



Best practices for companies moving to the next level
Friday, August 31, 2007

In this issue...best places to work list

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Pam Watson Korbel's Speaking Engagements

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7 Synergies of Business Success

1. Grow from the inside out.
 2. Develop a brand promise and live it daily
 3. Put people first.
 4. Hire leaders and managers.
 5. Values validate valuation.
 6. Lead to create and maintain value.
 7. Monitor, monitor, monitor
...whatever you measure will improve.
- Plus...**The quality of the company is directly proportional to the quality of the CEO.

For an article about the 7 Synergies of Business Success [click here for the article](#).

Opportunity:

Free Assessment To see how you stack up against other growing companies, complete the 7 Synergies of Smart Growth Assessment - write info@smartgrowth.com or [click here for the assessment](#)

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SmartSolutions Newsletter

What's All This Talk about the "best places to work" list?

It is that time of year when all the business publications create their list of the Best Companies to Work. So what is all the hub-hub?

Building a work force is a strategic issue facing every business. As Scott Farber, partner in charge of the Irvine Office of Grant Thornton LLP says, "Baby boomers are nearing retirement age and there is no one to replace them; the workforce is facing an overwhelming deficit over the next several years."

To counteract the decline in available employees, companies need to position themselves as attractive employers both to new and existing employees.

Here are the characteristics that exemplify the best employers identified by several lists across the company.

1. **Employee Benefits** - The Container Store, a perennial on the Best Places to Work list, stands out in this category. They offer medical benefits to part-time employees, family friendly shifts, a generous 401k plan.
2. **Accountability** - Employees want to be held accountable, meet regularly with their team and develop an accountability relationship with their supervisor.
3. **Fun** - At Blitz Distribution, a designer and distributor of skateboard products, employees spend their breaks on company ramps, rails and obstacles and earn tickets to industry events like X games. Each quarter management sponsors a "fun day" at a theme park or another adventure. In addition, many businesses feature game rooms now..
4. **Incentives** - eEye Digital pays employees \$3,000 for a referral to a future employee. Other companies are known for regular celebrations when they achieve quarterly goals.
5. **Training** - Companies retain their employees by continually training them. The Container Store provides over 240 hours of training per year for a full-time employee. Tuition reimbursement programs also help to retain employees.
6. **Family Friendly Work Environments** - Recognition that employees take care of children and elderly parents earns many companies top honors. Silverado Senior Living provides onsite day care at no charge for its employees. Flex time and telecommuting are frequently mentioned by the best companies.

book "More Money, Less Work, More Fun™! 123 ideas for smart growth in today's business environment."

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7. **Mentoring** - SmartLabs, Inc. created an internal mentoring program which prepares employees to move to the next level.

8. **State of the Art Technology** - WR Starkey Mortgage of Denver was recognized for constantly improving employee's productivity with technology.

9. **Business Savvy** - Edward Jones, which earns mention on several local and national lists, boasts about its management systems that function at a high level resulting in no business layoffs in the last 34 years.

10. **Focus employees on their strengths** - ReadyTalk, Inc. an audio and webconferencing business in Denver, says that the "tricky part" of managing is to keep people doing what they do best and not being tempted to promote them to jobs they can not do well..

11. **Demographics** - All the judges in the Best Companies to Work look at productivity measures, turnover/longevity and demographic breakdown of your work force, such diversity in race, gender and personalities.

12. **Employee Feedback** - No one makes the list without stellar feedback from their employees. For a free copy of a quarterly employee survey, e-mail pam@smartgrowth.com.

A great resource for entrepreneurial companies is www.greatplacetowork.com, which provides The Trust Index©, a tool that any company may use with their staff to assess your status as a Best Place to Work. Their site also provides insights into the Best Places to Work programs.

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SmartGrowth, Inc.

14 Inverness Drive East Ste. B220, Englewood, CO 80112
303.790.9131 Fax: 303.790.9356
CEO & Publisher: Pam Watson Korbel
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info@smartgrowth.com