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greater
diversity, and
more career
opportunities,

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to Work in IT 2023

29th
**ANNUAL
REPORT**



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Best Places to Work in IT

5 Workplace flexibility, diversity, and opportunity prevail at the top organizations on this year’s list, as employers respond to an evolving world of work.

BY BETH STACKPOLE

COMPUTERWORLD

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Tech talent's time to shine



Workplace flexibility, diversity, and opportunity prevail at the top employers in our 29th annual Best Places to Work in IT report.

[BY BETH STACKPOLE]

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES for IT professionals have been unprecedented over the past year amid strong demand for top talent and new skills. Recent economic pressures and rising layoffs have softened the market somewhat, but many companies continue to seek much-needed skills in data science, software development, cybersecurity, and other IT areas. Whether it's via compensation, training, career growth, or flexible work options, organizations that have doubled down on efforts

Top 10

[RANKINGS]

Best of the Best

Inside: Organizations that excel in six areas of human resources:

- IT GROWTH
- BENEFITS
- HYBRID WORK
- CAREER DEVELOPMENT
- EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT
- DIVERSITY

to cultivate a highly skilled IT workforce to help advance digital business will be well positioned to ride out a sustained economic downturn or other disruptions that may lie ahead.

In particular, hybrid work arrangements are helping align the needs of companies and workers, opening opportunities for a more diverse and productive workforce. Companies have a geographically broader pool of talent from which to draw, and prospective hires have more freedom to seek employment beyond where they live.

This shift is critical, given how vital IT’s role in business has become. Across industries, pandemic-era pressures have accelerated digital transformation, fast-tracking technology investments and casting IT as a key business enabler. This has put pressure on leadership teams to keep top performers highly mo-

tivated and engaged.

“IT can no longer be viewed as just a function or department. We’re really the backbone and the operating system of the enterprise,” says Jo Abernathy, CIO at Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, which earned the No. 1 large-company spot on

“IT is an amazing melting pot of many skill sets coming together in new ways and is constantly being reinvented,” says Debbie Peterson, senior vice president, People and Culture, with MetroStar, a digital services and solutions company specializing in government that earned the No. 1 spot



IT can no longer be viewed as just a function or department. **We’re really the backbone of the enterprise.**

JO ABERNATHY, CIO, BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF NORTH CAROLINA

the 2023 *Computerworld* Best Places to Work in IT list. “Technology isn’t used just to run the business but to reimagine it.”

As companies become more digitally driven, there is greater appetite for IT creativity — another plus for career paths in tech.

among small companies this year. “I think that leads to a lot more autonomy. You can be more creative. And because of that, inside of IT, you tend to see folks take on many more types of roles than they would in a different sector.”

With technology now being

Top 10

COMPANIES **[IT GROWTH]**

Demonstrating leadership in growing the IT ranks »

	[LARGE COMPANIES]	[MIDSIZE COMPANIES]	[SMALL COMPANIES]
1	ADM	Guardant Health	Cloud for Good
2	Baptist Health	Tokyo Electron U.S. Holdings, Inc.	Resultant
3	IT@Johns Hopkins	Janney Montgomery Scott LLC	Axxess
4	Align Technology	Credit Acceptance	Complete Technology Services
5	Fiege Logistik Stiftung GmbH	Plante Moran, PLLC	Edafio Technology Partners
6	Navy Federal Credit Union	KnowBe4	TMNA Services, LLC (TMNAS)
7	Cedars-Sinai	FINRA	Nethouse Sverige AB
8	Corewell Health	DriveTime	MetroStar
9	Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory	Planned Systems International, Inc.	Nitel
10	Zebra Technologies Corporation	Miami University	Dataprise



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Blue Cross NC has launched several initiatives to increase racial and gender diversity in IT.

the epicenter of modern business, IT jobs and salaries are on the rise, according to this year’s Best Places to Work in IT survey. The number of IT employees is up 8% over the previous year overall and is notably higher at midsize companies, at 17%. Across the board, companies are adding full-time IT employees: Almost three-quarters (72%) of

the respondents have expanded their IT ranks over the past three years, by 41% on average. The year ahead appears to be on a similar trajectory, with 72% of the respondents indicating that they plan to grow their IT organization, by 16% on average.

Raises for IT positions are the norm: On average, 92% of IT employees got a salary bump in

2022, with salary cuts and freezes nearly nonexistent.

Workplace flexibility is here to stay

Most of the survey respondents said the pandemic period has established flexible work as a legitimate option that doesn’t diminish enterprise productivity. As offices have reopened, many companies are embracing the hybrid work model: On average, 90% of IT professionals at responding organizations are working offsite at least part of the time, and most companies (83%) have established a formal policy on flexible work. More than half of the employers (57%) said they give individuals the ability to choose their work location (with approval from management or within certain parameters), and 42% said their employees have the freedom to choose where they want to work on any given day.

Many firms had already supported remote work options, giving them a head start on implementing collaboration tools and new work patterns when the pandemic began. That was the case at Cedars-Sinai, ranked No. 2 among large organizations for hybrid work. IT employees had been working a couple of days per week at home for some time, but once the hospital formalized its telework policy in 2021, it furnished all hybrid and remote workers with laptops, desktops, multiple monitors, docking stations, and virtual desktop software. An IT onboarding committee was established to help new employees feel welcome and to aid in the transition to a virtual environment.

“Since we implemented the formal policy, IT employee engagement scores and comments have continued to positively reflect that employees are happy

Top 10

COMPANIES **[BENEFITS]**

Taking compensation and employee perks to the next level >>

	[LARGE COMPANIES]	[MIDSIZE COMPANIES]	[SMALL COMPANIES]
1	Johnson & Johnson	Avanade	MetroStar
2	VMware	Tokyo Electron U.S. Holdings, Inc.	Amerisure Mutual Insurance Company
3	Genentech	OCLC, Inc.	Dataprise
4	Zimmer Biomet	Guardant Health	Avaap
5	Oshkosh Corporation	Extreme Networks	TMNA Services, LLC (TMNAS)
6	CDW	Janney Montgomery Scott LLC	T-Rex Solutions, LLC
7	Navy Federal Credit Union	CME Group	Resultant
8	RSM US LLP	FINRA	Nethouse Sverige AB
9	Ceridian HCM Inc.	VyStar Credit Union	Cloud for Good
10	Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina	Plante Moran, PLLC	Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota

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and productive working from home,” says Craig Kwiatkowski, senior VP and CIO at Cedars-Sinai.

Some organizations are finding that hybrid models provide a better balance and greater advantages for professional development than fully remote models. Employees at regional broker-dealer Janney Montgomery Scott, the No. 5 midsize company, spend two or three days a week in the office, with one of those days serving as a collective “team day” for IT employees. CIO Robert Thielmann believes that significant knowledge transfer is lost when employees go fully remote, and having employees interact in person with Janney’s veteran IT managers and peers is key to the company’s success.

People learn by observing, Thielmann says — things like the art of negotiation, collaborative design, and leadership behavior.



At Janney Montgomery Scott, over 40% of the IT staff comprises women and minorities, thanks in part to a formal DEI strategy.

ior. “Our managers operate like player-coaches. They impart a lot of knowledge and skills, but most importantly they impart work ethic,” he adds, likening Janney’s mentoring model to that of a teaching hospital.

To support a hybrid workplace, companies are not just amping up use of collaboration platforms

and equipment to make it easier for employees to work better remotely. They are also investing in on-site facility improvements to make in-office work more attractive and to bring parity to the hybrid work experience.

At biotechnology firm Genentech, for example, conference rooms have been redesigned to

provide better visibility during video calls and encourage equity during hybrid meetings.

“We offer a hybrid work model but also believe in the importance of a vibrant campus life,” says Charles Castano, vice president, U.S. Informatics, at Genentech, which earned the No. 2 large-company spot. Creative concepts such as “tech-free Tuesdays” and “whiteboard Wednesdays,” along with on-site events designed to drive connection and celebration, are among the company’s initiatives aimed at encouraging IT workers to come to the office without having a set agenda.

Nurturing and upskilling the workforce

Facing a skills gap in many critical technology areas, companies are making a push to nurture existing employees. This year’s survey results show that 38% of IT vacancies were filled internally in 2021,

Top 10

COMPANIES [HYBRID WORK]

Making strong commitments to a flexible workplace »

	[LARGE COMPANIES]	[MIDSIZE COMPANIES]	[SMALL COMPANIES]
1	VMware	Plante Moran, PLLC	Resultant
2	Cedars-Sinai	Avanade	Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota
3	Oshkosh Corporation	FINRA	MetroStar
4	Atrium Health	Extreme Networks	TMNA Services, LLC (TMNAS)
5	Corewell Health	KnowBe4	Ostfriesische Tee Gesellschaft GmbH
6	Fannie Mae	DriveTime	T-Rex Solutions, LLC
7	Informatica	Janney Montgomery Scott LLC	Dataprise
8	RSM US LLP	Genesis HealthCare System	Nethouse Sverige AB
9	University of Notre Dame	Tokyo Electron U.S. Holdings, Inc.	Edafio Technology Partners
10	Aflac	OCLC, Inc.	Amerisure



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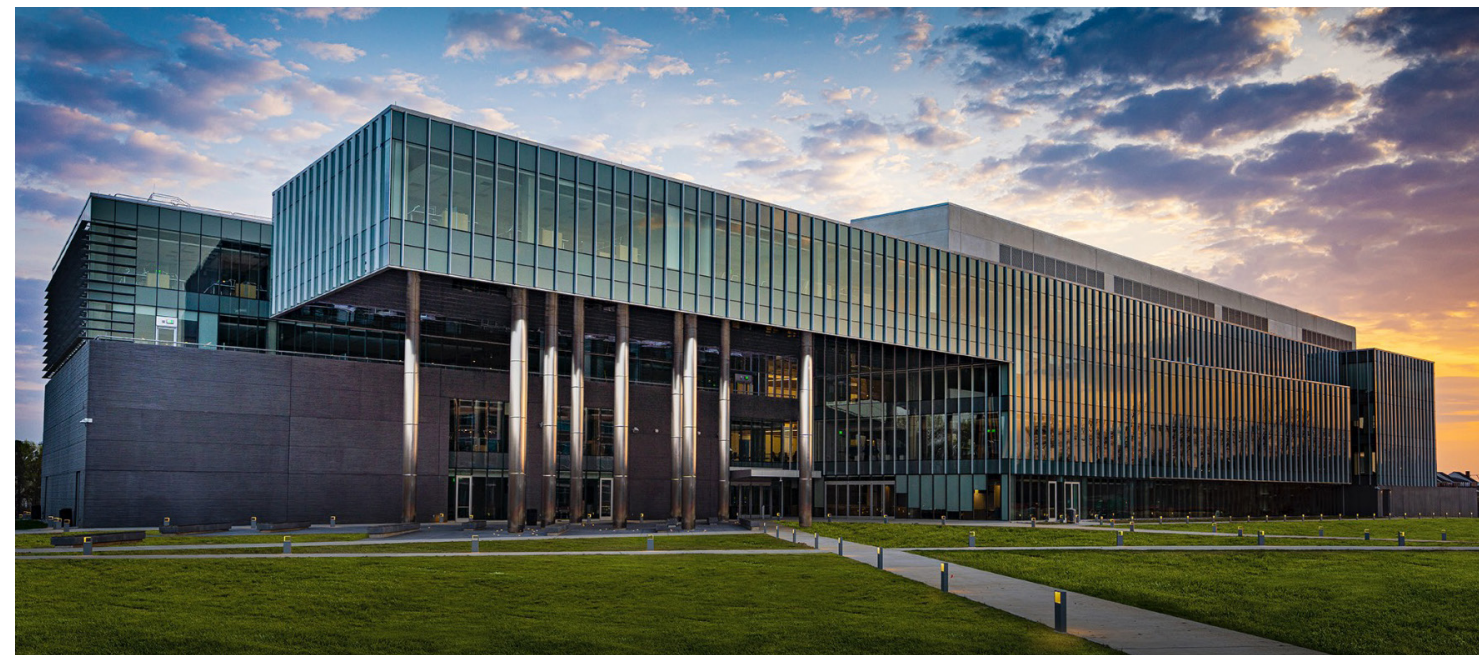


and companies are actively pursuing a variety of paths to boost employee engagement. In addition to hosting employee appreciation events and offering bonuses and other high-value items to top performers, companies put a significant focus on training and career development, including “stay interviews” with existing employees to help establish trust among team members and proactively resolve conflicts.

IT training budgets were flush this past year, with 62% of the survey respondents reporting increases in dollars spent, an indicator that upskilling employees and filling key skills gaps remain top priorities. The average IT employee is eligible for six days of in-person or remote training, the survey found, but three-quarters of the respondents said there is no set maximum. Popular training options include technical certifications,

professional and career development, management and soft skills training, and business skills development.

The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (APL), the No. 1 large organization for career development, offers a wide array of options to upskill its IT workforce, budgeting approximately \$1.5 million annually for IT staff training. Employees can take advantage of educational assistance programs, which cover up to 24 credits per academic year for staff members earning a degree at any university. IT staffers pursuing a doctorate are eligible for up to 200 hours of annual education leave (in addition to their regular leave), which provides time for research and work on their dissertation. There are also rotational assignments, mentoring programs, and in-person and online training classes, among other options.



The Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab offers a vibrant campus atmosphere along with what CIO Michael Misumi calls “a culture of lifelong learning and discovery.”

“One of the most important elements for the long-term health of APL is to create and sustain a culture of lifelong learning and discovery,” says Michael Misumi, APL’s CIO. “Our training programs build trust and engagement within the department, two tenets that are very important to the IT culture.”

Avanade, a digital business and

technology consultancy, trains employees on basic technical skills as well as how to apply those skills specifically to advance the company’s internal business processes and agenda. “Investing in your employee base by reskilling is mission-critical, both for the employee and the company’s ability to support priority areas where we’ve had trouble getting outside

Top 10

COMPANIES [CAREER DEVELOPMENT]

Investing in IT employees to help them grow their skills and careers »

	[LARGE COMPANIES]	[MIDSIZE COMPANIES]	[SMALL COMPANIES]
1	Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory	Plante Moran, PLLC	TMNA Services, LLC (TMNAS)
2	Genentech	VyStar Credit Union	Amerisure Mutual Insurance Company
3	Zebra Technologies Corporation	FINRA	Ostfriesische Tee Gesellschaft GmbH
4	Red Hat	KnowBe4	Nethouse Sverige AB
5	Children's Healthcare of Atlanta	National Information Solutions Cooperative	MetroStar
6	RSM US LLP	Extreme Networks	Edafio Technology Partners
7	Navy Federal Credit Union	Planned Systems International, Inc.	Dataprise
8	University of Notre Dame	Tokyo Electron U.S. Holdings, Inc.	Avaap
9	Baptist Health	Avanade	T-Rex Solutions, LLC
10	The Hartford	American Fidelity	Axon Active Vietnam Co., Ltd.

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Offering mentoring programs has become a popular way to upskill the existing IT workforce with practical business experience, a strategy cited by nearly three-quarters (71%) of the survey respondents.

talent,” says Ron White, Avanade’s global CIO.

In addition to providing technical training, Avanade promotes IT leadership development through initiatives such as The Leader Within, a six-month

virtual program aimed at women in tech, and Coaching@Avanade, which uses the BetterUp mobile platform to grow employee leadership and confidence.

Offering mentoring programs has become a popular way to upskill the existing IT workforce with practical business experience, a strategy cited by nearly three-quarters (71%) of the survey respondents. Blue Cross NC, for example, has instituted Blue Xchange, a six-month program that matches mentees seeking specific skills to an appropriate mentor. A second mentoring initiative, the Leadership and Diversity Development Experience Rotation (LADDER), connects minority IT leaders with IT professionals who are early in their careers to help nurture and develop a culturally diverse workplace.

Outside of training and career development, top employers have embraced numerous measures to

keep IT employees connected and engaged. There are companywide hackathons and tech summits to boost creativity and innovation. Speaker events, fireside chats, and more intimate roundtables provide a venue for more conversational information sharing and problem-solving across professional as well as personal areas of interest. In-person recreational events are designed to bring colleagues together to promote camaraderie and team building.

A strong commitment to DEI initiatives

With diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) now considered foundational to business success, IT departments are actively trying to cultivate new talent pipelines to bring more diversity into what has remained a stubbornly white and male-dominated field. The lion’s share (92%) of companies on the 2023 Best Places to Work

in IT list said they have a documented DEI strategy, and 96% have established some kind of DEI champion, through a formal role (61%), a team of employees dedicated to promoting workplace diversity (82%), or both.

Blue Cross NC, which tops this year’s list of large organizations in the diversity category, has taken several steps to increase racial and gender diversity, through initiatives such as its LADDER program and its involvement with Road to Hire, which focuses on helping underrepresented youth enter the tech field. It has also established TechNOW (Network of Women), an employee network for women working in technology at Blue Cross NC that includes a mentoring program. “Deliberate nurturing of talent is important,” says Abernathy. “It’s not just about creating mentors but what can be done to get more minorities in IT and, even more

Top 10

COMPANIES [EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT]

Fostering deeper connections and employee well-being >>

	[LARGE COMPANIES]	[MIDSIZE COMPANIES]	[SMALL COMPANIES]
1	Total Quality Logistics	KnowBe4	Nethouse Sverige AB
2	Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina	DriveTime	Cloud for Good
3	The Kroger Co.	Genesis HealthCare System	Ostfriesische Tee Gesellschaft GmbH
4	Baptist Health	FINRA	Resultant
5	VMware	Plante Moran, PLLC	TMNA Services, LLC (TMNAS)
6	UKG (Ultimate Kronos Group)	National Information Solutions Cooperative	Avaap
7	Oshkosh Corporation	Avanade	Dataprise
8	University of Notre Dame	American Fidelity	Complete Technology Services
9	Erickson Senior Living	Enova	Amerisure Mutual Insurance Company
10	Genentech	Tokyo Electron U.S. Holdings, Inc.	IT Convergence

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Avanade global CIO Ron White says reskilling investments are “mission-critical” to both employees and the company.

importantly, in leadership roles.”

This year’s winners are taking a variety of steps to promote DEI. Nearly all (98%) have created specific recruitment strategies to attract diverse employees through tactics such as leveraging diverse job boards or rewarding employees for diverse candidate referrals. Other popular efforts include celebrating employee differences (96%), offering diversity and inclusion training (93%), and creating employee resource

groups based on common interests and goals (85%).

At Janney, a formal diversity and inclusion strategy includes workforce tactics such as blind recruiting, diverse candidate slates, and expanding geographic search areas, among other approaches. The efforts to grow the talent pool are paying off: Over 40% of Janney’s IT staff comprises women and minorities.

“Skills, motivation, and fit are the primary factors during recruitment,” says Thielmann. “By placing skills and experience as the paramount focus, diversity naturally follows and has been a huge benefit to our technology department.”

Despite such efforts, there is more work to be done across the industry. *Computerworld*’s survey found that, on average, 28% of IT workers and 28% of IT managers are women. Although those numbers show progress, they are

still shy of many companies’ stated DEI targets. “The bottom line for employers is that you have to have more candidates in the pool in order to hire more women in the organization, and that’s not happening at a fast enough rate,” Abernathy says.

Genentech, with a mission to deliver better health outcomes for all patients, sees DEI as central to its charter. The company has created a chief diversity office; appointed a chief diversity officer reporting directly to the CEO; and set forth specific commitments, which include doubling the number of Black and Latinx employees among its leadership ranks and in its overall workforce. There are also more tactical efforts to support diverse hiring, such as seeking candidates from nontraditional talent pools and creating more-diverse interview panels.

“Cultivating an environment

where all employees are actively included, feel comfortable showing up, and thrive as their authentic selves is essential to delivering groundbreaking science and innovation to all patients,” Castano says.

Building a positive and nurturing IT culture is not about making a singular department better. In today’s digital climate, a happier and more effective IT organization translates directly into more innovative and competitive business. As our Best Places to Work in IT winners demonstrate, organizations that are proactive in creating a supportive, engaging, and rewarding environment for IT teams will be well positioned to succeed, now and in the future. ♦

BETH STACKPOLE is a veteran reporter who has covered the intersection of business and technology issues for more than 20 years.

Top 10

COMPANIES [DIVERSITY]

Demonstrating excellence in advancing workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion >>

	[LARGE COMPANIES]	[MIDSIZE COMPANIES]	[SMALL COMPANIES]
1	Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina	OCLC, Inc.	Nethouse Sverige AB
2	MITRE	VyStar Credit Union	Amerisure Mutual Insurance Company
3	Baptist Health	Avanade	Axxess
4	Corewell Health	American Fidelity	Cloud for Good
5	Erickson Senior Living	Janney Montgomery Scott LLC	MetroStar
6	RSM US LLP	KnowBe4	TMNA Services, LLC (TMNAS)
7	UKG (Ultimate Kronos Group)	Tokyo Electron U.S. Holdings, Inc.	Edafio Technology Partners
8	Cedars-Sinai	Miami University	Dataprise
9	Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory	Plante Moran, PLLC	Ostfriesische Tee Gesellschaft GmbH
10	Liberty Mutual Insurance	Curity, a ChenMed company	Axon Active Vietnam Co., Ltd.



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PLACES**
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PROFILE

NO. 2 | LARGE

*Among organizations
with 5,000 or more
employees*

» At this biotech company, the focus on wellness starts with a supportive work environment.

BY BETH STACKPOLE

WHETHER IT'S nurturing positive mental health, promoting diversity, or celebrating a culture that recognizes employees' success, Genentech is cracking the code on fostering a happy and healthy IT workforce.

Genentech

Cracking the code for a healthy, happy workforce

As a leader in the biotechnology industry, Genentech is particularly invested in its own employees' wellness, taking a holistic approach that cuts across career growth; social well-being; and financial, physical, and mental health. What stands out is Genentech's comprehensive suite of mental health benefits, which includes preventive care and early intervention, talk and text therapy, medication management, 25 free sessions with a mental health counselor each year for employees and their family members, and a variety of mental health workshops and resources.

Its wellness offerings also include free digital health tools such as the Rally app for wellness rewards; the Sleepio app to help alleviate insomnia; and the Doctor on Demand program, which supports video

visits to physicians and psychologists. More than 300 Genentech employees volunteer as mental health champions to help support colleagues' mental wellness.

"We offer programs designed to support our team members through mentoring and personal coaching," says Charles Castano, vice president of U.S. Informatics at Genentech. "We also have a very strong culture focused on wellness, ensuring psychological safety, and generally looking out for one another."

Laying down a path to career success

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are integrated into the company's DNA, both to ensure that Genentech is a compelling place to work and to bolster its capacity to deliver scientific innovations and medicines that



Genentech supports employees through a strong focus on wellness and psychological safety.

drive better outcomes for individuals and communities. Genentech's chief diversity office (CDO), created in 2020, has set

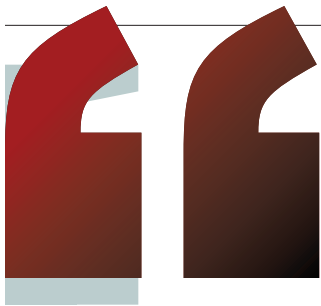
the goal of doubling Black and Latinx representation among directors and extended leadership. Other CDO initiatives

include requiring an inclusive hiring certification for all hiring managers and interview panels, providing unconscious-bias training and allyship and racial equity workshops, and expanding the pool of candidates by recruiting from non-traditional sources.

Change Sequence events are another way Genentech is working to expand its pipeline of diverse hires. These recruitment events coincide with culturally significant observances such as Hispanic Heritage Month or Black History Month and provide opportunities for people from outside Genentech to meet its leaders and team



A diverse workforce bolsters Genentech’s capacity to deliver scientific innovations that drive better outcomes for individuals and communities.



The idea is to coach managers and team members on topics like **resilience, vulnerability, and having the courage to speak openly about their ideas and perspectives.**

CHARLES CASTANO, VICE PRESIDENT OF U.S. INFORMATICS, GENENTECH



members.

“The events are a great way for outside talent to interact and connect with us,” Castano says. “We chat with them and give them guidance.”

Career enrichment is key to employee wellness, and here Genentech has a multifaceted plan to keep its workforce on a positive path. In addition to providing a wide array of skills development and career guidance initiatives, the CareerLab program grants employees five free 45-minute private consultations designed to help them plot a career arc that aligns with their values and goals. A robust mentoring program matches mentors and mentees through online profiles.

“We believe that coaching and mentoring are essential elements of professional and personal growth, and I make sure to set aside time in my schedule



Neighborhood work environments, designed for groups, are available throughout Genentech’s South San Francisco campus.

We have a very strong culture focused on wellness, ensuring psychological safety, and generally looking out for one another.

CHARLES CASTANO,
VICE PRESIDENT OF U.S. INFORMATICS, GENENTECH

for these mutually beneficial learning opportunities,” Castano says.

The Personal Excellence Program, unique to IT, concentrates on improving soft skills through a six-month regime of work-

shops, coaching, and educational sessions available to eligible employees.

Managers can use instructor-led sessions called LearningLabs to learn how to better foster meaningful development

conversations with team members.

“The idea is to coach managers and team members on topics like resilience, vulnerability, and having the courage to speak openly about their ideas

and perspectives,” Castano says. “This allows us to focus on the whole person’s development so they can contribute to a thriving community that is resilient, connected, and empathetic.” ♦



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BEST PLACES to Work in IT 2023

LARGE

COMPANY RANKINGS

Among organizations with 5,000 or more employees

No. 1
for Hybrid
Work

1	Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina
2	Genentech
3	VMware
4	RSM US LLP
5	UKG (Ultimate Kronos Group)

6	Oshkosh Corporation
7	Red Hat
8	Navy Federal Credit Union
9	CDW
10	Cedars-Sinai
11	Baptist Health
12	University of Notre Dame
13	Atrium Health
14	MITRE
15	Corewell Health
16	The Hartford
17	Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory
18	Principal
19	PPG

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for Career
Development



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No. 1
for
Benefits

20	Erickson Senior Living	31	Aflac
21	IT@Johns Hopkins	32	Tractor Supply
22	Johnson & Johnson	33	Zimmer Biomet
23	Zebra Technologies Corporation	34	Amedisys
24	Ceridian HCM Inc.	35	Kaiser Permanente
25	Liberty Mutual Insurance	36	Fannie Mae
26	Worthington Industries	37	Avery Dennison
27	Mattel Inc.	38	Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
28	Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC)	39	San Diego Gas & Electric
29	International Paper	40	Informatica
30	Discover	41	First Citizens Bank
		42	Applied Materials
		43	The Kroger Co.
		44	ADM

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45	Norton Healthcare	53	Align Technology
46	FedEx	54	AdventHealth
47	Portland State University	55	Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe (BVG)
48	DHL Express	56	Banner Health
49	Holman	57	Fiege Logistik Stiftung GmbH
50	Total Quality Logistics	58	Dept. of Veterans Affairs Office of Information and Technology
51	Nationwide Mutual Insurance		
52	Jack Henry & Associates		

NATIONWIDE



As employees returned to the office, Nationwide Mutual Insurance extended a variety of remote/hybrid work options as standard practices, with the technology team helping to build a consistent approach.

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COMPUTERWORLD
**BEST
PLACES**
to Work
in IT 2023

PROFILE

NO. 2 | MIDSIZE

*Among organizations
with 1,001 to 4,999
employees*

» A culture that supports and encourages flexibility helps Avanade's IT employees fulfill their professional as well as personal goals.

BY BETH STACKPOLE

Need to cart the kids to school early in the morning or volunteer for a community program in the late afternoon? At Avanade it's perfectly acceptable to tend to obligations during the traditional 9-to-5 work schedule, thanks to the Al-

Avanade

Support for flex work fosters an efficient and effective IT team

ve cha...ings for the better.



ternative Work Week program, launched in 2022 to promote job flexibility.

As the digital business and IT consultancy emerged from pandemic shutdowns, Avanade leadership recognized a need to change the employee experience with a greater focus on work/life balance and flexibility. With teams scattered around the globe, Avanade’s 135-person IT team was already accustomed to collaborating during off-hours and had built up a culture of trust and accountability that extended to people who weren’t actively visible during prime working hours.

Now, with the formal Alternative Work Week program well under way, employees can request a schedule that works best for them.

“There is a real willingness to flex to the way employees want to work,” says Ron White, global

CIO for Avanade.

At the same time, according to White, “the flexible work week does not change our obligation to meet our internal customer needs, including meeting deadlines, and that’s part and parcel of taking responsibility and continuing to function as an extremely efficient organization.”

Maintaining a sense of community

The Alternative Work Week is just one building block in Avanade’s internal Wellbeing program, designed to help employees find a balance that supports their physical and mental health needs.

Flush with tools and resources to promote practices such as better sleep habits, mindfulness, and stress management, Wellbeing aims to help employees avoid burnout. According to White, Avanade has made progress in



Avanade’s Wellbeing program is designed to help employees find the right balance to support their physical and mental health needs.

meeting that objective: In a recent survey, 89% of its IT employees said they feel supported from a

wellness perspective. That figure represents “a substantial leap from previous surveys,” he notes.



Avanade has established Digital Innovation Studios worldwide where multidisciplinary teams develop digital solutions.

Avanade has also initiated a variety of programs to forge connections and promote community among far-flung employees. The IT group has established an internal employee council that

has planned activities such as online cooking classes, a virtual escape room, and a virtual 5K run, and it hosts numerous discussion groups tackling issues as diverse as dealing with men-

opause and what it feels like to be a minority in the workplace. Offering upskilling and training is another way Avanade invests in its IT employees while also addressing skills

gaps that have been difficult to fill with outside talent. Instead of focusing on pure technical training, Avanade's approach is to frame the technology in the context of how it's applied in



We bring basic tactical training in and then combine it with how we work.

... Those things together allow you to function more effectively than just sending you to training would.

RON WHITE, GLOBAL CIO,
AVANADE



You’ve got to take the time and be creative on how you re-create that [in-person] experience.
... We’ve challenged every one of our managers to reach out to their teams with that context in mind.

RON WHITE, GLOBAL CIO,
AVANADE

the business.
“We bring basic tactical training in and then combine it with

how we work” in areas such as finance and sales, White explains. “Those things together allow you to function more effectively than just sending you to training would.”
Avanade also continues to promote diversity and inclusion across its workforce, through efforts such as targeted sourcing for under-represented groups and offering full STEM scholarships to students from under-represented communities. Changing the narrative around women in technology, the company recently achieved a goal of 40% female hiring globally.

A culture of staying connected

Although Avanade has made great strides toward establishing a positive work culture, White recognizes the challenge in keeping team members connected, especially pandemic-era hires who



Avanade recently achieved its goal of 40% female hiring globally through targeted sourcing for underrepresented groups, mentoring initiatives, and other diversity programs.

haven’t met colleagues in person.
“You’ve got to take the time and be creative in how you re-create that experience. It’s a constant drumbeat of ‘Keep reach-

ing out. Keep asking people if they’re OK,” White says. “We’ve challenged every one of our managers to reach out to their teams with that context in mind.” ♦

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BEST
PLACES
to Work
in IT 2023

MIDSIZE
COMPANY RANKINGS

Among organizations
with 1,001 to 4,999
employees

1 OCLC, Inc.

2 Avanade

3 KnowBe4

4 FINRA

5 Janney
Montgomery
Scott LLC

6 Plante Moran,
PLLC

7 Tokyo Electron U.S.
Holdings, Inc.

8 Extreme Networks

9 VyStar Credit Union

10 American Fidelity

11 Genesis HealthCare
System

12 DriveTime

13 Guardant Health

14 Credit Acceptance

15 Planned Systems
International, Inc.

16 CME Group

17 Enova

18 National Information
Solutions Cooperative

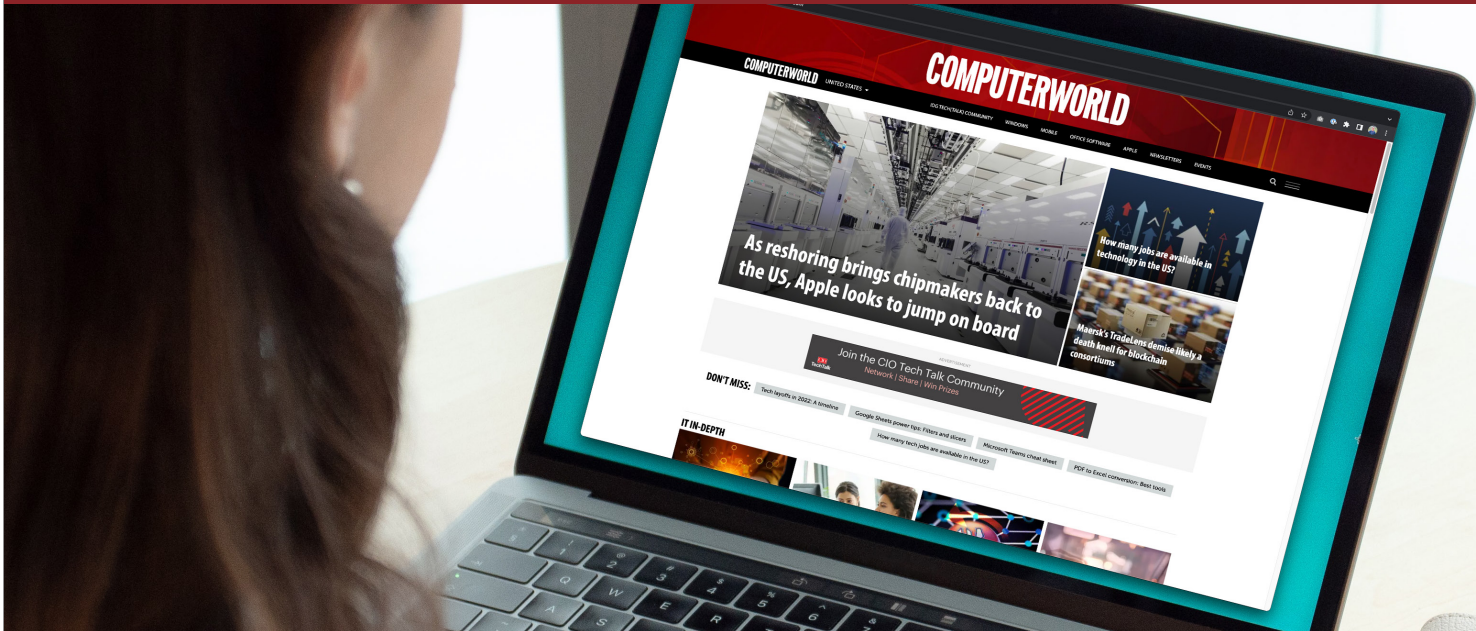
19 Miami University

20 Curity, a ChenMed
company

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for Employee
Engagement

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PROFILE

NO. 1 | SMALL

*Among organizations
with 1,000 or fewer
employees*

» An emphasis on continuous learning and community engagement helps MetroStar find — and keep — diverse talent.

BY BETH STACKPOLE

WHEN A company's mission is to advance artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to build human-centered solutions for the U.S. government, you can bet continuous training and upskilling are central to

MetroStar

A 'fast and fearless' IT culture fueled by upskilling



the IT charter.

For MetroStar, a solutions and digital services company catering to the public sector, it's that emphasis on building creative and innovative technologist communities, coupled with a commitment to employee development, that has helped the 400-plus-person company land the top spot for small companies in *Computerworld's* Best Places to Work in IT 2023 rankings.

Fast and fearless

"The company's 'Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal' is advancing AI and ML for the nation," says Vy Truong, MetroStar's chief innovation officer. "The team that I'm driving is fast and fearless ... because it's a race against other countries in this particular space."

To keep employees — and the company — primed for this high-stakes competition, Metro-



MetroStar emphasizes creative and innovative technologist communities as part of its commitment to employee development.

Star spends, on average, \$2,000 per person on both technical and business skills training, enabling employees to earn certificates, take courses, and fast-track their career development.

Additionally, the MetroStar University in-house training platform provides a broad curriculum for all employees. Truong also oversees a formal

upskilling program that specifically targets younger professionals, introducing them not only to key technologies such as AI/ML but also to methodologies such as DevSecOps and full-stack development, customized to reflect MetroStar's approach.

With companies such as Amazon, Google, and Microsoft right down the road, Truong

says, "if you're not upskilling people, giving them opportunities to take part in work they feel is engaging, and creating a road map for them, you'll lose them to one of those other bigger, flashy companies."

That level of engagement applies to hybrid work as well. Debbie Peterson, MetroStar's senior vice president of People & Culture, stresses the importance of aligning flexible work strategies to individual teams rather than instituting a blanket hybrid work policy. This approach requires an understanding of what each team needs to be successful — without over-prescribing policies that inhibit flexibility and autonomy.

Fostering talent, inside and out

Community and education are central to MetroStar's ethos, and the company reinforces



MetroStar expects 75% of its employees to continue working in a hybrid capacity.

If you're not upskilling people, **giving them opportunities to take part in work they feel is engaging**, and creating a road map for them, you'll lose them to one of those other bigger, flashy companies.

VY TRUONG, CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER, METROSTAR

that commitment through partnerships with six colleges and universities, including three HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities).

Nurturing the next generation of professionals

The programs are designed to give back to the community by helping nurture the next generation of professionals through mentorship and internships, sponsored STEM events, and exposure to what's possible in a career serving the public sector.

"We also focus on both upskilling emerging talent and more experienced professionals, along with [offering] an internal talent mobility program that helps realign and reassign existing staffers in new ways," says Peterson. "So we have a lot of hooks out there, but it's important that we're giving back

as well."

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is another core tenet of MetroStar's culture, and the company has made big strides in that area, maintaining a workforce that is 51% ethnically diverse along with an executive team that is 29% female.

"DEI is not made in strategy or press releases — it's made in microactions," Peterson says.

For instance, DEI goals are continuously reinforced through commitments from top leadership as well as with tactical moves, including being deliberate about writing job descriptions, training managers, and finding diverse talent pools.

"Having diversity at the highest levels makes it easier to hold ourselves accountable," Peterson adds, "and it inspires people to come to the company because they can see themselves in the leadership team." ♦

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to Work
in IT 2023

SMALL

COMPANY RANKINGS

Among organizations
with 1,000 or fewer
employees

1	MetroStar
2	Resultant
3	Dataprise
4	Nethouse Sverige AB
5	Amerisure Mutual Insurance Co.

No. 1
for
Diversity

6	Cloud for Good
7	TMNA Services, LLC (TMNAS)
8	Avaap
9	Ostfriesische Tee Gesellschaft GmbH
10	Edafio Technology Partners
11	Axxess
12	T-Rex Solutions, LLC
13	Axon Active Vietnam Co., Ltd.
14	Complete Technology Services
15	Nitel
16	Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota
17	IT Convergence
18	Connectria LLC

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COMPUTERWORLD publisher Foundry conducted its 29th annual survey to identify the best places to work for IT professionals. In May 2022, *Computerworld* started accepting nominations from organizations that had a minimum of 100 total employees and five IT employees.

Participants were asked to provide contact information for a 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 entire organization.

Beginning in June 2022, contacts at the nominated organizations received a 52-question company survey across six categories: DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) practices; IT turnover, promotions, and growth; IT retention and engagement pro-

COMPUTERWORLD BEST PLACES to Work in IT 2023

29th
ANNUAL
REPORT

How we chose the Best Places to Work

The methodology behind our selection of the organizations on this year's Best Places to Work in IT lists.

grams; remote/hybrid working; benefits and perks (such as elder care and child care, flextime, and reimbursement for college tuition); and training and career development opportunities.

In addition to receiving scores based on answers to closed-ended questions, the survey entries (including numerous open-ended responses) were reviewed and evaluated by a panel of industry experts.

The nominations and company surveys were conducted online. Responses to the company surveys were collected and tabulated by a third-party research vendor. The research was closed in September 2022.

Top 10 lists

Our top 10 lists show the best of the best — the organizations that excel in each of the six categories covered. To determine each list, we considered the following:

- **Diversity:** DEI strategies and practices; the existence of dedicated role(s) promoting workplace diversity and inclusion; gender diversity within the IT workforce and within IT management; DEI training opportunities.
- **Employee engagement:** The frequency of employee satisfaction surveys; promotions; salary increases; actions taken to boost employee morale.
- **Hybrid work:** Employee autonomy over work location; the percentage of remote and hybrid employees; policies regarding flexible work; actions taken to support flexible work; actions taken to ensure employee safety and well-being.
- **Benefits:** The range of benefits and perks offered, including sabbaticals, elder care and child care, paid time off, and

(within the U.S.) family leave and healthcare benefits.

- **Career development:** Mentoring programs; training budget; promotions within IT; accessibility of training to remote employees; unique training programs.
- **IT growth:** Changes in IT headcount over the past three years; IT turnover and anticipated growth; the company's revenue growth over the past three years.

In scoring the responses from the company surveys, results were weighted against averages and benchmarks calculated within each company size group.

The survey process was managed by Jen Garofalo, research director in Foundry's Global Services group, working with independent firm Research Results. ♦

About our judges

Karen Funk is a senior editor at *CIO* and *Computerwoche* magazines in Germany, focusing on IT jobs and career issues, leadership, and diversity. She is the founder of Germany's CIO of the Year award, which she has overseen since its debut in 2007.

Maryfran Johnson is CEO of Maryfran Johnson Media and host of CIO.com's *CIO Leadership Live* video podcast. The former editor-in-chief of *CIO* magazine is widely respected in the tech industry as an engaging public speaker, moderator, and interviewer with expertise in IT leadership issues.

Hans Königes is a senior editor with Foundry's *Computerwoche* magazine in Germany. As head of the Jobs & Career Department, he is responsible for all topics concerning the IT labor market, jobs, professions, salaries, personnel management, recruiting, and social media in professional life.

Rob O'Regan is global director of content strategy at Foundry, the publisher of *Computerworld*. He is a veteran journalist and content marketer with a passion for great storytelling.

Valerie Potter is managing editor, features, at *Computerworld*. She has worked in technology journalism for more than 20 years.

Dan Roberts is CEO and president of Ouellette & Associates Consulting, Inc. In addition to hosting the *Tech Whisperers Podcast* and writing *The CIO Whisperers* blog for CIO.com, he has written and contributed to numerous books, including *Confessions of a Successful CIO: How the Best CIOs Tackle Their Toughest Business Challenges* (Wiley, 2014).

Isaac Sacolick is president and founder of StarCIO and author of *Digital Trailblazer: Essential Lessons to Jumpstart Transformation and Accelerate Your Technology Leadership* (Wiley, 2022). He is a frequent contributor to *InfoWorld* and CIO.com and also shares his insights on digital transformation on Twitter (@NYIke), on his blog *Social, Agile, and Transformation*, and on the *Driving Digital Standup* YouTube channel.