

2007

North Bay
Business Journal
BEST PLACES to WORK!

TWO-TIME WINNER

Pacific Landscapes Inc. lives by its 'five truths'

In a time of personal crisis, how many companies will assist employees with a no-interest personal loan?

That's one of the benefits of working for Pacific Landscapes, a company whose "five truths" include "integrity above profits, community respect and 100 percent accountability."

Flexibility is key to the company's employee longevity. In addition to paid vacation and time off for family reasons, Pacific Landscapes pays half of the costs of Kaiser Permanente medical coverage for an employee and his or her family, regardless of the number of enrollees. The employee's half of the medical expenses can be paid in pre-tax dollars through the company's Section 125 Plan for out-of-pocket child-care or medical expenses.

The company promotes from within, saying, "Training someone internally is much better than hiring from outside and not knowing for sure what you will get." Promotions

are based on what the company calls the Double A: attitude and aptitude.

Employees are also reimbursed for the costs of registration, books and materials for any education course related directly or indirectly to their current job or future aspirations. English as a Second Language and basic math skills classes are reimbursed.

"We believe that our success as a business and community member is all about

the quality of relationships we maintain," said one employee.

Recognizing that the majority of its employees are Hispanic, the company decided to take a visible and active stand on comprehensive immigration reform. "We know it is a controversial issue, and few employers have spoken publicly," said an employee. "However, we still feel it was the right thing to do. That is the culture we strive for in our company."



PACIFIC LANDSCAPES INC. EMPLOYEE QUOTE

"The upbeat attitudes from all. Great interest from management as to how employees are doing in their day. I believe that team playing is important to all."

How the 2007 Best Places to Work survey was conducted

Companies selected as Best Places to Work in the North Bay were analyzed by the editorial staff of the BUSINESS JOURNAL on the basis of several criteria, including the employer questionnaire, the survey ratings by employee, the number of responses, size of the company, the breakdown of responses from management and non-management as well as written comments.

In all, 132 companies were nominated, up from 90 in 2006, from which 43 winners emerged from Sonoma, Marin and Napa counties, up from 24 last year.

Winners in the lists on Pages 26 and 28 are grouped by size so that employee scores are comparable. The winners

are then listed within their size categories by employee score.

Nominations for Best Places to Work in the North Bay were sought starting in March. Anyone within a company can nominate their business by completing a simple form. A minimum of 20 employees was required.

Nominated companies were then contacted by the BUSINESS JOURNAL staff and invited to submit a company application and to ask employees to complete a brief online survey.

The survey was set up through Zoomerang, a widely used online polling service. Companies had about three weeks in late May and early June to complete the application and survey for which a minimum number of responses

was required. After an extensive analysis of the employer questionnaire and online responses, the winners were selected July 17.

BUSINESS JOURNAL staff contributing to the 2007 Best Places to Work in the North Bay were Event Development Manager Noelani Price; reporters Will Jason, Lorelee Stevens and Jeff Quackenbush; freelance writer Mary Southhall; Research Coordinator Laura Cochrane; and Editorial Assistant Princessa Pabalan. Tomas Chadsey and Mark Fertig of The Press Democrat's online staff provided technical advice and support for the Zoomerang survey.

— Brad Bollinger, Editor in Chief