

Badger Mining: Growing and Strong

2009 Best Small Company to Work for in America

Badger Mining, a family owned silica sand mining company based in Berlin Wisconsin is this year's #1 Small Company to Work For. They had a brief respite last year from the #1 spot they had previously occupied in 2006 and 2007 yet they are back in first place for 2009. While the strength of Badger's policies and practices is well documented, it is the comments from associates, more than anything else, that attest to the depth of the trust-based culture that has been created in this organization.

This privately held company was founded in 1979, yet its roots go back to over 100 years of mining activity within the Berlin, Wisconsin area. Businesses that develop from deep personal roots within one community often also show a deep sense of responsibility to the community – and Badger Mining is a perfect example of this. Programs in place within Badger exemplify the best ways in which an organization can take responsibility for their impact on the environment, the quality of their work, and the quality of their associates' lives.

Badger Mining

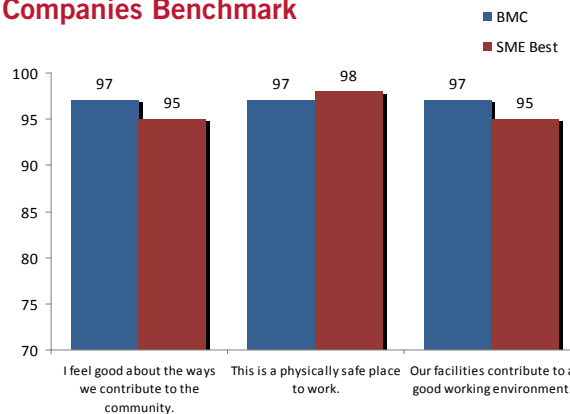
Web address.....www.badgerminingcorp.com
 Corporate Headquarters..... Berlin, Wisconsin
 Year founded..... 1979
 Chairman and CEO Michael C. Hess
 Industry..... Mining and Quarrying
 US Employees (FT, PT, Temp) 166
 Job Applications in past year 450
 Turnover 2%

Environmental Stewardship

Badger Mining has established environmental safety practices with the goal of moving beyond compliance standards to serve as stewards of the lands they use. As an example of this commitment, BMC developed a concurrent reclamation program for a non-metallic mining operation now known as White Sand Lake. Once a certain portion of the sandstone in the area had been mined, the reclamation steps began, leading to the creation of a gradual slope to form the shoreline of what would become a recreation and fishing area.

BMC took on a more significant project with the creation of their Corporate Center on the immediate outskirts of Berlin Wisconsin, on top of an abandoned landfill site of approximately 15 acres. This area is now home to BMC's C.A. Chier Resource Center, serves as an attractive entrance to the town of Berlin, and serves as home to wildlife, including turtle, ducks, geese, and shorebirds. When grassland birds and killdeer nest in the area around the Resource Center buildings, particular care is taken to avoid mowing any of the grass in that area.

Badger Mining and 2009 Best Medium Companies Benchmark



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“ We have hired several more engineers to promote more on our environmental issues and meeting with the public with mining concerns. A mining engineer was hired to handle our reserves and another Process Engineer is in the works to help our production area to set and meet goals. ”

“ I'm production team and I also help with the Environmental Team. The environmental team listens to my ideas and I get to help with planting trees – wildlife restoration and to help reclaim the land after mining is done. Put it back better than it was if possible. There's lots of pride in that. ”

Quality of Work

All work teams at BMC are self-directed. Associates do their own problem solving and make their own decisions, reinforcing the strong sense of ownership that Associates have for the results of their work. Two qualities in particular

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stand out as unique elements of BMCs workplace culture that contribute to the overall quality of the work product and the workplace atmosphere.

As part of the hiring process at BMC, potential new associates participate in a team interviewing process that involves many people and relies on behavioral interviewing techniques to assess a person's culture fit. The interviewing team is comprised of the Coach for the position, a BMC Staffing Associate and two to four members of the team the person will be working on. This gives everyone the opportunity to have input in the hiring decision, and starts the process of building the strong team relationships that contribute to the intense commitment to quality among BMC associates.

“ *One of the most important things is the people I work with. They are the greatest. I have made life-long friends here. I love my job and wish everyone could say the same about their company.* ”

Once hired, associates are assigned to a core team – the one for which they were hired – and are also encouraged to join cross-functional teams such as the Wellness or Safety Team. These teams - for almost every program or function in the company – are comprised of people from all areas of the company. Associates take advantage of the opportunity to join any team they have an interest in and they get “extra credit” for joining and actively participating on these teams during their performance evaluations. Because the organization structure at BMC is very flat and there is no ladder to climb, these teams allow Associates to expand their contribution to the company as an outward growth instead of an upward growth.

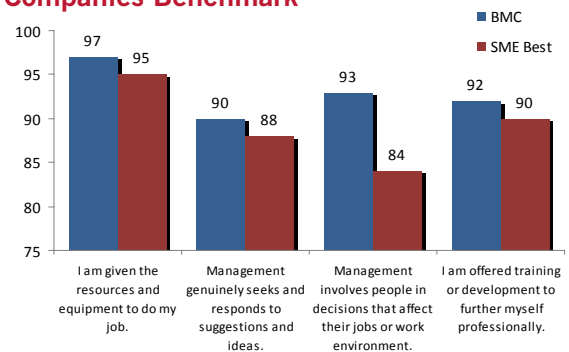
“ *The ability to join most any team within the organization is unique. It allows associates to come to work and do their main job duties but allows us to become involved in other areas of the company as well. I think by allowing this, the talents of individuals can be utilized to their fullest potential and the day never becomes boring.* ”

“ *When coming to Badger you are never faced with “issues” or “negativity”. Anytime there is a difficult situation it is treated as an “opportunity to improve”. In my first few weeks of work at BMC, I couldn't believe how often I heard the word “opportunity”. As a new associate it made me believe I made the right decision in coming to work here and as I have stated several times to my peers, “I matter”. That's something a lot of other companies can't come close to offering....no matter how great the benefits and compensation may be.* ”

Quality of Life

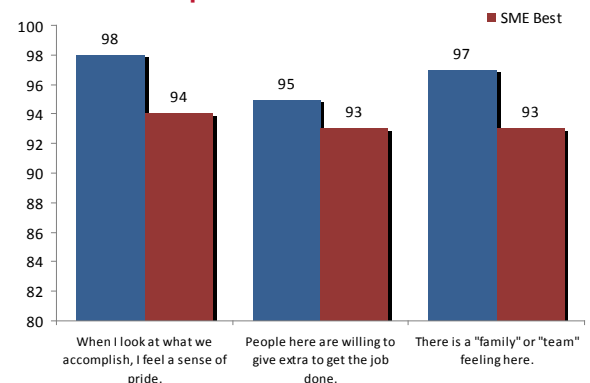
The same care that is shown for the environment outside of the corporation's boundaries and shown for associates through the creation of strong teams and interesting work, is also shown for associates as human beings. Bad-

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ger Mining has developed and implemented state of the art practices in the areas of pay and profit sharing, health and wellness, safety, flexibility and recreation offerings. These programs reflect a deep respect for the quality of life that everyone involved with BMC has a right to experience.

Beginning with their pay practices, BMC's leaders and founders have placed a clear stake in the ground that says everyone deserves to be paid fairly, and deserves a fair share of the profits. The general theory of BMC's compensation system is to set base pay at or slightly below the market, with additional compensation – called Achievement Pay - putting them above the market. BMC's profit sharing is paid out equally to all Associates regardless of job position, with every Associate receiving 20% of the profit each quarter. This is done “because we believe all Associates are equal at BMC. The contribution each Associate makes is as important as another and we treat our Associates accordingly.”

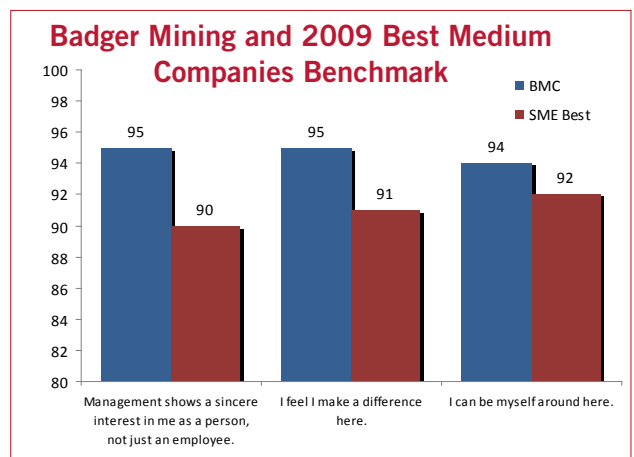
Health and wellness programs are another area where BMC shines. This last year, leaders at BMC wanted to elevate wellness as a core value and have it on the same level as quality, safety, and team. A special Wellness Focus Group was formed to explore many options to create a “culture of wellness”. They have partnered with a group that will provide onsite Health Risk Assessments (in place for more than six years) onsite health coaching, and regular educational events. The wellness agenda extends beyond eating right and exercise to encompass six dimensions of wellness: physical, emotional, spiritual, social, occupational, and intellectual. Wellness teams will be created for each location to help Associates understand that the wellness team is not simply an HR initiative. The Advisory/Leaders Team is providing their full support for this effort and provided a budget close to \$200,000 for these activities during the coming year.

Safety practices are built into on-the job training programs and Achievement Pay\$ incentives, as well as being featured at company wide meetings. Every Associate knows that they have the authority to stop any production or process if they see a safety issue that needs to be addressed. Two years ago, BMC's Taylor plant was awarded the Sentinels of Safety award recognizing this plant for its safety achievement. The award is sponsored by the Mine Safety and Health Administration, and dates back to the Hoover administration.

Workplace flexibility is simply a way of life at BMC. When a situation arises that requires an associate to leave work or change his/her work schedule, associates, team members and leaders make the arrangements. This approach to flexibility is provided so that Associates can attend to any personal situations that may arise. Associates can pretty much set their own schedule – they just need to get the work done and make sure their team is aware of their schedule. In the plant setting they need to get someone to fill in for them if it is required. Giving Associates the freedom of taking personal and sick days and setting their own work schedules has not increased absenteeism or affected production schedules in any way. People are committed to working together to get the job done – they trust each other.

“ I have never seen, heard of, or will likely ever see a place where so much ownership and trust is placed directly in the hands of the associates (employees). This is the reason our facilities run with unheard of efficiencies and our culture of teamwork is so strong. ”

Recreation is an important part of life for most BMC associates given that they are in a beautiful part of the world with access to many outdoor activities. The Quality of Total Life Team developed a program to sponsor recreational teams for Associates' participation in an effort to improve their Associates' enjoyment. BMC will pay the dues for recreational teams when 50% or more of the team members are BMC Associates or their family members. BMC is maintaining a photo history



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of team sponsorships and season records. The interest in recreation and outdoor activities comes full circle back to their interest in environmentalism and stewardship.

There are many programs set up to make sure that BMC leaves the land better than they found it. Given that most of the associates enjoy hunting, fishing and outdoor sports, they work with leaders to insure that mining efforts do not destroy the environment. After a site has been mined it may be turned into a fish pond or wetlands. Badger Mining has also planted trees and natural flora to insure that the facilities are kept up and blend in with the natural environment.

When Associates are asked what makes BMC such a great place to work the common theme is "Family". Associates feel they are part of a family working at BMC, not just another employee. The flexible working schedule, excellent benefits, reputation in the industry and community, environmental awareness and low turnover and long length of service attest to this. BMC's turnover rate is 2% and average length of service is 16 years. People want to work there, and choose to stay. Of course Badger Mining Corporation is the # 1 Small Company to Work For in America for 2009!

Any Company Can Create a Great Workplace

Our Mission is to Help Them Do It

Great Place to Work® Institute, Inc. has conducted pioneering research on the characteristics of great workplaces for over 25 years. We believe all companies can become great places to work, and our mission is to help them succeed. Our Great Place to Work® Model® is recognized as the standard for assessing great workplaces. In 40 countries around the world, we are proud to:

- **Recognize the Best Companies** for their achievements through our international Best Companies lists. In the U.S., these lists include Fortune's 100 Best Companies to Work For®, as well as the "Best Small & Medium Companies to Work for in America" published in collaboration with SHRM.
- **Help companies create and sustain great workplace cultures** through our consulting services. Our data collection tools (employee survey, focus groups, 360° professional development tool) educational workshops and training programs, action planning system, and strategic advising services all support the transformation process within any organization. The Institute's unique access to Best Companies' data allows us to offer unparalleled benchmarking opportunities, best practice information, and transformation insight to our consulting clients.
- **Share resources, best practices, and Institute research** through our education services. These include peer networking groups, workshops, conferences, and publications which enable organization leaders to learn directly from each other, as well as benefit from our wealth of knowledge and lessons learned from the Best Companies and our clients.

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Additional Resources

- Online Seminar: *Tapping People's Minds – Effective Collaborative Decision Making*
11AM, September 23rd, 2009
www.greatplacetowork.com/workshops/seminar-2009-09-23.php
- One Day Conference: *Best Practices Forum: Ideas and Action Plans for Your Business*
October 8th, 2009 in San Francisco
www.greatplacetowork.com/workshops/best-practices-workshop.php
- Nominate your company to be on Best Companies lists in North America, Europe, Latin America and Asia by visiting
www.greatplacetowork.com/best/
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