

based tax services firm knew it had to make a change. Instead of measuring employee performance by face-time, tenure or hours worked, the company decided to embark upon a completely results-based model. This meant total employee freedom when it came to hours worked, location and all the other traditional workplace rules. This approach required a massive effort to develop quantitative and qualitative metrics that could be used to evaluate employee and team effectiveness. In addition, Human Resources and IT had to reconfigure themselves to provide services to any employee, any time, any place. Improving employee retention also meant adding a long list of new and enhanced employee benefits including generous paid vacation, paid leave and paid community service time. The company reports staggering results with high internal employee satisfaction and industry leading client satisfaction ratings. Voluntary turnover has dropped from 19 to 11 percent with valued former workers re-joining the firm and company-wide record revenues.

Companies with 26-100 employees

Wheelabrator Environmental, Spokane

www.wheelabratortechnologies.com

Achieving a major cultural change from a top-down organization to a more collaborative one is never easy. But Wheelabrator says the effort is paying off with better employee retention, a safer work environment and higher employee satisfaction. The company has developed and in house Leadership Development Program and a robust staff development tool called Performance Driven Success. Each program is designed to help managers grow, and employees understand how they fit into the company and how to make the most of their opportunities. To back it up, the company offers up to \$4,000 a year so employees can take classes at accredited schools and universities along with other benefits like a discount stock purchase plan. The company says other tactics and benefits like recognition programs, a willingness to promote from within, \$5,000 in adoption assistance and performance bonuses have also proven valuable. When it comes to safety, the company's Safety On Purpose program provides incentives for accident free work and requires each employee to ask three questions before any job can begin: Do I know how to do the job safely? Am I trained in the task? Can I do the job safely without endangering myself, others or the environment? A "no" to any of the three questions requires a proactive action to resolve the problem.

Continuous Commitment

Companies with 250+ employees

SKILS'KIN, Spokane

www.skils-kin.org

A non-profit working to improve the lives of people with disabilities through employment training and placement faces many challenges. But year after year, Skils'Kin has shown itself to be highly committed to continually growing the organization, improve benefits and make the workplace more flexible to meet the diverse needs of its workforce. In addition to offering a full roster of traditional benefits, the organization has now added a benefits coordinator position to enhance access to benefits, improve response times to problems and maintain relationships with benefit providers. Other changes include offering a \$500 payment to reduce the sting of the medical plan's \$1,500 deductible, the addition of up to five days leave to deal with cases of domestic violence, time off to participate in a substance abuse rehabilitation program, the addition of bereavement leave to include extended family members who have often provided long term support to a disabled employee, and the addition of 80 cell phones and laptop computers to allow for flexible schedules and off-site work.

February 3, 2012
Red Lion Hotel Olympia



Program

GUEST SPEAKER



Governor Gregoire

AWARDS PRESENTATION

AWB Board Chair Tom Hosea, KeyBank

The AWB Better Workplace Awards honor member companies that demonstrate innovation in the areas of workplace safety, job training and advancement, and benefit and compensation programs. The 2012 Awards recognize member businesses, both large and small, that go the extra mile in providing a family-friendly work environment, promoting safety and enabling employees to achieve their best.

Awards Sponsored By:



And the winners are.....

Workplace Safety

Companies with 26-100 employees

Ash Grove Cement Company, Inc., Seattle

www.ashgrove.com

Getting workers and supervisors to work together effectively is the key to Ash Grove Cement's success in preventing workplace injuries. In fact, the Seattle plant has run three years without a lost time accident. The company's safety plan includes a constantly-reviewed series of daily, weekly and monthly inspections where input is sought from every worker in every department. The review program includes watching for trends, regular safety committee and area-specific team meetings, and a palette of safety training programs conducted throughout the year. One program, Safety in Motion, focuses on the prevention of injury by improving lifting and movement techniques. Other training programs include courses in CPR, first aid and water safety. All the training is put into practice twice a year when full scale evacuation drills are conducted. Employees are also encouraged to suggest and implement innovative fixes to plant equipment and processes to reduce risk. Employees are incentivized to make safety a priority through awards, a gift card giveaway tied to a wellness program and annual safety pay bonuses that in 2011 provided \$400 per employee.

Companies with 250+ employees

Fluor Federal Services, Inc., Richland

www.fluor.com

The word "safety" appears first on Richmond-based Fluor Federal Services' list of business values. But the project management company's commitment to safety doesn't end with a mere word. Fluor's leadership team and employees all embrace a "culture of safety" that runs through the entire organization and holds each team member accountable for their own safety, and the safety of others. Fluor has a multi-faceted safety program in place that starts at pre-job analysis and planning and runs all the way through project completion. The company isn't afraid to invest in safety either, sometimes building full scale mockups of difficult projects and spending up to \$17,000 per employee for specialized safety training. Fluor has maintained the Department of Energy's prestigious "STAR" certification, the highest level of achievement within the agency's Voluntary Protection Program since 2001. Keeping the STAR certification requires comprehensive reviews and operational safety evaluations by the experts from the DOE. The results are tangible: injury rates are nine times lower than the national average in the heavy construction industry.

Job Training/Advancement

Companies with 101-250 employees

Clark Nuber, Bellevue

www.clarknuber.com

After trying a consultant-lead leadership development program for a couple of years, Clark Nuber decided to take the program in house. The 150 employee accounting firm had many goals for the program that included preserving the company's culture over the long term, maintaining the company's competitive advantages through employee retention and improving the firm's business results. After a major developmental exercise to build the program's curriculum, leadership settled on a one-year mentoring model. Fifteen employees graduated in the program's first year, giving their experience overwhelmingly high marks for its relevance to their job and future in the firm. Participants were also pleased with the opportunity to choose their own mentor within the firm and participate in team building exercises that included everything from a book club to golf outings. The new class of seven employees is benefitting from the feedback of the first class by getting more time with the firm's partners and getting involved with the company's charitable giving program. Recently, Clark Nuber's program was awarded the Human Resource Innovation Award by the Leading Edge Alliance – the second largest international professional association of independently owned accounting and consulting firms.

Companies with 101-250 employees

Sonderen Packaging, Inc., Spokane

www.sonderen.com

Sonderen Packaging may be based in Spokane, but the company isn't afraid to use the best of several Japanese manufacturing and efficiency systems to take the company to the next level. The company is heavily involved in Lean manufacturing training, which overlays all of the other process-oriented improvement programs. For example, changing the location of a single machine on the factory floor yielded an additional 733 machine hours annually, allowing the company to run more business without additional costs. The company also invests in employee continuing education in fields like electrical engineering and business. Employees are also encouraged to apply for internal promotions when positions become available.

Innovative Benefits/Compensation

Companies with fewer than 25 employees

Ryan, Bellevue

www.ryan.com

When work-life balance issues kept cropping up in exit interviews, Ryan LLC, a Dallas, Texas

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