space and conference room has a plaque inscribed with the words.

“It’s things they look at every day. We coach to (the values). We start all our touchpoints with them. Our meeting agendas revolve around mission, purpose and growth. It’s a practice,” Parker elaborates. “I don’t know that you ever actually arrive, you just continue the practice.”

Brinson adds that employees take “ownership in our culture.

“They are vested. They love JA as much as Chris and Doug and the owners,” she confirms.

Associates at JA Benefits also impact their own compensation through personal and professional development. The team, Chris Johnson says, is naturally curious and wants to learn.

“Our team digs it. They want to be part of it. They challenge us on how we can make it better. And I think that’s fair. We’re asking



Team-building challenges occur both in and outside the office of the benefits consulting company. Testing out benefits as an “incubator,” offers founder Doug Johnson, is a way for the company to be confident about the programs and policies it recommends to its clients.



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them to develop personally, professionally. We're incentivizing them to do it, but they are truly invested in what type of organization we can become," he adds.

One of the recent additions to the repertoire at JA Benefits is the group book study of *The Collaborative Way: A Story About Engaging the Mind and Spirit of a Company* by Jason Fickett and Lloyd Fickett.

Everyone read the 114-page book, which touches on themes of speaking straight, listening generously, honoring commitments, being there for each other and more.

"Our team loved it," Brinson recalls. They couldn't wait to go talk about it."

Parker says the group book study gave everyone the same language to work with, enabling clearer communications.

"It's a pretty quick read, but it gives you a common language. I'm under no illusion that every day is going to be perfect, but when something happens that's challenging, it gives you a common language (to work through it)."

### Hard to ignore

One thing that's clear from a few hours spent at JA Benefits: These people care about their clients and each other.

Doug Johnson provides an example.

"We were in a meeting this week and Greg, who's one of our account executives who's not here today, he walks into an insurance committee meeting for one of our clients and this young lady brings Greg up

This is the seventh year JA Benefits has been on the Best Places to Work list. The company's employees regularly go to lunch together, and celebrate or support each other through life events.



this big smiley-face cookie.

"Greg got involved in a claim situation she had. She went from owing \$15,000 in out-of-pocket expenses to basically getting a credit of \$1,300 because Greg intervened and got the claim processed the way it should have been. She had a \$17,000 swing in a matter of 24 hours.

"Those kinds of things happen all the time. The solutions team does it every day. We sometimes take it for granted, but when Greg gets a big smiley-face cookie, it's hard

to ignore."

Fidler points out the joy Johnson clearly feels in relaying that example.

"Doug's telling that story and there's a smile on his face and you might call that enthusiasm," he exclaims.

"But that's every day, knowing that we have a collective mission and we all work together to accomplish that and there is an amount of pride and satisfaction in doing the job right. I feel very fortunate (to be here). They can just prop me up when I'm 100."

# MOSER CONSULTING

#1 - Medium Company

## 'More Real Than I've Ever Seen Before'

By Rebecca Patrick

"It starts with the leadership – Ty and Paula. They really are just genuine, true leaders who care about everybody here from the top down, and I think our employees really feel that with how they run the business," says Allison Mitchell, human resources advisor at Moser Consulting.

"We are a growing company and in two cities, but we've always been able to maintain that small company kind of family feel. And I think that's why people really like working here."

The aforementioned husband-and-wife team founded Moser Consulting in 1996. The information technology firm – headquartered on the north side of Indianapolis and with an office in Baltimore – has grown to employ nearly 200; approximately 150 are in Indiana.

With two locations and the nature of the IT business often resulting in employees at client sites, the company has worked hard to "keep the culture close," Ty Moser states.

"From a communication standpoint – even if you are remote – we want to keep them in the fold as much as possible so everybody is aware of everything."

That transparency is "comforting," offers Malinda Lowder, marketing team lead/consultant, web design and development, who has been with the company five years.

"You really have an idea of where we're going, how the company is doing overall. Every month we have a meeting where we go over new clients and revenues; you see it laid out there – good or bad. It makes you feel very connected and confident in that you know what's going on and you see things coming."

She also notes that the open-door policy is "more real than I've ever seen before."

"Moser is just different. There's something special about the way they treat the employees. It really takes into consideration what the employees want. And what's really incredible is how flexible they are. They just don't take something and set it in stone. They are willing to flex benefits based on what the employees want year to year; they take advice and move very quickly."

### Embracing evolving workplace

Last year, monthly Fun Thursdays were

implemented at the suggestion of some of the younger staff members. From 3-6 p.m. in the Moser café, employees gather to socialize and play cards, board games and video games.

Also on tap: beer and wine tasting.

"Every time, there are more people joining in. It's a great time to get to know folks on a personal level. It's been well received," Moser determines.

Catered lunches, including a healthy option, are brought in three days a week. Packaged salads and frozen Weight Watcher meals are consistently available for staff. In-between meal hunger is taken care of with a box of SnackNation healthy (and not-so-healthy) treats.

"I appreciate the help because a lot of times trying to be healthy in your workplace is not easy." Lowder asserts. "They make it easy to help with your health."

There is an on-site gym as well as a Wellness Bucks program implemented in the

last few years. For the latter, employees enjoy a reimbursement of up to \$300 per quarter for qualified spending.

What's covered is very broad and ranges from physical wellness such as bikes and treadmills to a fishing license, massage or manicure – anything that helps with an employee's mental health or simply makes them feel well.

"That's been very popular and people have really taken advantage of it. We've probably spent \$200,000 the last two years on the program," Moser reveals.

Mitchell points to training as another area that is unparalleled.

"Our consultants need to stay on top of the ever-changing IT world. ... I've never seen a company invest so heavily in training the way Moser does. We offer online courses. We pay for certifications. We send employees to conferences.

Continued on page 33



"It's just a really unique company. The people really care about each other and talk to each other," offers employee Malinda Lowder. That caring and fellowship also extends to the community, with a recent Habitat for Humanity build and holiday shoebox charity event.



# THE NEWCOMER and THE RECORD-SETTER

## #1 - Large Company

### Group Management Services

This marks the first time Group Management Services, or GMS, has participated in the Best Places to Work in Indiana program. A PEO (professional employer organization), GMS was founded in 1996 and entered the Indiana market two and a half years ago.

#### In their own words:

"Group Management Services brings people together to advance their lives. Holding area expertise in human resources, risk management and benefits administration, GMS continues to be an intellectual bedrock for its clients. Our client retention rate soars over 96% because we work as hard to keep and serve our clients as we do to earn their business. The culture of GMS is to learn, perform and serve while enjoying life both inside and outside of the office. Through employee development, career-pathing, benefits, wellness programs and income potential, GMS offers its employees the ability to grow intellectually and financially as much as they want. No goal or dream is too large at GMS."

– Jason Harvoth, sales manager/GM



## #1 - Major Company

### Microsoft

Microsoft has applied to the Indiana Best Places program on nine occasions – taking the top spot seven times and twice finishing second.

#1 – 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2019

#### In their own words:

"Our 'growth mindset' culture lets us experiment, try things even if we fail, and solve problems to help everyone be productive and achieve our mission. By offering flexible work schedules, generous vacation and holidays, we can spend time with family or pursue our interests outside of work. Whether we're bridging lines of communication, donating products, empowering humanitarian organizations, using our skills to help others or simply lending a hand to those in need, Microsoft makes giving a top priority and it's a great sense of pride. Being proud to work at Microsoft comes up consistently as one of the top phrases in our yearly employee poll. We ask our employees to give us their best, and we're committed to doing the same."

– Matthew Goben, director of enterprise sales – Great Lakes region, industrial sector



## Moser

Continued from page 31

“Ty really believes in growing and developing all of our employees. They are becoming personally successful in their roles and Moser is becoming successful overall.”

### A strong connection

It all centers on personal respect.

“We can’t make everyone happy, but we try to accommodate,” Moser states. “We know we’re not perfect, but we listen. Everything revolves around communication and making sure the employees are in the know, and that translates to hard workers and people who take care of our clients.”

While that’s all true, it’s much more than that says Lowder, who laughs at a personal recollection.

“Ty would probably be embarrassed if I shared this story, but I will anyway,” she teases.

“My husband also works for Moser. One time it was our anniversary and he had to miss it for an emergency; he had to go to a client site. The next day, Ty sent me roses because my husband had missed our anniversary. He sent me something to make up for that. That kind of thing happens all the time.”

Lowder also shares the “family-first” attitude when her husband’s sister became critically ill and they flew to Seattle to be with her.

“A couple days later, a cookie basket showed up at their house in Seattle,” she notes.

“It’s just constantly being aware of all the things going on in the employees’ lives, being a part of it and being supportive.”

**RESOURCE:** Moser Consulting at [www.moserit.com](http://www.moserit.com)

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# Small Companies

## 1. JA Benefits

Bedford | [www.jabenefits.com](http://www.jabenefits.com)

**Industry:** health care – insurance/services

**For employees:** access to health clinics throughout the state, acute/preventative care and prescriptions free for employees and family; 10@10 daily gathering for 10-minute walk and talk session; team workout sessions at local gym; beer Fridays.



## 2. Artisan Electronics

Odon | [www.artisan-electronics.com](http://www.artisan-electronics.com)

**Industry:** engineering

**For employees:** eligible for paid time off on day one of hire; able to pool and donate unused time off; bring your kids to work day; group meals; company garden; monthly themed happy hours with guests.



## 3. Hanapin Marketing

Bloomington |

[www.hanapinmarketing.com](http://www.hanapinmarketing.com)

**Industry:** advertising/PR/marketing

**For employees:** company emphasizes developing talent and promoting from within; profit-sharing program; employee-led wellness group; flexible work schedules; office closed on the second Friday of the second month of the quarter for three-day weekends.



## 4. Lakeside Wealth Management

Chesterton | [www.lakesidewealth.com](http://www.lakesidewealth.com)

**Industry:** financial services

**For employees:** employees recognized monthly for various reasons; emphasis on staff engagement through friendly competition; concierge services; each division has a DJ in charge of playing music to match the mood.



## 5. DK Pierce & Associates

Zionsville | [www.dk Pierce.net](http://www.dk Pierce.net)

**Industry:** consulting

**For employees:** dogs allowed in the office; regular off-site team retreats allow for quality strategy and social time; corporate headquarters surrounded by walking trails and woods; each employee has \$2,000 annually to grow professionally.



## 6. Renovia

Indianapolis | [www.renovia.com](http://www.renovia.com)

**Industry:** construction

**For employees:** Monday morning huddles to recognize outstanding moments throughout the previous week; annual all-company retreat at a lake; company-paid national and international mission trips.



## 7. University High School of Indiana

Carmel | [www.universityhighschool.org](http://www.universityhighschool.org)

**Industry:** education

**For employees:** offers tuition assistance for employees' children to attend; encouraged to recognize spirit week theme days and dress up; autonomy in the classroom; teachers can develop new courses during January Term; daily yoga classes.



## 8. The Garrett Companies

Greenwood |

[www.thegarrettco.com](http://www.thegarrettco.com)

**Industry:** real estate

**For employees:** concierge services; free, weekly on-site yoga; monthly massage therapy; annual ski retreat to Telluride, Colorado; ice cream truck delivers free treats on occasion; random fun competitions; flexible workday.



## 9. Spectrum Technology, Inc.

Indianapolis | [www.spectrumti.com](http://www.spectrumti.com)

**Industry:** technology

**For employees:** 100% 401(k) match up to 4%; catered meals; Beer :30, typically on Friday afternoons; relaxed attire; chili cook-offs; bring your baby to work program for new parents up to six months.



## 10. DemandJump

Indianapolis | [www.demandjump.com](http://www.demandjump.com)

**Industry:** technology

**For employees:** Freaky Friday weekly all-hands lunch and employee recognition; on-site yoga; committee organizes twice-monthly fun events; sales gong that gets hit by high-impact team members for bringing on new customers.



## 11. Indesign, LLC

Indianapolis | [www.indesign-llc.com](http://www.indesign-llc.com)

**Industry:** engineering

**For employees:** anniversary celebration and spirit week, for employees to dress for a theme, ends with three-hour party including "year-in-review" presentation; transparency through monthly meetings; employee-owned company; collaboration room; company garden.



## 12. Centerfirst

Indianapolis | [www.center-first.com](http://www.center-first.com)

**Industry:** health care – insurance/services

**For employees:** company-paid events to TopGolf, happy hours and weekly lunches; primarily a work-from-home environment with flex hours; profit-share options; proactively gathers feedback from employees and institutes changes.



YELLOW BOX INDICATES HALL OF FAME COMPANY

**By Charlee Beasor**



Monthly happy hours offer employees and their spouses or friends the chance to unwind together.

# Artisan Electronics

## GROWING THEIR OWN IN SEVERAL WAYS

“We want to be an extension of the family, to give people a little more intrinsic value of coming to work and having a full day of energy. They perform better and put better energy in for us, and the family atmosphere is a big piece of (our culture).”

*Greg Sapp, vice president  
www.artisan-electronics.com*

A strong student internship program (though a little older than these family members pictured) has given Artisan Electronics a leg up in recruiting new employees to southern Indiana.

### Upward momentum

- Provides engineering, software development and technical services for the federal government, primarily the U.S. Department of Defense
- Started in founder and president Greg Gossett’s dining room in 1996
- Moved to WestGate@Crane Technology Park in 2010; doubled its square footage in 2017
- Employs nearly 50 people

### Engineering the workforce

- Recognized for outstanding workforce development program by Regional Opportunity Initiatives (ROI)
- Robust student intern program
- As part of Artisan’s work with ROI, the company hosted seven interns in 2017 and retained five as full-time employees
- Employees are eligible for up to \$3,000 per year for training, education and professional development

“Everyone is appreciative of going through a great internship program. Southern Indiana is a difficult area to recruit to and for the long-term stability of our talent, we’ve found that growing the people already here has added to that (stability).”

### Seeding the Field

- Themed monthly happy hours with employees, spouses and friends
- Paid time off and benefits available on day one of work
- Telecommuting/ work-from-home options
- On-site fitness facilities and cafeteria
- Weekly Nerf competitions
- Company garden for employees to plant, grow and harvest food for work or home

“The second year we had the garden growing, our owner Greg Gossett, about two weeks after the seeds were planted, he went to the store and purchased a watermelon and staged it like it had just grown overnight,” Sapp adds. “The picture of it is still floating around here somewhere.”



# Renovia

## Striving to Light the Way

By Symone C. Skrzycki

Heavy rain beats down as I dash into Renovia, a commercial construction company specializing in coatings and repairs.

“Did you need a rowboat to get in?” quips Paul Strack, national director of sales and marketing.

The bright, warm interior is a contrast to the storm outside. Fittingly, Renovia’s corporate purpose is “to be a light.”

Images of lighthouses along a hallway adorn a “Be a Light” wall. Poignant photos of beaming employees with loved ones illuminate another.

Established in 1999, the Indianapolis-based business has additional offices in Nashville, Tennessee, and Tampa. The bulk of its 44-member team works at its headquarters. Customers represent industries such as national retail, health care, hospitality, storage and apartments.

“We’re a Christian-based organization. What that means is, we try to make decisions based on biblical principles and not the secular world,” shares president and partner Matt Rolfsen. “We have a lot of non-believers that work in the organization and we have believers. It’s not part of your career path by any means. But I think for some of us, it’s part of ‘doing life together.’”

Doing life together allows “Renovians”



Building houses in Tijuana, Mexico, with Homes of Hope at the 2018 company kickoff meeting.

to blend their spiritual, family/personal and business worlds.

“As an employee,” Strack asserts, “it’s the best environment of all three. To mix them and grow them and be able to share it with your peers is really cool.”

Company values – Kaizen (Japanese for “improvement”), Serve First and Uncompromised Character – are showcased on a conference room wall.

Caleb Archer has one year with Renovia under his belt. The office jokester, who calls himself the Sheriff (referencing humorous antics at a recent company kickoff meeting), appreciates how everyone gets along.

“If we have questions, we can deal with it,” he relates. “If we have conflict, we can

deal with it. It’s not awkward. We’re all on the same page. We work well together. That’s what makes it a nice, strong company.”

### Chipping in for a cause

Volunteering with charities that serve the hungry and assist people with special needs are among Renovia’s community contributions.

One effort produced 25,000-plus meals for the Million Meal Movement. Even the smallest of helpers lent a hand.

Office manager Jessie Sears’ three young daughters – the youngest nearly 2 and the oldest 9 – participated.

“On a Saturday, no one wants to come in without their families – or at least I don’t,” Rolfsen comments. “We really want to provide opportunities where we can bring our kids and they can come to learn what it is to be a servant.”

Strack relishes mission trips. He took his first one five years ago as a new hire.

“The bond I created with the people from Renovia on that international trip – it will last for years and years to come,” he declares. “It’s inspired me to go on other mission trips with the company since then.”

### Huddle up

Corporate-wide Monday morning huddles connect colleagues on-site and remotely. Leaders share a Bible verse, recite core values, disclose updates and pump up excitement about a new game, The Pursuit.



There’s a powerful level of trust and rapport among members of the Renovia team. Pictured are Caleb Archer and Jessie Sears.

Created by Renovia’s engagement council, The Pursuit is a personal and professional development program. Employees earn points and ascend tiers by completing activities in the categories of self, career and service. There are over 100 options (reading a book, listening to a podcast) spanning health and wellness, leadership, spirituality and more.

Sears stops by a new employee’s desk (she’s prepared it for his upcoming arrival) and picks up The Pursuit icon.

“We chose a pyramid because it’s the strongest geometrical shape,” she reveals. “We chose the pressed wood because we like to say that we all have our own stories and we’re forged together. And we chose this circle here, because we always want you to pursue professional and personal growth. We don’t ever want you to think it’s complete.”

**Dedicated to development**

A success profile, biweekly goal setting and review process, and annual performance appraisal shape each employee’s individual development plan.

Renovia has four business areas: estimator, project manager, sales and foundation (e.g., accounting, HR, etc.).

“(Onboarding includes) a culture school as well as getting competencies in any position so they have more of a 360 perspective of the organization,” Rolfsen explains. “When they’re doing their role, they understand how it affects their teammate on the other side.”

Kolten Everts and Bryan Cook, collaborating on a job, exemplify that dynamic. The latter is a nine-year veteran at Renovia.

“We were a much smaller family nine years ago,” he notes. “It feels like family. What’s the word I’m looking for? We do life together.”

Estimator Everts chimes in: “We have a culture of always learning here.” Like Strack and Sears, Everts is a member of the engagement council. “He was a big part of (starting) The Pursuit as well,” according to Sears. “He’s actually won our Estimator of the Year (award) two years in a row and he’s only been here for two years.”

“Overachiever!” a colleague playfully exclaims.

**‘Believing in us’**

Sears is one of six female employees. She recalls that during her job interview with Rolfsen, she asked a lot of hard questions.

“Matt was authentic (and in the years since) I’ve never felt left out. I’ve never felt unempowered. I just went to a roundtable on having male allies and I could list a minimum of 10 here. ... I have not felt that in my past positions. I had a lot of trust issues from that. I’ve had to break the glass ceiling at my old position and it’s very scarring. I have a map in place (here) that I feel invested in.”

She also recounts how three months after being hired, “They sent me back to school on a track for a different role. That was believing in me with barely knowing me. And that’s honestly a huge part of Renovia.”

In May, accounts receivable specialist Kelly McGee celebrates her 10th anniversary. Renovia is covering education expenses as she trains to become a paralegal.

“I’ve never been to college. I’m six weeks in!” she declares, with tears of gratitude in her eyes.

“Knowing that you have a team behind you that supports you and holds you accountable and (that) Tim Jones (her supervisor) went out on a big limb for me – I can’t put that into words.”

**RESOURCE:** Renovia at [www.renovia.com](http://www.renovia.com)

**13. Magnum Logistics**

Plainfield | [www.gomagnum.com](http://www.gomagnum.com)

**Industry:** transportation

**For employees:** company CEO matches fundraising donations for employees in need; weekly prayer meeting; regular meals provided; participates in community philanthropic programs; encourages employees to get up and move around during the day.



**19. eGov Strategies LLC**

Indianapolis | [www.egovstrategies.com](http://www.egovstrategies.com)

**Industry:** services

**For employees:** “Debauch of the Year” celebrates humorous personal missteps; pet-friendly office every day; family comes first; ability to work from home; emphasis on both personal and professional development.



**14. Alerding CPA Group**

Indianapolis | [www.alerdingcpagroup.com](http://www.alerdingcpagroup.com)

**Industry:** accounting

**For employees:** company pays CPA exam fees; lunch and learns to bring staff together and speak on diverse topics that promote unity and understanding; regular themed pitch-in meals; chair massages during busy season.



**20. iRiS Recruiting Solutions**

Carmel | [www.irisrecruiting.com](http://www.irisrecruiting.com)

**Industry:** staffing

**For employees:** annual tropical incentive trip for employees and a guest; team-building events and service projects during workdays; extended lunch hour for physical fitness activities in building’s workout facility.



**15. That’s Good HR**

Indianapolis | [www.thatsgoodhr.com](http://www.thatsgoodhr.com)

**Industry:** staffing

**For employees:** insurance offered to employees that work at least 30 hours; flexible scheduling; allows employee children in office for unexpected schedule changes; offers work-share and part-time schedules; cell phone reimbursement.



**21. Hamilton County Tourism, Inc.**

Carmel | [www.visithamiltoncounty.com](http://www.visithamiltoncounty.com)

**Industry:** nonprofit

**For employees:** 100% employer-provided medical, vision, dental, life and disability coverage for employees; supervisors have discretionary funds for spot employee recognitions; on-site, weekly yoga sessions.



**16. BLASTmedia**

Fishers | [www.blastmedia.com](http://www.blastmedia.com)

**Industry:** advertising/PR/marketing

**For employees:** summer hours of half-days on Fridays; regular workout challenges posted in on-site gym by on-staff trainer; happy hours; continuing education stipend; conversations about how individual can advance within the organization.



**22. Sponsel CPA Group, LLC**

Indianapolis | [www.sponselcpagroup.com](http://www.sponselcpagroup.com)

**Industry:** accounting

**For employees:** half-day Fridays during summer; Green Bean delivery; massages; healthy snacks provided; employees can dress for their days, including casual dress; office Olympics and fun events throughout the year.



**17. Indiana Spine Hospital**

Carmel | [www.indianaspinehospital.com](http://www.indianaspinehospital.com)

**Industry:** health care – provider

**For employees:** chair massages; no surgeries planned for Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve and surgery center closed, with employees receiving extra paid holidays in 2018; reimbursement for professional licensing fees.



**23. Greenlight Guru**

Indianapolis | [www.greenlight.guru](http://www.greenlight.guru)

**Industry:** technology

**For employees:** monthly meetings to focus on culture and fun, typically with a motivational topic and speaker; Friday game day at midday; company offers room for innovation; formalized executive coaching.



**18. Visit Indy**

Indianapolis | [www.visitindy.com](http://www.visitindy.com)

**Industry:** nonprofit

**For employees:** eligible for up to 10% total retirement fund match from employer; fun committee plans “surprise & delights” and team-building events during the year; family-oriented, flexible culture; free downtown Indianapolis parking.



**24. Cripe**

Indianapolis | [www.cripe.biz](http://www.cripe.biz)

**Industry:** architecture, engineering and survey

**For employees:** monthly morale lunches with Pictionary, trivia and competitions; impromptu healthy breakfasts and afternoon treats provided; Cripe Chili Contest with clients as judges; became an employee-owned ESOP in 2018.



**YELLOW BOX INDICATES HALL OF FAME COMPANY**

By Symone C. Skrzycki



Color blocks reflect employees' individual traits. Among them are red (Do it now!) and blue (Do it right).

# Starin Marketing

## CONNECTING AND PRODUCING

"How do you find connectedness? It's transparency with people. You can have it in a building where everybody comes together, but you can also have it where they don't. Once you have that, you don't have to worry about the mechanics."

– Bill Mullin, CEO  
www.starin.biz

Starin stresses connectivity through physical and digital workspaces. Zoom Communications is one of its primary brand partners.

### Sound bites:

- Supplies audio video solutions and assistance to dealer partners around the globe
- Founded: 1988
- Location: Chesterton
- Team in tune: Nearly 70 (and growing)
- Annual Winter Fest celebration
- Monthly luncheons and gatherings

### Where to find its technology:

"Almost anywhere you see a microphone or a speaker or a projector or a display. There's also a lot of movement toward digital signage."

- Classrooms
- Sports arenas
- Concert venues
- Places of worship
- Corporate enterprise – meeting spaces, office communications

### True colors:

An Insights Discovery profile reveals associates' dominant characteristics based on a color wheel. Building blocks reflect those traits.

"Nobody is one color. They are always a blend across the spectrum."

### Famous clients:

- White House, Department of Homeland Security
- Museum of Modern Art in New York
- Paul McCartney, Taylor Swift

"We've done everything from supplying a PA system for the Rolling Stones' international tour to Zoom video conferencing, which is one of our greatest concentrations and programs. That's a case where there's millions of people that anonymously we help serve."

### Amplifying benefits:

- Covered memberships: YMCA and Costco
- Discounts for major cell phone carriers
- HealthiestYou interactive telemedicine program; no charge to associates
- 100% employee-owned company

### Personal, financial philosophies:

- Financial Peace University (Dave Ramsey)
- Brand You management

"I tie it into Maslow's hierarchy (of needs). We're basically showing folks that it's about self-actualization. ... Finding their place in the organization. Finding themselves. Becoming whole."



**25. RESOURCE Commercial Real Estate, LLC**



Indianapolis | [www.rcre.com](http://www.rcre.com)

Industry: real estate

**For employees:** televisions available in office; annual anniversary celebration and awards dinner with food, entertainment, awards and prizes provided; company softball and kickball teams; quarterly bonuses.

**26. mAccounting**



Indianapolis | [www.maccounting.com](http://www.maccounting.com)

Industry: accounting

**For employees:** quarterly chair massages; monthly company-sponsored themed lunches and activities; six weeks paid parental leave; accounting employees eligible for monthly revenue share; closes office week between Christmas and New Year's Day.

**27. Apex Benefits**



Indianapolis | [www.apexbg.com](http://www.apexbg.com)

Industry: health care – insurance/services

**For employees:** access to free health clinic for employees and dependents; \$5,000 adoption benefit; quarterly on-site massages; healthy snacks; monthly educational trainings; work at home options; fall family festival.

**28. Guidon Design**



Indianapolis | [www.guidondesign.com](http://www.guidondesign.com)

Industry: architecture

**For employees:** walking club; chair massages; Friday afternoon social club; flexibility; limited overtime; career advancement and training emphasis; performance bonuses; employer pays 80% of health insurance premiums.

**29. Indianapolis Indians**



Indianapolis | [www.indyindians.com](http://www.indyindians.com)

Industry: sports and entertainment

**For employees:** monthly birthday celebrations with employees' favorite treats or snacks; daily access to Indians clubhouse, fitness room, suites and playing field for personal space, recreation and exercise; free tickets to local events.

**30. KBSO Consulting LLC**



Carmel | [www.kbsconsulting.com](http://www.kbsconsulting.com)

Industry: engineering

**For employees:** office closed from Christmas to New Year's Day; associates can bring their dogs into work; Women's Business Enterprise; flexible work hours; unlimited paid time off from day one of employment.

**31. T&W Corporation**



Indianapolis | [www.twdesignbuild.com](http://www.twdesignbuild.com)

Industry: construction

**For employees:** lunches catered in on continuous improvement program days monthly; all-employee lunches for fellowship about six times a year; T&W service day once a year to help a local charity.

**32. North Meridian Surgery Center**



Carmel | [www.nmsurgerycenter.com](http://www.nmsurgerycenter.com)

Industry: health care – provider

**For employees:** company absorbed health care premium increases in 2017 and 2018 without increasing employee contribution; monthly seminars to increase knowledge of spine medicine; annual holiday party; chair massages.

**33. Zylo**



Indianapolis | [www.zylo.com](http://www.zylo.com)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** team lunches and pitch-ins; team members often exercise together; fosters an environment for learning; ROI or DIE is an internal theme and rallying cry to ensure customers are top of mind.

**34. Ultimate Technologies Group**



Fishers | [www.ultimatetechnologiesgroup.com](http://www.ultimatetechnologiesgroup.com)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** above-market compensation and benefits package with 120% of market pay, annual bonuses and ownership shares in the company; employees encouraged to work in the physical location that is best for them.

**35. Luther Consulting, LLC**



Carmel | [www.lutherconsulting.com](http://www.lutherconsulting.com)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** Woo-Hoo awards given weekly; on-site yoga; pets are welcome in the office; 100% employer-paid health insurance; unlimited sick and personal time; flexible schedule to work from alternate locations.

**36. General Insurance Services**



Michigan City | [www.genins.com](http://www.genins.com)

Industry: insurance – non-health care

**For employees:** Carrot Incentive Program awards any producer who reaches their carrot goal for the year with a plaque; annual Halloween costume contest; monthly lunch and learns; profit-sharing program.

**37. Indiana Soybean Alliance**



Indianapolis | [www.indianasoybean.com](http://www.indianasoybean.com)

Industry: nonprofit

**For employees:** employer pays 100% of health insurance premium; tuition reimbursement after one year of continuous employment; expansion of lactation room in 2019, based on suggestion from employee; office closed between Christmas and New Year's Day.

YELLOW BOX INDICATES HALL OF FAME COMPANY

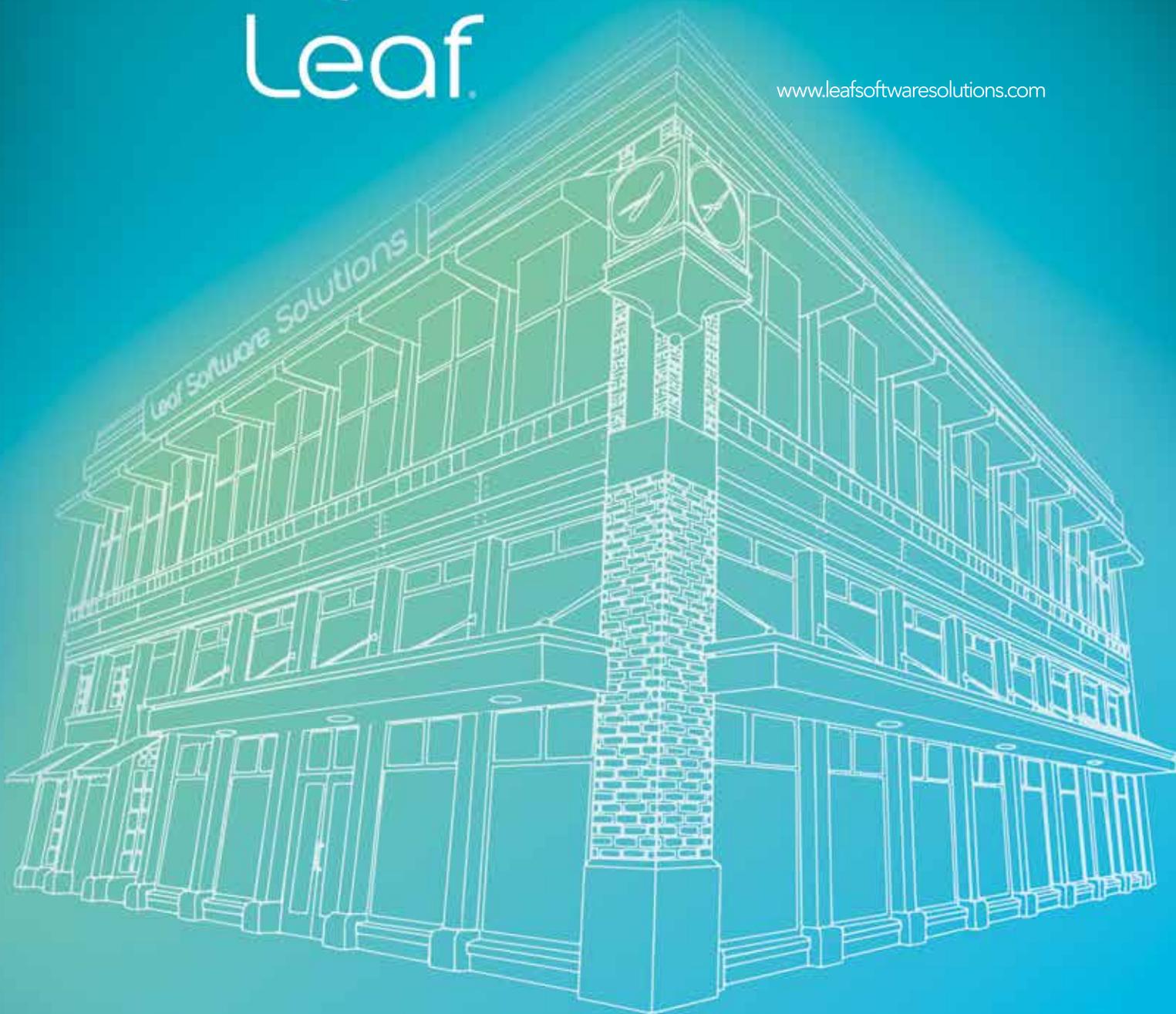


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# eGov Strategies

## Agile Development in a Bureaucratic World

It's 9:30 a.m. on a Thursday morning and about 13 people (and three dogs – Rava, Dugger and Wrigley) are gathered around a conference room at eGov Strategies in downtown Indianapolis.

Gearing up for their daily stand-up meeting, Jason Breitwieser is trying to get a remote conference call to show up on the screen in order to connect with the company's remote workforce.

"Boy, this is not going like rehearsal," company co-founder and chief solutions officer Ken Barlow quips, breaking the nervous tension that accompanies any technical glitch in front of a group (especially when there's an outsider invited to observe the whole thing).

"Hey, it woke up!" Breitwieser exclaims, to cheers.

Pretty soon, each person is delivering brief updates on their projects, any roadblocks (referred to as "blockers") to resolutions, the status of client relationships and more.

Breitwieser explains that anyone on the team can solve a blocker.

"One example of a blocker: When I first started, Ken's sitting at this very table and is shaking the mouse, frantically, saying 'I can't get this to work.' We don't have any batteries

anywhere in this office building," he recalls.

"So, I brought in batteries. That was an example of a blocker, when I was introducing this. It's team problem solving."

The "this" Breitwieser refers to is agile development, a project management system that includes short-term "sprints," or bursts of work done in three-week time periods, and more frequently shared with the customer to create an iterative product.

At eGov Strategies, the customer is a state or local government or municipality. Founded in Indianapolis in 1999 by Barlow and chief technology officer Alan Pyrz, the company has two lines of business: designing, building and hosting web sites, and processing payments for government entities.

### Basement beginnings

Pyrz and Barlow were on the team that created the city of Indianapolis' first web site in 1996, at the behest of then-Mayor Stephen Goldsmith. They started a company, but during the end of the dotcom boom.

"Even though that company grew, nothing really came out of it. We got some local clients, but when that went bust, we got fired from our own company, which is kind of an interesting thing to go through," Barlow recalls. "We got contacted by one of the governments we were working for and they said, 'We kind of like what you're doing.'"

The pair reignited the company and founded it, in Pyrz's basement, as eGov Strategies.

"It didn't exactly start off the fastest growing company, but we've had solid growth,

30% the past four or five years on average. The future is really bright," Barlow adds. "It's really about making it easier for governments to serve their constituents. It's easier for people to get their taxes and bills online. They can see how much they owe for taxes and payments."

The pair brought on Skeets James as chief executive officer eight years ago to help with financial modeling and fundraising.

"They said, 'We need somebody to come in and give us direction, and with experience and get (us) some money,' and they just turned everything over to me," James recalls.

The company has clients across the United States; eGov Strategies is the largest credit card child support payment processor in the country, Barlow says.

"We facilitate property tax payments for the third largest county in the U.S., which is Harris County, Texas, which is where Houston is," he shares. "We got that contract a year or so ago. That's enabled us to process now over \$1 billion in payments. That's a goal we'd always had."

### 'I came here, and they changed'

Back to the stand-up meeting where the rest of the development team – working mostly remotely – give their updates. One team member mentions that his daughter is having surgery, so he'll be working from the hospital.

"Good luck with the surgery, Joe, we hope everything goes well," Jason Morris, director of merchant services, offers to the voice on the screen.



Daily stand-up meetings at eGov Strategies provide the Indianapolis-based team and its remote workforce the ability to practice agile development. A few four-legged friends typically join in the day-to-day work life.

Most of the company's daily meetings last anywhere from 10 to 20 minutes and while business is thoroughly discussed, laughter abounds as jokes and barbs are thrown across the room.

Barlow pipes up that he'd wanted the company to have open office seating initially. But agile development and stand-up meetings allow employees to collaborate, while also enjoying their privacy.

"It never feels like I'm very far away from the rest of the team, even when I'm working remotely," offers Collin Larson, who checks in from Fredrick, Maryland.

Barlow refers to Breitwieser, who's been with eGov Strategies about a year and a half, as "a guy who knew what agile really was. He said, 'Here's how you do it, here's the software to use.'"

Part of Breitwieser's decision in coming to work for eGov Strategies was the willingness to embrace change.

"They've needed this change for 15 years," he relays. "These guys knew what they wanted. I asked them (during the interview process), 'How averse to change are you?' They paused, they said, 'We want to change.'"

"I came here, and they changed."

### Accountable, flexible

Having office pets is a leftover tradition from the company's basement beginnings.

But for Lawrence Ballenger, director of application development, the ability to have his pup Rava with him in the office two days a week enables him to get more work done. He works from home the other three days.

Ballenger was spending so much time in the office when he started working at eGov Strategies eight years ago that it was challenging to take care of Rava.

"It's a nice perk, because it gave us the flexibility. Rava does great and can go for 12 hours, but not every dog can do that," he concedes.

Accountability is part of the flexibility at eGov Strategies. For instance, Ballenger and his wife are passionate about snowboarding. They have a weekly pass at Perfect North Slopes in Lawrenceburg and on Fridays, while their two-year-old daughter is at daycare, the pair hit the slopes.

"My wife will drive, and I'll use a tether and we'll go down there and I can flex my day – go boarding for two or three hours and I'll work and join our Friday code review. It is nice to have that flexibility and be able to do those things," he offers. "They say, 'We know you're



Company outings, flexible working environment, pick-up basketball games, a celebration of personal missteps with the annual "Debauch of the Year" and more lead to a culture where turnover is rare.

getting your stuff done. If you've got stuff to get done (outside of work), go do it."

"Everybody here is just really good at what they do, so it's fun to be in an environment like that. It allows you to be creative and push your own boundaries yourself," he shares.

### Right people in the right place

James points out that of the company's 16 employees, six have computer-related college degrees.

"The reality is, if you're into software development, you don't necessarily need a college degree. Jason, the guy that brought us agile, he is self-taught, and a lot of people are like that," he says. "We've got some of the best in the city, which is really helping us. Alan, he's a civil engineer and a lawyer, but he wrote a lot of the code to start with."

"The key is surrounding yourself with the right people."

Pyrz is self-taught. He says Ballenger came in as a professional developer and helped "shore up" the process. But a degree is just not as necessary here, he stresses.

"Are you smart? Do you work hard? Are you willing to learn? Those are key aspects," Pyrz contends.

**RESOURCE:** eGov Strategies at [www.egovstrategies.com](http://www.egovstrategies.com)

## BEST PLACES COLUMN

### What We Have Learned From BPTW

By Michael Wilson, chairman, Leaf Software Solutions

Leaf has been recognized for eight consecutive years as one of the Best Places to Work in Indiana. During this time, it has been reinforced within the entire team that being a Best Places company is not an accident. The thing we have learned and re-learned is that you have to be intentional and truly dedicated to being a company where people want to come to work every day.

In addition, we have to clarify the elements that make up the whole. At Leaf, it started with our guiding principles: fairness, kindness, effectiveness and significance. We have always maintained a dedication to excellence. We have been committed to checking our egos at the door and working in an environment of collaboration and

teamwork.

These are only a few of the ideas, strategies and artifacts we have used to build a positive culture at Leaf that is sustainable over time, and a foundation on which to continue to grow our business.

Being a Best Places to Work company is an honor because it is a public recognition of who Leaf is in our private, internal moments as a team. This allows others to see what the DNA is of Leaf's culture. We have learned that if we remain intentional and truly dedicated to building a great corporate culture, we are more likely to continue to receive this recognition.

**38. Peepers by PeepersSpecs**  
Michigan City | [www.peepers.com](http://www.peepers.com)  
Industry: retail



**For employees:** Motivosity is peer-to-peer kudos with monetary value to be cashed in for company swag or gift cards; monthly Yay Day for activities, food and prizes; recreation room; friendly and casual environment.

**39. Community First Bank of Indiana**



Kokomo | [www.cfbindiana.com](http://www.cfbindiana.com)

Industry: banking

**For employees:** company vehicle provided for traveling; jeans Fridays; Halloween contests; company parties and softball league; wellness program with awards of paid time off or cash; community volunteer opportunities.

**40. Leaf Software Solutions**

Carmel | [www.leafsoftwaresolutions.com](http://www.leafsoftwaresolutions.com)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** foosball table, bumper pool table, gaming systems, stocked board game shelf for recreation; hot breakfast from Café Patachou every Friday morning; in-office private gym and locker room.



**41. LHD Benefit Advisors**

Indianapolis | [www.lhdbenefits.com](http://www.lhdbenefits.com)

Industry: insurance – non-health care

**For employees:** company-sponsored December holiday lunch and evening holiday party for employees and spouses or partners; flexible work hours; quarterly “wind downs” for staff to gather and socialize, enjoy a beverage and snacks.



**42. Goelzer Investment Management, Inc.**

Indianapolis |

[www.goelzerinc.com](http://www.goelzerinc.com)

Industry: financial services

**For employees:** provides health, dental, life and disability insurance to full-time employees; weekly and quarterly all-hands meetings for recognition of employees; personalized bobble heads represent each member of the firm; employee-owned company.



**43. netlogx LLC**

Indianapolis | [www.netlogx.com](http://www.netlogx.com)

Industry: consulting

**For employees:** provides professional coach to support leadership coaching, workshops and seminars; Gratitude Journal is in the lobby and team members can write notes showing appreciation for others; \$500 travel bonus.



**44. Bloomerang**

Indianapolis | [www.bloomerang.co](http://www.bloomerang.co)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** employer pays 100% health insurance premiums for employees; kindness cards with prepaid gift cards for co-workers; free chair massages; open-door policy and access to leadership; transparent culture.



**45. Nix Companies**

Poseyville | [www.nixcompanies.com](http://www.nixcompanies.com)

Industry: manufacturing

**For employees:** fifth-generation family-owned company; continuous improvement program; family atmosphere; annual company gatherings; weekly core value share program; quarterly division lunches; monthly employee spotlight.



**46. FirstPerson**

FIRST PERSON

Indianapolis |

[www.firstpersonadvisors.com](http://www.firstpersonadvisors.com)

Industry: insurance – non-health care

**For employees:** peer-to-peer public recognition through company app; concierge service; annual events throughout the year; extra support during “peak” season; full week of holiday gift time for the last two weeks of the year outside standard paid time off.

**47. Starin Marketing, Inc.**

Chesterton | [www.starin.biz](http://www.starin.biz)

Industry: audio/visual marketing and distribution

**For employees:** 100% employee-owned company; holiday parties and social activities; memberships to YMCA and Costco; discounts on cell phones and plans; monthly lunches; quarterly off-site events.



**48. Sigstr**

Indianapolis | [www.sigstr.com](http://www.sigstr.com)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** quarterly outings to get away from work and spend time together; Spread the Good initiatives to give back to the community; unlimited time off and travel is encouraged; office overlooks Monument Circle.



**49. Caldwell VanRiper**

Indianapolis | [www.cvrindy.com](http://www.cvrindy.com)

Industry: advertising/PR/marketing

**For employees:** holiday break between

Christmas Eve and New Year’s Day; birthdays are considered holidays and employees have the day off; “Breakfast Club” on Mondays for entire staff; focus on work-life balance with flexible schedules and ability to bring children to work.



**50. Jackson Systems**

Indianapolis |

[www.jacksonsystems.com](http://www.jacksonsystems.com)

Industry: distribution

**For employees:** employee appreciation weekend for entire staff and spouses with paid travel, hotel, meals and entertainment; on-site massages during tax season to decrease stress; flexible, fun environment.



YELLOW BOX INDICATES HALL OF FAME COMPANY

Continued on page 72

**By Tom Schuman**



Team members take part in the company's annual meeting at Camp Tecumseh YMCA.

# Alliance Bank

## COUNTING ON EACH OTHER

“During one of my interviews, I asked somebody: ‘Why do you like to work here? Why have you stayed at Alliance Bank?’ She said, ‘Because everybody is so happy all the time.’ It sounded too good to be true. But I just knew the way she was talking about it, the way she was smiling, the way her eyes lit up when she talked about the company, I just knew that was something I wanted to be a part of.’

*Alyssa Tellez*  
HR Manager  
[www.myalliancebank.com](http://www.myalliancebank.com)

Giving back – at the Benton County Farm to Fork Dinner and the Humanitarian Distribution Center in Francesville.

### Providing service:

- Founded in 1930
- 69 team members
- Seven offices: Francesville, Monon, Rensselaer, Winamac, Monticello, Otterbein and Oxford with “very solid base” of farming and agricultural customers

“In several of the communities we are in, we are the only bank, so we are kind of the anchor of the community.” – Shane Pilarski, president/CEO

### Team approach:

- Values: Be Responsive. Have Integrity. Be Secure. Deliver Value. Be Reliable
- Vision: Growing Together
- Employee stock ownership plan is largest shareholder. “We try to do a good job ensuring employees that they need to act like owners because they are owners.” – Pilarski
- My 2 Cents Initiative: Cost-savings ideas with originator sharing in the company savings

### Staying connected:

- Pilarski strives quarterly to work at least one day from each office
- Annual meeting brings all together for team building/celebration
- Spirit of Alliance Award (employee nominations) presented each year
- Mentor program (mentor from different office) to welcome new team members
- Office managers and supervisors utilize OEB (other employee benefits) accounts for team events throughout the year

### Coming home:

Ashley Bice, marketing director, returned after working 12 years elsewhere. “I already knew the culture, the people, the cooperation that happens. And how community-minded we are.”





# WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Indianapolis Indians

MEETINGS/STAFF EVENTS LIMITED TO WORK HOURS

**69%** | **54%**  
On the list | Not on the list

PRODUCTIVITY/TIME MANAGEMENT SEMINARS/CLASSES

**58%** | **54%**  
On the list | Not on the list

TELECOMMUTING OPTIONS

**74%** | **53%**  
On the list | Not on the list

FINANCIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**70%** | **65%**  
On the list | Not on the list

FLEXIBLE HOURS/COMPRESSED WORKWEEK

**73%** | **61%**  
On the list | Not on the list

PAID TIME OFF FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE/VOLUNTEER WORK

**81%** | **64%**  
On the list | Not on the list

NO/MINIMUM OVERTIME

**66%** | **39%**  
On the list | Not on the list



Salesforce



Hamilton County Tourism, Inc.

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# FAMILY FIRST

## 'It Starts With the Team Member'

By Charlee Beasor

Every year, there is growth in the variety of perks, benefits and amenities offered by companies named to the Best Places to Work in Indiana list.

And while foosball tables in the office, free meals, on-site massages and stocked kitchens – to name a few – are designed for relaxation and stress relief, some companies provide benefits to help reduce the sources of stress that can emanate from outside the office.

For example: That's Good HR, an Indianapolis-based staffing agency, allows a few of its employees to job share in order to work through family commitments. Children are also welcome to accompany their parents to the office when childcare or school schedules change.

Edward Jones now has 16 weeks of paid parental leave for primary caregivers. Hanapin Marketing in Bloomington gives six weeks of paid parental leave for new moms and dads.

At Indianapolis-based CREA, a return-to-work program permits new parents to assume a reduced schedule for four weeks after returning from maternity leave (for full pay).

Companies such as Horseshoe Casino Hammond, Indianapolis marketing agency Blue 449 and CLA, with offices in Evansville and Indianapolis, possess healthy maternity programs for pregnant mothers.

This is just a glimpse of what the 2019 Best Places companies provide in terms of family-friendly policies and childcare offerings.

### 'CREA babies'

When CREA, a syndicator of affordable housing tax credits, surveyed its employees about benefits in 2016 (after parting with a former sister company), one thing jumped out to Katy McShane, senior vice president and director of human resources.

The change in ownership meant that the company's previous median age in the late 50s dropped to a number hovering around the mid-30s.

"There are a lot of CREA babies that come around every year," she exclaims. "We are averaging about 10 a year."

Stefanie Brown, vice president of marketing, jokingly adds, "Somebody's always pregnant. As soon as somebody has a baby, we're like, 'Who's pregnant now?'"

"So that obviously became very important," McShane continues. "We stepped back and said, besides other health benefits and tuition reimbursement, this is something that matters to our employees. Stefanie was actually the first employee to utilize the benefits."

The company offers paid maternity leave, access to short-term disability benefits and two weeks paid parental leave at 100% of base salary, as well as adoption leave.

Brown fondly recalls the return-to-work program, giving new mothers the opportunity to experience a reduced four-day schedule for the first four weeks after their leave.

"Everyone transitions (back to work) differently; it's a nice perk to have to transition to work after you've been gone for three



From employee and family outings and allowing children to accompany parents to the office during the workday when school is canceled to taking time off to care for babies or aging parents, these Best Places to Work in Indiana companies focus on family.



Horseshoe Casino Hammond is a 24/7 operation. Company leadership invests in the health and wellness of its employees, and recently instituted additional paid parental leave.

months,” she adds.

Wellness/mothers’ rooms are also available at CREA. The newly expanded headquarters boasts three of these locations, compared to one previously.

“(Parents) feel valued and comfortable coming back to work, being able to do the things they need to do for their child,” Brown asserts. “I’ve worked here for 10 years and (Jeff Whiting, president and CEO) has always said, ‘Put your family first.’ Even when I didn’t have kids and I needed to go see my mom, he said, ‘Do that.’”

“He’s been the driving force with making people feel comfortable being able to take care of their families.”

### Tailored approach

CREA has just over 100 employees in its Indianapolis headquarters and six regional offices nationwide. The strategy is to survey employees every few years to keep an eye on what’s needed in terms of benefits.

That’s Good HR takes a similar approach. With only 15 to 20 women working at any time in the privately held staffing firm, the importance of flexibility became evident immediately.

Greta Cline is partner and co-owner of That’s Good HR, and in charge of finance and operations. When she and business partner Mary Springer bought out the company’s former majority shareholder in April of 2017, the company became a Women’s Business Enterprise.

“We have learned with the flexibility and combining positions and job share, you get as much or more productivity from that as making someone sit there for 10 hours a day. They have skin in the game. They want to keep the flexibility. They’ll work harder when they’re here. It has really worked for us.”

Constant evaluation and development of human resources policies is critical.

“Your tailored approach today doesn’t mean that’s going to fit tomorrow and the needs change. ... As kids age, the needs change and you just always have to be (flexible).”

Susie McKenna, director of marketing and communications, points out that the employees who share a job were recently promoted.

“This was not a barrier to their career. These are opportunities for growth. It makes them fresher in the office, more productive when they’re here and protective of their time here,” she notes.

A recent snow day saw the That’s Good HR office bustling with children – some of them even pitching in and learning what it’s like to work in an office setting.

“There’s a sweet spot of age where it works

better,” to have children in the office, says Cline. “But definitely, our recent snow day that we had, we had a big day planned and so it was great that was available because we didn’t have to change our events for that day and what we were going to get accomplished in here.”

Adds McKenna, “You’re modeling for your children the importance of work and also that you can work for people who support you.”

### 24/7 world

It can be difficult to ensure a healthy balance between life and work when your business never closes. The leadership at Horseshoe Casino Hammond is up to that challenge.

The casino offers four weeks of paid parental leave, a healthy pregnancy program for mothers and access to an on-site wellness clinic for employees and families to utilize when they or their children or spouses are sick. These are among numerous other health and wellness-related programs.

Dawn Reynolds Pettit, regional vice president of human resources, says the emphasis on balance benefits not only the employees, but also the company.

“We’re a 24/7 operation. We are busiest when other people are off – on holidays, nights and weekends. Our employees are oftentimes away from their families. We work very diligently to help bridge that gap,” she outlines.

The parental leave policy is new for 2019, and the company began communicating about it to employees late in 2018. It’s been a “home run,” Pettit notes.

“It’s four weeks of paid parental leave at full salary for any mom or dad for birth, adoption and fostering. And it does not have to be taken at the time of the birth,” she adds.

Continued on page 60



At That’s Good HR, moms of humans and “fur babies” alike are taken into consideration, along with those who take care of family members and other personal situations.



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# Medium Companies

## 1. Moser Consulting

Indianapolis | [www.moserit.com](http://www.moserit.com)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** annual employee of the year with cash award and recognition in front of company; monthly “Fun Thursday” to socialize, play games, wine and beer tasting; paid training; catered lunches three days per week.



## 8. Formstack

Fishers | [www.formstack.com](http://www.formstack.com)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** employee health insurance premiums paid 100%; monthly meetings for shout outs to give high fives to employees who have helped with projects; paid sabbaticals; office yoga.



## 2. American College of Education

Indianapolis | [www.ace.edu](http://www.ace.edu)

Industry: education

**For employees:** 100% tuition reduction for American College of Education courses; paid sabbaticals; office Olympics; internal mindfulness and meditation club; remote working capabilities; paid parking; free snacks and drinks.



## 9. Parkview Wabash Hospital

Wabash | [www.parkview.com/locations/parkview-wabash-hospital](http://www.parkview.com/locations/parkview-wabash-hospital)

Industry: non-profit – health and human services

**For employees:** Halloween scavenger hunt; flexible hours, scheduling and compassionate approach to balancing personal needs and family time; new, state-of-the-art facility; quarterly employee engagement meetings and activities.



## 3. Oak Street Funding LLC

Indianapolis | [www.oakstreetfunding.com](http://www.oakstreetfunding.com)

Industry: financial services

**For employees:** “Star Award” program recognizes employees for going above and beyond; extra paid time off for exceeding goals; on-site exercise room; stand-up desk options; friendly departmental team building contests.



## 10. RQAW

Fishers | [www.rqaw.com](http://www.rqaw.com)

Industry: engineering

**For employees:** employee appreciation holiday luncheons; new employee welcome luncheon; birthday/work anniversary recognition; ping pong, cornhole, euchre tournaments; social outings; complimentary fitness facility.



## 4. E-gineering

Indianapolis | [www.e-gineering.com](http://www.e-gineering.com)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** employer pays 100% of employee health insurance premiums; free use of office for personal events; two fully stocked kitchens with snack and meal choices; nap room; monthly physical therapy clinic.



## 11. Elements Financial Federal Credit Union

Indianapolis | [www.elements.org](http://www.elements.org)

Industry: financial services

**For employees:** cross-department relationships exist, ongoing leadership development opportunities are provided; wellness committee plans midday fitness walks; employee appreciation week; theme days.



## 5. MemberClicks

Carmel | [www.memberclicks.com](http://www.memberclicks.com)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** catered lunches several times per month; personal development session on meditation in the workplace; lounge with comfortable furniture and TVs; unlimited time off; paid gym memberships.



## 12. National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies

Indianapolis | [www.namic.org](http://www.namic.org)

Industry: business trade association

**For employees:** CEO takes a few employees to lunch monthly on a rotating basis; twice a day walking breaks; on-site massages every other week; bring your dog to work day; four teams to help shape company culture.



## 6. Blue Horseshoe

Carmel | [www.bhsolutions.com](http://www.bhsolutions.com)

Industry: services

**For employees:** employee health insurance premiums paid 100%; free on-site monthly health clinic; arcade and ping pong; yoga; voluntary pet insurance; free-form workspaces.



## 13. Renaissance Electronic Services

Indianapolis | [www.dentalhero.com](http://www.dentalhero.com)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** immediate vesting in retirement plans; monthly culture team event; game room with table tennis, foosball, televisions and video games; gym memberships, healthy snacks, flexible and remote work options.



## 7. OrthoPediatrics

Warsaw | [www.orthopediatrics.com](http://www.orthopediatrics.com)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** dollar-for-dollar retirement plan matching; monthly social outings and community service events; midday breaks for games, puzzles, etc.; Nerf wars on Friday afternoons; unlimited vacation time.



**YELLOW BOX INDICATES HALL OF FAME COMPANY**

By Rebecca Patrick



At the end of every harvest season, Oliver Winery offers a full paid day of canoeing fun for each employee and a guest.

# Oliver Winery

## GETTING BETTER WITH AGE

"Our culture of caring is something that resonates most with all of our employees. We are in the hospitality industry and that is very much part of our DNA and who we are. ... We really make a lot of effort to get to know folks and to have personal touches that let people know we care about them. We want to be part of the bright spot in their day."

— Julie Adams, president  
Oliver Winery

### Label distinctions

- Founded in 1972; Indiana's oldest and largest winery, and one of the 50 biggest in the U.S.
- The nation's only 100% employee-owned winery
- Recently ranked a Top 25 winery to visit by *Travel + Leisure* magazine; more than 200,000 guests come each year

### A bouquet of benefits

- Employees receive an annual allocation of Oliver Wine Company stock into a retirement account, with contributions averaging 12% of yearly compensation
- Seven annual employee events foster camaraderie; among them: a family-friendly picnic, Harvest Hootenanny (end-of-season bash and bonfire) and Casino Night
- Hand-signed card and a gift for birthdays
- Personal development, financial management and stress management classes

### From the start

A welcome box sets the tone with new hires; it includes their "favorite Oliver wine, a logo shirt and other kinds of fun swag." There is also a detailed training plan that covers not only the employee's duties but general information about the winery.

### Sharing = caring

- "Listening Lunches" hosted by founder Bill Oliver and Adams gather a small group of employees together to get the broader team's perspective on life at the winery. "Why Do You Stay" conversations let the HR director know what is working and what isn't
- Comprehensive all-employee meetings have been added

"I hope that our employees would say that we do both more listening and more sharing than ever before."



"Because Oliver employees are owners, they know that every grape harvested, glass poured and five-star customer rating earned directly impacts their future. We hear from them that this fuels their passion and dedication to the winery."

# Scale Computing

By Tom Schuman

## Going All Out ... and Doing It Together

It's not unusual for team members at a Best Places to Work company to indicate that they "work hard and play hard."

At Scale Computing, it doesn't take long to see that mentality in action. A couple of examples:

**Business:** Brent Patrick, senior marketing manager, says the company has a "cult following" among its customers. "People love an underdog. That's kind of who we are in the market. We just try to take our fair share" ... with Blake Dickmeyer, director of sales, quickly chiming in with "and theirs" in the quest to grow the operation.

**Fun with a purpose:** Asked about their favorite company perks, five team members gathered around the table in the R2-D2 conference room quickly – and passionately – launch into some of their top activities.

Exhibit one is the HandleBar Hot Laps competition on Monument Circle in downtown Indianapolis. Team t-shirts and a pep rally are precursors to two straight Spirit Awards, which includes collecting new clothing items. The ensuing donation for the award was provided to Horizon House to support its efforts in helping the homeless.

Kellie Howe, Tier 2 technical support engineer, proudly states, "We come in and blow them (bigger companies) out of the water."

Next up: Donations and subsequent shopping so 50-plus area youth would have presents to open during the holidays. For Joe Knight, an account-based marketing strategist who joined Scale in late 2018, "For that to happen the first month I was here, that was awesome."

Patrick summarizes it this way. "When we rally behind a cause, we rally hard. We have some of the best people in the world working in this building every day."

Dickmeyer ties the play and work aspects together. "It all goes in tandem. We are a small fish against whales. We've got to bring our 'A' game into the marketplace all the time. With that mentality, it bleeds over into all aspects."

### Computing it all

Jeff Ready, CEO of Scale, and partners founded the company in 2007 with a focus on information technology (IT) infrastructure



The Scale Computing team takes pride in its efforts to support Horizon House, including collecting new clothing as part of the HandleBar Hot Laps competition in downtown Indianapolis.



solutions for small- and medium-sized businesses with minimal IT expertise. It is now, pun intended, on the leading edge of a change that is bringing computer services to the "edge" – not in the cloud and not within a company's own data center.

"We now find ourselves at the tip of the spear in edge computing," offers Ready, who started and successfully exited several companies in Silicon Valley before returning home to Indiana. "I wanted to build something here. Why people like working here – it's having a significant technology, a radical innovation-type company, combined with a midwestern or Indiana culture."

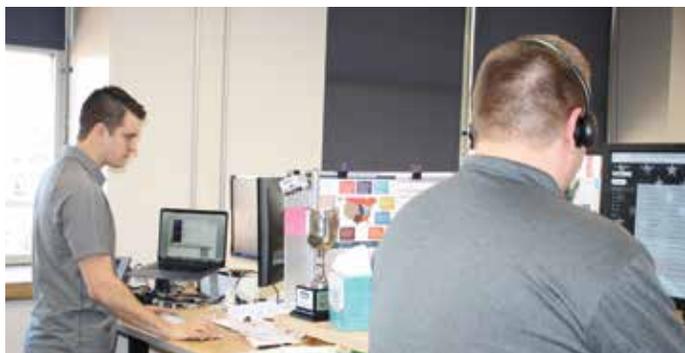
Ready and the executive team established four core values: integrity, innovation, collaboration and fun. But he credits associates for taking the ball and running, even in a time of explosive growth. The company added approximately 40 employees between October 2018 and February of this year and aims to double its head count to 280 in the next 18 months.

On the day of this conversation with staff,

Ready was in Barcelona officially unveiling a partnership with Hong Kong-based personal computer firm Lenovo. In late 2018, the company announced an infusion of \$34.8 million in venture capital from a variety of investors.

"One of the things I am so – proud is not even the right word – impressed with is that the culture does not come from the top down," he affirms. Citing the Horizon House support, holiday shopping for kids – "it started with probably enough for half a dozen" – and other initiatives, "Not a single one of those things was decided by myself or the executives. I love that we do these things as a company."

And while growth sometimes brings internal challenges, Ready contends that "over time, the culture actually has, on its own, gotten stronger. By hiring folks who embrace a similar approach, you then have that much more of a concentration among the team. Thus, as the company has gotten bigger, it's counterintuitive, (but) it's seemed easier to maintain that culture."



“Scalers” say a singular focus on the customer brings them together and helps drive company success.

### Home base

Scale has called the Union 525 tech center in downtown Indianapolis home since 2017. The co-location with other tech-related companies delivers a new energy, according to the team. The open format within the recently expanded Scale office leads to natural collaboration. Ready and other executives are in the mix with their corner desks – no individual enclosed offices.

“We hired a new vice president of marketing who asked what channels I would go through to share a new idea with Jeff,” Dickmeyer shares. “I said I’d probably just walk over to his desk and say, ‘Here’s what we’re doing; what do you think?’ That’s not the norm, but it’s the norm here.”

Patrick relays that he meets with his team members one-on-one every week. “The first half hour is what they need from me. The second half is about their personal career trajectory.”

Knight, one of those on Patrick’s team, was surprised in one of his early meetings when his supervisor said, “Just to let you know, I work for you; you don’t work for me. That’s not just our department, but across the entire company. People want to see other people succeed.”

### Special times

Patrick calls the Dip-Off Contest, in which the actual prize for the best homemade dip is a dipstick for your car, the “best day of the year.” Howe chimes in with pet dogs in the office on Thursdays as the “best day of the week.”

Scale Computer clothing and promotional swag are in abundance. The team credits Lynanne “LG” Gibel, director of support services, for being the house mom/cheerleader and driver of the “Scaler” mentality.

Aly Sander, operations specialist, says people “have a strong determination to be here. Everybody believes in the product.”

Howe puts it this way, describing January’s “all hands” meeting that includes team members from other U.S. and international offices. “It wasn’t, ‘We’ve done that and pat yourselves on the back.’ It was, ‘Now let’s get going, let’s keep pushing forward.’ To have the leaders of your company get up there and inspire everyone, that was really awesome.”

Ready terms it a “privilege” for him to be engaged with this team. “We’ve got each other’s back when someone needs help. Being a great place to work is a competitive advantage and it does help us attract and keep the right people. It makes it fun for me to be a part of it.”

**RESOURCE:** Scale Computing at [www.scalecomputing.com](http://www.scalecomputing.com)

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**14. The Skillman Corporation**

Indianapolis | [www.skillman.com](http://www.skillman.com)

**Industry:** construction

**For employees:** employee health care premiums paid by company; access to TeleDoc; birthday cards for all employees signed by entire company; regular company-wide announcements of promotions, awards and honors.



The SKILLMAN Corporation  
Construction Management

**20. Scale Computing**

Indianapolis |

[www.scalecomputing.com](http://www.scalecomputing.com)

**Industry:** technology

**For employees:** president's club annual incentive trip; State Fair event during the summer; employees can bring their dogs to work on Thursdays; flexible work hours; safe and comfortable work environment that promotes diversity.



**15. Gregory & Appel Insurance**

Indianapolis | [www.gregoryappel.com](http://www.gregoryappel.com)

**Industry:** insurance/employee benefits

**For employees:** access to near-site health clinic; annual holiday party extravaganza; discounted partnership with a massage service; summer hours for 10 half-day Fridays; weekly fresh fruit delivered.



**21. Oliver Winery**

Bloomington |

[www.oliverwinery.com](http://www.oliverwinery.com)

**Industry:** winery

**For employees:** 100% employee-owned company with employee stock ownership plan; internal leadership training program; monthly "Wine Fridays" to promote camaraderie and learn about wine; 50% discount on wine.



**16. Morales Group Inc.**

Indianapolis |

[www.moralesgroup.net](http://www.moralesgroup.net)

**Industry:** staffing

**For employees:** culture committee to create monthly fun activities; well-being workshops; free massages; paid time off to go on annual mission trip; two extra paid days off during holidays.



**22. OneCause, Inc.**

Indianapolis | [www.onecause.com](http://www.onecause.com)

**Industry:** technology

**For employees:** ping pong table and cornhole boards; biweekly social hour; weekly yoga; summer all-company meeting; days to give back to the community; social hours; healthy work environment.



**17. Lessonly**

Indianapolis | [www.lessonly.com](http://www.lessonly.com)

**Industry:** technology

**For employees:** free yoga offered weekly; teams hold creative monthly/quarterly outings; unlimited paid time off and flexible work; 12 weeks paid parental leave for primary caregivers and six weeks for secondary caregivers.



**23. Springbuk**

Indianapolis |

[www.springbuk.com](http://www.springbuk.com)

**Industry:** technology

**For employees:** quarterly awards for employees reflecting core values; celebrating "seismic events" for the company and recognizing contributors at monthly all-hands breakfast clubs; large "bored room" with video games, board games, snacks and more.



**18. Software Engineering Professionals, Inc.**

Carmel | [www.sep.com](http://www.sep.com)

**Industry:** technology

**For employees:** company brings in outside experts to provide training; career path with career check-ins and skill assessments; dedicated time for work on side projects or products; employee-run anonymous gift exchange twice a year.



**24. HWC Engineering, Inc.**

Indianapolis |

[www.hwcengineering.com](http://www.hwcengineering.com)

**Industry:** engineering

**For employees:** employees who become professionally licensed within their areas receive a salary increase and lunch with the team; team gaming afternoons; game tables on-site; flexible scheduling and telecommuting available.



**19. J.C. Hart Company, Inc.**

Carmel | [www.homeisjchart.com](http://www.homeisjchart.com)

**Industry:** property management

**For employees:** quarterly wellness challenges; corporate challenge event with obstacles, tug of war, golf, soccer, etc.; president meets with each associate annually and delivers a personalized letter and bonus at the holidays.



**25. Shrewsberry**

Indianapolis |

[www.shrewsusa.com](http://www.shrewsusa.com)

**Industry:** engineering

**For employees:** employee health insurance premiums paid 100%; spot bonuses; on-site yoga classes; chair massages; pitch-ins; annual team-building events; sponsors sports teams and a book club.



YELLOW BOX INDICATES HALL OF FAME COMPANY

## My Best Advice to Companies Thinking About Participating

By Nicole Bickett, vice president of people + administration, Springbuk



Having been a part of the Best Places to Work program with two different companies, my advice to companies considering whether to apply would be to ensure that the core values of the company – and the support from senior leadership – bleed throughout the organization.

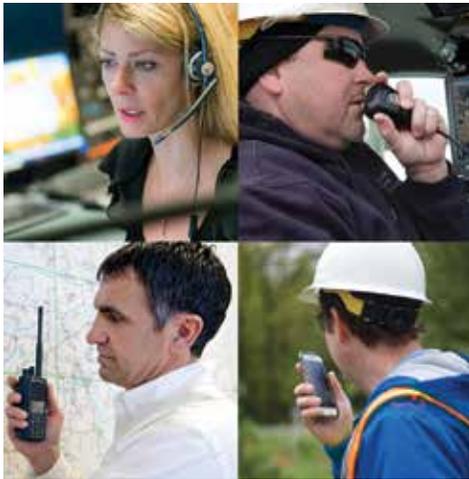
A great culture follows a great vision, and employees want to know that your strategy and behaviors match what the organization has set out to do. The plans for that vision all fall into place when the entire team is aligned to it and can get behind it.

The unique programming within your company also plays a part in becoming a Best Place to Work. Thinking creatively and through the mind of the employee helps in creating an environment where people want to be at work. Consider the different types of people in your organization and build programming to meet those needs. For example, tech is big on having game options – if your company is too, make those available for brain breaks throughout the day.

Other team members value connection time and that is often done around food. Providing snacks where people congregate in office kitchens, or opportunities to share experiences together in a breakfast meeting or company celebration, bonds the team, which is crucial when the team is going after big goals. Consider working parents and think about ways you can provide flexible work, vacation and leave options. Many employees consider these items even more important than salary.

Most importantly, make your company a place where people can't wait to get up and go to work. Find assessments that help team members understand themselves better, how they can be successful, and build roles around their strengths. When employees are using their strengths and natural talents, everyone benefits. Create opportunities for team members to openly share ideas and allow them to participate in implementing them. The entire team must work together to create a top culture that everyone can be proud of!

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[STUARTLAW.COM](http://STUARTLAW.COM)

**26. Visiting Nurse & Hospice of the Wabash Valley**

Terre Haute | [www.myhospicevna.org](http://www.myhospicevna.org)

Industry: health care – provider

**For employees:** weekly huddles with counselor to discuss issues that are impacting caregiving staff and providing methods to cope or grieve; management staff encourages employees to put family first; employee emergency fund.



**27. First Internet Bank**

Fishers | [www.firstib.com](http://www.firstib.com)

Industry: banking

**For employees:** tuition reimbursement; paid volunteer time; free access to 24/7 on-site fitness facility; new baby program with gift and initial deposit into savings account; annual employee appreciation events; internal employee-run professional groups.



**28. Probo Medical**

Fishers | [www.probomedical.com](http://www.probomedical.com)

Industry: manufacturing

**For employees:** quarterly bonus program; company party for meeting goals; massages during busy times; wellness initiatives; happy hours after work paid for by company; flexible work hours; children and dogs are welcome anytime.



**29. VOSS Automotive**

Fort Wayne | [www.vossusa.com](http://www.vossusa.com)

Industry: automotive

**For employees:** company pays 100% employee and dependent medical, dental and vision insurance premiums; Christmas bonuses; employee appreciation day is a paid, daytime baseball game; on-site fitness center with financial incentives to work out.



**30. Wessler Engineering**

Indianapolis | [www.wesslerengineering.com](http://www.wesslerengineering.com)

Industry: engineering

**For employees:** pitch-ins and cook-offs; surprise time off; focus on employee professional development; employee-owned company; 16 hours annually to give back to a non-profit of an employee's choice.



**31. Butler, Fairman & Seufert, Inc.**

Indianapolis | [www.bfsengr.com](http://www.bfsengr.com)

Industry: engineering

**For employees:** staff members earning client compliments, professional designation achievements or promotions are recognized in monthly newsletter; sponsored golf league for all employees; fantasy sports leagues and March Madness competition; half-days on Fridays.



**32. Weddle Bros. Construction Co., Inc.**

Bloomington | [www.weddlebros.com](http://www.weddlebros.com)

Industry: construction

**For employees:** diversity achievement awards; ballgames on big screen during tournament seasons; holiday pitch-ins; employee stock ownership plan; exercise equipment provided; emphasis on safety.



**33. CREA, LLC**

Indianapolis | [www.creallc.com](http://www.creallc.com)

Industry: financial services

**For employees:** formal 10-year award recognition with engraved compass; summer solstice half-day lunch; ergonomic stretching and physical challenges; International Talk Like a Pirate Day and St. Patrick's Day parade with a company float.



**34. Accutech Systems Corporation**

Muncie | [www.trustasc.com](http://www.trustasc.com)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** leadership lunch-n-learns; quarterly and monthly fun activities and competitions for Grand Pooh-Bah points with one person named Grand Pooh-Bah annually; birthday serenades by in-house mens' choir; 40 hours of philanthropic time off.



**35. Rehab Medical, Inc.**

Indianapolis | [www.rehabmedical.com](http://www.rehabmedical.com)

Industry: health care – provider

**For employees:** collaboration rooms to take a break and play games or work together; monthly planned activities; quiet room; promotes diversity, growth and self-awareness with training institute; four-day workweeks during the summer.



**36. Unified Group Services, Inc.**

Anderson | [www.unifiedgrp.com](http://www.unifiedgrp.com)

Industry: health care – insurance/services

**For employees:** partnered with On Target Health in 2018 for individual weight management; parties hosted based on years of service; company paid employee lunches; eligible employees able to work reduced summer schedule.



**37. IDSolutions**

Noblesville | [www.e-IDSolutions.com](http://www.e-IDSolutions.com)

Industry: telecommunications

**For employees:** employer pays 100% of employee health care premiums; monthly happy hours in the office; friendly office competitions; bimonthly voluntary after-hours get-togethers; on-site financial educational and wellness seminars.



## What We Have Learned From BPTW

By John Brand, president, Butler, Fairman & Seufert, Inc.



Butler, Fairman & Seufert Civil Engineers (BF&S) has been actively participating in the Indiana Chamber's Best Places to Work program since 2012. Our initial interest was to pursue the ever-important "employee engagement" measurement being plugged by business management publications.

This exercise certainly confirmed employee feedback can positively affect employee morale and increase employee engagement. A double shot in the arm for BF&S – satisfied team members and, as a result, pleased clients. Participating in this program is an annual commitment of BF&S and achieving the designation is always our goal. However, the most unexpected outcome is how this program has added to our overall credibility with both our team members and clients.

BF&S relies on the specific survey results to mold company initiatives focusing on areas where we score below par. We have also initiated an internal employee survey six months into the year to measure movement on areas of concern. Sharing the results, developing action plans with employee input and continuing to measure their feedback sends a message of credibility to our entire team:

"We value your feedback, plan to act on it and

will report back to you – you can count on it."

As we recruit new team members, BF&S repeatedly hears positive feedback from candidates regarding our "Best Place" status. This designation lends credibility to the importance we place on valuing employee input. It lets recruits know we are serious about team collaboration and high employee morale.

An unexpected and rewarding result comes from the many congratulatory calls and emails we receive from our clients when we are touted as a Best Place to Work. Client messages confirm this designation lends credibility to the dedication and level of service of BF&S. It validates our commitment to having friendly, engaged team members and offering high-quality services, which drive overall client satisfaction.

At the end of the day, participation in the Indiana Chamber's Best Places to Work program has boosted our credibility with our BF&S team, potential recruits and the valued communities we serve. Being a Best Place to Work firm helps us determine how to improve our company and enhance the loyalty of our clients. Reaching this goal adds credibility to serving and advising in accordance to our mission – Civil Engineering Solutions for Better Communities.

## What We Have Learned From BPTW

By Rick Dennen, founder and CEO, Oak Street Funding



The number one thing Oak Street Funding® has learned from participating in Best Places to Work is how our being named a Best Place to Work for the past seven years reinforces our commitment to our culture and creates a sense of pride for our current and future employees. This in turn translates into a consultative, knowledgeable and caring approach with our clients and a distinctive client experience, which reinforces our continued employee focus.

Since 2003, as founder and CEO, I, along with my leadership team, have worked to make Oak Street Funding an employee-focused organization providing diversity, inclusion and a sense of community and pride. We purposefully recruit only those individuals who will fit within our employee-centric mindset. While it may take a little longer to make the right hire, in the long run this results in greater employee engagement and lower employee turnover.

We define our success by the quality of the relationships we have with our employees, our clients and the communities we serve. By focusing on

the employee experience first, we are rewarded with heightened employee engagement and a strong sense of pride. Our philosophy is if you take care of your employees, they will take care of your customers.

Additionally, we make it our focus to provide training and continuing education not only to keep skills sharp for an employee's current position, but also to prepare them for advancement within our company. Many find new roles that appeal as they progress through the company. And, more often than not, we promote from within.

We also have a robust referral program for hiring as many of our employees know others who will fit within our culture. Birds of a feather, as it were. These measures allow us to maintain and strengthen our company culture.

Being named a Best Place to Work exemplifies that we are living our company culture every day and, as a result, positioning both our employees and our customers to be successful. We are proud to once again be named a Best Place to Work.

## Family First

Continued from page 50



CREA's Katy McShane, senior vice president and director of human resources, says the company's emphasis on "CREA culture" has provided her with plenty of data that the efforts pay off, namely through a consistently low turnover rate.

"We do like them to take it all at once. That way they have a whole month where they can focus on family, which is critical. And then come back and re-engage in the workforce more fully."

Pettit adds that another element is Horseshoe Casino Hammond's partnerships with local community organizations that deliver discounted rates for childcare, including the YMCA.

"Families are critical. I always say work is what we do so we can have a life and enjoy our life. It shouldn't be the other way around. We are providing services and resources and the best quality of life for families in the community," she shares.

Despite the idea that having second- or third-shift workers gone on long leaves of absences would prove difficult for the employer, Pettit asserts that isn't the case.

"We have learned along the way how to schedule accordingly. We have a great centralized scheduling team that schedules for almost all of our departments, so there is coverage in place while allowing (for flexibility)."

That's Good HR also ensures consistent coverage when employees are absent for family reasons or long periods of time. The framework is already built into what the company does as a staffing firm.

"We follow our own advice and we do hire a person to fill that role, which helps everyone else not feel the stress," Cline explains.

### Financial impact

Not all companies are able to extend the benefits outlined here.

"There is a cost to it," Cline says. "And we're constantly working and thinking about ways to be more productive with flexibility."

"It's not always perfect, but we feel right now that it's still worth it in the long run."

For Pettit, the fact that the casino has been named to the Best Places to Work in Indiana list nine times is all the proof she needs.

"We only achieve that (listing) by providing all the resources and engaging with our employees, showing our employees walking the walk and talking the talk of the benefits and incentives we offer," she says.

"It starts with the team member and if you don't take care of the team member, you're never going to have all the other things you want to have and achieve as a business," Pettit contends.

"We don't have a secret sauce. We get out there and see what our employees need and show appreciation. And if we take care of what they need, they can take care of our customers and the customers take care of the business. It has to start with the employee; if not, you've got nothing else."

### 'Fur babies' included

While the focus is on children and family issues, McKenna shares that some of the women at That's Good HR aren't mothers. Some have animal "fur babies," others take care of parents, etc. Flexibility and support exist for those employees as well.

McShane gives a personal example at CREA.

"I had a situation where my dad was ill and lived overseas. And there was not a question asked and any check-in was 'How's he doing?'," she outlines. "There's true personal concern and you feel that, and it's driven from the top down and it trickles through the rest of the organization."

"When we say we're a family-friendly organization, it doesn't mean we have an annual picnic where everybody gets together once a year, though we could add that. Work-life balance, the life part of that includes the family. And I think we do a good job of that."

What has it done for the company's turnover and retention numbers? McShane exclaims, "I have data on it!"

"Our turnover rate has hovered at around 8% for the last few years and probably of the 8%, less than 1% is involuntary turnover. One, we make sure when we bring people on board that they are as excited about us as we are about them. So, we get it right the first time and then people stay because they like the work, they like the organization, they like their co-workers."

"I hear it, but I think the data speaks for itself and even a little bit better."

**RESOURCES:** Stefanie Brown and Katy McShane, CREA, at [www.crealc.com](http://www.crealc.com) | Greta Cline and Susie McKenna, That's Good HR, at [www.thatsgoodhr.com](http://www.thatsgoodhr.com) | Dawn Reynolds Pettit, Horseshoe Casino Hammond, at [www.caesars.com/horseshoe-hammond](http://www.caesars.com/horseshoe-hammond)



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# FAMILY-FRIENDLY BENEFITS

PARENTAL LEAVE UPON BIRTH/ADOPTION

**78%** | 55%  
On the list | Not on the list

ADOPTION ASSISTANCE

**27%** | 26%  
On the list | Not on the list

FLEXIBLE HOURS (SCHOOL EVENTS, ETC.)

**100%** | 84%  
On the list | Not on the list



Impact

FAMILIES INVITED TO COMPANY EVENTS

**86%** | 76%  
On the list | Not on the list



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FREE/DISCOUNTED TICKETS FOR LOCAL EVENTS

**71%** | 61%  
On the list | Not on the list

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**55%** | 56%  
On the list | Not on the list

BUSINESS WORKSHOPS/ CONFERENCES

**94%** | 83%  
On the list | Not on the list

CERTIFICATIONS

**86%** | 82%  
On the list | Not on the list



# TWO YEARS BACK TO BACK

## 2018 & 2019 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN INDIANA

We thank and give credit to our employees for creating a culture worthy of recognition, two years in a row. The fresh, forward thinking of our team translates into the work we do every day in seeking out our mission to make affordable housing a reality, and we're lucky to find some fun along the way.

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[CREALLC.com](http://CREALLC.com)

By Symone C. Skrzycki

# OWNING IT

## Controlling Your 'Best Places' Destiny

It's 5 p.m. and you're at the airport with barely enough time to make your flight. A quick cup of coffee sounds so appealing. You make the stop.

One more scenario.

You're driving on a deserted highway approaching a red light. No one's around. You could easily speed through it. You hit the gas pedal.

In the workplace, some employers take a similarly cavalier approach to employee satisfaction – thinking short term and leaving the outcome to chance. It's a strategy (or lack thereof) that can deplete morale, tarnish reputations and damage bottom lines.

Among those that don't exercise this approach: the 2019 Best Places to Work in Indiana.

So, what's the surefire strategy for becoming a Best Place to Work?

There's no such thing, asserts Peter Burke, president and co-founder of Best Companies Group. You have to customize based on what engages your employees.

"The motivators of employee engagement (throughout workplaces) are all different. A big misconception people have is that if you take the same formula and apply it in every organization, you'll get the same results. Not

the case. Understanding what your core values are and applying those, hiring and promoting accordingly – that's more along the lines of what's going to get you there."

That doesn't mean you can't learn from others' success.

A panel of honorees joined Burke ([www.bestcompaniesgroup.com](http://www.bestcompaniesgroup.com)) in sharing approaches and challenges in creating and maintaining a Best Places culture.

They include:

- John F. Gause, CEO and president, Apex Benefits (ninth year on list), [www.apexbg.com](http://www.apexbg.com)
- Chris Cason, president, Blue Horseshoe (fourth year on list), [www.bhsolutions.com](http://www.bhsolutions.com)
- Will O'Brien, president and founder, Ultimate Technologies Group (newcomer), [www.ultimatetechnologiesgroup.com](http://www.ultimatetechnologiesgroup.com)

### Benefits: Extra versus expected

Engagement is the key to a thriving culture. It's become increasingly difficult, however, for companies to stand out with perks (flexible schedules, health care benefits, social outings) they've implemented.

"All of these things that the Best Places to Work are doing ... now it's not like, 'Wow, this is great!' We're starting to evolve into, 'Well, why are you patting yourself on the back? That's what I expect when I'm interviewing in a lot of places,'" Burke stresses.

"That's probably the biggest challenge," Cason chimes in, "because it's always evolving and doing one thing well three years ago might not mark you as being unique as you move forward. As we strive to always be

unique in that, it's a continually moving target."

Since Best Companies Group began overseeing Best Places to Work programs 15 years ago (in Pennsylvania), Burke has observed a shift away from providing "stuff" to offering experiences.

"There's a lot of companies that give a lot of stuff and they have a checklist mentality," he notes. " 'Hey, if we do this, we can put a ping pong table in. If we have beanbag chairs and TVs in the cafeteria or breakfast room, that'll be great,' as opposed to, 'Hey, what kind of experiential thing can we do that people are going to remember?'"



"You have to keep trying to move that bar forward and improve because the second you are happy with where you're at, you're never going to improve as a company again."

– Chris Cason



“At the end of the day, you’ve got to make sure you’ve got buy-in from leadership – that they want to hear the good, the bad and they want to get better. That they’re going to listen and they’re going to do something.”

– John F. Gause

Blue Horseshoe, established in 2001, specializes in technical consulting, helping customers implement enterprise resource planning and supply chain software systems. Its 270 employees are divided among five Indianapolis locations, as well as sites in Denver; Charlotte; Columbus, Ohio; and Amsterdam.

“In each of our offices, we have a culture committee,” Cason discloses. “They’re given some resources – both financially and time-wise of things to do – and it’s their responsibility for their office to try and come up (with ideas). And continually push the boundaries of the things that they want to do to help make them unique.”

One initiative is Nerd Night For the Needy. Employees bring their gaming systems and food donations to an overnight shut-in.

“That’s something that wouldn’t have come up a couple years ago and now we’re running it for a second time,” Cason remarks. “Our employees help drive the direction of things like that and we try and continue to have the right platform to help them fulfill some of those goals.”

Ultimate Technologies Group focuses on commercial audio/visual technology, information technology infrastructure and building controls. The company, less than two years into its operations, has 35 employees.

O’Brien is passionate about employee engagement. Sometimes the obstacle, he maintains, is gaining executive buy-in.

“I do believe that the benefit that we get from engaged employees far outweighs the cost that goes into it. But the cost is always something I find myself explaining over and over again to new leaders in terms of, ‘Why do we do this or invest (our) money this way?’

Hopefully most of them see it eventually, but it may take a while to get there.”

Gause of Apex Benefits, an employee benefit consulting firm, concurs regarding survey participation: “At the end of the day, you’ve got to make sure you’ve got buy-in from leadership. That they want to hear the good, the bad and they want to get better. That they’re going to listen and they’re going to do something.”

### Spread the word

Apex, like many companies, shares survey results with staff. Gause cautions the importance of following through.

“That’s the thing you’ve got to be careful about if you’re going to do this – is to be able to report what you learn. Then, as the year goes on (continue the discussion about) what you’re doing to try to address those, because it’s all about getting better. Especially right now in this employee marketplace. It’s tough to recruit and it’s tough to retain. It’s (input generated by the survey) been really beneficial for us.”

Blue Horseshoe also conducts a separate anonymous employee survey.

“We’ve done that from the beginning,” Cason indicates. “When it came around to Best Places to Work ... it’s been a tremendous vehicle for us. They get surveyed twice but it’s almost completely different. We don’t replace one with the other. It’s really good to be able to get that feedback.

“The biggest thing you learn out of it is your weaknesses and how to go and attack those and what things you need to improve them. And as you grow, as you get bigger, not everybody else is having the same experience you are. Being able to measure that from across the entire company gives you a great benefit to see what people are seeing, not from the owner’s perspective but from an employee perspective.”

Gause seconds that, recalling when Apex first applied to the program nine years ago.

“At the time when we probably only had 15 employees, 20 employees – whatever the number was – not everybody knew everything that was going on in the company, which was surprising to me since I (did). I felt like everybody should know.”

In response, Apex started holding regular, company-wide meetings. Today, its team of 65 interacts through quarterly huddles and other gatherings.

At Blue Horseshoe, employees are often on the road and out of the office. An annual kickoff meeting, monthly town halls and lunches, and a weekly newsletter help connect them.

Cason mentions additional communications,

such as fireside chats, designed for smaller groups.

“We talk about the things that come out in the surveys,” he reveals. “We talk through what are the areas for improvement? What things can we do? It’s where we get a lot of ideas on some of the new types of benefits and things we want to try out. The changes we make to bonus plans and compensation (and) benefits all come through that.

“I would say because of all the traveling, communication, we find, is very necessary to make sure it’s a two-way street.”

### Hiring, holding onto talent

Earning a spot on the Best Places list is a powerful recruitment and retention tool.

“We’ve already hired somebody who came to us because they heard about the announcement,” reports O’Brien.

Cason agrees: “I’ve been shocked by people I will see at a career fair and they say, ‘Oh, I see you’ve been on the Best Places to Work (list).’ That’s actually something that causes somebody to come up and want to talk to you or be that differentiating factor.

“When you get into retention ... it’s all that you do to stay that way. It’s your philosophy that you want to be that company. At that point, it’s all the things they (employees) see that you try and do because you care about being a Best Places to Work. They no longer look for the external thing; it’s what they live and whether they truly believe it from there.”

Flexibility is paramount. Consider the changing mentality over the past decade regarding work-life balance.



(On making employees owners): “It’s not an ESOP. They’re actual shares of stock and based on your level that you’re coming in to, you may have a different amount of ownership. ... That sense of ownership penetrates deeper than just a pocketbook.”

– Will O’Brien



"If you're in an industry where your competitor, for the most part, offers exactly what you do, the last differentiating factor is the people. With the Best Places to Work, that's a huge advantage when you're recruiting."

– Peter Burke

"You've got to give the millennials a little bit of credit," Burke emphasizes. "They've readjusted the values. I know I'm making a generalization there, but I see it over and over again. It's like: 'You know what? When I'm here working for you and even when I'm at home on my phone working, you have my full attention. I'm going to do everything I can for you. But I want a personal life.'"

Exposure to a variety of career opportunities is especially valuable in a small company like Ultimate Technologies Group.

"When you're a new company, you need people to be very flexible and to wear different hats all the time. But what was interesting," O'Brien recalls, "is where I anticipated I'd get a lot of pushback and frustration – if we hired the right people, the ones that were a good fit for us – they saw it as a benefit of working there that they got to do so many different types of things."

It also increases their marketability within the organization.

"We assume everybody would be looking (for prime employment opportunities – internal or external) at any time of the day, so we want them always to be looking and choosing us," Cason reflects.

An unpleasant, but important topic, is conflict and how to handle it.

"It may sound strange, but from my seat – the CEO seat – I kind of enjoy seeing some conflict sometimes because it tells me that people are passionate and they really care about what they're trying to do," Gause divulges. "As long as they're professional. I'm blessed to have a strong leadership team that will challenge each other sometimes on ways to accomplish things and they check egos at the door. That's good to see. And if other people can see that, I think it's pretty healthy."

### Tell the world!

One of the most exciting aspects of being named a Best Place to Work is touting the honor. Companies celebrate in a variety of ways, including advertising, promoting in email signatures and internal parties.

And of course, there's the annual Best Place to Work in Indiana Awards Dinner. Gause describes the lively event.

"We get a table or two and as you go down there (to claim your award on stage), you whoop and holler. It's a lot of fun."



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# Large Companies

## 1. Group Management Services Inc.

Indianapolis | [www.groupmgmt.com](http://www.groupmgmt.com)

Industry: services

**For employees:** employees are immediately vested in 401(k) and retirement fund matching; ping pong table and basketball hoop in office; company vehicle given within 90 days of employment; monthly cell phone and gym allowances.



## 7. Blue 449

Indianapolis | [www.blue449.com](http://www.blue449.com)

Industry: advertising/PR/marketing

**For employees:** transition program for working mothers to gradually increase to full-time hours; six weeks paid parental leave; pet insurance; paid sabbaticals; celebrates Friendship Day with personalized cards and sweet treats.



BLUE 449

## 2. Onebridge

Indianapolis | [www.onebridge.tech](http://www.onebridge.tech)

Industry: consulting

**For employees:** annual “values awards” given to employees across the organization for showcasing commitment and alignment to specific core values; employee milestones recognized; on-site gym; weekly yoga; unlimited paid time off.



## 8. PROLINK STAFFING

Indianapolis | [www.prolinkstaff.com](http://www.prolinkstaff.com)

Industry: staffing

**For employees:** each office votes weekly for “Most Valuable ProLinker”; mentoring programs for new staff to learn from seasoned team members; yearlong transitional leadership training program for directors.



## 3. Hylant

Multiple locations | [www.hylant.com](http://www.hylant.com)

Industry: insurance (non-health care)

**For employees:** concierge services for employees; on-site massage therapist and massage chair; monthly social gatherings; dedicated health strategist; paid time off for volunteering.



## 9. IPMG

West Lafayette | [gotoipmg.com](http://gotoipmg.com)

Industry: social services

**For employees:** virtual company allows employees to work from home with flexible schedules; internal leadership training program; employee of the month, years of service and peer recognition programs; 100% employee owned.



## 4. Impact

Indianapolis | [impactmybiz.com](http://impactmybiz.com)

Industry: services

**For employees:** employee health insurance premiums haven't increased for four years; five-year anniversary \$5,000 shopping spree at Tiffany's & Co. and 10-year anniversary Rolex; annual all-company trip for meeting sales goals.



## 10. Conga

Indianapolis | [www.getconga.com](http://www.getconga.com)

Industry: software

**For employees:** company rents several pontoon boats on Geist Reservoir during annual Boat Day; movie outings for staff with tickets, drinks and popcorn included; free daily lunch and unlimited snacks and beverages.



## 5. Centier Bank

Merrillville | [www.centier.com](http://www.centier.com)

Industry: banking

**For employees:** access to free clinics, including on-site clinic; non-profit CARE program provides financial support to associates and families in need; concierge services; on-site massage therapist, manicurist and reflexologist.



## 6. WestPoint Financial Group

Indianapolis | [www.westpointfinancialgroup.com](http://www.westpointfinancialgroup.com)

Industry: financial services

**For employees:** annual black-tie achievement gala and awards dinner; food truck Thursdays; office happy hours funded by sales managers or managing partner; monthly national food holiday celebrations.



## 11. FORUM Credit Union

Fishers | [www.forumcu.com](http://www.forumcu.com)

Industry: financial services

**For employees:** wellness reimbursement; company intranet allows employees to recognize teammates; all-employee development day; recreation room; on-site fitness center and lunchtime fitness classes; library for quiet space.



## 12. Katz, Sapper & Miller

Indianapolis | [www.ksmcpa.com](http://www.ksmcpa.com)

Industry: accounting

**For employees:** “Bright Ideas”

program gives employees opportunity to submit ideas and receive \$250 if idea is implemented; paid sabbaticals; meals provided throughout the “busy” season; modified work arrangements and remote work options.



YELLOW BOX INDICATES HALL OF FAME COMPANY

## My Best Advice to Companies Thinking About Participating

By Brian Owens, senior director of engineering, Carbonite



What a great honor for Carbonite to be chosen as a 2019 winner for the Best Places to Work program with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce. When asked for my best advice to companies thinking about participating in Best Places, I automatically thought about what we do that our employees respect and appreciate.

First and foremost, we strive to provide challenging and meaningful work for our teams. Everyone likes to be challenged. If the work is mundane or repetitive, team members will end up just counting the hours until they can leave. But if there are significant problems to solve, with the proper amount of urgency placed on solving them, it creates an environment where some amazing things can be accomplished.

Placing the appropriate amount of relevance and time commitment to those problems is also vital. Don't make a lack of planning turn in to someone else's emergency.

Considerable care about the health and welfare of our teams is also essential. This can entail a variety of things. One of my personal mantras regarding leading

a team is to promote the idea that there are some things more important than work. Health is one of the most obvious. Family is also at the top of that list and on people's minds. We understand that if someone is ill or has family issues, it will naturally cause stress in their work life.

For your employees, make sure they know what your priorities are and work with them to have a good work-life balance. This doesn't mean that work is not important as well, but it creates the conversation about balance. Know that they will be able to focus better on their work if they are not feeling overwhelmed by other factors.

It is important to enjoy what you do in life. Nobody has a good day every single day. At Carbonite, we pride ourselves on offering a good work-life balance for our employees. As leaders, we enjoy what we do, and we appreciate the contributions that our team makes daily. And I think that appreciation rubs off on the team. We can't always control our team's attitude, but we can control our own attitude. As a leader, that's a key to success.

## What We Have Learned From BPTW

By Clayton Jennings, president, Hylant-Fort Wayne, and David Norris, president, Hylant-Indianapolis



Clayton Jennings



David Norris

Hylant is celebrating its sixth year as a winner of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce Best Places to Work award. Each year we are awarded this honor, we learn more about showing our employees their value. After all, it's our employees who make our business successful.

Over the years of participation, we have learned that as our industry evolves and becomes more complex, ensuring our teams are armed with the development, tools, resources and capacity they need to best serve our clients is critical. The feedback we receive yearly ensures we are able to pivot as needed to keep our employees satisfied with work, providing an environment of engagement, showing them value and empowering them to take time for themselves and their families.

We know listening to feedback and implementing their recommendations keeps our employees engaged and happy. Over the years, our employees have told us they would like more professional development opportunities, increased performance feedback and flexible working hours. We have proudly implemented these changes and found our employees to be happier and more successful.

Our core mission to strengthen and protect the businesses, employees and communities of our client family, by embracing them as our own, extends to our employees as well. Each time we hear their feedback, we can provide for their needs and continue to grow.

# Conga

## Taking the Team to New Heights

Acquisitions can be especially stressful for those working at the company that is going away. But what if worry about keeping your job was replaced with a feeling of winning the employer lottery.

That's what happened a year ago for those at Octiv (founded as TinderBox) when it was bought by Conga, a Denver-based leader in the world of digital documents.

The relief that filled the downtown Indianapolis office came pretty quickly, recalls Mary Ryan, executive assistant to the chief marketing officer/HR operations specialist.

"From the very moment they (Conga leaders) came off the elevator, they worked very hard with everybody here to make sure they were on a great career path – that (the acquisition) was a smooth transition for everyone and everybody would land on their feet," she begins.

"Conga's main mantra is growth equals opportunity. They were nothing shy of that with every single person in this office. They wanted to make sure the benefits were the best of the best, and that we were happy with our compensation and titles, and our new teams.

"I realized they didn't just purchase us for the (Octiv) product. They purchased us for our people. ... They have such a passion for our people."

Approximately 50 individuals are currently employed at Conga Indy.

Among the group is Daniel Incandela, chief marketing officer for all of Conga, who was hired after the acquisition.

"What I have found to be a really great quality of the Conga culture is that they acquired a company here and now they are investing in the city and this office.

"They are placing a lot of the new hires in this office because they see the quality of what's happening in Indianapolis and the talent, and they want to build in the city as well. That's rare for a company outside of the state to do that."

### More than 'just posters on a wall'

Ryan says she'll never forget a call she received from the HR department in Colorado.

"They said whatever flavor you have in the Indy office, we want you to keep that up. Your employees are happy. The office is thriving; we don't want to take that from you ... and they have never faltered from that," she praises.

Instead, Conga's guiding principles – five-star value, passion with a purpose, adapt to win and desire for knowledge – have been married to pre-existing positives.

The five-star value has become a "rallying cry" for Conga Indy to deliver a wonderful experience to its prospects, customers and colleagues, Incandela notes.

PR director Stephanie Capouch had been at Conga Indy only a month when she spoke to *BizVoice*® about what immediately jumped out to her.

"I could see how engrained the core values are and how people actually live and breathe them. They aren't just posters on the wall," she declares.

"Everything from the desire to be flexible, be helpful, be collaborative to a really strong customer-focus mentality."

Adam Becker, chief of staff to the CRO/senior director sales integration, offers his take: "People are enabled and empowered to essentially make their own decisions and build their own directive. It's extremely fast paced, but we have a lot of fun."

Incandela, the top Indy executive, says that the "coolest thing for me is to watch people grow professionally and realize they can do things that six months ago they didn't think they could. And that happens here daily. It happens to me daily too," he laughs.

### Pick of perks

Food and fellowship are a big part of Conga's culture imported into the local office. Lunch is provided every day (yes, every day!) for employees, as is breakfast three times a week.

"Not only do we get free lunch, which is really nice, but we have this big long family table that seats about 20 people," Becker describes. "Almost every single day that table is jam packed with folks eating lunch. The company is making sure we are coming together as one team and enjoying life types of things during at least a little of our day."

Beyond the meals being a "wonderful perk," Incandela admits that it enables the company to stay more focused on its mission.

"So, it's two things for us. It's inspiring so that we can keep kicking butt, but also it is one of the things Conga has done to show that they care for the employees."

The latter also manifests itself in free health care coverage for employees and a \$60 per month wellness stipend.

Capouch captures what the overall extras are like at Conga.

"For a company of this size, they are so focused on the holistic person – of how people stay happy and healthy so they can do their best work, and they have built perks and benefits around that," she shares.



Conga Indy has been in the Conga family for one year; the company strives to make people's lives easier through automation, which includes digital documentation, smart contracts and effortless e-signatures.



“Whether it’s a holiday party, an outing to the track in May or going to watch (the) *Captain Marvel* (movie) as a team-building activity, there’s a regular cadence of things (that we do),” says chief marketing officer Daniel Incandela.

“They don’t look at employees as a means to an end. They are making an investment, from everything from the benefits to the free lunches to the fitness reimbursement – after you’ve eaten all the food!”

Ryan enthuses, “I swear every day it’s like a new benefit pops up that I didn’t know of.” She singles out charity contributions, in which an employee gift is matched at 150%.

“I was just giving \$50 to the Humane Society but now it’s turned

into \$125! Because instead of just giving to one organization, they respect what everybody wants to give to. It doesn’t put a cap on people’s philanthropic hearts and I absolutely love that!

**The best part**

Becker is filled with excitement for the future of the company.

“We are evolving at an incredibly fast pace – the pace at which innovation is really picking up. ... Conga is sitting at a really interesting high-potential space in the market where we see a lot of value we can bring to our customers.

“We are just scratching the surface here, and there is so much we can do and so much more growth potential, and I am so excited to be a part of that story.”

Ryan was quick to acknowledge the respect given to her and says it’s her favorite thing about working at Conga.

“Any time I have an idea – big or small – it’s not only heard by my peers, heard by leadership but considered and often times executed. And I don’t mean that to say I have all these great ideas. I meant that to say I’m an executive assistant; I’m not a manager, director or vice president,” she emphasizes.

“It’s a great feeling to be an individual contributor and have a seat at the table. That doesn’t happen (at) a lot (of places). That just speaks volumes to me that they value my opinion. It feels really good.”

Incandela concludes, “If I was going to join a new company, it had to be something that aligned with my own cultural values and approach to how to treat human beings, and Conga is totally in line with that. I’m so happy and proud to work here.”

**RESOURCE:** Conga at [www.getconga.com](http://www.getconga.com)



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[tshickel@elements.org](mailto:tshickel@elements.org)

## What We Do Differently Because of BPTW



“The Best Places to Work program has opened up a wonderful feedback channel for us. One of the top ‘asks’ from our associates has been to relax our traditional dress guidelines. Because of this feedback, we have made substantial changes like removing a requirement for nylons/trouser socks, allowing sandals,

eliminating the need for formal suits to be worn and have gone to casual Fridays – which are a huge hit! We made sure our associates knew that these changes were because of their feedback on the Best Places to Work survey!”

– *Chrisanne Christ, senior partner, human resource development Centier Bank*



“We have a stronger focus on both wellness and training than ever before. Past surveys have indicated our employees want more in these areas. Our wellness program has expanded beyond physical health to include an emphasis on career development, community involvement, financial wellness and

social well-being. In terms of training, we have added a specialist role to staff to offer more internal education. We’ve also introduced the StrengthsFinder assessment to all staff, providing 250-plus hours of training last year to help employees identify their personality strengths and apply them to their everyday work. We are proud of this alignment of our employee needs to our culture.”

– *Lisa Schlehuber, CEO Elements Financial*



“Best Places to Work has caused us to more fully engage our staff in company decisions. The best illustration today is how our staff’s ideas drove the design of our new office space.”

– *Rick Conner, CEO American Structurepoint*



“Communication. While we had always thought of ourselves as great internal communicators, our 2014 BPTW survey suggested differently. We had just come out of a recession that greatly impacted the architecture, engineering and construction industry and our focus had been on righting the ship.

“We are proud to say we have since moved the bar significantly. We developed a strategic communication initiative that took a vertical organizational approach to voice, messaging and consistency. ‘Teaching the Why’ became our mantra and outcome. Messaging, transparency and delivery come from voices at all levels. This has served us well in our transition to being employee owned.”

– *Fredrick J. Green, AIA, NCARB, president/COO Cripe*

### Small Companies

Continued from page 44

#### 51. OfficeWorks

Fishers | [www.officeworks.net](http://www.officeworks.net)

Industry: distribution

**For employees:** lunchtime yoga; FunWorks committee provides time to relax and enjoy camaraderie; weekend tailgate parties; company regularly offers meals, particularly on rainy or snowy days.



#### 52. Alliance Bank

Francesville | [www.myalliancebank.com](http://www.myalliancebank.com)

Industry: banking

**For employees:** free telemedicine service available; Embassy Suites weekend getaway is a one-night stay, free of charge, for all employees in Indianapolis; monthly team huddles with games; generous paid time off; professional development opportunities.



#### 53. eimage

Indianapolis | [www.eimage.com](http://www.eimage.com)

Industry: technology

**For employees:** engagement coaches to provide direct feedback in transparent and respectful way; new, collaborative workspace with standing desks, state-of-the-art kitchen that is fully stocked with beverages and snacks; telecommuting policy.





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**13. Parkview Noble Hospital**

Kendallville |

[www.parkview.com/locations/parkview-noble-hospital](http://www.parkview.com/locations/parkview-noble-hospital)

**Industry:** non-profit – health and human services

**For employees:** Center for Healthy living offers a variety of wellness programs and exercise classes; self-scheduling of work shifts and hours; discounts through Perkspot; tuition reimbursement, tuition discounts for family members at affiliate educational programs.



**19. Merchants Bank of Indiana | Merchants Capital Corp.**

Carmel | [www.merchantsbankofindiana.com](http://www.merchantsbankofindiana.com)

**Industry:** banking

**For employees:** entrepreneurial company that allows employees to participate in cross-functional and interdisciplinary work to grow personally and professionally; 100% tuition reimbursement.



**14. Carbonite**

Indianapolis |

[www.carbonite.com](http://www.carbonite.com)

**Industry:** technology

**For employees:** unlimited vacation time off; free catered breakfasts/lunches; on-site flu shots, blood drives and eye exams; Jedi Master Award is a peer-nominated award given quarterly to five employees globally for outstanding performance.



**20. American Structurepoint, Inc.**

Indianapolis |

[www.structurepoint.com](http://www.structurepoint.com)

**Industry:** architecture and engineer design/consulting

**For employees:** six weeks paid maternity leave; internal “round of applause” program for peer recognition with gift card awards; friendly competitions of cornhole, ping pong and pool; fresh fruit delivered weekly; corporate Topgolf membership.



**15. Traylor Bros., Inc.**

Evansville | [www.traylor.com](http://www.traylor.com)

**Industry:** construction

**For employees:** years of service awards and retirement celebrations; annual picnic; daily stretch 'n flex exercises; family-oriented culture; annual Christmas check equal to one week of pay; longtime partner of the United Way.



**21. Parkview Huntington Hospital**

Huntington |

[www.parkview.com/locations/parkview-huntington-hospital](http://www.parkview.com/locations/parkview-huntington-hospital)

**Industry:** non-profit – health and human services

**For employees:** employee peer recognition program; co-worker appreciation week; gratitude exercises; bingo; holiday decorations; tuition assistance and discounts; biannual community health and wellness fair.



**16. Blue & Co., LLC**

Carmel | [www.blueandco.com](http://www.blueandco.com)

**Industry:** accounting

**For employees:** secret pal season (during tax time) allows employees to do creative and fun things for their “pals”; Building Leaders program is 18 months of career development for senior level roles.



**22. MCM CPAs & Advisors LLP**

Jeffersonville | [www.mcmcpa.com](http://www.mcmcpa.com)

**Industry:** accounting

**For employees:** fun committee plans monthly appreciation programs; chair massages; relaxation classes during the lunch hour; Nintendo Wii systems in every office for stress relief; flexible work arrangements; relaxed dress code.



**17. Ontario Systems**

Muncie | [www.ontariosystems.com](http://www.ontariosystems.com)

**Industry:** technology

**For employees:** game tables in breakroom; holiday contests at Halloween and Christmas; OS Olympics of friendly competitive events; casual dress code; relaxed and fun environment; remote work available.



**23. Ash Brokerage**

Fort Wayne | [www.askbrokerage.com](http://www.askbrokerage.com)

**Industry:** insurance (non-health care)

**For employees:** massage therapist on-site every other week; stretch breaks; occasional free lunch and snacks; volunteer and community service opportunities; free beer on tap in café available at 5:01.



**18. SkillStorm**

Indianapolis | [www.skillstorm.com](http://www.skillstorm.com)

**Industry:** staffing

**For employees:** Dream Team trips are annual rewards for employees and guests for top performers; awards for employees living core values; spontaneous and quarterly incentive programs; new hire parties.



**YELLOW BOX INDICATES HALL OF FAME COMPANY**



Parkview Wabash Hospital

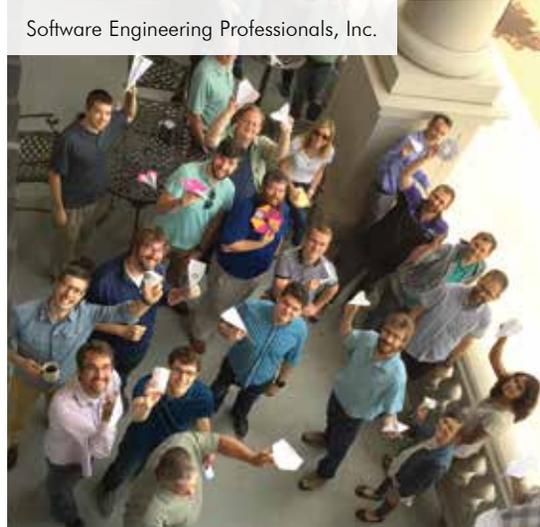
CORPORATE CULTURE/  
COMMUNICATIONS

**92%** | **81%**  
On the list | Not on the list

RELATIONSHIP  
WITH SUPERVISOR

**94%** | **88%**  
On the list | Not on the list

Software Engineering Professionals, Inc.



LEADERSHIP/PLANNING

**93%** | **81%**  
On the list | Not on the list

WORK ENVIRONMENT

**93%** | **87%**  
On the list | Not on the list

PAY/BENEFITS

**89%** | **79%**  
On the list | Not on the list

ROLE SATISFACTION

**94%** | **86%**  
On the list | Not on the list

TRAINING/DEVELOPMENT

**89%** | **78%**  
On the list | Not on the list



Colliers International



National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies

OVERALL EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

**94%** | **86%**  
On the list | Not on the list

	On the list	Not on the list
Job provides meaning/purpose:	92%	82%
Proud to work for organization:	96%	88%
Continue with company at least two more years:	93%	86%
Recommend company's products/services:	97%	90%
Recommend employment at company:	94%	85%

# Major Companies

## 1. Microsoft Corporation

Indianapolis | [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)



**Industry:** technology  
**For employees:** flexible work schedules; generous vacation; exclusive discounts on Microsoft products; \$800 annual wellness reimbursement; team meetings with hands-on activity or volunteer opportunity.

## 2. Edward Jones

Statewide | [www.edwardjones.com](http://www.edwardjones.com)



**Industry:** financial services  
**For employees:** limited partnership offered after three years' tenure and good performance; tuition discounts; executive coaching; trimester bonuses; summer regional meetings for financial advisors and families.

## 3. Horseshoe Casino Hammond

Hammond | [www.caesars.com](http://www.caesars.com)



**Industry:** gaming  
**For employees:** wellness rewards program; on-site wellness/urgent care clinic for employee and family use; holiday pay; employees receive their birthdays off of work; concierge services; paid parental leave.

## 4. Busey Bank

Carmel | [www.busey.com](http://www.busey.com)



**Industry:** financial services  
**For employees:** peer-to-peer feedback and recognition program; random acts of kindness week; associate appreciation month; mandatory annual weeklong vacation; paid sabbaticals; three customized training and development tracks.

## 5. CLA

Indianapolis | [www.claconnect.com](http://www.claconnect.com)



**Industry:** accounting  
**For employees:** lunch catered frequently; contests and events organized by culture committee; costumes allowed at Halloween and Christmas; weekly communication to celebrate wins, achievements and personal updates; unlimited paid time off; profit sharing.

## 6. Aerotek

Multiple locations | [www.aerotekcares.com](http://www.aerotekcares.com)



**Industry:** staffing  
**For employees:** incentive trips and rewards for employees hitting monthly and yearly goals; employee stock program; office pitch-in meals; flexible work hours and telecommuting options.

## 7. Salesforce

Indianapolis | [salesforce.com](http://salesforce.com)



**Industry:** technology  
**For employees:** new wellness program in 2018; 24/7 wellness center and \$100 monthly wellness reimbursement; employees can give "thanks" badges on internal employee social network; all employees eligible for variable cash compensation.

## 8. Kronos Incorporated

Indianapolis | [www.kronos.com](http://www.kronos.com)



**Industry:** technology  
**For employees:** student loan repayment assistance and college tuition reimbursement; 12 weeks paid maternity leave and four weeks paid paternity and adoption leave; unlimited paid time off; free downtown Indianapolis parking.

## 9. The Kendall Group

Fort Wayne | [www.kendallgroup.com](http://www.kendallgroup.com)



**Industry:** distribution  
**For employees:** 100% employee-owned company; participates in "Bring Your Child to Work" days; chili cook-offs; ugly sweater contest to collect donations for winner's charity of choice; tuition reimbursement.

## 10. Colliers International

Indianapolis | [www.colliers.com](http://www.colliers.com)



**Industry:** real estate  
**For employees:** trivia night competition; pop-up outings at a pub across the street; internal book club, with books and lunch paid for by the company; annual holiday party and summer outing.

## 11. Total Quality Logistics

Indianapolis | [www.tql.com](http://www.tql.com)



**Industry:** transportation  
**For employees:** athletics program for employees to participate in intramural sports leagues; five-month professional training program; incentive program for all-expenses paid getaway with a guest.

## 12. First Merchants Bank

Muncie | [www.firstmerchants.com](http://www.firstmerchants.com)



**Industry:** financial services  
**For employees:** employee recognition and milestone programs; concierge services; community days as a paid benefit for volunteering; discounts on theme parks, travel destinations, lodging and more; on-site wellness coach.

YELLOW BOX INDICATES HALL OF FAME COMPANY

## My Best Advice to Companies Thinking About Participating

By Randie Dial, managing principal, CLA Indiana



The Indiana Chamber's Best Places to Work program is an experience that offers value and recognition. I would highly recommend participating, but only if you feel you are ready for it!

Let me explain. As the managing principal, I have been leading the charge for CLA in Indiana the last five years. You will notice we have not been on the Best Places to Work list in recent years. Why is this? Simply put, I didn't feel we should participate. This program should be for those companies that truly believe they are one of the Best Places to Work. Our leadership team did not feel, until this year, that we had the employee engagement, culture, family atmosphere and many other facets that are important to truly be one of the Best Places to Work.

Between 2015 and 2018, we saw a monumental shift in Indiana for CLA. We have worked hard over the past few years developing talent, building trust, knocking down silos, recognizing our strengths and getting to know our market very well. This has led to an unlimited number of opportunities that have been

created for our clients, our people and our community.

As we gained momentum over that period, our central strategy was simple ... look different, create opportunities and build inspired careers. As a professional services firm, our industry is full of competition. On the surface, it can be difficult to tell us apart.

However, with our industry-focused wealth advisory, outsourcing and CPA/advisory services, we are one of a kind. We are private business and owner focused. We are proactive, not reactive. We bring strategy along with compliance. As a result, we have had the pleasure of being able to show our people, clients, prospects, partners and the community overall that WE ARE DIFFERENT. We truly are one of the Best Places to Work in Indiana!

You will continue to see CLA in the market going forward, and if you have not met us yet, I encourage you to do so. You will find we communicate and engage differently. We are here to get to know and help those we cross paths with, and our ultimate passion is to simply create opportunities!

## My Best Advice to Companies Thinking About Participating

By Joe Kirsch, executive vice president and commercial market president, Busey Bank



Busey Bank is honored to be named one of the Best Places to Work in Indiana. As a corporation, we have participated in other Best Places to Work awards programs in Illinois, Florida and Missouri, as well as at the national level.

The best piece of advice I would give to organizations considering participation is to identify internal partners within your organization early in the awards process. From the benefits assessment and employer questionnaire to communicating survey information and publicizing the results, our organization has utilized associates in human resources, information technology, marketing and communications throughout every step of the process. Getting early buy-in from these partners establishes timelines while also building teamwork and camaraderie across the organization.

We've also found that leading by example is critical to success. When emails for the awards program survey come through, it can be easy for your staff to ignore the notes because everyone is busy. Through effective communications with your group and personalizing the message, it shows your employees that the company is genuinely invested in this program. When you seem enthusiastic about the program, it will project onto your staff, encouraging

them to participate. This strategy led Busey to a 76% participation rate in our latest survey – one of the highest across our market footprint!

Through the employee surveys, the Best Places to Work awards program gives the organization a chance to reflect on how we are investing in our associates. While this process can be time consuming, it's important to get a pulse on where you're at and the programs and benefits you offer. I encourage leaders to take the time to read employee responses, find trends and themes, and act upon their feedback. This information helps make culture improvements and assists with recruiting – and retaining – your most valuable asset, your employees!

Additionally, the survey portion of the program gives your team an opportunity to share open and honest feedback. Through talking with associates and getting feedback on the values and mission of the organization, we can gauge the company culture.

Ultimately, the best thing about the Best Places to Work awards program is how it encourages honest feedback from associates. Winning awards is great, but Busey's real motivation to participate in this program is to build upon our service-minded culture, ensuring we're a best place for associates to work.

## Vera Bradley

Continued from page 18

Backgaard says, “That’s probably the most rewarding thing of all of Vera Bradley – because I can honestly say, had there been no Vera Bradley, there would be people who would not be on this Earth today.”

She’s also excited to work with the Fashion Institute in New York on designing products for the disabled.

“We’re making bags for people who can’t manipulate a zipper or carry (one). I’m working with students and that’s very rewarding for me.”

### Traditions and savings

The five-day Annual Outlet Sale, held at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, brings \$5 million in revenue to Fort Wayne.

“As these thousands of visitors come into our community, many

of them stay for more than a day,” explains Mayor Henry. “They’ll stay for two or three days. They stay at the hotels. They go to the restaurants. And right next to the Coliseum, we have one of the largest shopping malls in the state. When they get done doing their shopping at the Vera Bradley outlet sale, many of them go over to our mall and do additional shopping. There’s a number of ways that they contribute to the economic base of our community.”

Indianapolis resident Rachel Stotts has attended the event with a group of college friends for more than 15 years. Those who live too far away send lists of items they’d like others to pick up on their behalf.

“Once you get in there, immediately you smell the roasted nuts,” Stotts relates. “While you’re waiting in line, when you get in there, they’re

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## What We Hope to Learn From Best Places to Work

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“We are honored that our employees’ experiences in the firm earned us a spot on this year’s list of Best Places to Work. We care deeply about our employees, their families and the culture in which we work. At Shrewsberry, we understand that our staff is the cornerstone of our success. We constantly work to nurture our company

culture and always look for opportunities to improve. This process helps us gain insight into critical employee satisfaction indicators like overall employee engagement and family-friendly benefits. Our team will closely analyze the results, then implement continuous improvement measures to help Shrewsberry remain one of the best places to work in our industry.”

*Anthony Warren, Ph.D., president  
Shrewsberry*



“We hope to gain feedback and insight from the employee and corporate survey tools. It is then important to use the feedback to make positive changes in corporate organization and culture. We also want to celebrate things we do well as an organization. Talented individuals have many options when exploring career opportunities and we want to continue to compete for top talent. We realize a positive corporate culture is critical to our future success.”

*Jane Ade Stevens, CEO  
Indiana Soybean Alliance*



“Through this process, I hope to learn ways to improve our business in Indianapolis. As a company, one of Impact’s main pillars is culture and we strive to create the best possible work environment for employees every day. I hope that this process provides insights into what we are doing well and where we can make

improvements, so that we can continue to evolve and grow as a branch and as a company.”

*Chris Zvirbulis, general manager  
Impact-Indiana*



“There is so much to learn from the Best Places to Work process – about our company, about the economic ecosystem and about our state. Most of all, it is continued confirmation that Indiana has all of the ingredients to be the epicenter of the great productivity boom. The economy of the future is all about the

convergence of all industries with technology. I believe that Indiana is the center of that boom, and the many great companies included in this year’s Best Places to Work are further confirmation of that.”

*Christopher Day, co-founder and CEO  
DemandJump*

roasting those sugary roasted pecans or whatever they are. I equate that smell with that sale for some reason, kind of a comforting smell.”

### Lasting impact

Among Vera Bradley’s top sellers today are a large duffel, tote bag, throw blanket, zip ID case.

Stephanie Muehlhausen, women’s accessories senior fashion director for Macy’s, comments on the company’s appeal.

“Macy’s has long been a fan of Vera Bradley. The signature of the brand is playful and colorful, and we are thrilled to carry everything from handbags to bedding to swimwear. Our customers love the vibrance.”

Miller, honored in 1997 as the Indiana Chamber’s Business Leader of the Year and later the state’s first CEO of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, is retired from Vera Bradley. She still sits on the boards of both the company and the foundation.

Baekgaard continues to embrace change. A new \$122 million boutique hotel in Fort Wayne (a project of hers, not Vera Bradley) is slated to break ground in May.

What is Baekgaard’s favorite product?

“I’m a backpack person,” she responds without hesitation. “Because first of all, I’m in New York a lot and I like to be able to carry something over both shoulders and be able to walk and keep my hands free. Recently, we made a mini velvet backpack. I carried that to a very formal event in New York and I just loved it. It’s a velvet, small backpack with mini quilting.”

She shares a memory related to writing her book, which was published in 2017.

“We were with all the big publishers in New York and the agent who was taking me to meet (another) publisher. We walked in and we



The 2018 Blessings in a Backpack event featured reality star Daniella Jonas. She is the wife of Kevin Jonas of the Jonas Brothers rock band.

meet with the publisher and I didn’t even need to say a word. Within two minutes, they’re pulling stuff out of their purses saying, ‘Oh my gosh! I got this pattern when I graduated from (college).’

“This agent was kind of sitting there like, ‘Oh my gosh.’ It was kind of funny – that all of these people in New York that we were supposed to be in awe of meeting (and I was), they connected on that level.”



# Proud to be a Best Place to Work in Indiana!

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# OPIOIDS in the WORKPLACE

## Employers Have Options for Assistance

By Rebecca Patrick

There are two definitive actions for any problem: Face it head on, or ignore it in hopes it simply resolves itself.

When it comes to the state’s ongoing opioid crisis, the latter shouldn’t even be considered an option anymore for employers.

“You can look at your workforce and make assumptions that they have it all together – no one has anyone in their life affected by opioid usage. But the fact is that it is so pervasive,” declares Kim Canada, strategist at FirstPerson, a benefits and compensation advisory firm.

“We really need to do what we can to get out in front of it and provide that education and reduce that stigma, so people feel like they have a resource or a place to go for themselves or a loved one ... because it’s extremely isolating,”

Both Canada and Brooke Salazar, HR consultant with Apex Benefits, report that more employers are recognizing the urgency and seeking out their services.

“Employers really want to understand what their role is when it comes to addiction and their employees,” Salazar offers.

Having a formal policy is recommended, she continues, not only for legal and practical purposes but for the human and compassionate

side of the equation.

“You need it for the HR person and the employee just as much. So, when that human resources person gets a call at 3:30 on a Friday afternoon that someone is passed out in the bathroom, they are able to jump in quicker if there is a policy.”

But she cautions any plan shouldn’t be one-size-fits-all and instead generated after spending time assessing the company environment.

“It’s so important to really be deliberate and thoughtful so you are living your values. Whether those values are employee safety, as it should be for every company, or one time is too many – especially if that employee can do himself/herself or others harm based on their job – or is it you have a chance to seek treatment and then return, and what that looks like.

“It just depends on the company. But having a deliberate and



Indiana Workforce Recovery is the Indiana Chamber and Wellness Council of Indiana initiative to help combat the opioid epidemic in the workplace.

Learn more at [www.wellnessindiana.org](http://www.wellnessindiana.org).

This is the third in a yearlong series on the drug and addiction issues facing Indiana, as well as efforts to combat the crisis.

thoughtful policy is absolutely necessary to prevent inconsistency in how terminations or discipline are handled.”

### Testing and data tracking

A key aspect of any substance policy revolves around testing.

Amy J. Adolay, a partner at Krieg DeVault law firm, encourages employers to “set out their plan for a drug-free workplace program – when they are going to test and what they are going to test (for) and put that in writing.”

But before any drug testing policy is implemented, it’s advisable to speak with an attorney about the implications of such testing and making sure the drug policies are in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act and any applicable state law, she notes. Not to mention, there are different drug tests allowed depending on the situation.

Data tracking can help employers become aware of trends of substance dependencies and how to mitigate high-risk claims. This is done by tracking not only pharmacy usage but visits to the doctor or emergency room.

Salazar shares a scenario that occurred with an Apex client.

“One of the employees was going to the ER quite often in different locations for a variety of reasons. However, the billing code kept coming back as pain management, so we were able to identify that that could be drug-seeking behavior.

“We were able to notify the crisis case manager with the insurer so they could reach out to the employee. Then in turn, that crisis

case manager put a block on opioid use for that employee through the pharmacy plan.”

Apex staff discovered this trend by combing through reporting data.

FirstPerson also offers that service. “We can help employers identify what percentages of prescriptions being prescribed are indeed opioids. And then really continue to have conversations around that, and then go back to providers to ensure we have safeguards in place that need to be there,” Canada describes.

She stresses that privacy is a must and employee information is kept confidential.

“Employers are definitely not getting, ‘Kim Canada uses opioids X number of times.’ That isn’t identified. They will just see how pervasive it is among the population.”

Canada and Salazar also both repeatedly mention having an employee assistance program, or EAP, in place to provide education, review claims utilization and, perhaps most importantly, give one-on-one assistance to employees who need it.

### From the frontline

A northeastern Indiana employer told *BizVoice*® it has had a drug and alcohol policy in place for over 20 years. Where that company has stepped up recently is in the education of workers and updating procedures.

Regarding testing, there is a drug and alcohol screen post offer, post incident, random and when there is reasonable suspicion or cause.

“Our employees understand that any time you believe that you may need some type of drug addiction or similar assistance

that you can come forward; we can put you in touch with our EAP and our insurance platform, and get you the services that you need, along with FMLA leave if you are eligible,” explains the health care professional representing the company.

“Then upon return they would need to show they have completed a (rehab) program and are subject to random drug screening that is separate from our normal company practice for a period of time.”

As Salazar stressed, it’s paramount for employers to adopt specific policy that makes sense in relation to their values, overall employee safety and job demands.

For this employer, that translates to encouraging employees to speak up and come to the health care professional, HR person or manager before the fact – before there is an incident at work or they are selected for a random test. If an individual waits until a failed test occurs or they know they will fail the random check, it means termination.

The company recognizes that continued communication is and will be key.

Medical disposal kits to deactivate the drugs are also part of the plan, as is naloxone training in the event an overdose occurs.

### On the right road

Celadon Group, headquartered in Indianapolis, is one of the 10 largest truckload carriers in North America.

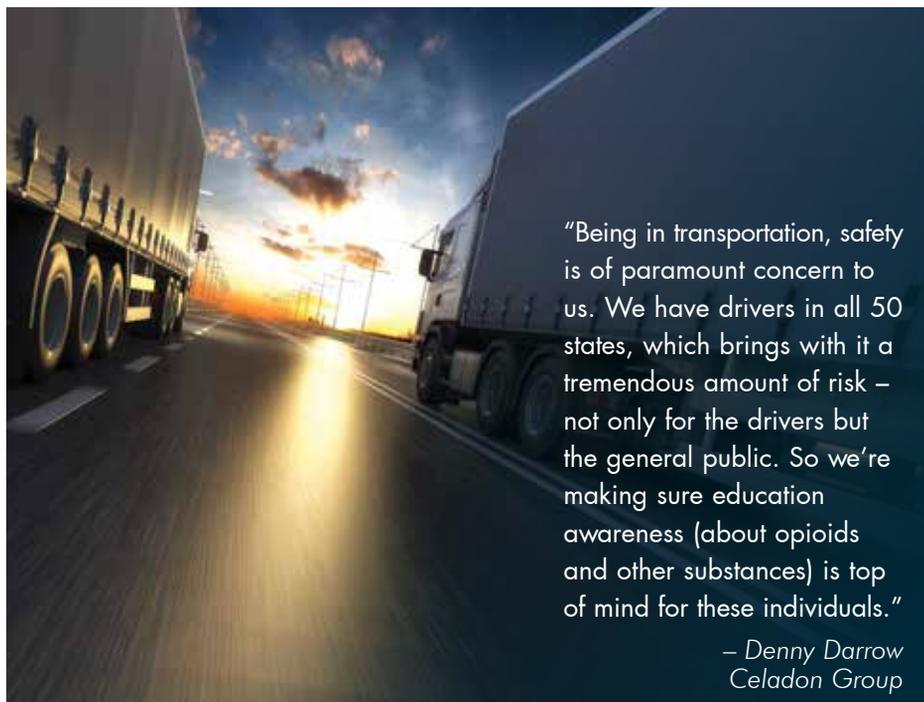
Denny Darrow, vice president of human resources, points to 2016-2017 as when Celadon and other employers started seeing meaningful impacts on their health plans and claims.

“You saw a spike in the number of concurrent claims for both opioid prescriptions and additional services requested as a result of those individuals or families who were prescribed those medications. That may be counseling services or mental health services or additional health conditions as a result of increased opioid dependencies or prescriptions.”

Giving the nature of the trucking industry and the rigorous U.S. Department of Transportation compliance program, “The topic of opioids is part of our pre-employment, screening and education process,” Darrow notes. “It’s part of our onboarding, built-in program to where time is devoted to those employees should they need conversation and education around it.”

Celadon’s on-site clinics play an integral role too.

“We make sure that they are doing those physicals there. That they are having those conversations and reviewing medical history and, at the first opportunity, educating them about the dangers of opioids as well as identifying the resources and alternatives.”



“Being in transportation, safety is of paramount concern to us. We have drivers in all 50 states, which brings with it a tremendous amount of risk – not only for the drivers but the general public. So we’re making sure education awareness (about opioids and other substances) is top of mind for these individuals.”

– Denny Darrow  
Celadon Group

Darrow believes the company's overall strategy is having an impact.

"From what I've heard from our clinic team, we have had good conversations with employees. They are asking questions: 'Hey if I have to take this, what are my alternatives and should I talk to my doctor or pharmacist about safeguards and disposing of the opioids when I'm through with the prescription?'"

"I have had enough comments which are leading me to think we are having an impact. How profound it is I can't really tell you numerically. But it's good to have that feedback."

## State issues helpful resource

Indiana's new substance abuse treatment law (circa 2018) is intended to help employers by putting forth the proper guidelines they should follow in the event an employee fails a drug screening or voluntarily comes forward for assistance.

Any employer can participate and follow the free guidelines, which were scheduled for a May 1 release. The second part of the law provides employers in the program with civil immunity protection for negligent hiring. As of press time, language in 2019 legislation was on track to open up this legal safeguard to any Hoosier employer (originally, it was only for those without an EAP).

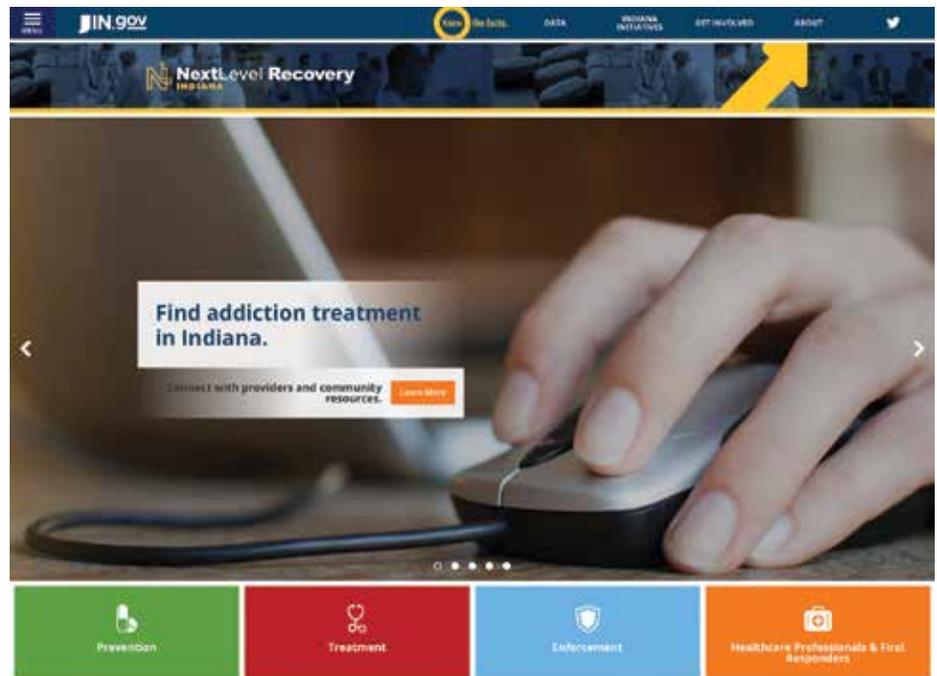
"The goal is to provide employers with a system whereby they can refer an individual to treatment and retain that individual," states Mike Thibideau, director of the Indiana Workforce Recovery initiative for the Wellness Council of Indiana (WCI).

"Also, if an individual is hired for a position and is qualified for the position but cannot pass a successful drug test, this gives the employer a system they can go through that can keep that position open for that individual and refer them to care and get them to working as soon as possible after treatment."

In order to receive the full benefit – and namely the legal protection – an employer has "to fully participate in all the listed-out actions (in the guidelines). Anything that is not specifically designated as discretionary would have to be followed," Thibideau notes.

He also clarifies what the guidelines don't do, which is provide information on industry-specific regulations (testing or otherwise): "They need to do that individually with their legal counsel."

The guidelines are available on the state of Indiana and WCI web sites.



Mike Thibideau, director of Indiana Workforce Recovery, urges companies of all sizes to utilize the state's new employer guidelines (available online) for dealing with substance abuse – either as a starting point or reference for existing policies.

WCI also has five new videos that serve in conjunction with the guidelines and take a deeper dive on the subject matter.

Thibideau explains, "The guidelines will walk you through a process, but there will be multiple portions where you need a little more foundational information, so that's where we refer you to an individual video module to learn more. For example, it could be on workplace drug testing or on drug-free workplace policies."

Each video runs 12 to 15 minutes, with an additional set slated for release in July.

## Top takeaways

Salazar says it's only natural for employers to need assistance in this area.

"This is relatively new territory, and I don't think HR and executive leadership gets into their profession thinking that these are the problems I'm going to deal with every day."

Darrow advises his counterparts to seek out the "impressive yet new and evolving toolkits out there for employers." He cites both the Employers' Forum of Indiana and the Indiana Workforce Recovery initiative.

"The Wellness Council of Indiana is doing a very good job at holding regional meetings with health care providers,

professionals, caregivers and employers in the area to educate them on the current risks, dangers and opportunities," he remarks.

More of these events are slated for fall 2019.

Above all, use what you have – and in many cases, it's already right there at your fingertips.

"Employers just need to make sure they are leveraging their resources, through their insurance plans, through their broker – like FirstPerson (which Celadon uses) – on best practices and any independent solutions, like an on-site clinic, to make sure any issues are being addressed," Darrow suggests.

For Canada, it's about striking that right balance while covering all the bases.

"It's making sure you are not doing things that violate privacy, so that means consulting with an attorney on policy – that's the hard stuff, that's not the warm and fuzzy stuff," she begins.

"But also, on the softer side, providing education for employees about different ways that if they need help, here are resources. If you have a friend or family member (in crisis), here are resources. It's really trying to open up more conversations between employee and employer to make it clear they have a resource that they can reach out to."

**RESOURCES:** Brooke Salazar, Apex Benefits at [www.apexbg.com](http://www.apexbg.com) | Denny Darrow, Celadon Group, at [www.celadontrucking.com](http://www.celadontrucking.com) | Kim Canada, FirstPerson, at [www.firstpersonadvisors.com](http://www.firstpersonadvisors.com) | Amy J. Adolay, Krieg DeVault, at [www.kriegdevault.com](http://www.kriegdevault.com) | Mike Thibideau, Wellness Council of Indiana, at [www.wellnessindiana.org](http://www.wellnessindiana.org)



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# RESPONDING TO THE NEED

## Programs to Increase Counselor Numbers

Indiana’s efforts to combat the opioid epidemic have properly included a partial focus on expanding treatment options. More counselors and clinical workers are required to achieve that mission.

Two of the various initiatives to do just that include Community Health Network and its partners in central Indiana, as well as Trine University in Angola.

The Community Behavioral Health Academy will prepare students to be both a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and Licensed Clinical Addiction Counselor (LCAC). Indiana currently falls about 7,000 workers short of the need for behavioral health professionals. Among the contributing factors: low pay, stressful working conditions and the need for more relevant curricula around evidence-based treatments for substance use disorders.

Academy participants will complete a specialized curriculum and internship over two semesters. Graduates will receive financial incentives and educational opportunities, including a priority job interview at Community Health Network upon graduation.



In addition to Community Health Network, partners are the Indiana University School of

Social Work-IUPUI campus, the University of Indianapolis and Ascend Indiana. The academy is made possible through a grant from the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation.

Organizers say the program is a model that can be replicated in other communities and regions.

George Hurd, vice president of Community Behavioral Health, notes, “By creating a pipeline of qualified, specially trained therapists, we will strengthen our fight against the opioid epidemic and change the lives of those with addiction.”



At Trine, the College of Graduate and Professional Studies (CGPS) program is now offering a licensed addictions counselor concentration. It

allows students who earn a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice or psychology to take specialized coursework in order to sit for the addictions counselor licensure exam.

Ryan Dombkowski, Ph.D., dean of the CGPS, shares that the new concentration “prepares students to become powerful agents of change in their communities, as well as increasing their ability to gain employment.”

Tess Ottenwiler, director of addiction recovery and family services at the Bowen Center, adds, “As the need for addictions recovery services continues to grow, quality treatment is imperative. I look forward to partnering with Trine to further our addiction recovery efforts in our communities.”

**RESOURCES:** Community Behavioral Health at [www.ecommunity.com/services/mental-behavioral-health](http://www.ecommunity.com/services/mental-behavioral-health) | Trine University at [www.trine.edu](http://www.trine.edu)

## Helping the Health Care Professionals

Health care professionals are at the forefront of assisting those suffering from opioid and other addictions. And while they are also subject to the same substance use disorders, most have an option that provides treatment and a return to work upon successful completion.

“The accepted addiction rates across the board – that’s for all people in the country – are about 10%,” reports Dr. David Cummins, medical director for the Valparaiso-based Indiana Professionals Recovery Program (IPRP). “We think it’s probably a little higher in the health care workforce.”

Parkdale Management has a contract with the state of Indiana to manage the monitoring phase of the alternative-to-discipline program for nurses, pharmacists and podiatrists. Cummins says physicians and dentists have had their own separate, very effective program in place for many years.

Three stages of any treatment, according to Cummins, are detox, formal treatment and monitoring. “That’s someone watching you, drug testing you, being sure you’re seeing your therapist, being sure you’re going to your meetings. That’s what IPRP does.”

Parkdale, formed in 2014, features a residential treatment center in Chesterton that serves professionals from around the country. Seventy percent of those patients are in the health care field. It also has a consulting business to assist hospitals and other employers with addiction-related policies and best practices. IPRP is a separate entity with its own staff.

Cummins contends that health care professionals can be more susceptible to addictive behaviors, but also benefit from IPRP and the other related initiatives in place.

“One of the things that health care providers have is access. All of us can find a way to acquire opioids off the street if we are motivated to. But nurses (and others) have easier access,” he maintains.

On the other hand, “If they are answering to a licensing board, they’re forced to get proper treatment. One of the biggest problems for the general population is getting the treatment you need and then following through on it. With your license at stake ... that’s a real strong incentive to follow through with your treatment.”

The state should be credited for its efforts, Cummins believes.

“Indiana has put itself out there as a very progressive state with an alternative-to-discipline program – with a comprehensive and broad monitoring program. It gives these professionals a pathway back. Other states have much smaller versions or none at all.”



Dr. David Cummins

**RESOURCES:** Dr. David Cummins, Parkdale Management, at [www.parkdalecenter.com](http://www.parkdalecenter.com) | Indiana Professionals Recovery Program at [www.inprp.org](http://www.inprp.org)

# Teaming to Provide Emergency Treatment

An initial pre-arranged call to interview Christine Michiaels of Frontline Foundations for this story on the city of LaPorte’s Quick Response Team (QRT) did not take place as planned.

Michiaels was engaged with the team in a response following a potential overdose. She ended up driving the person in need of help to a treatment facility more than two hours away.

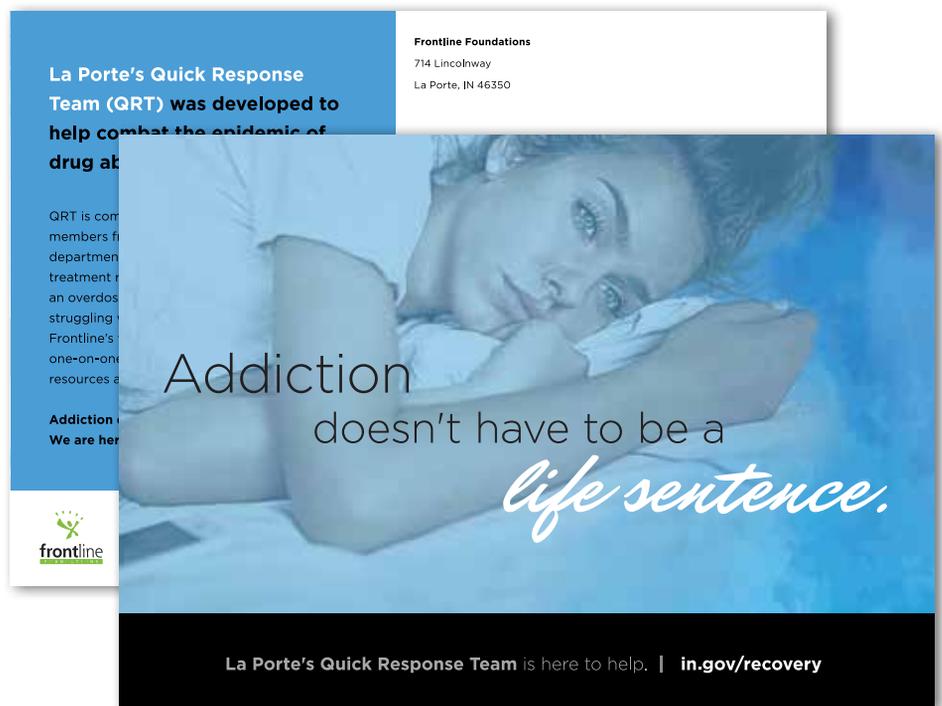
Speaking the next day, she says the goal is to “get all the people that have requested or are interested into treatment – wherever that may be. We just want to find the best fit for people.”

The QRT effort began in November 2018. First responders provide information on local and state resources, as well as a “leave behind card” for the victims of a drug incident to sign and give consent to be contacted about treatment. Responses and overdose reports are turned into Michiaels, the QRT coordinator for Frontline, which offers treatment and recovery support services from offices in Chesterton and LaPorte.

The next step, she says, is to make contact with the individual within 72 hours. The visiting team includes a police officer, a firefighter or medic, and recovery coach or counselor.

“The recovery coach helps navigate the direction they need to go,” explains Michiaels, adding that Narcan (emergency overdose treatment) is available and supplied to family members with the training they need for potential use. “We want to figure out what is going to work for that individual.”

An extensive awareness campaign was



A community awareness program introduced residents to LaPorte’s Quick Response Team initiative.

conducted prior to the QRT being put into place. That was important to alleviate skepticism about the effort. The result: “More people realize we’re truly trying to help them. There were a lot of opioid overdoses. Now we are seeing more methamphetamine and other drugs.”

Michiaels estimates that 60% of those treated by first responders sign the consent card. “We definitely see that number rising,” she adds. “The last week (in early March), we

had overdoses every single day and every single day we’ve gotten the consent cards as well.”

The timing of the response is particularly important.

“There are a lot of resources. Many people just don’t know about them,” Michiaels contends. “An overdose or potential overdose is a big scare, a reality check. That’s going to be the best chance to get somebody to agree to treatment.”

**RESOURCE:** Christine Michiaels, Frontline Foundations and LaPorte Quick Response Team, at [www.frontlinefoundations.com](http://www.frontlinefoundations.com)

# Costly Concerns

## Addressing Hidden Health Care Challenges



**Jeremy Watson**

The issue pops up in the workplace in a thousand subtle ways. Maybe someone always needs to leave early to go meet with their high schooler's principal. Maybe it's consistently late arrivals. Or increasing absenteeism. Or worse, presenteeism where your employee is physically at work, but not mentally "there" or productive.

These can be signs that employees may be facing behavioral health issues such as depression, anxiety or substance use. Or that their spouses or children may be.

It's not easy to identify behavioral health problems in the workforce. Many times even the employee's closest family is unaware. Stigma and shame can keep employees from talking with their manager or with HR. It's vital to help employees confront these issues if a business is going to protect its investment in staff, improve productivity and be a high-functioning, profitable enterprise.

Consider the facts:

It is estimated by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that one in six workers is dealing with behavioral health issues such as depression, anxiety and stress, and that about one in 10 have a substance use disorder of some type, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). That means that between 10% to 15% of your staff could currently be in need of behavioral health care.

So what are three things you can do to help?

### 1. Look at the real costs

Looking at your insurance costs won't give you a true picture of how behavioral health is impacting your bottom line.

To get a clearer picture of the financial downside, use "The Real Cost of Substance Use to Employers." This free online calculator was developed by the National Safety Council and the national nonprofit Shatterproof in collaboration with the independent research institution NORC (formerly the National Opinion Research Center) at the University of Chicago.

This will give you specific information about the cost of substance use (including prescription drug misuse, alcohol misuse, opioid and heroin addiction as well as misuse of other illicit drugs and marijuana) in the workplace based on the size of your employee base, industry and state. Visit [shatterproof.org/workplace-cost-calculator](http://shatterproof.org/workplace-cost-calculator) to see what substance use is truly costing your company.

### 2. Find a behavioral health partner

Just as you went to a professional to help develop and implement your wellness plan, the same should be true for behavioral wellness. Most HR departments are not comfortable addressing substance use or

behavioral health issues and are reluctant to bring up the topic. Likewise, employees are hesitant to reach out for help because of stigma and a fear of losing their co-workers' respect – or even their jobs.

A good first step is to talk to your benefits broker or employee assistance program provider. You may also want to work with a substance use treatment facility in your area to provide education to your HR staff and options to your employees. With the opioid crisis in full swing, treatment centers of all types are popping up throughout Indiana. To find a reputable, nationally accredited treatment facility, go to the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers (NAATP) and use its directory at [naatp.org](http://naatp.org).

### 3. Create a culture of acceptance

Easier said than done. However, openly talking about behavioral health issues and substance use is a great way to start a dialogue with employees. Supporting a staff member's behavioral health is not just about keeping a valuable asset but also about sending a message across the organization about your values.

For information on how to talk about substance use issues as well as find other valuable resources, visit Next Level Recovery Indiana at [in.gov/recovery/know-the-o](http://in.gov/recovery/know-the-o) for facts, training, tools and more.

Often employees are afraid to discuss a behavioral health issue they may be experiencing; therefore, their problems can spiral out of control. These issues may not only affect the performance of the individual employee, but everyone in the organization.

Additionally, when employees return to work after having been treated for a medical issue, employers are often provided clear information on what accommodations need to be made to assist the employee with a successful transition. It is often less clear on how to support someone who is recovering from a behavioral health or substance use disorder.

Managers and supervisors of people often are not trained on how to identify employees at risk or how to have a conversation with someone about their behavioral health. Learning these skills, tackling any causes around work-related behavioral health issues and developing a culture supportive of both physical and mental health well-being will not only boost employee engagement – it may save a life!

**AUTHOR:** Jeremy Watson is director of business programs for Fairbanks Treatment and Recovery Center. Learn more at [www.fairbanksemployerservices.com](http://www.fairbanksemployerservices.com)



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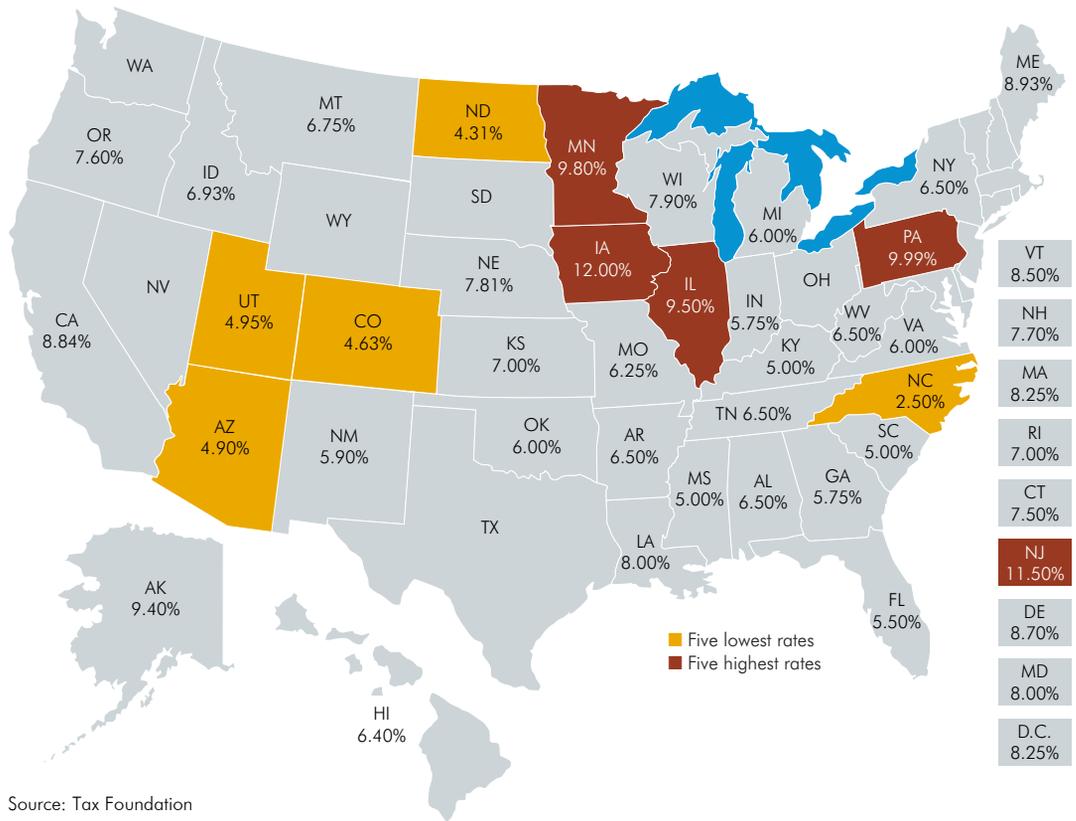
# Tackling the Taxes

## CORPORATE INCOME TAXES

Defining and comparing corporate income tax rates is no simple task:

- Forty-four states have a corporate income tax, ranging from 2.5% in North Carolina to 12% in Iowa
- Nevada, Ohio, Texas and Washington impose gross receipts taxes instead of corporate income taxes. Of the two, gross receipts taxes are generally thought to be more economically harmful.
- South Dakota and Wyoming are the only states not to levy a corporate income or gross receipts tax
- Thirty-four states have single rate corporate tax systems
- Indiana's rate decreased to 5.75% on July 1, 2018, and is scheduled to go to 5.5% on July 1, 2019

Top Marginal Corporate Income Tax Rates as of January 1, 2019



Source: Tax Foundation

## MARKETPLACE FACILITATION

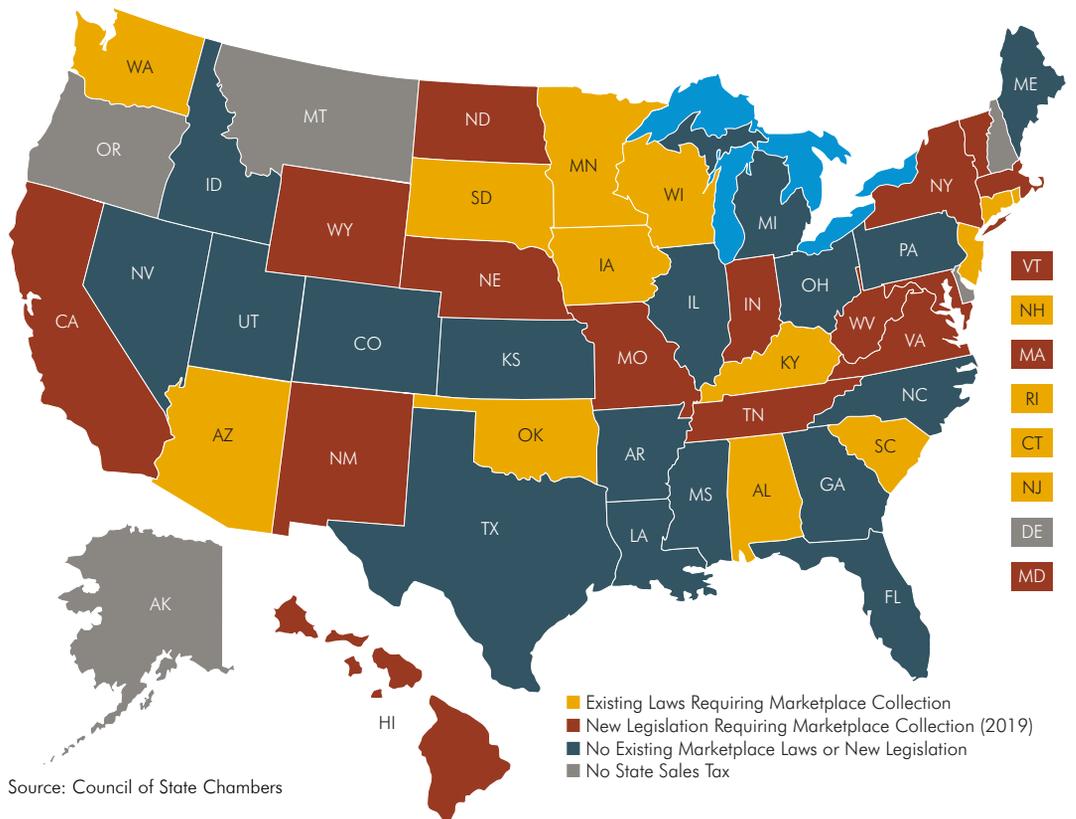
The U.S. Supreme Court decision in *South Dakota v. Wayfair* has generated widespread interest, including in Indiana, in marketplace facilitator laws.

A formal definition of a marketplace facilitator is a “business that provides an infrastructure to facilitate retail sales, collect and process payments, or receive compensation from retail sales.” Informally, it’s Amazon, Etsy and others.

The reasoning behind such laws is that it is easier for the marketplace facilitators to collect online sales taxes rather than the individual sellers of products.

As this issue went to press, the marketplace facilitator legislation was expected to pass in Indiana.

Marketplace Facilitator Collection Laws



Source: Council of State Chambers



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