

Attracting **Talent**

How Small and Medium
Companies Can Compete

GREAT
PLACE
TO
WORK[®]

Lessons
from the **2014**

▶ **50** Best Small and
Medium Workplaces



The **Ultimate** Talent Competition

Just when you thought that the ever-increasing global population put the odds of finding top talent in your favor, along comes a slew of studies from trusted research firms that beg to differ. From McKinsey & Company and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, to The Conference Board and other authorities, the numbers are in and here's just a sampling of what they are reporting:

- > By 2020, the U.S. will have 1.5 million too few workers with college or graduate degrees.¹
- > CEOs rated “human capital shortages” as the number one item on their priority lists for 2014.²
- > Fifty-six percent of U.S. employers believe the talent shortage has a medium to high impact on their ability to meet client needs.³
- > More than 2.5 million people in the U.S. are voluntarily quitting their jobs *each month*, and this number is steadily rising — making the prospect of *keeping* talent dimmer as well.⁴

Big vs. Small & Medium

In addition to the current talent shortage, small and medium businesses must compete against the brand recognition, salaries, and benefits of larger companies. However, before you throw in the towel on your search for the best and the brightest, bear in mind that not everyone wants to work for a big company. In fact, there are several small and medium-sized businesses that are winning the ultimate talent competition.



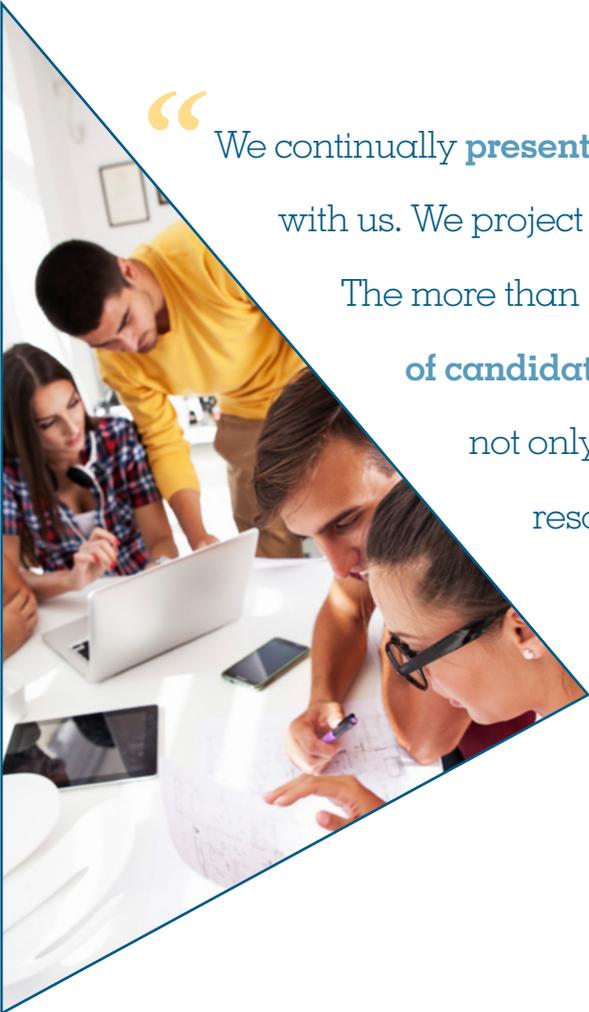
FORTUNE

Becoming a Stand-Out

Important to note is that the Best Small & Medium Workplaces are up against the same odds as ALL other small and medium companies. They have to find ways to make their often-times lesser known brand a more alluring choice than the familiarity and prestige of big company brands. They have to deal with the fact that they may not always be able to offer the highest pay, or valuable stock options. And yet, when it comes to attracting great people, they are genuine contenders.

Small & Medium Wonders

Despite the competition and news of talent shortages, this year's 50 Best Small & Medium Workplaces are proving to be formidable competitors in bringing talented employees in their doors. These go-getters, who have anywhere from 25 to 999 employees, are growing at a rapid pace — while maintaining extremely selective hiring criteria. So what's their secret? They know how to leverage their culture and the advantages associated with their smaller size to win over the candidates they seek. And the good news for you? You can follow their lead.



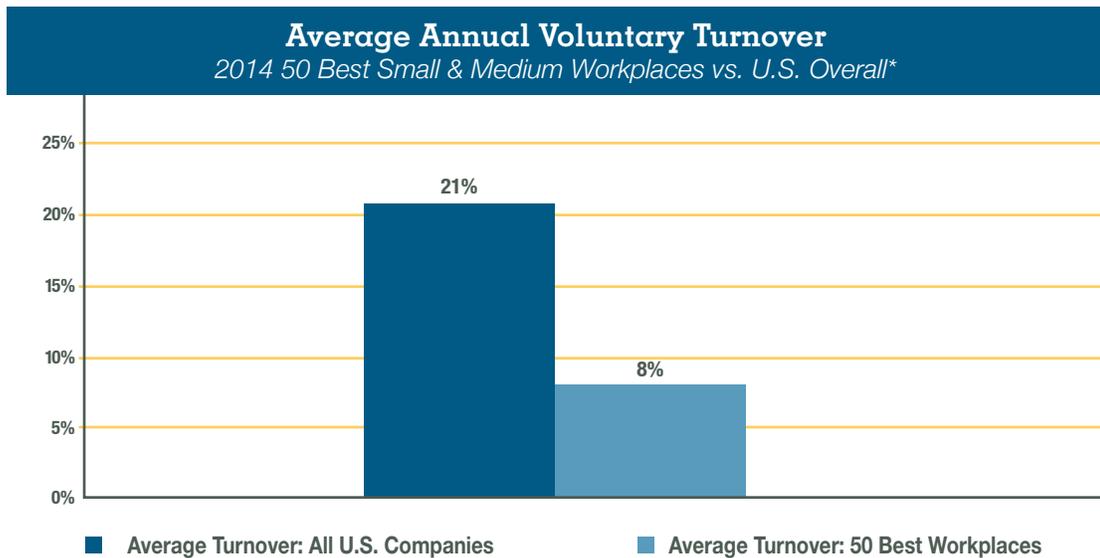
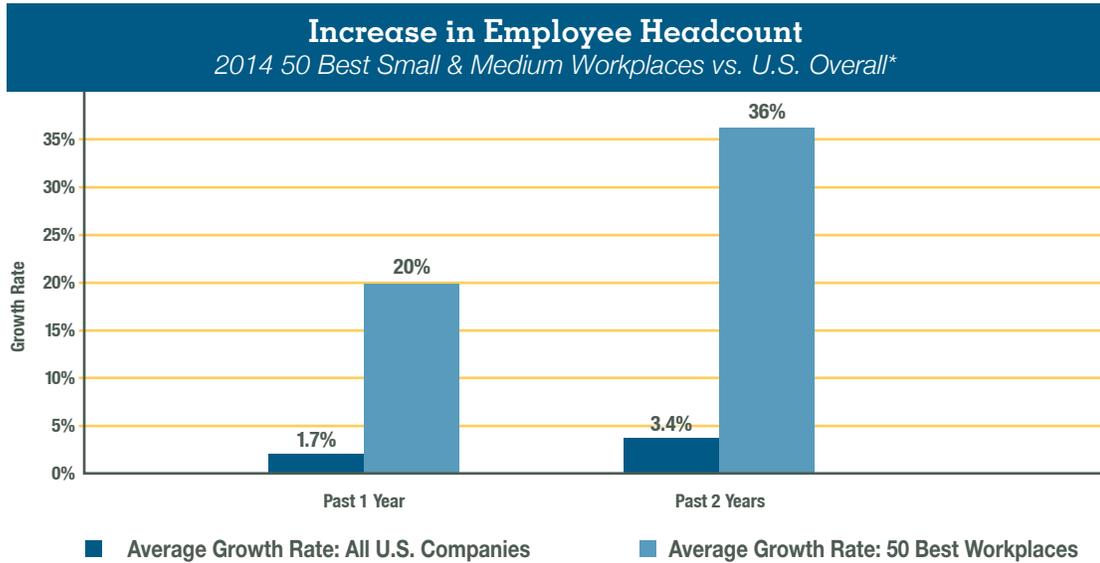
“ We continually **present a value proposition** when it comes to employment with us. We project why people would want to come to work for us.

The more than 1,330 percent increase [since 2006] in **the number of candidates wanting to work for us is evidence** that we are not only getting that information out, but we are making it resonate with those we are after. ”

*A. R. Almodóvar, P.E., CEO,
Intuitive Research and Technology Corporation*

Attracting—And Retaining—Talent

As the tables below show, the **Best Small & Medium Workplaces** are outperforming U.S. companies—big and small—in the areas of growth and voluntary turnover.



*SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Great Place to Work® Institute 50 Best Small & Medium Workplaces Research



How Small & Medium Businesses Can Compete

In our intensive research of this year's 50 Best Small & Medium Workplaces, we have identified six strategies that many of these winners engage in that help to attract, hire, and retain the talent they seek. Throughout the rest of this whitepaper, we will show you how a variety of these companies have leveraged each of the strategies outlined below. Of course, how a company executes each area may change according to a company's industry and unique culture. However, challenging your organization to focus on these strategies will have a strong impact within your own workplace as you seek to bring new employees into the fold:

1. Provide robust opportunities for **growth and development**.
2. Highlight the **impact employees can make** by working at your company.
3. Ensure **pay is fair** and benefits are enticing.
4. Employ **creative recruiting** tactics.
5. Make a phenomenal **first impression**.
6. Make your company's **unique culture** a selling point.





Strategy #1:

Provide robust opportunities for growth and development.

What are the primary desires of the most desirable candidates? For starters, they want to grow. They want to be challenged. They aren't looking to simply work at a job; they are looking to further their careers. Give them these opportunities, and you just may have them at hello.

Permission to Dream

When qualified candidates walk through your door (whether in-person or virtually), be ready to demonstrate how your company can challenge them and set them on an upwardly mobile career path. Highlight any and all opportunities your company offers to assist them in their desire to grow professionally—whether it be challenging work assignments, a strong investment in training and development programs, frequent opportunities to work closely with senior leaders, or a commitment to promoting from within. Make sure they understand your world is one of unlimited potential.

Leverage Your Small & Medium Career Advantages

Show prospective employees that you are serious about opportunities for growth and development by featuring them as major benefits in your Employee Value Proposition. Be sure to underscore the unique advantages they will gain from working at your smaller company, including more opportunities to access senior leaders, innovate and implement new ideas, expand roles and take on new responsibilities, and even have a voice in important issues facing the company.

Take Two

Two of the growth and development practices that many of the Best Small & Medium Workplaces share are a strong commitment to:

1. Train and develop employees
2. Promote from within

Last year, the Best Small & Medium Workplaces:

- > Filled nearly one-third of open jobs with an internal candidate.
- > Invested an average of 64 training hours into each full-time employee.
- > Among those offering tuition reimbursement, offered an average \$6015 per employee in annual tuition reimbursement.

BEST PRACTICE: FIRST, LOOK WITHIN

Company | **Studer Group**

Industry | Healthcare Consulting Firm

Number of U.S. Employees | 194

2014 Best Small Workplaces Rank | #5

At Studer Group, all open job positions are initially posted internally to ensure current employees are given the first opportunity to apply. In the event a new position needs to be created, Studer Group surveys current team members to determine if they have the skills needed to achieve the results desired. If not, the leadership team then conducts an assessment to see if the skills needed could be internally developed. Once all opportunities to leverage existing talent have been exhausted and a position is still open, then Studer Group will pursue external recruiting.

Major League Stats for Assurance

- 79:** Percent of job positions filled through internal promotion
- 62:** Percent of employees pursuing an insurance designation or other certification
- 90:** Percent pass rate of employees taking continuing education courses
- 80:** Percent of employees participating in tuition reimbursement programs

Company | **Assurance**

Industry | Financial Services & Insurance

Number of U.S. Employees | 330

2014 Best Medium Workplaces Rank | #4

Game-Winning Practices

Assurance is committed to the belief that if they equip employees to become the best they can be, then the company will be the best it can be. To uphold this belief, they maintain a dedicated Training & Education Team whose sole responsibility is to find, create and execute in-house educational programs that make professional development for employees convenient, engaging and affordable. The programs are popular with employees and include free learning lunches, after work certification and designation programs, onsite testing and more. But Assurance doesn't stop there; they also regularly engage in these best practices:

- Partner with top insurance industry instructors to teach courses.
- Survey employees semi-annually to ensure their educational needs are being met.

- Host supplementary classes including formal management and leadership training, professional writing skills, technology courses, and more.
- Provide each employee with up to \$5,250 each year in educational reimbursement, class materials and courses offered through an accredited university or provider.
- Pay 100% for insurance certification and licensing programs.
- Provide access to discounted rates at local community colleges.
- Offer internship opportunities to dependents of employees.
- Perform talent assessments of employees and work with their managers to build a personal development and retention plan.
- Encourage employees to move up or around in the company by participating in the formal internal job application process.



“From in-house designation and certification courses, to reimbursement for participating in outside educational opportunities, we're committed to preparing our future Assurance leaders to be at the top of their game and our industry.”

Tony Chimino, CEO, Assurance

educational
opportunity





Strategy #2:

Highlight the impact employees can make by working at your company.

What impact does your company have on the world? The wonderful thing about working at a small or medium company is that with a smaller workforce, it can be easier to demonstrate how just one person's efforts can make a big difference. This sense of impact and purpose are critical components of a great workplace. Moreover, according to studies conducted by the University of Michigan, when employees know how their work impacts the lives of others, their company or the world around them, their productivity, morale and job satisfaction increase significantly.⁵

Making an Impact on Millennials

While feeling good about the difference you are making is important to most employees, research has shown that it is especially critical to Millennials. In fact, a 2012 study from iOpener Institute of 18,000 Generation Y shows that a sense of purpose in one's work is a *stronger predictor than pay* as to whether he or she will stay at a company and recruit their friends.⁶

Your Company's EVP

There are many ways to highlight your company's place in the world—through your website, social media outlets, recruiting materials, and more. Whether employees will have access to high-impact work projects, or ample opportunities to give back to the community through volunteerism, be sure to integrate the impact employees can make by working at your company as a part of your overall Employee Value Proposition.

BEST PRACTICE: VISIONARIES WANTED

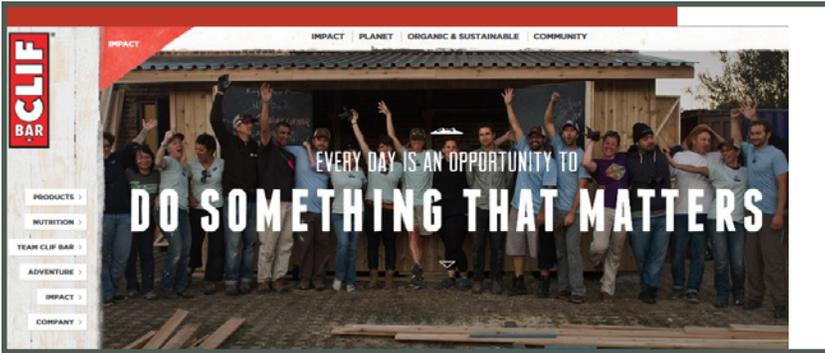
Company | [Advantage Answering Plus](#)
Industry | Professional Services
Number of U.S. Employees | 35
2014 Best Small Workplaces Rank | #12

Job candidates who email their resume and cover letter to Advantage Answering Plus automatically receive a reply that includes a copy of the Business Mission, Core Values, and the “2014 Painted Picture” of what the company aspires to be in the near future. By sharing the company's vision for the future and explicitly inviting employees to “help build” the organization, prospective employees immediately get a sense that this is a place where they can invest their talents to make a big impact.

BEST PRACTICE: SHOWCASING ACTUAL PROJECTS

Company | [Intuitive Research and Technology Corporation](#)
Industry | Engineering
Number of U.S. Employees | 279
2014 Best Medium Workplaces Rank | #1

Intuitive Research and Technology Corporation, an aerospace engineering and analysis firm, believes in giving job-seekers a clear idea of the type of projects they will work on, the scope of the work, and the impact their work will have on clients, the company, and the global marketplace. The company's website features a variety of completed projects and describes in detail the customer problem, the solution the team at INTUITIVE developed and implemented, and finally, the difference their hard work made on clients' success.



Company | [Clif Bar & Company](#)

Industry | Manufacturing & Production

Number of U.S. Employees | 384

2014 Best Medium Workplaces Rank | #12

A Life's Calling

Although Clif Bar is well known for making power bars that help improve the performance of athletes and health-conscious snackers, the company is also renowned for living out its values of making a difference in the world. Prospective job applicants and fans of the brand who visit their website are greeted with a challenge that embodies the giving nature of the company's culture: *"Every day is an opportunity to do something that matters."*

Bringing It All Together

Behind Clif Bar's desire to be a force for good are the company's five aspirations, which are to sustain People, Brands, Business, Community, and Planet.

Leaders at Clif Bar goes to great lengths to ensure people understand that success isn't defined solely by what employees do, but by how they do it. Employees are encouraged to find ways to use creativity, inspiration, connection, ownership, and authenticity to make a difference in the success of the five aspirations.

Small Business, BIG Impact

Serious about supporting their Core Values, Clif Bar maintains an IMPACT section on their website that shares how employees and the company are directly involved in building a better planet and fostering more sustainable communities and food systems through organized volunteer events, company-sponsored foundations, and more.

Unlimited Paid Volunteer Time

Yes, you read that correctly. To encourage employees to give back to the community, Clif Bar offers unlimited amounts of paid time off to volunteer. As long as employees are able to get their work done, they can take as much PAID volunteer time as they like to make a difference in their communities.

- 98:** Percent of Clif Bar employees who perform volunteer work.
- 9,218:** Number of hours donated to charities through volunteer work last year.
- 200:** Number of nonprofits that benefitted last year from Clif Bar's generous volunteer program.

people
community





Strategy #3:

Ensure pay is fair and benefits are enticing.

Creating a rewarding work environment for potential employees is not just about providing a healthy paycheck. Rewards can also include having meaningful opportunities for recognition, the feeling of making a difference in the world, being a part of a successful team, and more. All of that said, it is still important that people are compensated fairly for their work, and receive benefits and perks that are both competitive and yes, even enticing, as a part of their experience with your company.

The Small Company Advantage

Smaller companies may not always be able to offer salaries that top out the pay scale, or provide expensive perks like on-site daycares and gourmet cafeterias. However, if we look to the Best Small & Medium Workplaces who chose to share this data, we see that pay tends to be at least at the industry median. And, benefits across the 50 Best tend to be competitive, and even creative.

In fact, when it comes to special and unique benefits and perks, smaller companies often have the advantage. These companies can more easily tailor offerings to the needs of their employee base— from flexible schedules, to PTO for volunteers, even double-time pay on the opening day of deer hunting season (thank you, Badger Mining Corporation). In short, smaller companies can more easily offer a unique approach to benefits that cater to individuals, not the masses.

Large-scale Perks at Small-scale Companies

Some of the famous perks that we see offered at larger companies simply are not possible in a small-company setting. But, don't give up just because you don't have space for an on-site gym. Below are some perks and benefits that are highly valued by employees, and might be well within your small company's reach:

- > Foster productivity by allowing employees to BYOD (Bring Your Own Device).
- > Encourage employees to give back via employer-paid volunteer days.

- > Promote work/life balance through flexible work arrangements.
- > Give tenured employees the gift of time with sabbaticals every few years.
- > Support a family-friendly atmosphere by subsidizing childcare.
- > Promote a healthier workforce by subsidizing gym memberships and stocking the lunch room with healthy snacks.

Pay at the Best Small & Medium Workplaces

One of the criteria for being considered a great workplace is a commonly-held belief among employees that they are paid fairly for the work they do. And while it is important for pay to be fair and within industry norms, this year compensation at the Best Workplaces hovers closer to the mid-range than to the top of the range in their respective industries, indicating that small and medium companies do not *necessarily* need to pay top dollar to be competitive.

Of the 50 Best Small & Medium Workplaces who reported their industry compensation band this year:

- > 5% pay in the 25-49 percentile.
- > 43% pay in the 50-74 percentile.
- > 14% pay in the 75+ percentile.
- > 38% do not track pay according to the industry compensation band.

BEST PRACTICE: TECHNOLOGY BUY-IN

Company | **Granite Properties**

Industry | Construction and Real Estate

Number of U.S. Employees | 150

2014 Best Small Workplaces Rank | #1

Granite Properties empowers employees to be productive on the go by supporting a popular BYOD policy. Employees are given \$120 per month toward their smartphone plans and every three years, they get \$1,000 to spend on business equipment of their choosing, such as laptops, iPods, iPads, printers and software.

When it comes to
**special and unique
benefits and perks,**
smaller companies often
have the advantage.

GREAT
PLACE
TO
WORK®

Key Benefits at the Best Small & Medium Workplaces

85%: Average paid healthcare coverage for employees

68%: Average paid healthcare coverage for dependents of employees

17: Average number of days off given to employees after one year of employment (includes holiday, vacation, PTO, and sick days)

36: Of the 50 Best offer flexible schedule options

A Public List of Total Rewards

Browse the image of the Centro web page below and you will quickly see part of Centro’s strategy to attract and retain talented employees. Aside from being wonderfully creative, Centro made a point to address the five basic desires of employees with a rewards package that includes noteworthy offers such as free onsite yoga, 10 “Ferris Bueller” personal days, monthly happy hours, tuition reimbursement, and much, much more.

Company | **Centro**

Industry | Advertising & Marketing

Number of U.S. Employees | 468

2014 50 Best Medium Workplaces Rank | #8



PRODUCTS

SERVICES

ABOUT US

BLOG

CAREERS

Total Rewards Package

COMPENSATION

- Competitive base pay
- Employee stock options
- Generous employee referral program
- 401(k) employer match
- Financial advisors

LIFESTYLE

- Monthly happy hours
- Centro Family Connection Program
- Certified coaching for working parents
- Mother’s nursing room
- Free Sittercity memberships
- Travel assistance services
- Yearly Wellnesspalooza events
- Onsite Smoking Cessation program
- Free annual wellness screenings
- Giving Tree Charitable Donation
- Annual Blood Drive

BENEFITS

- 3 weeks vacation
- 10 ‘Ferris Bueller’ personal days
- 12 paid holidays
- Change The World Day
- Extensive medical and dental plan
- Free vision insurance
- Free preventative care
- Centro funded HSA Accounts
- Free short and long-term disability
- Free basic life insurance
- Pre-tax dependent care
- Pre-tax commuter benefits
- Paid 3 week sabbatical every 4 years
- Charitable donation matching
- Raving Fan employee recognition

HEALTH

- Daily fresh fruit delivery
- Healthy snack bar
- Free onsite nutritionist
- Onsite Weight Watchers
- Gym reimbursement program
- Mindfulness and meditation program
- Free onsite yoga
- Onsite Farmer’s Market

LEARN

- Tuition reimbursement program
- Dream Empowerment Movement
- Monthly lunch and learns
- Management & Leadership Development
- Role specific development
- E-Leaning/LMS
- Organizational Development



Strategy #4:

Make a phenomenal first impression.

Job applicants are already aware of their need to make a good impression in order to land a job, but in a time of talent shortages, it's also equally important for employers to make a great impression on the best candidates. Truth be told, when it comes to top talent, it's often a matter of them choosing you — not the other way around.

Pull Out All the Stops

When highly qualified candidates come calling, give them every reason to say yes to success at your company by treating them as the valuable individuals they are. Many of the 50 Best are known for going to great lengths to provide outstanding treatment to potential job candidates from the first interaction they have. This is a smart practice because:

- > People within industries talk and your red-carpet treatment will bolster your good reputation with peers and prospects alike.
- > Potential employees who experience good treatment during the interview process will find it easier to believe your company really is the best choice.
- > Even if this opportunity does not pan out, having a good relationship with strong candidates will help easily bring them back.

Leverage Your Small & Medium Charms

Creating a warm and welcoming environment that makes a job candidate feel valued is easier for smaller organizations because intimacy is a function of size. To ensure you make the most of this competitive advantage:

- > Be prompt and clear in your communications with job applicants.
- > Be as hospitable as possible, both leading up to and during the interview.
- > Equip interviewees with helpful information before they arrive, including directions, parking/ transportation recommendations, timing, agenda for the day, dress code, etc.

- > Demonstrate respect for candidates with timely communication after the interview, even if it doesn't work out. After all, you never know when a position that's perfect for them will open in the future; and many of the 50 Best stay in touch with strong candidates for this very reason.

BEST PRACTICE: A TASTE OF THE GOOD LIFE

Company | [Squarespace](#)

Industry | Information Technology

Number of U.S. Employees | 295

2014 Best Medium Workplaces Rank | #3

In an effort to “hack recruitment” and attract candidates from outside their headquarters in New York City, Squarespace launched a generous recruiting campaign, inviting job applicants lucky enough to score an interview, along with their significant other, to enjoy an authentic “Big Apple” weekend. Candidates stayed at the chic *SoHo Grand Hotel*, savored a gourmet meal at *Wyllie Dufresne's Alder Restaurant*, took in an evening of hip tunes at *Smalls Jazz Club*, and got a culture fix via a trip to *The New Museum*—all compliments of Squarespace.

As a reflection of the sincere care they show for their existing employees, Holder Construction has designed and implemented an application and interview process that treats prospective employees in a similar fashion. This multi-step program reinforces to candidates Holder Construction's commitment to the success of people by equipping them with everything they need to prepare for their company visit and interview experience.

Company | **Holder Construction Company**

Industry | Construction and Real Estate

Number of U.S. Employees | 728

2014 Best Medium Workplaces Rank | #17



Pre-Interview Process

Holder coordinates each candidate's on-site interview, taking great care to provide them with all the tools and resources they need to be prepared.

Clear Communication

Candidates are directed to review the special section of Holder's website created just for them called, "Your Day at Holder." Here, answers to the most frequently asked candidate questions can be found.

Interview Coordination

Holder does everything they can to make a job candidate's visit easy, including scheduling air travel, ground transportation and hotel arrangements to ensure guests do not incur out-of-pocket expenses. In the event someone drives to the interview, Holder has a check waiting upon their arrival to reimburse them for mileage expenses.

Emailed Details

Prior to interviews, recruits receive a detailed email outlining important information about their visit that includes:

- Confirmation of the upcoming interview
- Copies of all necessary travel documents
- An after-hours telephone number in the event they have any questions or encounter difficulties outside of normal business hours
- Directions to the offices
- A summary of what to expect during their visit
- Recommended additional steps they can take to prepare

Special Touches

- As a special touch, Holder's Recruiting Champions call candidates a day or two before their interview to talk about what to expect, give them an overview of who they will be meeting, and make sure they are comfortable and prepared for their interview and visit.
- Additionally, when candidates arrive at their hotel, they are greeted with a goodie bag containing healthy snacks, a bottle of water and a tin of mints, as well as a folder containing information about Holder and their visit.

approachable



Strategy #5:

Employ creative recruiting tactics.

Your company may have a brand name that few have heard of, but that's no reason to worry; however, it is a reason to get creative. Most of the small and medium companies on our list have invested not just time and money, but true ingenuity into their recruiting strategy. It's a smart practice with a tangible ROI.

Recruitment Footsoldiers

If birds of a feather flock together, then your next great hire may very well be a close friend or acquaintance of your last great hire. Finding great people that are a good match for your company culture is easier when you have the eyes and ears of your people helping you look. One way to ensure this strategy is successful is to offer current employees the incentive of a referral bonus for candidates that become new hires.

Get Schooled

If you're looking to attract the freshest talent on the market, it's wise to partner up with colleges and universities. After all, they are preparing the next generation for career success and you have the positions their go-getters need to fulfill those aspirations. Establishing an internship program is a great way to recruit eager new talents that have the potential to turn into great hires.

Recruiting Stats of the 50 Best

- 36:** Percent of last year's new hires at the 50 Best who were referred by employees
- 39:** Of the 50 Best offer a referral bonus
- \$3,378:** Average max employee referral bonus
- \$20,000:** Highest referral bonus given for a successful referral
- 14:** Percent of employees gained from college campus recruiting efforts
- 36:** Of the 50 Best actively recruit on college campuses

BEST PRACTICE: THE COLLEGE CONNECTION

Company | [Holder Construction Company](#)
Industry | Construction and Real Estate
Number of U.S. Employees | 728
2014 Best Medium Workplaces Rank | #17

Holder Construction has spent years building mutually rewarding relationships with a number of college and university career centers, allowing Holder to be involved in some of the following ways:

- Teaching classes
- Participating on school advisory boards
- Hosting information sessions
- Sponsoring fundraising events
- Sponsoring career fairs and recruiting-related events

Due to the long-term relationships Holder has built with these schools, they are able to get to know candidates both in and outside of the recruiting process. They also have the opportunity to offer full-time, co-op and internship positions to the best and brightest of each graduating class.

transparency



Company | **Atlassian**

Industry | Information Technology

Number of U.S. Employees | 255

2014 Best Medium Workplaces Rank | #7

All Aboard

When faced with a talent shortage of developers in their local market, Atlassian decided to get creative and take their recruiting show on the road. They kitted out a bus and began a road trip, conducting interviews and hosting informational evenings at local coffee shops and pubs—all with the purpose of luring highly skilled developers back to their headquarters for a job at Atlassian.

Their goal was to travel to four major metropolitan areas and hire 15 phenomenal developers in 15 days with the promise of an awesome job and an all-expenses-paid relocation package. The result of their quest? They received over 1,000 applications for their 15 positions in just four weeks, which was more than five times the volume of qualified candidates they normally attract.

Go the Distance

By putting their recruiters on the road, Atlassian accomplished several things:

1. It eliminated the need for an endless array of potentially awkward Skype interviews.
2. It enabled candidates to meet their prospective employer face-to-face in a relaxed atmosphere.
3. It made applying and accepting a job easier for everyone involved.
4. The increased pipeline of candidates reduced the dollars spent on recruitment agencies.

Innovation Pays

While the bus was a winning idea, it's only one in a series of creative recruitment strategies employed by Atlassian. In 2010, the company won several awards for their "32 Campaign" a recruiting program in which they set out to hire 32 engineers by using social media, instead of traditional recruiting channels. The campaign was extremely successful and resulted in the company receiving more than 2,500 applications for the 32 positions.

awesome collaboration



Strategy #6:

Make Your Company's Unique Culture a Selling Point.

Never underestimate the power of your company's culture to attract and retain great people. Think of the culture of your company like the personality of a person—the ones that inspire, engage, motivate and genuinely care will always draw crowds of like-minded people.

Greatness Begets Greatness

As iron sharpens iron, a great culture challenges people to become their best. It gives them the opportunity to grow their talents and to make lifelong friends of the people who share their passion, talents and skills. If your company has worked hard to create a culture you know great people would love to be a part of, don't be shy; showcase it shamelessly at every opportunity and you may just find top talent will come searching for you.

Spread the Love

Some of the ways that the Best Small & Medium Workplaces share their culture with others include:



- > Regularly posting photos of fun company events and community service projects on their main website and intranet, as well as in publications such as newsletters, emails, local papers, trade magazines, and more.

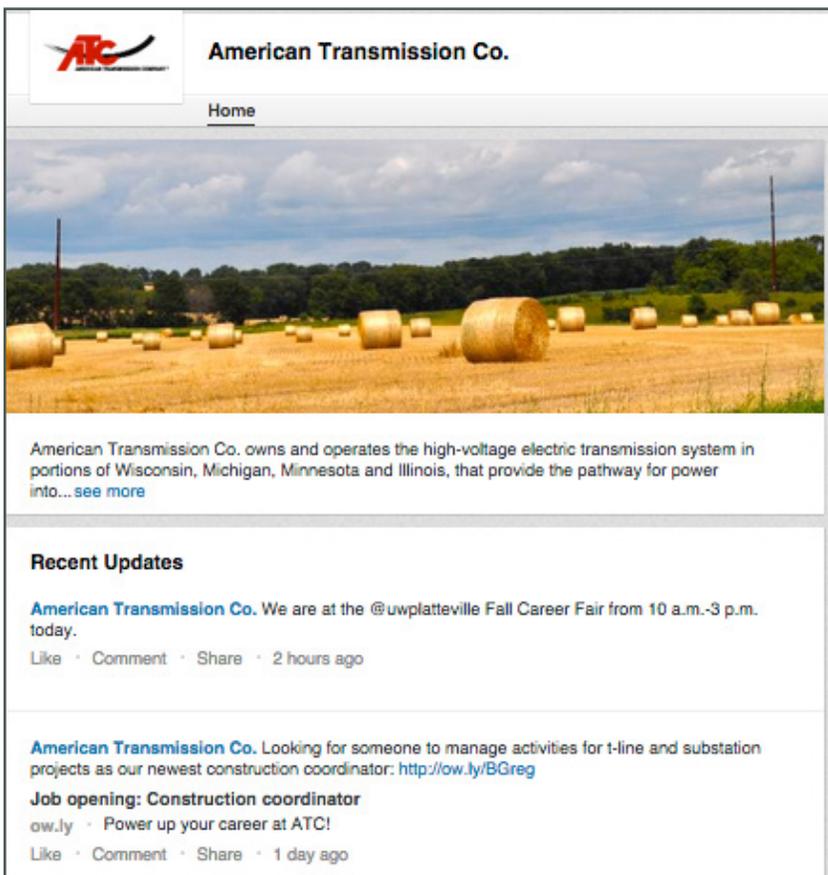


- > Posting short and engaging videos of employees candidly sharing why they enjoy working for their company and how the culture has impacted their lives, both personally and professionally.





- > Taking a creative approach to the traditional mission, vision and values statements posted on the main website and crafting culture-centric manifestos that inspire and resonate with potential employees.



- > Leveraging social media outlets such as Facebook, YouTube and Instagram to build relationships with potential candidates and clients alike, while sharing the latest adventures and successes through photos and blurbs about current events.



Double Duty

Aside from telling the story of your culture in an engaging way, these practices will also serve you well as a screening tool. Now prospective hires can get a sneak preview of what it's like to work at your company, and know if it's a fit for them long before they ever send you a resume, much less set a foot in the door.



Keeping an **Eye on Culture** during Growth

Although most of the **50 Best Workplaces** are growing at a rapid pace, all of them take their time in selecting the right person for the job—and their culture. These leaders have invested a great deal in defining, creating and maintaining their award-winning cultures and they are unwilling to compromise it, even when the demand for new employees feels urgent. Because they understand that their people are their number one asset, they take a rigorous approach to bringing the right folks on board. In fact, a hallmark of these companies is the shared belief that a candidate's alignment to the company's mission, values, and culture is just as important as their skill set.

Growth with Good Reason

The Best Small & Medium Workplaces report a variety of reasons for why they only hire employees who will be a good fit for their carefully cultivated culture, including:

- > A keen awareness that their culture sets them apart from their competition.
- > A belief that culture is a critical component of their success, and therefore should not be compromised for the sake of growth.
- > A first-hand understanding that employees who align with the culture serve to further that culture.
- > A protective attitude that recognizes that hiring someone who does not fit can be damaging—to the work environment, the customer experience, and to the brand.
- > The knowledge that it is better to spend effort up front defining the type of employee who will fit both the job and the culture, and then recruit and hire according to that strategy.

“ Never hire someone because they're good enough or because we need to put a butt in a seat. **This is the downfall of almost all fast growth companies.** We will be patient and wait for the right A-player to hire. The extra few weeks or months it takes to find the right person will pay off immediately. ”

*Memo Excerpt from Centro CEO,
Shawn Riegsecker, to All Staff*





BEST PRACTICE: FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

Company | **Studer Group**

Industry | Healthcare Consulting Firm

Number of U.S. Employees | 194

2014 Best Small Workplaces Rank | #5

Studer Group has grown from 145 to 194 employees in the past two years. The company follows an intensive interview process before hiring each employee to make sure that prospective and current employees feel that Studer Group is the right fit for both.

- To ensure a cultural fit, potential hires are asked to read and sign the company's *Core Values and Standards of Behavior* before the recruiting process begins.
- Human Resources prepares an interview scoring sheet that includes skill-based and behavioral-based questions.
- Candidates are also interviewed by a team of peers to ensure shared values and appreciation for the culture of the organization.
- Candidates for some leadership positions must undergo both an online and in-person assessment conducted by an outside firm as another data point used in the hiring process.

BEST PRACTICE: KEEPING CULTURE HARMONIOUS

Company | **Solstice Mobile**

Industry | Mobile Technology Solutions

Number of U.S. Employees | 134

2014 Best Small Workplaces Rank | #14

In the past two years, Solstice Mobile has grown from 34 to 134 employees. During this time, the company has worked hard to maintain its harmonious culture by seeking people who are as passionate about serving as they are qualified to do the job. Because their motto is "Serve People First" the company makes it a priority to seek collaborative, creative people who love learning and are capable of putting team goals ahead of personal goals. The company maintains a unique approach to interviewing in which:

- Candidates are first interviewed by peers with equal experience to ensure that current employees find the applicant to be someone they would want to work with.
- Candidates are required to share how they have empowered others on their past teams to succeed.
- Interviews are interactive and candidates are asked to either build or critique an existing mobile application or concept.
- Candidates must also write a paragraph sharing the most creative thing they have ever done, regardless of context. This allows each interview to be personalized, and enables the company to better determine whether the person is a cultural fit.

Getting It Right

Despite the constantly shifting tide of the economy, reports of talent shortages, and competition from major brands with deep pockets, the Best Small & Medium Workplaces as a group are not only attracting new candidates, they are hiring and retaining them at an impressive rate. They are also staying true to their mission, vision and values, by hiring only people that will be a good fit for the positions they have open *and* their culture.

You've Got This

As a small or medium business, your size actually gives you many strategic advantages over the competition. By embracing these differences and leveraging them, you may just find yourself swarmed by qualified job candidates that are chomping at the bit to make a significant contribution to your company.

Be Inspired

Now that you've learned some of the game-changing strategies that the Best Small & Medium Workplaces employ to attract and retain talent, we hope you will be inspired, get creative and adapt a few (or all) these powerful practices to fit your culture. To recap, they are:

1. Provide robust opportunities for **growth and development**.
2. Highlight the **impact employees can make** by working at your company.
3. Ensure **pay is fair** and benefits are enticing.
4. Employ **creative recruiting** tactics.
5. Make a phenomenal **first impression**.
6. Make your company's **unique culture** a selling point.



Dial a Friend

Of course, as a research-driven organization that is highly invested in understanding how ordinary businesses become extraordinary, the **Great Place to Work® Institute** is always eager to talk to you about your unique best practices and the results you have achieved. We also have a team of consultants who are ever-ready to help you understand the steps you can take now to transform your workplace into a great one.

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2014 25 BEST SMALL WORKPLACES <i>(25-249 Employees)</i>		2014 25 BEST MEDIUM COMPANIES <i>(250-999 Employees)</i>	
1	Granite Properties	1	Intuitive Research and Technology Corporation
2	Professional Placement Resources LLC	2	Return Path Inc.
3	Ruby Receptionists	3	Squarespace
4	Talent Plus Inc.	4	Assurance
5	Studer Group	5	Pinnacle Financial Partners
6	ENGEO	6	Hagerty
7	Dixon Schwabl	7	Atlassian
8	South Mountain Company	8	Centro
9	Badger Mining Corporation	9	Cirrus Logic
10	Insomniac Games Inc.	10	4imprint
11	Sage Ruddy & Company Inc.	11	ESL Federal Credit Union
12	Advantage Answering Plus Inc.	12	Clif Bar & Company
13	Kahler Slater	13	Infusionsoft
14	Solstice Mobile	14	EKS&H
15	Square Root	15	ZocDoc
16	Axis Communications Inc.	16	Marco Inc.
17	Stellar Solutions Inc.	17	Holder Construction Company
18	Funeral Directors Life Insurance Company (FDLIC)	18	West Monroe Partners
19	Snagajob	19	Etsy
20	Yext	20	Datalogix Inc.
21	City of Rancho Cordova	21	AdRoll
22	Integrated Project Management Company Inc.	22	Lincoln Industries
23	AnswerLab LLC	23	American Transmission Company
24	ONTRAPORT	24	Development Dimensions International
25	Xactly Corporation	25	Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont



About **Great Place to Work**[®]

Great Place to Work[®] is the global authority on high-trust, high-performance workplace cultures. Through proprietary assessment tools, advisory services, and employer branding programs, including Best Companies lists and workplace reviews, Great Place to Work[®] provides the benchmarks, framework, and expertise needed to create, sustain, and recognize outstanding workplace cultures.

In the United States, Great Place to Work[®] produces the annual **FORTUNE 100 Best Companies to Work For**[®] list and the **Great Place to Work**[®] **50 Best Small & Medium Workplaces** list.

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¹http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/employment_and_growth/future_of_work_in_advanced_economies

²<http://www.conference-board.org/>

³http://www.manpowergroup.us/campaigns/talent-shortage-2014/assets/pdf/2014_Talent_Shortage_WP_US.pdf

⁴<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.t04.htm>

⁵<http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200407/making-difference-work>

⁶http://www.iopenerinstitute.com/media/73185/iopener_institute_gen_y_report.pdf

