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# 100

2018

# BEST PLACES TO WORK *in* IT

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**25th ANNUAL**

**2018**

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# COMPUTERWORLD
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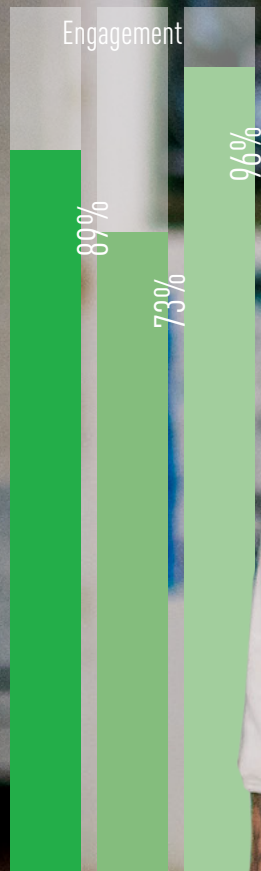
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# 100

## 2018 BEST PLACES TO WORK *in* IT

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## *The value of* SOFT BENEFITS

Many of our **Best Places to Work** have found that the most effective way to attract and retain top talent is to make the workplace somewhere employees want to be.

**BY MARY K. PRATT**

**W**ITH UNEMPLOYMENT low, demand for technology workers today is high, giving tech pros plenty of career opportunities.

Yet Judd Williams, CIO for the **National Collegiate Athletic Association**, hasn't had turnover among his 35-member IT team during the past two years.

It's not big paychecks that retain his workers, Williams says. Although the NCAA offers competitive compensation, Williams instead attributes his

GETTY IMAGES

retention success to the myriad benefits offered by the Indianapolis-based nonprofit — from free tickets for championship events to *Star Wars* movie outings.

"We do have to differentiate to attract and retain talent, so we focus on creating a better work environment," Williams says.

His IT workers enjoy flexible hours in the summer, an option to work from home once a week, a week off at Christmas, and opportunities to learn new skills and advance in their careers. They also get some unusual perks, such as afternoon trips to a nearby IMAX theater whenever there's a new release in the Star Wars franchise, annual retreats for strategizing and socializing, and formal recognition programs that include the Penguin Award for risk-taking (named for the bird that dives into waters where predators could lurk).

Williams acknowledges that these benefits don't cost a lot to implement or take much time to administer. But they have big returns by helping retain talent and keeping workers happy and engaged, factors that contributed to the NCAA's placement as the No. 7 small organization on *Computerworld*'s 2018 Best Places to Work in IT list.

The NCAA is on to something. CIOs and executives at many companies that rank among the 2018 Best Places to Work in IT, as well as research and workplace experts, say competitive compensation is now a given, so workers seek out soft benefits — that is, those perks and programs that can foster energetic, supportive cultures. Moreover, CIOs such as Williams say offering these benefits helps them cultivate a strong workforce that in turn delivers better results.

Monika Dowal, senior director of strategic partnerships at Mondo, an IT and tech staffing firm, says she constantly sees the importance of these kinds of benefits.

"Soft benefits and benefits in general trump salaries when [candidates are] considering positions," Dowal says.

She says job candidates are increasingly asking about and weighing such corporate offerings when deciding where to apply and which job offers to accept. In fact, one recent candidate decided to accept a position as an IT project manager with a company because that employer offered paid time off for workers to volunteer.

Dowal says tech workers today seem to value several specific benefits: professional development opportunities such as on-the-job training and financial support for advanced learning; assistance with paying off student loans; company-supported philanthropic pro-



**NCAA** headquarters. The association's CIO attributes the low turnover in his IT organization to the myriad benefits offered by the nonprofit.

grams such as mentoring and volunteering; and work-life balance policies such as flexible schedules, unlimited paid time off and telecommuting options.

Some other low-cost perks popular among tech workers include standing desks in the office, conferences and speaking opportunities, free food, on-site fitness classes and meditation lessons.

Consider this: In 2016 a survey from the job-review website Glassdoor found that 57% of job candidates listed benefits and perks among their top considerations for accepting a new role. A 2015 Glassdoor survey showed that nearly 80% of workers preferred new or additional benefits to a pay increase.

"These benefits are becoming a massive consideration," Dowal adds.

Dave Piwowar, vice president of HR for **Secure-24**, an IT services provider, says he, too, has seen the power of benefits to draw and keep technical professionals.

Piwowar says the Southfield, Mich.-based company, which ranks as the No. 6 small organization on the 2018 Best Places to Work in IT list, seeks input and feedback from staff about what they value. As a result, besides providing traditional benefits such as health insurance, Secure-24 offers more modern options such as an unlimited vacation time policy, flexible schedules and access to a weekly meditation program.

It also adopted a casual dress code and company-funded happy hours. Those are held after work once or twice a month and are hosted on a rotating basis by different teams, which pick the menu of food and craft beers.

Such benefits are offered to all of its 640 workers, since Secure-24 believes these programs benefit all types of professionals, Piwowar says. But



Anny Ly (right) celebrates her birthday by "treetop trekking" with ULTIMATE SOFTWARE colleague Parsha Antara.

the company also developed training and professional development programs specifically for its 550 technical workers, seeing that technologists particularly value company-sponsored learning opportunities.

"Everybody wants to grow their careers and move forward, but our technical people especially are looking for the latest and greatest," he says, noting that the company's Academy Model training program, which gives entry-level workers a path to advance in the company, is highly valued by new hires.

**Ultimate Software**, the No. 1 midsize organization on the Best Places to Work in IT list for the second year in a row, has similar benefits.

Based in Weston, Fla., the HR software provider offers its 4,300 employees (over 1,500 of whom are IT workers) the benefits typically found in corporate settings today — health insurance, retirement savings, bonuses, etc. — says John Machado, vice president of development.

Ultimate Software also offers its tech team specific benefits geared toward learning and career development, because tech workers tend to value those things more. Machado says the company has developed unique ways to deliver this benefit. It has what it calls "tribes," groups

of workers interested in a particular area, such as data, who meet and learn together, supported by the company.

But Machado says Ultimate Software, like other leading employers, has found that employees want benefits that support a healthy work-life balance as well as camaraderie among colleagues. To that end, the company supports and provides funding for such activities as summer picnics and barbecues.

Machado says such benefits don't require much in company resources, but they're critical for supporting the company's broader workplace culture.

"Anything that promotes a culture where our employees feel more engaged because they know we care about more than just them creating code pays huge dividends because of increased retention," he adds.

Although studies reinforce the importance of companies offering these kinds of benefits, leading employers say there's no single perk that's going to draw in workers or keep existing ones happy. Indeed, employers say they implement different types of benefits so they can meet the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce, where each worker has a list of what he or she values most — a list that changes over time.

"It's about the personalization of benefits to meet you where you are in your life — that's the trend," says Michele Alcazar, vice president of operations and strategy for technology at **Prudential Financial**, an insurance company based in Newark, N.J., and the No. 8 large organization on the 2018 Best Places to Work in IT list.

Alcazar says Prudential, with 49,000 employees worldwide (and over 20,000 in the U.S.), including 3,000 IT staffers worldwide (more than 2,300 in the U.S.), has developed a range of benefits, from loan repayment programs for its college recruits to elder-care programs for older workers caring for aging parents. Those are in addition to competitive compensation, traditional benefits and more modern perks such as flextime and 10 weeks of paid parental leave for both mothers and fathers. Prudential also offers life coaching, coaching on health and personal finance, and mentoring, teaching and volunteer opportunities.

Alcazar says that clearly some of these benefits cost more than others, but their costs are outweighed by the returns. "There are huge intangible benefits from running these programs, besides people feeling good about working at a company that supports them," she says. "There's team building and bonding that happens, too."

But companies have to do

## TRAINING

1. Enova International
2. Planned Systems Intl.
3. Ultimate Software
4. Altria Client Services
5. Cloud for Good
6. Quicken Loans
7. NCAA
8. Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory
9. Illumina
10. Commonwealth Financial Network

**PRUDENTIAL FINANCIAL** employees Johnny Loperena, Abhinai "Abe" Pothireddy and Siobhan Wolohan rode together in the 2017 Bike New York Five Boro Bike Tour as a form of team building.

more than just offer a few benefits if they want to create and maintain great work environments, Alcazar and others say. They have to use the benefits to support the culture they want to cultivate, and likewise, the culture should support workers who seek to take advantage of the benefits; it does no good for anyone to offer benefits such as flexible schedules or tuition reimbursement if managers discourage workers from using them.

Consider, for example, what Detroit-based **Quicken Loans** offers. Teresa Wynn, senior vice president in the company's Office of the CIO, says the online mortgage lender, the No. 1 large company on the Best Places to Work in IT list for the fifth year running, offers a plethora of benefits to its 17,000 employees, many of which fall into that bucket of low-cost

soft benefits. The company has mentoring and volunteer opportunities. It allows workers to take Monday afternoons to work on innovative pet projects. It supports learning and speaking opportunities so that employees can grow their skills and careers.

Wynn says each one of those benefits is important to someone, but it's not any single one that defines or differentiates the company or the environment for its nearly 1,800 IT employees. Rather, it's how they all work together to create a workplace where employees want to be. ◆

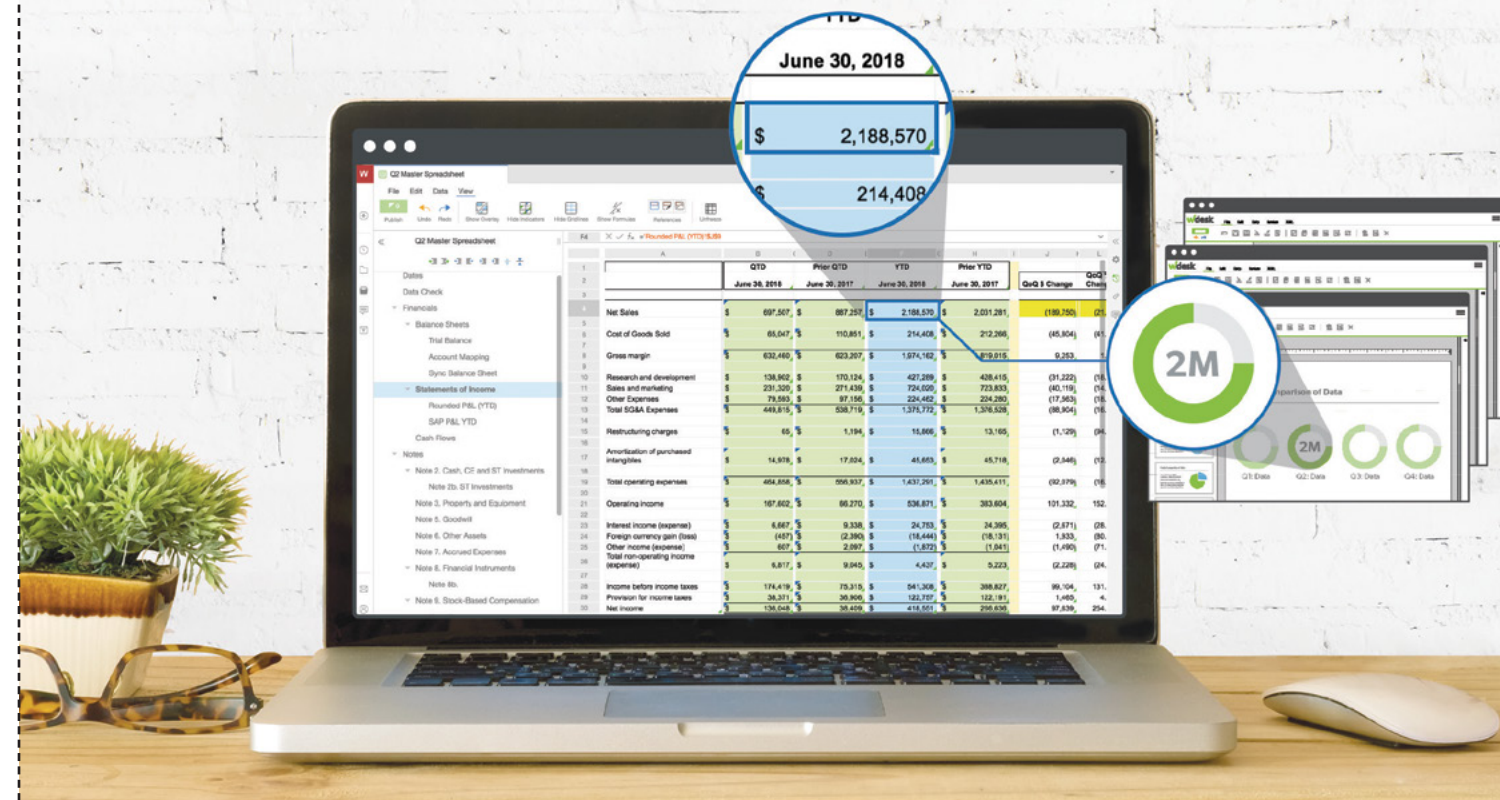**MARY K. PRATT** *is a freelance writer based in Massachusetts.*



**QUICKEN LOANS** Technology team members enjoy the company's annual IT Family Gathering, an event designed to recognize all-star team members, share wins and celebrate the year's successes.

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For many of the employees of this Salesforce partner, **the mission is a big part** of why it's a great place to work.

**BY TAM HARBERT**

# Good work, and good works, at
# Cloud for Good

**F**OR PHILANTHROPICALLY minded people who have crossed into IT from the liberal arts world and want to work from home, Cloud for Good, the No. 1 small organization on *Computerworld*'s 2018 Best Places to Work in IT list, seems like a perfect employer.

The premium Salesforce. org partner is a B corporation, which means it's a for-profit business certified by the nonprofit B Lab as meeting certain

standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency. It was founded by Tal Frankfurt, who learned Salesforce when he was working as a fundraiser, trying to better manage donors, participants and volunteers at a nonprofit for at-risk youth in Israel. Gradually, other nonprofit colleagues asked him about how to use the platform, and he started consulting.

After moving to the United States, he founded Cloud for Good in 2011 and started hiring people with similar stories. He worked from a home office and saw no reason to rent commercial space, so the company is 100% virtual. Now numbering more than 50, employees come from a nonprofit or educational background, are Salesforce-certified and work from home. "Our employees all see the power of this platform to transform operations for [non-

profits]," says Will Norse, vice president of operations at the company and formerly CIO at a nonprofit. "That's what gets our folks jazzed."

Kestryl Lowrey's story is typical. After graduating with a double major in anthropology and theater, then going on to earn a master's in performance theater, Lowrey worked for several nonprofits in New York City. Despite rebelling against a family tradition of working in tech (his father and grandparents worked for technology companies), Lowrey found himself handling technology for his employers. "Out of a nine-person office, I was the only one who knew how to fix the printer." He joined Cloud for Good in 2014 and is now a solutions architect.

Lara Hoke, a senior cloud consultant who has a degree in fine arts and is an established painter, came from an arts nonprofit in San Francisco. As she

learned Salesforce, she became more and more interested in the technology, "but I wanted to work for mission-based organizations," she says. She says her arts background helps her think creatively about how to help nonprofits use Salesforce to

> **Our biggest job is as problem-solvers. You don't necessarily know what the answer is... but you enjoy the process of figuring it out.**
>
> **LARA HOKE,** SENIOR CLOUD CONSULTANT, CLOUD FOR GOOD

their best advantage. "Our biggest job is as problem-solvers," she says. "When you're painting, that's often what you're doing. You don't necessarily know what the answer is . . . but you enjoy the process of figuring it out."

Despite working alone in their homes, employees' common interest in nonprofits

provides the foundation for a cohesive culture at the company. "We have a strong sense of collaboration and community" that comes from a shared purpose, says Lowrey. "We all want to help nonprofits to use technology for good."

**I feel more connected** to my co-workers at Cloud for Good than I did with co-workers that I was seeing in the office every day."

**KESTRYL LOWREY,** SOLUTIONS ARCHITECT, CLOUD FOR GOOD

But Frankfurt takes intentional steps to build on that and create a culture to unite workers spread out among 15 states, three Canadian provinces, and the Netherlands. First, he's careful to hire people who can work independently at home without feeling too isolated. Second, he sets clear expectations and goals,

defining exactly what success looks like. Third, he makes dedicated efforts to build connections and foster collaboration.

For example, employees use Zoom video as their prime means of communication with each other and customers. "All calls are video calls," says Frankfurt. "I don't even remember the last time someone called me on my phone." For camaraderie, employees gather virtually in chat rooms dedicated to common interests such as parenting or sports. Frankfurt holds open office hours in his chat room twice a month.

"I feel more connected to my co-workers at Cloud for Good than I did with co-workers that I was seeing in the office every day" in previous office jobs, says Lowrey. And every month or so, he gets together in person with several other Cloud for Good employees in New York.

Norse joined Cloud for Good

almost five years ago, when it had only 10 employees. Back then, the company was using Google Apps and Hangouts, but it outgrew them as the number of employees increased. So it moved from Google to Office 365 and from Skype to Zoom.

There are also personal touches that help employees feel known, recognized and appreciated. The company has a "care group" that comes up with personalized gifts for employee birthdays and work anniversaries, Norse says. "They gave me, an amateur photographer, a gift certificate for a photo walk around Boston," he says. "That kind of small thing goes a long way to keeping people feeling integrated and invested." ◆

**TAM HARBERT** *is a* Computerworld *contributing writer based in Washington, D.C., who specializes in technology, business and public policy.*

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# Dignity Health

## *Compassionate patient care and passionate IT*



Members of the **DIGNITY HEALTH** IT team come together to celebrate the launch of a new health coding system designed to save lives with more accurate tracking.

A mix of **innovative assignments** and a **focus on community and personal engagement** is this health care provider's prescription for transformative IT.

**BY BETH STACKPOLE**

**H**ELLO HUMANKINDNESS. It's the branding campaign for Dignity Health, but it gets to the heart of the health care provider's culture and serves as a rallying force to keep IT employees happy and engaged.

"Hello Humankindness is our brand promise — we invest in it, we believe in it as individu-

> ## "We empower people and encourage them to **engage and participate and solve things.**
>
> **DEANNA WISE,** EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CIO, DIGNITY HEALTH

ployees and an IT staff of close to 1,500. "We empower people and encourage them to engage and participate and solve things. They feel like they have an ability to make a difference, and that ability to make a difference fulfills them in their jobs."

Empowering IT workers to stretch their wings on creative projects in areas such as big data analytics and digitized patient experiences while encouraging participation in everyday acts of human kindness is what sets the Dignity Health culture apart from other IT organizations, Wise explains. And it helped the Phoenix-based organization rank as the No. 32 large company on *Computerworld*'s 2018 Best Places to Work in IT list.

Making a difference can come in the form of innovating new systems that transform patient care, such as the health group's Sepsis Bio Surveillance Agent, an analytics effort that

als, and we align the culture in IT with that premise that we are here for the patients," says Deanna Wise, executive vice president and CIO for the fifth-largest health system in the U.S., with nearly 60,000 em-

> **The leadership from the top down has a good communication sense.**
>
> **CHERYL MARTIN,** APPLICATION SYSTEMS ANALYST, DIGNITY HEALTH

provides early warning alerts that identify patients at risk of septic shock, or the Perinatal Predictive use case, an analytics model that calculates the probability of complex fetal complications. But Dignity Health IT

employees also make a difference by giving back to patients and the broader community, Wise says. Just one example is that of an IT support staffer who was formally recognized companywide, not for his client skills or technical prowess, but for giving a teenage patient a much-desired haircut.

"He was fixing a device in the patient's room and the teenager expressed concern he needed a haircut," Wise recalls. The staffer, who is a barber on the side, spoke to the nursing staff and arranged to come in and cut the patient's hair. "It made a huge difference in how the patient felt, and even though it wasn't his job, he came in and made a difference," she says.

IT staffers are also encouraged to give back to the community through company-sponsored charity events. Wise says members of the IT team recently participated in a local

program to help feed hungry children and were encouraged to do so on company time, not on weekends or after hours. "It was a bonding experience, but we were doing something focused on community … and we want to sponsor and promote that type of work," she says.

For Cheryl Martin, an application systems analyst, that commitment to kindness and community fosters the kind of culture that makes her proud to be a member of the Dignity Health IT team. Martin, who has worked in IT health care for 27 years, worked at Dignity Health for 20 years, left briefly for a year to pursue other ventures, but then returned, enticed by both the career opportunities and the strong company culture. Martin is also one of many Dignity Health IT employees (38% of the total IT staff) who are able to work remotely—mostly from her

home office, with a couple of days a week spent in the local Reno, Nev., satellite office. She stays connected to her colleagues through WebEx meetings and videoconferencing and says she doesn't feel disenfranchised from the team.

"Communication is key — we always know what's coming and what changes are being made," she says. "The leadership from the top down has a good communication sense."

**Martin is also one of many Dignity Health IT employees (38% of the total IT staff) who are able to work remotely.**

While Martin enjoys the flexibility to work from home (especially not having to commute on the many days that it snows in northern Nevada), she says the real draw is how the company treats employees, particularly the way it encourages career growth and exploration. Martin, who works on the team supporting Dignity Health's supplier and materials procurement systems, says she has been encouraged and supported with training to branch out in different areas where she has interest.

"They give you the opportunity to learn and grow," she explains. "In many places, you get pigeonholed by expertise in one particular area. Here, they are big on supporting personal growth as well as professional development." ◆

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**BETH STACKPOLE,** *a contributing writer for* Computerworld, *has reported on business and technology for more than 20 years.*

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# BEST PLACES TO WORK in IT

2018

Without chargebacks and other organizational constraints, IT is free to focus on innovation and creating value for the business. **BY BETH STACKPOLE**

**W**HAT DOES it take to create a challenging and engaging place to work? According to Paul Blowers, CIO of Plante Moran, there's no secret sauce, but there are a few critical ingredients.

Recognizing and developing staff, promoting growth and camaraderie, and encouraging individual freedom are among the top principles Blowers and other company leaders em-



**PLANTE MORAN** IT staffers display art they made together, one of many team-building events held throughout the year.

# Plante Moran

*One firm, one focus on innovation*

> **There is no shortcut to get to a caring, inclusive, growth-oriented culture — you have to talk about it, believe in it, and live it out every day.**
>
> **PAUL BLOWERS,** CIO, PLANTE MORAN

phasize to nurture an inclusive culture for Plante Moran, a professional services firm with nearly 2,500 employees, 71 of those in IT. And those initiatives contributed to the Southfield, Mich., firm being named the No. 3 midsize company on *Computerworld*'s 2018 Best Places to Work in IT list.

"There is no shortcut to get to a caring, inclusive, growth-oriented culture — you have to talk about it, believe in it, and live it out every day,"

Blowers says. "We are committed to providing staff with an open and transparent IT environment. There are few rules and there's no real project or initiative that is off limits."

One way Plante Moran breaks through conventional organizational restraints is through its "one-firm firm" principle, in which the company is viewed as a single entity and not a collection of profit and loss centers that are measured and rewarded independently. That makes it far easier for the Plante Moran IT department to allocate resources to initiatives that deliver optimal

value to the business as a whole compared to conventional structures, where specific IT investments are measured against the performance of the facilitating department or P&L center.

"When you live and work in IT, this resonates — we don't do allocations, we don't do chargebacks, and we don't portion out technology costs to different practice or geographic areas," Blowers says. "This gives us tremendous freedom and flexibility. It's like rocket fuel for focusing on value-added activities, not IT housekeeping."

Plante Moran's IT organization even has a specific role, solution specialist, whose sole purpose is to partner with the business to explore how to best exploit technology for competitive advantage. "We wouldn't be able to do that if we focused on back-office accounting," Blowers explains. "It becomes a big barrier in terms of how you jus-

tify the cost of innovation and digital transformation."

Transparency and accessibility to top management is another hallmark of the Plante Moran culture. Blowers conducts semiannual town hall meetings for the entire IT staff to cover technology strategy and firm updates, and he routinely

> **We get to do so much experimentation — people have a chance to be exposed to different things.**
>
> **DANIELLE DELONGE,** TECHNOLOGY TRAINING AND CHANGE MANAGER, PLANTE MORAN

makes himself available for impromptu hallway conversations with staffers — "Paulway talks," as many IT employees call them.

Blowers describes his management style as "servant leadership," which he underscores by trying to have direct conversations with IT staffers and

by sitting on as many advisory teams as possible, allowing him to stay actively involved in mentoring and employee coaching. "A key part of my job every day is to serve the staff I'm privileged to lead," he says. "There is no hierarchical nature — I make connections with staff at every level."

Danielle DeLonge, technology training and change manager at Plante Moran, is a fan of the hands-on management style of Blowers and company leadership. Having easy access to mentors who provide perspective on far-ranging issues, from whether to take a stretch assignment to how to handle vendor relationships, has been a real boost for career decisions, she says. At the same time, she enjoys the myriad opportunities to engage with her IT peers, from the weekly "Breakfast Club," where staffers take turns bringing in breakfast for the team, to the company-

wide family picnic that happens every summer.

DeLonge also welcomes the opportunity to work with state-of-the-art tools and on innovative projects such as KnowledgeShare, a digital intranet platform that blends cloud, mobile and social technologies and helps far-flung Plante Moran employees collaborate and share expertise. KnowledgeShare was recognized among CIO's 2017 CIO 100 winners. "I'm always surprised when I talk to people in larger organizations who are using outdated tools or not doing a lot of innovative work," she explains. "We get to do so much experimentation — people have a chance to be exposed to different things."

**[DeLonge] enjoys the myriad opportunities to engage with her IT peers, from the weekly "Breakfast Club"… to the companywide family picnic that happens every summer.**

It's the way Plante Moran encourages employee collaboration and knowledge sharing that resonates most with DeLonge. "People who have a lot of passion are able to give voice to it and influence the [direction] of a project," she says. "It's not just a hierarchical organization where the person here the longest wins. We all learn from each other." ◆

**BETH STACKPOLE,** *a contributing writer for* Computerworld, *has reported on business and technology for more than 20 years.*

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# BEST PLACES TO WORK *in* IT

2018

In a fast-growing company, it takes vigilance to hold on to the values that helped place it on *Computerworld*'s 2018 Best Places to Work in IT.

**BY TAM HARBERT**

**T'S NOT** much of a secret that Workday is a great place to work. In addition to being ranked by *Computerworld* as the No. 4 large company among the 2018 Best Places to Work in IT, last year it came in at No. 7 in *Fortune*'s list of the best companies to work. The challenge may be holding on to what has made the young company great as it grows.

The company, founded in



People leaders (the term used at **WORKDAY** for managers) lead table discussions at the company's people leadership summit.

# Workday

*is a great place to work, and it wants to stay that way*

2005 by David Duffield and Aneel Bhusri, makes cloud-based software for finance and human resources. Both founders came from PeopleSoft — Duffield was founder and CEO, and Bhusri held several senior leadership roles. From the very beginning, the Workday founders placed heavy emphasis on several core values, the first of which rec-

ognizes the value of employees — it is committed to hiring the best and treating them well. That value was so important, in fact, that Duffield and Bhusri personally interviewed the first 500 employees of Workday.

Today, the Pleasanton, Calif., company employs more than 6,300 people in the U.S. Josh DeFigueiredo, vice president and CISO, was employee No. 447. "It's definitely a challenge to retain that culture in a company that's grown like we have," he says.

In response to that challenge, Workday is trying to institutionalize the founders' values in formal ways. One aspect of the culture that many employees like is how the company fosters connection, teamwork and collaboration. "Connections are very important," says Patti Althen, who joined two years ago and is now director of program management, IT. "A big focus of the company is building con-

nections among all employees."

One way to make sure managers are inculcated with Workday culture is the people leadership summit. Started three years ago, the summit brings in a group of "people leaders" (what Workday calls managers) from around the world for two days to discuss leadership and culture. At its most recent summit, the company systematically mixed people together to encourage new connections and build new relationships across the company.

"We actually wrote an algorithm that considers the different contexts: where people are from, different genders, different generations and other factors," says Greg Pryor, vice president for leadership and organizational effectiveness. "We intentionally placed them at tables that are optimized to expose them to new, interesting, purpose-built connections. . . . So now you know someone



**Workday CEO Aneel Bhusri (standing, far right) brings some of Workday's top-performing people leaders on stage during the company's people leadership summit.**

**Workday people leaders discuss with their group how to become better leaders.**

in the Dublin office you can ask for help when needed," he says. "It's our intentionality in the power of teams, because teams are increasingly how work gets done." It worked so well that Workday intends to incorporate the algorithm in the next release of its product, he says.

Another example is a program called Vista, a smaller, multiday meeting that brings together individuals from different parts of the company.

These employees, who have never worked together and probably don't know each other, are placed into teams and put into hypothetical work situations. The goal is "to create sub-networks within the organization to empower people to solve cross-functional problems," explains DeFigueiredo, who recently participated. "We'll all probably find ourselves in situations where we need help from people outside of our own small worlds." His team included people from human resources, development and infrastructure. The group has continued, on its own, meeting quarterly.

Workday employees also value how the culture empowers them, not only to express themselves freely, but also to control their own careers. The culture resists boxing them in.

DeFigueiredo joined more than eight years ago as a member of internal security opera-

> **A big focus of the company is building connections among all employees.**
>
> **PATTI ALTHEN,** DIRECTOR OF PROGRAM MANAGEMENT, IT, WORKDAY

tions. But he says he "quickly found myself doing work that had nothing to do with my job description." Specifically, salespeople started bringing him along to customer visits to explain how Workday protected their data. He discovered that he liked this type of external-facing role, and his manager helped him chart a career path accommodating that preference. Today, DeFigueiredo has scores of people reporting to him. "I tell my managers that part of their job is helping people get where they want to go, even if it's to a different part of the company."

Most recently, the company rolled out "performance-enablement tools." According to Althen, the tools are designed to give employees even more opportunities to "drive their own careers rather than just going where management sends them."

She adds, "That's the kind of investments they are making into their employees — you see this all over the company." ◆

**TAM HARBERT** *is a* Computerworld *contributing writer based in Washington, D.C., who specializes in technology, business and public policy.*

# BEST PLACES TO WORK *in* IT

2018

# Pariveda Solutions
## *Everyone has a path to VP*

A transparent expectations framework and an **emphasis on continuous learning** are aimed at encouraging employees to reach their fullest potential. **BY BETH STACKPOLE**



**PARIVEDA's** FinFest project team gathers at a group dinner to celebrate a successful day of the annual companywide conference.

**L**OTS OF companies talk up career development, touting their commitment to mentorship and training. At Pariveda Solutions, the goal is a bit more lofty: The 500-person management consulting firm promises to grow individuals to their fullest potential, including achieving vice president status after participating in a years-long, intensive grooming program.

Not every Pariveda employee wants to be a vice president, of course, and not every professional will get there. However, the company's commitment to

continuous learning and the development of IT talent with an eye toward leadership and business acumen, not just technical chops, is what sets it apart from other companies in the business. It also contributed to Pariveda's ranking as the No. 13 small company on *Computerworld*'s 2018 Best Places to Work in IT list.

"Other technology-focused firms put an emphasis on training, but the emphasis is on skills development targeting specific technical areas that are hot in the marketplace," explains Brian Orrell, Pariveda's CTO. "We do that, but we don't end there. We grow people in a more purposeful way for longer-term career advancement rather than the skill of the moment."

Underlying Pariveda's talent development initiative and individual-oriented growth culture is its expectations framework, one of the many platforms on which it nurtures,

trains and coaches people to achieve clearly defined goals for clearly defined organizational levels. In addition to providing transparency, the framework means employees are reviewed against the same codified set of expectations, not against other employees. What's more, everyone in the same role earns the same salary, which keeps things on a level playing field.

The framework, which aims to help Pariveda's employees develop their careers from "effective consultants into successful executives," is as much about personal cognitive development as it is about career advancement, Orrell says.

Charles Knight, who started at Pariveda fresh out of college in 2006 and just recently became a vice president, would agree. He says what sets the Pariveda expectations framework apart is that it's not specific to IT consulting or even to

technology. "It's generic enough that it develops the whole person, and because of that, it's very powerful," says Knight, who works out of the firm's Dallas headquarters. "I feel like I'm stretched in so many different dimensions and developed in ways I never would have imagined. It has broader implications outside of work."

Beyond the framework, Pariveda also pours a lot of resources into training, doling out $1.3 million every year, which amounts to an investment of $2,637 per employee. And the training is far from passive. "One way to grow people is by having them be trainers themselves," Orrell says. "Having a conference with speakers from your own peer group is pretty valuable." The conference is the annual FinFest, where company employees (referred to as "Fins") are invited to present in a TED Talk-style program that

emphasizes continuous learning. Why Fins? Because the company's mascot is the dolphin. And why the dolphin? Because of its high intelligence.

For FinFest, Pariveda employees submit abstracts on what they'd like to present, and each conference program is narrowed to 15 topics on forward-thinking ideas — for example, Pariveda Fins were presenting on machine learning back in 2008, and cross-platform mobile app development in 2010.

FinFest, the expectations framework and ongoing coaching and mentoring are significant tools to help Pariveda make good on its promise to nurture employees to meet their



Employees from Pariveda's San Francisco office watch the live stream of the FinFest keynote speech by CEO Bruce Ballengee.

> **One way to grow people is by having them be trainers themselves.** Having a conference with speakers from your own peer group is pretty valuable.
>
> **BRIAN ORRELL,** CTO, PARIVEDA

full potential. But management guidance is also a big factor, says Knight, who recalls a time mid-career when things got rough and he started doubting his ability to reach his goal of becoming a vice president. Knight was put on a project where the Pariveda team expected him to take charge, but the client didn't recognize him as the leader because he lacked a formal title. "My mentor talked about leadership being more than a title — he kept telling me to stop waiting for a title and doing what it takes to lead without it," Knight explains. "That shaped my perspective on leadership from an early standpoint."

Today, even with his new vice president status, Knight embraces the camaraderie and collaboration that a transparent organization affords. "We operate as one firm, so collaboration is natural and seamless," he says. ◆

**BETH STACKPOLE,** *a contributing writer for* Computerworld, *has reported on business and technology for more than 20 years.*

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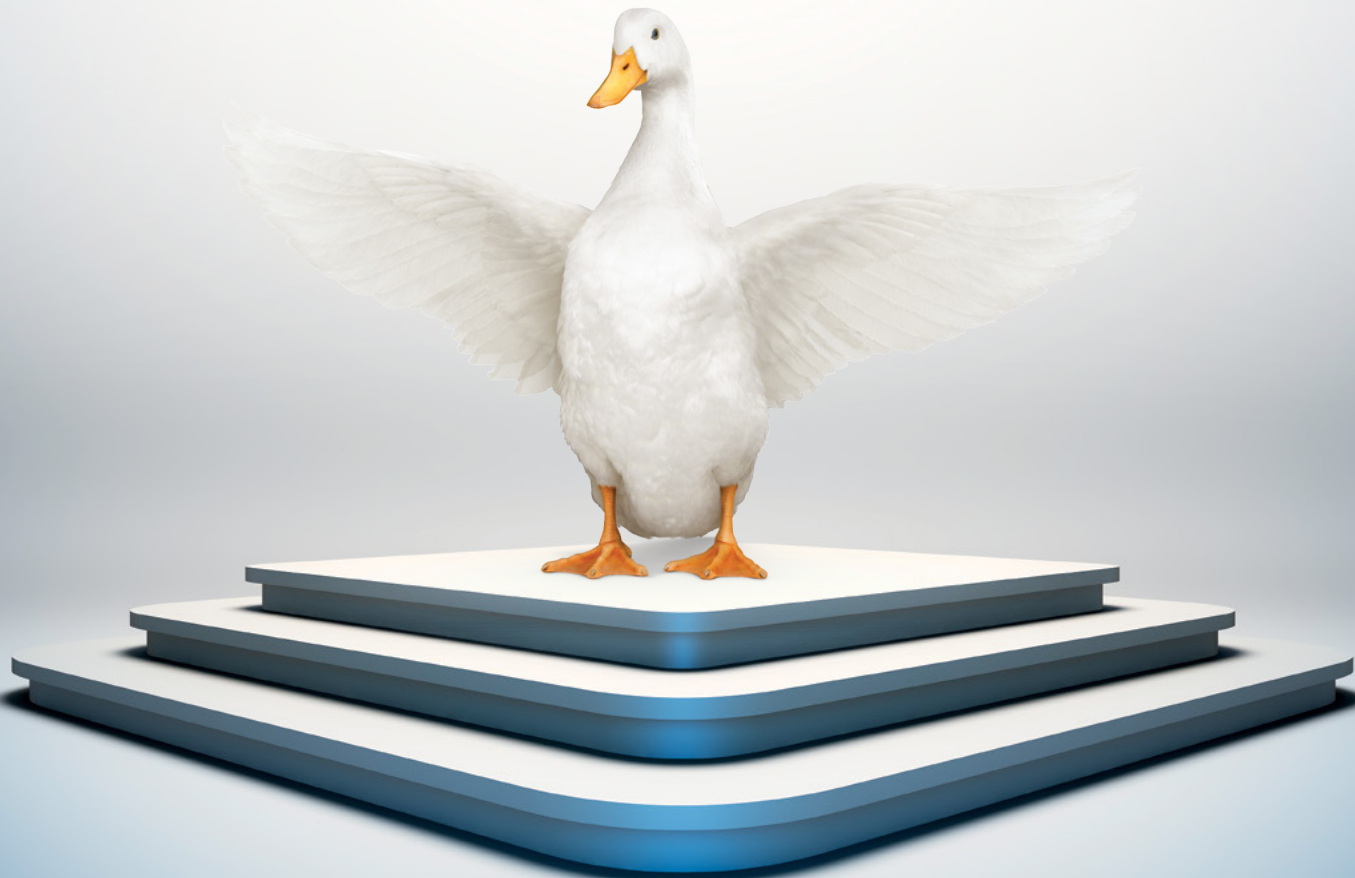
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# 100

## 2018 BEST PLACES TO WORK *in* IT

## LARGE
### organization rankings
(5,000 or more U.S. employees)

**1** **Quicken Loans**
Detroit

**2** **Owens Corning**
Toledo, Ohio

**3** **VMware**
Palo Alto, Calif.

**4** **Workday**
Pleasanton, Calif.

**5** **Genentech**
South San Francisco, Calif.

**6** **Applied Materials**
Santa Clara, Calif.

**7** **DHL Express**
Plantation, Fla.

**8** **Prudential Financial**
Newark, N.J.

**9** **Vanguard**
Malvern, Pa.

**10** **Worthington Industries**
Columbus, Ohio

**11** **Norton Healthcare**
Louisville, Ky.

**58 Kroger Technology**
Cincinnati, Ohio

**59 University of Oklahoma**
Norman, Okla.

# MIDSIZE
## organization rankings
(1,001 – 4,999 U.S. employees)

**1 Ultimate Software**
Weston, Fla.

**2 Enova International**
Chicago

**3 Plante Moran**
Southfield, Mich.

**4 Credit Acceptance**
Southfield, Mich.

**5 Halifax Health**
Daytona Beach, Fla.

**6 AARP**
Washington, D.C.

**7 Illumina**
San Diego

**8 Zebra Technologies**
Lincolnshire, Ill.

**9 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina**
Durham, N.C.

**10 Datto**
Norwalk, Conn.

**11 CME Group**
Chicago

**12 CHG Healthcare**
Midvale, Utah

**13 Informatica**
Redwood City, Calif.

**14 Genesis HealthCare System**
Zanesville, Ohio

**15 Baird**
Milwaukee

**16 Janney Montgomery Scott**
Philadelphia

**17 Avanade**
Seattle

**18 American Fidelity Assurance**
Oklahoma City

**19 Matson**
Honolulu

**20 Workiva**
Ames, Iowa

**21 Caesars Entertainment Services**
Las Vegas

# SMALL organization rankings

(1,000 or fewer U.S. employees)

1 **Cloud for Good**
Asheville, N.C.

2 **Axxess**
Dallas

3 **Sev1Tech**
Woodbridge, Va.

4 **Dataprise**
Rockville, Md.

5 **Commonwealth Financial Network**
Waltham, Mass.

6 **Secure-24**
Southfield, Mich.

7 **NCAA**
Indianapolis

8 **NRECA**
Arlington, Va.

9 **Infoverity**
Dublin, Ohio

10 **Connectria Hosting**
St. Louis

11 **Liquidnet Holdings**
New York

12 **National Information Solutions Cooperative**
Lake St. Louis, Mo.

13 **Pariveda Solutions**
Dallas

14 **oXya**
Jersey City, N.J.

15 **Planned Systems International**
Arlington, Va.

16 **MetroStar Systems**
Reston, Va.

17 **Avaap**
Edison, N.J.

18 **CFA Institute**
Charlottesville, Va.

19 **Paramount Software Solutions**
Alpharetta, Ga.

20 **Health Catalyst**
Salt Lake City

# How We Chose
## *the Best Places to Work*

**F**OR THE 25th year in a row, *Computerworld* conducted a survey to identify the 100 best places to work for IT professionals. In November 2017, *Computerworld* started accepting nominations from U.S.-based organizations and from non-U.S.- based employers that met the following criteria: They were required to have a minimum of 300 total employees at a U.S. headquarters and a minimum of 30 IT employees in the U.S., with at least 50% of their IT employees based in the U.S.

Participants were asked to provide contact information for the person at their organization who is familiar with or has access to employment statistics and financial data, as well as benefits policies and programs for the IT department and the organization as a whole.

In January 2018, the contacts at the nominated organizations received a 52-question company survey asking about average salary and bonus increases, percentage of IT staffers promoted, IT staff turnover rates, training and development, and the percentage of women and minorities in IT staff and management positions. In addition, information was collected on the employer's retention programs, methods of rewarding outstanding performances, and benefits ranging from elder care and child care to flextime and reimbursement for college tuition and the costs of earning technology certifications.

Upon completion of the company survey, participants were instructed to select a random sample of employees from their U.S.-based full- and part-time IT staffs for participation in an employee survey. All participating companies were emailed instructions regarding sample selection as well as a unique survey link to share

with employees. Topics covered in the employee survey included satisfaction with compensation and benefits, training and development programs, and work/life balance. In addition, employees were asked to rate employee morale in the IT department, the importance of various benefits, and their level of agreement with a variety of statements on topics ranging from career growth to management's fair and equal treatment of employees.

A total of 20,566 IT employees responded to the employee survey from the final 100 organizations selected as best places to work for IT professionals.

The nomination survey, company survey and employee survey were all conducted via the internet. The responses to the company and employee surveys were collected and tabulated by a third-party research vendor. The company portion of the research was closed in February 2018, and the employee survey portion was closed in March 2018.
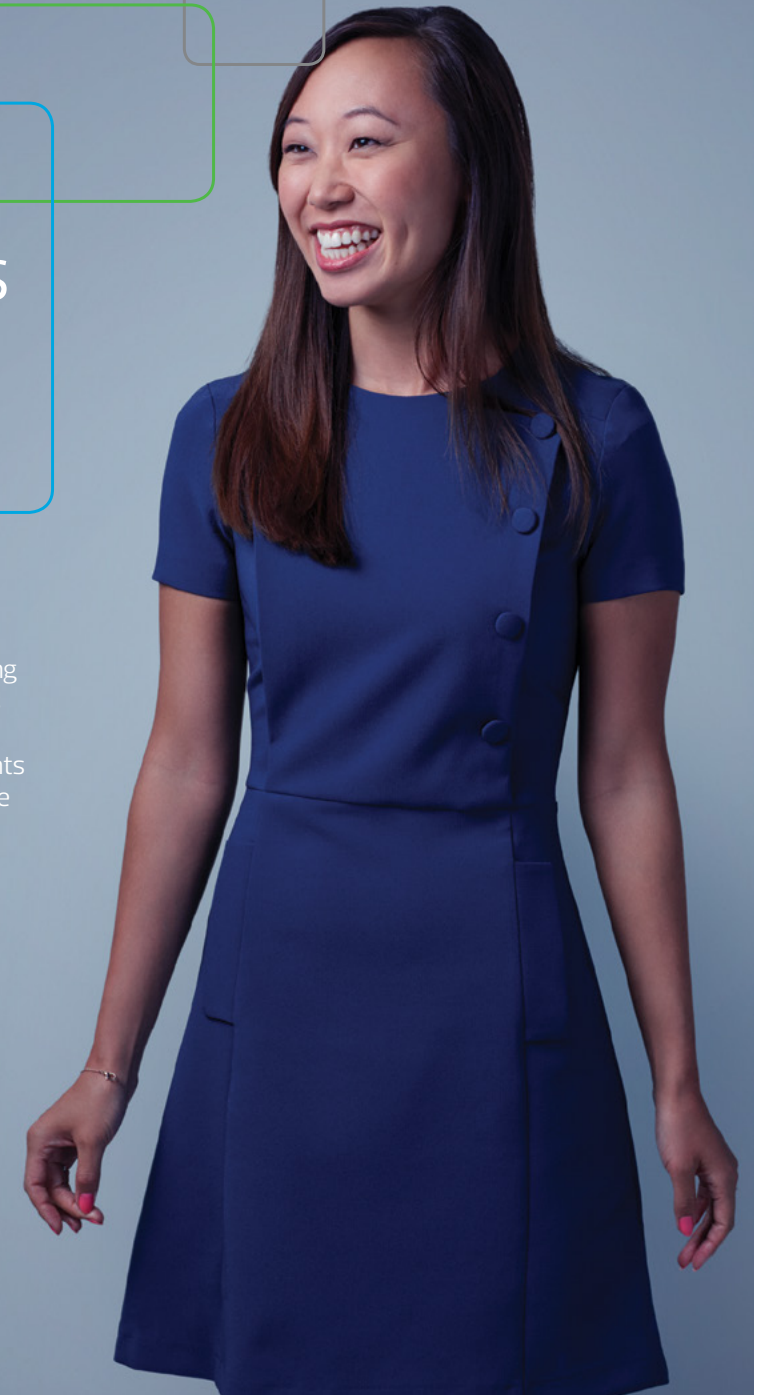
In scoring the responses from the company and employee surveys, company results were weighted based on employees' importance ratings from the employee component. Approximately half of the total scoring is based on employee responses, with the remainder based on the survey of the company's benefits and other programs.

The survey process was managed by Jen Garofalo, research director in IDG's Strategic Marketing Services group, working with independent firm Research Results. A complete description of our methodology is available on our website. ◆