

Great Place to Work and Lifelong learning

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For the first time ever, Great Place to Work Europe, in March 2003, published a list of the Top 100 Best Workplaces* in the European Union. More than 210,000 employees from all 15-member states evaluated their workplace environments. Trust between employees and employers is the main key to creating excellent workplace relations, the analysis showed. To be a great place to work a company must, among other things, offer its employees training programs, the analysis also showed.

What makes a Great Place to Work?

Based on 20 years of research, the Great Place to Work Institute has defined a great workplace as a place where employees **trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy the people they work with.** The great workplaces are measured by the quality of the following three, interconnected relationships:

- The relationship between employees and management,
- The relationship between employees and their jobs/company, and
- The relationship between employees and other employees.

It's all about trust

The Great Place to Work Model consists of five dimensions. **Trust** is the essential ingredient for the primary workplace relationship between the employee and the employer. According to the model, trust is composed of three dimensions: Credibility, Respect, and Fairness.

Credibility means managers regularly communicate with employees about the company's direction and plans - and solicit their ideas. It involves coordinating people and resources efficiently and effectively, so that employees know how their work relates to the company's goals. It's the integrity management brings to the business. To be credible, words must be followed by action.

Respect involves providing employees with the equipment, resources, and training they need to do their job. It means appreciating good work and extra effort. It includes reaching out to employees and making them partners in the company's activities, fostering a spirit of collaboration across departments and creating a work environment that's safe and healthy. Respect means that work/life balance is a practice, not a slogan.

Fairness: At an organization that's fair, economic success is shared equitably through compensation and benefit programs. Everybody receives equitable opportunity for recognition. Decisions on hiring and promotions are made impartially, and the workplace seeks to free itself of discrimination, with clear processes for appealing and adjudicating disputes. To be fair, you must be just.

DIMENSIONS OF A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

Dimension	How It Plays Out in the Workplace
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications are open and accessible Competence in coordinating human and material resources Integrity in carrying out vision with consistency
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting professional development & showing appreciation Collaborating with employees in relevant decisions Caring for employees as individuals with personal lives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity—balanced treatment for all in terms of rewards Impartiality—absence of favoritism in hiring and promotions Justice—lack of discrimination and process for appeals
Pride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In personal job, individual contributions In work produced by one's team or work group In the organization's products and standing in the community
Comraderie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to be oneself Socially friendly and welcoming atmosphere Sense of "family" or "team"

*The 100 Best Workplaces List is based on national List of Best Workplaces in all EU member states. Great Place to Work Europe has developed the list for the European Commission, which seeks to raise workplace standards throughout the EU by recognising organisations that provide their employees with superior work environments. Beside the Top 100 Best List, the European Commission has awarded prizes for best practices within the areas of Lifelong Learning, Diversity and Gender Equality.

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Pride and Camaraderie: The final two dimensions of the Institute's model relate to workplace relationships between employees and their jobs/company (Pride), and between the employee and other employees (Camaraderie).

A great place to work

As companies become great, the division between management and labor fades. The workplace becomes a community. Employees take pride in their job, their team, and their company. They feel that they can be themselves at work. They celebrate the successes of their peers and cooperate with others throughout the organization. People take pleasure in their work - and in the people they work with - in a deep and lasting way. They want to stay around for their careers.

Supporting professional development

Offering professional trainings to employees is among the ingredients to create a great place to work. European companies already do a lot to develop their employees professionally, but there are big differences how employees evaluate their employers commitment to that issue.

The Great Place to Work survey illustrates a clear correlation between employee satisfaction and

the hours of formal job training they are offered. Our experience shows that, generally, the more employees appreciate the opportunities employers give them to develop professionally, the more they are inclined to work hard and with dedication and this effort filters through to the firm's bottom line.

What training programs do European companies offer their staff, and what do the employees think of these programs?

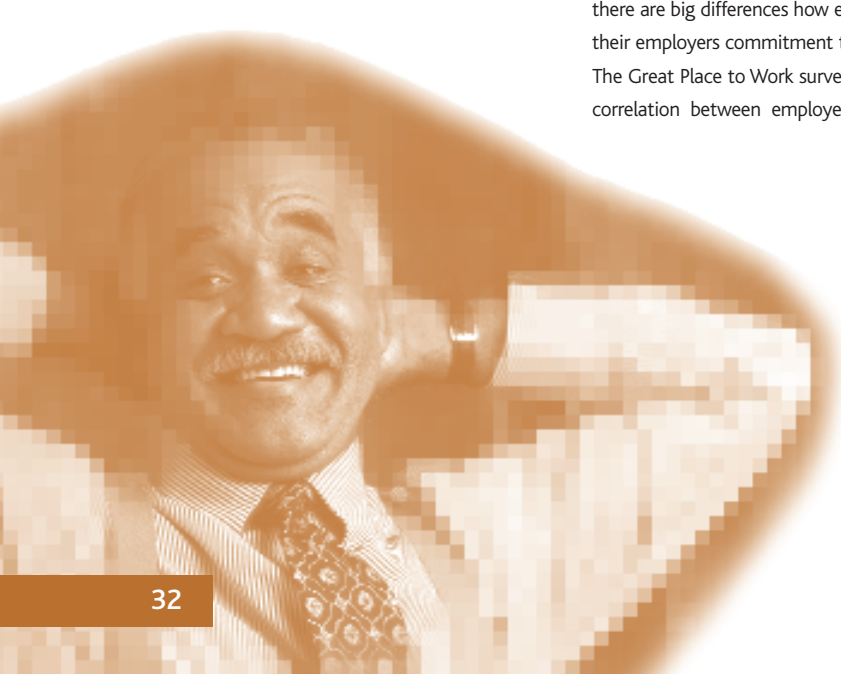
On average, European companies offer their employees 57 hours of formal job training per year, and 86% of the companies offer their employees individual employee development plans. Do employees feel that this is sufficient?

On average 73% of the European employees are satisfied with the training and development they are offered. However, there are differences across countries and status levels within firms.

The most satisfied staff can be found in Greece (83%), Austria (82%) and Finland (80%), where more than four out of five employees feel that they get offered training to develop them professionally. Luxembourg (60%) and Italy (65%) ranks lowest. In these countries less than two out of three employees are satisfied with the training offered. The rest of the European countries are placed around European average of 73%.

Not surprisingly, employee satisfaction depends on the employee's position within his or her organization. The results from the Great Place to Work survey confirms that the higher the position, the more satisfied are employees with the training they are offered. More than 85% of the surveyed executives and senior managers feel that they are offered training to develop them professionally, whereas only 68% of clerical workers think the same. Interesting, however, that it is especially the male executives, 86% of whom are satisfied with their training. By comparison, "only" 81% of the female executives feel this way.

There are also cross-country differences in how executives and senior managers feel about the training they are offered. 98% of the executives in Austria and Greece feel that they are offered training to further themselves professionally, whereas only 70% of their colleagues in Luxembourg feel the same. Executives from the Netherlands are quite satisfied (93%), followed by Spain (92%), Finland (91%) and Belgium (90%). At the other end of the spectrum





we find that executives in countries such as Italy (75%) and France (83%) are not as satisfied as their European colleagues. The other European countries are placed close to the European average, with their executives about 85% satisfied.

Best practises within Life Long Learning

The law firm Hannes Snellmann from Finland, won the EU Lifelong Learning Award. This firm is an excellent example of a company's belief, first, in the importance of the human capital, and, second, that this includes ALL employees. Hannes Snellmann's decision to include ALL levels of its staff in its training and development programs was an important reason why it won the award. Generally, low skilled employees are often underrepresented when it comes to formal job training or individual development planning. But not at Hannes Snellmann (learn more about Hannes Snellmann's approach and their experiences in the textbox).

For further information visit:
www.greatplacetowork-europe.com

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BEST PRACTICE – LIFELONG LEARNING AWARD WINNER – HANNES SNELLMAN, FINLAND

Competence development for all employees

Hannes Snellman, one of the largest and oldest law firms in Finland, was founded in 1909. It specializes in transactions, namely mergers and acquisitions, technology, finance & capital markets and dispute resolution & insolvency. It has the highest expertise in these fields in Finland. Developing and maintain-ing this expertise is its top strategic priority.

Its commitment to staff education is evidenced by the fact that its annual learning budget amounts to seven percent of total salaries. In addition, the firm makes a point of offering training and development for everyone, including law courses for assistants. All employees — there are 169 — have their own per-sonal development plan, reviewed twice a year. Above that, training and staff development is fully integrated into the work schedule.

What it comes down to then is that the largest group of employees, assistant attorneys, spend an average of 150 hours a year training. The largest non-legal group, staff assistants, spend an hour a week in courses on law.

Hannes Snellman makes the point that a worker here "can develop his or her professional knowledge from a novice to a specialized worker and advance from a trainee to a partner." Staff members appreci-ate the training opportunities. Ninety-six percent said they were offered training to further them professionally.

Source: Great Place to Work® Europe, 2003.

Otto Zell

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