



2009 Guide to Bold New Ideas for Making Work Work

Excerpts from the 2009 Edition profiling winners of the Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility

The selected profiles highlight flexible employers with strong wellness initiatives

Bader Martin, P.S

Certified Public Accountants

Winning Site: Seattle, Washington

72 Employees

Web Site: www.badermartin.com

Increases in medical premiums paid by this award-winning CPA and business advisory firm have been less than 10% during the last two years and employee contributions have remained at \$10.00 per month -- “outstanding,” the company reports, compared to medical costs at similar firms. “Employees enjoy a healthy lifestyle,” a representative of the organization explains, and the firm introduced a compressed work week during the summer months to give employees more time to bike, run, dance and enjoy other pursuits outside work, keeping them happier and healthier as a result. Healthy snacks and meals are provided to staff during the busy tax season when accountants typically neglect their diets. Then, too, the firm’s emphasis on flexibility and work/life fit attracts young talent. Twelve new individuals joined Bader Martin last year, mostly referred by word of mouth – through suggestions from local college professors, for example. One of the Puget Sound region’s largest local CPA firms, Bader Martin is also proud of the civic benefits its compressed workweeks and flexible options deliver; these include reduced traffic, pollution and gas consumption.

BECU

Credit Union

Winning Site: Tukwila, Washington

410 Employees

Web Site: www.becu.org

We’ve all heard plenty about the nation’s credit crunch, but while many banks were reducing their lending last year, BECU continued writing checks to borrowers. It never pursued the shaky loans that helped create the credit crisis, the organization says, and today boasts a healthy balance sheet. **That emphasis on strength is also evident in the organization’s workplace, where wellness is “a huge priority,” a representative states. The credit union – Washington’s largest – holds a wellness fair every year, giving employees an opportunity to check their blood pressure, cholesterol and other key health indicators. Professionals are on hand to discuss health concerns, and staff also have access to a 24-hour “nurse help hotline” and an employee assistance program able to help them with anything from finding care for an ill parent to dealing with a flood in the basement. Resources for employees include a**

Wellness Committee and wellness coaches, onsite gyms, commuter subsidies, onsite flu shots, an employee assistance loan program and a mortgage benefit program offering employees 0.5% off on the interest rate of their home loan. BECU's many other workplace options – including telecommuting and alternative work schedules – make the company “a coveted employer in the community, with staggering application numbers,” according to BECU Work-Life Specialist Monica Patti.

Discovery Communications

Global Media Company

Winning Site: Silver Spring, MD

1940 Employees

Web Site: www.discoverycommunications.com

Discovery Communications is the world's number one nonfiction media company, reaching more than 1.5 billion subscribers in more than 170 countries. A winner of numerous awards, the company is committed to recruiting and retaining top industry talent, and offers employees a broad range of flexible options to help them meet their obligations in and outside the office. Employees can take advantage of compressed workweeks, part-time roles and job sharing. Additional offerings include paid personal days, summer work hours, unpaid leaves of absence, reimbursement for back-up dependent care and paid time off to care for dependents. Time-saving services available onsite for staff include dry-cleaning, car wash and repairs, a sandwich shop and mini-convenience store, take-home meals and personal shopping. **Opened in 2004, the company's on-site medical clinic offers holistic health management with stress busters like massage therapy, yoga, meditation, stress management workshops, aerobics, nutrition counseling and onsite reflexology and life coaching, all available by appointment. Since the center opened five years ago, it has helped save more than one life – and has also saved the company an impressive \$5 million, based on health insurance cost savings and reduced staff time away from work.** The company even offers bicycle and sneaker reimbursement along with transit reimbursement, car sharing programs and hybrid vehicle discounts. Last summer the Discovery Kids Place Child Care Center opened its doors in the company's global headquarters for 102 children of employees. “Having the center on site adds to working parents' flexibility; they can manage their time better and visit with their children during the day,” says Internal Communications Director Kristen Mainzer.

Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce

Not-for-Profit Civic Organization

Winning Site: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

37 Employees

Web Site: www.mmac.org

“For an organization that supports economic growth and prosperity, we've really become a model of flexibility,” says Mary Ellen Powers, COO of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce. “We've made strides in work-life balance with a 35 hour work week (not including lunch). And we provide a great deal of flexibility in when and where works get done, offering incredible freedom for our staff to self-manage a wide variety of personal needs.” **Employees have maintained their strong work ethic and seem happier and less stressed, according to Powers, perhaps in part as the result of a health program that has helped them ease stress, lose weight and generally adopt healthier habits. In fact, the group's top three health risks -- nutrition, fitness and cancer -- decreased by 5%, 3% and 11% respectively in just one year.** MMAC's Wellness Program includes a yearly health risk appraisal for employees and spouses, annual biometric testing and flu shots in the office, health counselors that provide individualized health risk reduction services and access to a website providing a wealth of health-related information, including comparisons of local physicians and hospitals. A Health Advisory Team of MMAC employees organizes bi-monthly “lunch and learn” sessions on health topics and promotes walking programs and weight loss competitions – as well as keeping the break room filled with healthy snacks. The Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce recently became the first small business in Wisconsin to win a national Well Workplace awards from the Wellness Councils of America.

**Narragansett Bay Commission
Wastewater Treatment and Collection Agency
Winning Site: Providence, Rhode Island
243 Employees
Web Site: www.narrabay.com**

Among the numerous honors won by Rhode Island's largest wastewater agency is the National Association of Clean Water Agency's (NACWA) award for Excellence in Management – a nod, in part, to the organization's commitment to flexibility. The state agency offers its people a number of scheduling options, including telecommuting, compressed workweeks and extended unpaid leaves for new parents, plus the option of returning to work part-time. Employees can also use paid sick time to care for ailing family members. **NBC, which works to reduce pollution in the state's water, encourages staff to participate in wellness programs during work hours -- including lunch-time yoga, pilates and tai chi classes and workshops on topics like nutrition and stress management – a practice it believes reduces its medical costs. Wellness Clinics held every two years provide various screenings for participants, to assess blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels, for example, and the company uses aggregate data from these screenings to determine future wellness programs.**

**Washington Health Foundation
Not-for-Profit Health Organization
Winning Site: Seattle, Washington
22 Employees
Web Site: www.whf.org**

The Washington Health Foundation wants to make Washington the healthiest state in the nation. To this end, they provide resources to employers in an annual healthiest business challenge, and to school personnel at an annual healthy school summit, among other initiatives. They're doing right by their employees, too. Staff can work from home and adopt non-traditional schedules, and take mental health days, too. **They're encouraged to "meet on the move" – to walk while they discuss work issues with each other – and to take time during the workday to exercise. A casual dress policy makes it easier for them to do so, as do reimbursements for gym memberships and fun, friendly competitions to see which employee teams can log the most miles. Then there's food: the Washington Health Foundation provides fresh fruits and vegetables for snacks and orders a healthy lunch for the entire staff each Thursday.** Finally, the organization's commuting policy offers each employee a bus pass, since individuals who use public transportation not only put less wear and tear on the environment, they also increase their physical activity.

**Woodward, Hobson & Fulton, LLP
Law Firm
Winning Sites: Lexington, Kentucky; Louisville, Kentucky
134 Employees in two Kentucky offices
Web Site: www.whf-law.com**

Woodward, Hobson & Fulton has been a well-respected law firm for more than 90 years and has won recognition as a Best Place to Work in Kentucky for five years running. The firm's voluntary turnover is now 7%, very low for the legal industry. Maybe it's because 92% of employees say the firm's policies give them the flexibility they need to manage their personal lives, according to a recent firm-wide survey. **One benefit of working at this Kentucky firm is its wellness program, so strong it has reduced the company's health insurance costs so that WH&F can continue to pay a generous portion of the premium for its employees' health insurance. The program, designed with leadership from one of the firm's nurse paralegals, includes on-site flu shots and health fairs, a quarterly fitness prize drawing, fresh fruit delivered one Thursday each month to promote healthy food choices, gym membership reimbursement of up to \$25 a month, non-smoking discount on health insurance premiums, on-going sessions of Weight Watchers at Work and insulated lunch bags to encourage healthy eating.** To promote flexibility, WH&F cross-trains staff members to fill roles

other than their own; this practice gives participating employees a better understanding of the firm -- and makes it easier for employees to cover for each other when someone needs to leave early or take an unplanned day off. At the same time, WH&F is always looking for ways to make being out of the office easier. WH&F purchased digital dictation software this year, enabling recordings to be sent remotely. In the past, if attorneys or paralegals worked away from the office and produced dictation, they had to return their tapes to the office before a transcriber could work with them. Now these recordings are downloaded into the software program, where people ready to transcribe the tapes have easy access to them.

WorldatWork

Not-for-Profit Association for Compensation, Benefits and Human Resources Professionals

Winning Site: Chandler, Arizona

150 Employees

Web Site: www.worldatwork.org

WorldatWork is focused on education, research and creating a community for compensation, benefits and work-life effectiveness. It gives its 25,000 members and professionals information about how “total rewards” —ranging from health insurance to work-life benefits to professional development opportunities—can help them attract, motivate and retain a talented workforce. So how does the organization manage its own workplace? “We live and breathe flexibility and wellness and provide a lot of support to make sure everyone can be engaged, productive and focused on what's really important in life,” says President Anne C. Ruddy, CCP. **It's not just the access to a Privacy Room, chair massages, seminars, fitness assessments and control over a schedule that keep people engaged, it is a culture of “WellnessatWork” and flexibility that reinforces to each employee that their work-life effectiveness matters. Ruddy says these activities and initiatives produce measurable results in employees' health and productivity. Fully 66% percent of employees participate in the wellness program and about one quarter regularly work outside the office, with more doing so periodically.** Does all this flexibility cause staff to lose focus? Apparently not: WorldatWork has expanded from just over 100 employees in 2005 to 150 in 2008, and has added a new location in Washington, DC. In addition, WorldatWork was recognized by *ComPsych*® Corp with the silver “Health at Work Award” and named by the *Arizona Republic* as one of the “Top 25 Workplaces for Women in Arizona.” It also recently won the American Psychological Association's National Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award in the nonprofit category. “In this time of financial stress brought on by a contracting economy, WorldatWork has made it a priority to create an environment that is sensitive to the health and well-being of our workers,” Ruddy says. By acknowledging that employees have other stresses in life, and doing what it can as an employer to relieve those stresses with financial planning seminars, fitness assessments, one-on-one mentoring, impromptu celebrations and private and public recognition, WorldatWork sends a message to all employees that they are valued for everything that they contribute—both inside and outside of the office.

When Work Works is a nationwide initiative to highlight the importance of workforce effectiveness and workplace flexibility as strategies to enhance businesses' competitive advantage in the global economy and yield positive business results. *When Work Works* is a project of Families and Work Institute in partnership with the Institute for a Competitive Workforce, an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Twiga Foundation, with funding provided by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. For more information, visit www.whenworkworks.org