



DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR EMPLOYEES THINK ABOUT WORKING AT YOUR COMPANY?

HOW PARTICIPATING IN THE FORTUNE 100 BEST COMPANIES TO WORK FOR® LIST CAN HELP YOUR ORGANIZATION

According to recent studies, US job satisfaction is at an all-time low* and 45% of employees intend to start searching for new jobs as soon as the economy recovers.** While Great Place to Work® Institute workplace evaluations are best known for producing the FORTUNE 100 Best Companies to Work For® list, a comprehensive workplace assessment can also provide you with the intelligence you need to plan for a post-downturn economy.

This paper will explore the many ways that companies have used their workplace assessment to achieve more than just a ranking on the 100 Best list. You will hear CEOs and executives from companies you trust and admire address how the assessment has enabled them to retain and recruit top talent, develop a workplace culture that yields committed, inspired employees, and refine HR programs and practices to maximize every dollar spent on “people” programs. "It's not about the rank," says Dan Warmenhoven, former CEO of NetApp, the 2009 #1 company on the FORTUNE 100 Best Companies to Work For® list. "It's about how do we keep making continuous improvement." The Great Place to Work® Institute evaluation and methodology provide a unique opportunity to do just that.

*[The Conference Board](#), Jan. 5, 2010, 45% of American's are satisfied with their work.

**The 2009 [Employment Dynamics and Growth Expectations Report](#), Sept., 2009 by Robert Half International





Feedback & Benchmarking

Critical to the improvement process is employee feedback, which is gathered during the evaluation process through an anonymous, proprietary survey known as the Trust Index®. This tool provides candid feedback from employees about their workplace experiences, revealing where an organization excels and could improve. "The Trust Index® results became another data point that was critical to us on an annual basis to determine what was working and what wasn't working," states Mary Shumaker, HR Director, Continuous Improvement Team, PricewaterhouseCoopers.

In addition, the evaluation allows leaders to benchmark their employees' experiences against the best employers in the U.S.

"Because of the benchmark, it gives us feedback on whether we're making progress or not," says Victor V. Buzachero, Corporate Senior Vice President for Innovation, Human Resources and Performance Management, at Scripps Health. "We know where we stack up to the best." At NetApp, this knowledge has translated into action. "We go through a very detailed analysis, a gap analysis of how we rank relative to others in all the categories," says Warmenhoven. "We use that as a framework to determine what we're going to do to improve our scores."

"We were outspending the competition in terms of benefits, probably making more investments, but our people were not perceiving it that way,"

Kevin Kelly, Director, Americas People Team, Ernst & Young

Not only are applicants able to benchmark their employees' experiences, they also can identify how their policies and practices stack up against the 100 Best. There is priceless value in knowing not only what everyone else is doing, but what the very best are doing. Through the Best Companies Report, leaders gain access to trends and innovations in policies and practices at industry leading companies. At Camden Property Trust, this perspective has enabled them to keep their benefits meaningful and exceptional for their employees. "This Benchmark report has become one of the most valuable tools we purchase and use," says Cindy Scharringhausen, Senior Vice-President of Human Resources at Camden. "We now have broad industry information to say this is what top companies are doing and maybe this is what we should consider. This allows us to possibly recruit from a broader base of employees beyond our industry."

Taking Action

Most importantly, the Institute's evaluation process can reveal where a company's practices are connecting with employees and where they may be falling short. While many companies can invest

heavily in programs and benefits it thinks will engage employees, the evaluation process can determine if employees truly value them. For example, leaders at Ernst & Young learned through the evaluation process that their benefits could be better connected to employees. "We were outspending the competition in terms of benefits, probably making more investments, but our people were not perceiving it that way," says Kevin Kelly, Director, Americas People Team. A Great Place to Work® Institute consultant helped analyze their evaluation and identified an opportunity to change the benefits approach. "Just that little shift in thinking was very valuable in terms of having these insights and holding ourselves accountable to everything we do."

In another instance, the same evaluation process allowed Camden Property Trust to identify a way to improve its workplace culture through stronger hiring practices. "The Institute consultants learned from our Culture Audit® how important our culture is to Camden, but they did not see how this focus applied to our hiring process," says Margaret Plummer, Camden's Vice President of Employee Development. "This was such a light bulb for us. It should have been very obvious to us, but sometimes you need another perspective."

Providing Motivation

The continuous effort to engage employees and create a great workplace requires a strong commitment from an organization's leaders. Companies value the evaluation process as a way to create a shared goal for leaders and challenge them to go past the status quo. "The 100 Best process helped create a common goal for our leaders and a platform for the discussion," says Mary

"We started talking about this goal continuously -- not specifically being 'on the list,' but the importance of seeking out and responding to the feedback of our people."

Mary Shumaker, HR Director,
Continuous Improvement Team,
PriceWaterhouseCoopers

Shumaker, HR Director, Continuous Improvement Team, PricewaterhouseCoopers. "We started talking about this goal continuously – not specifically being 'on the list,' but the importance of seeking out and responding to the feedback of our people. In fact, our Firm's Senior Partner made it a point to include this element of our people strategy in almost every leadership meeting he held and stressed the importance of having the full leadership team on board. The process of seeking and responding to feedback through a survey process is now embedded in our culture."

A similar experience occurs at Ernst & Young, an organization that has appeared on the 100 Best list for 12 years. Speaking of the evaluation, Kevin Kelly says, "It does challenge us to stay focused on creating a great place to work. It becomes our internal mechanism to say 'are we continuing to better ourselves.'"

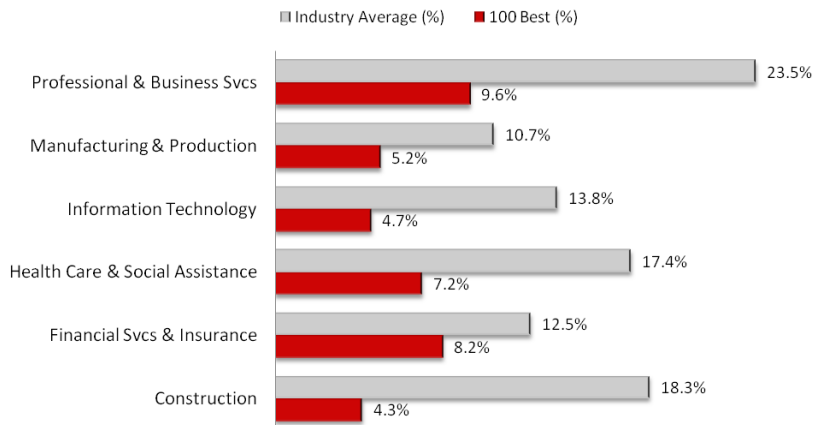


Providing Motivation

In addition to the benefits of the evaluation process, being recognized as one of the FORTUNE 100 Best Companies to Work For® has its own unique perks. Recognized workplaces benefit from extensive positive recognition at a local and national media level. Over four million readers see the best companies list, heightening a workplace's reputation among prospective customers and job candidates. For the latter, the Institute's research shows companies appearing on the 100 Best list have 42 applicants for every open position on average.

One of the unsung benefits of being recognized is the external validation winning a designation brings to an employer's practices. Many companies find it challenging to give their employees an honest perspective on the quality of its policies and practices compared to the marketplace. "It gives our employees perspective on how their workplace stacks up," says Victor Buzachero of Scripps Health. "When we say 'we're doing everything we can for you', then they believe we're doing everything we can for them. It adds credibility for management."

Voluntary Turnover: 2010 "100 Best" vs. Industry Average



Source: 100 Best data provided by Great Place to Work® Institute Inc. Comparative data provided by BLS. 100 Best data includes FT&PT turnover; BLS data includes same, in addition to turnover for temp/contract workers

This credibility adds to the workplaces' ability to retain their current employees, a timely strength as turnover intention rises among U.S. workers. Voluntary turnover is 2 to 4 times lower among the 100 Best workplaces than industry norms. These organizations directly profit from this through lower direct costs for hiring and training new employees as well as the indirect benefit of avoiding



the lost institutional knowledge and disrupted customer relationships created by departing employees. As the economy rebounds, the best workplaces are well positioned to take advantage of the emerging opportunities, rather than overcoming a new crisis caused by a swell of departing talent.

Conclusion

Although not all organizations win recognition, all can experience valuable benefits and unique insights from the Institute's evaluation process. The process requires a commitment of time and resources yet this investment can pay off handsomely. Equipped with candid feedback from employees, companies can evaluate their programs against leading organizations and keep leaders and employees engaged in building a better workplace. These insights can help any organization learn where they are in becoming a great workplace, identify where to go next, and build the energy to get there.

Getting Started

To get started with your Great Place to Work® Institute workplace evaluation, visit www.greatplacetowork.com/work_with_us/fortune_100best.php or call to speak with a representative at 415.503.1234, ext. 380.

"It gives our employees perspective on how their workplace stacks up, When we say 'we're doing everything we can for you', then they believe we're doing everything we can for them.

It adds credibility for management."

Victor Buzachero, Corporate Senior Vice President for Innovation, Human Resources & Performance Management, Scripps Health