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FOR FINANCIAL
ADVISERS

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BEST PLACES TO WORK

FOR FINANCIAL ADVISERS

THE SECOND ANNUAL *InvestmentNews* Best Places to Work for Financial Advisers highlights 75 standout employers in the financial advice industry.

Our list of top firms was created by Best Companies Group through on-line employee and employer surveys. Those data were combined to assess the strengths of each firm that voluntarily participated in this program and determine the ultimate ranking.

The 75 firms presented on these pages have been grouped into three categories — large, medium and small — based on employee count. The profiles of these successful firms offer insights into the human resources practices they use to attract and retain skilled employees in a competitive environment.

*Long profiles of the top 5 firms in each category written by Deborah Nason.
Sixty shorter profiles written by Brittney Grimes.*

Firms selected as 2019 *InvestmentNews* Best Places to Work for Financial Advisers will be celebrated at a Top Advisory Firm Summit, along with those receiving *InvestmentNews*' Best Practices and Top Technology recognition later this year. The event will be held in Chicago on Nov. 13. Please contact associate publisher Mark Bruno for more information at MBruno@investmentnews.com.



MASSEY QUICK SIMON & CO.

Employees 54 | Firm type RIA | Chief Operating Officer Mark D. Delotto | Location Morristown, N.J. | Primary Custodian Fidelity Institutional Wealth Services

Since a merger in 2017, the combined company of Massey Quick Simon & Co. has focused on integration and navigating growth.

Responding to employees' suggestions, the firm established a five-member Employee Experience Committee, which plays a key role in "making the employee feel heard," said chief operating officer Mark D. Delotto. The members come from diverse backgrounds and are from both original firms, the family office William E. Simon & Sons and the wealth management firm Massey Quick & Co. The group meets monthly and reports quarterly to the management team.

Among other activities, the committee:

- Refreshed the company's core values to spell out the work culture.
- Reviewed and harmonized employee handbooks.
- Conveyed employee concerns about the merger process.
- Fostered integration with informational presentations and social mixers.
- Performed community service projects.
- Set up new-hire celebrations.
- Created team-building assignments.

In addition, the firm emphasizes constant and transparent communications through weekly meetings and semi-annual town halls.

"Two years in, we're still scratching the surface," Mr. Delotto said.



MERIT FINANCIAL ADVISORS

**Employees 56 | Firm type Hybrid | CEO and Founder Rick L. Kent
Location Alpharetta, Ga. | Primary Custodian LPL Financial | Broker-dealer LPL Financial**

"If you try to tell people to do things, it's very challenging. Instead we ask, 'What can we do together?'" said Rick Kent, founder and CEO of Merit Financial Advisors.

"In our industry, you hear 'clients first.' I personally believe in 'team first,'" he said.

When leadership decided to embrace this philosophy, the six-office, 56-person firm reduced the management hierarchy dramatically and created 11 teams of four to six people.

Every year, the executive team lays out its corporate objectives and the small teams collaboratively decide how to achieve them.

A member of the executive team meets with each team quarterly and weekly. The biggest advantage of the weekly check-ins, Mr. Kent said, is that leadership can uncover any roadblocks quickly, giving them more time to figure out how to help and provide advice and feedback.

"We don't want them to feel that we're breathing down their necks," he said, "We dispel that idea by telling them, 'This is not tied to your compensation; we just want to help you get better.'"

Since instituting this approach four years ago, assets under management have tripled and Mr. Kent expects them to double from there in the next three years.

BALASA DINVERNO FOLTZ

**Employees 60 | Firm type RIA | Co-CEO and President Armond A. Dinverno
Location Itasca, Ill. | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services**



Like many best places to work, the 60-person firm of Balasa Dinverno Foltz espouses certain core values. But above and beyond those, "It's about loving on our people," said Armond A. Dinverno, co-founder and president.

Love is not usually a word used in management circles, but Mr. Dinverno recently had an epiphany when he came to understand that both business and personal relationships are too often based on fear.

"People traditionally feel that their companies don't care about them," he said. "I want us to consciously come across as loving to both team members and clients."

Mr. Dinverno outlined several steps the firm must take to convey this:

- Change the collective mindset from judgmental to helpful.
- Have fewer policies.
- Communicate with integrity by speaking the truth, not the company line.
- Be curious by asking clients and employees what's on their minds.
- "People want more from work nowadays," he said. "It doesn't mean there isn't accountability and high expectations. But using the word 'love' gives work a deeper meaning."



MRA ASSOCIATES

Employees 54 | Firm type RIA
CEO and Managing Partner Mark Feldman
Location Phoenix | **Primary Custodian** Schwab Advisor Services

When Mark Feldman joined MRA Associates in 2012 as CEO, he and the other partner had a definite vision for the organization's sustainability. "We decided that this should be a firm that doesn't require a third-party transaction to monetize the shareholders," he said. "We decided to build something for internal succession."

As a result, Mr. Feldman and his team created an operating model that provides every financial adviser and high-performing professional an opportunity to become a shareholder. Since 2012, there have been 10 new partners.

Ripple effects include:

- Increased client satisfaction because low turnover means stable service.
- Introduction of a formal and substantive mentoring program.
- Growth of a multigenerational team to serve a multigenerational clientele.

Another forward-looking strategy is the company's inclusive decision-making structure, in which a 16-person management committee oversees running the firm.



SULLIVAN BRUYETTE SPEROS & BLAYNEY

Employees 63 | Firm type RIA
CEO and President Greg Sullivan
Location McLean, Va.
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services

A focus on healthy relationships, with both employees and clients, is an overriding aspect of his company's culture, said Greg Sullivan, CEO and co-founder of Sullivan Bruyette Speros & Blayney.

To support this idea, the 63-person firm puts an emphasis on fun and social time, along with employee autonomy and management's commitment to get to know each employee individually.

For example, Mr. Sullivan recently started a program of having breakfast with an employee three days a week, asking each one to "tell me your story." The response has been incredible, he said, as people deeply appreciate his taking the time to learn about them.

A strong mentoring program also has been in place for 10 years, and applies to everyone in the firm. Employees choose a mentor, with whom they meet quarterly. After two or three years, they choose a new one. As a result, the mentees feel better connected to the firm, feel heard, and develop relationships with people who can provide advice and empathy.

"As you build healthy relationships you strengthen ties to the company," Mr. Sullivan said.

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 Financial Advisor
 Los Altos, CA



ALLEN & COMPANY OF FLORIDA INC.

Employees 67 | Firm type Hybrid | Chairman Ralph Allen
Location Lakeland, Fla. | Primary Custodian Wells Fargo | Broker-dealer Allen & Company of Florida Inc.



ALLEN & Company of Florida Inc. offers an employee stock-ownership plan after six months with the firm. It also allows employees to customize their health, dental and vision benefits.

Employees who exemplify the firm's core values can receive an award and \$200. The firm also sponsors regular trivia and email bingo activities and recognizes employees' hard work during a week each May, and offers annual corporate bonuses and cash rewards for reaching goals.

JMG FINANCIAL GROUP

Employees 54 | Firm type RIA | CEO Anthony D. Cecchini
Location Downers Grove, Ill. | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



JMG Financial Group rewards employees who go above and beyond by giving them raffle tickets they can trade in for additional vacation time. Employees also can receive bonuses based on peer recognition and recommendations.

To relieve stress, employees occasionally play games such as basketball knock out, tai chi and flag football at a fitness center located in its office building. The firm allows casual attire year-round and offers four-day work weeks in summer.

CRESSET WEALTH ADVISORS

Employees 80 | Firm type RIA | CEO Doug Regan | Location Chicago | Custodians: Fidelity Institutional Wealth Services, Schwab Advisor Services, Pershing Advisor Solutions



CRESSET Wealth Advisors believes in team collaboration and hosts employee outings to baseball games and other events and encourages the teaming of junior and senior members of the firm.

The firm offers unlimited PTO and a flexible work environment with permission to work remotely. Employees also have complimentary access to an onsite gym, enjoy summer happy hours and the opportunity to take part in the Cresset Fantasy Football League.

BRIDGEWORTH

Employees 53 | Firm type RIA | CEO and Managing Partner Delynn Zell
Location Birmingham, Ala. | Primary Custodian LPL Financial



BRIDGEWORTH recognizes employees during a staff appreciation day and awards "Bridgeworth bucks" with which employees can buy big-ticket items at the annual holiday gathering.

The firm offers summer hours and closes early on Fridays. It allows employees to set aside time for volunteering and service projects.

Every person at the firm is given the opportunity to be heard and serve on key committees that drive the direction of the company.

SIGNATUREFD

Employees 78 | Firm type RIA | Co-founder and CEO Jeff Peller
Location Atlanta | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



SIGNATUREFD offers a flexible work environment and work-at-home days. One perk is a dependent-care plan, which provides 100% child care expenses at approved providers.

The firm also believes in volunteer work and offers unlimited vacation for charity work. Employees receive a robust health and wellness plan, along with on-site chair massages, staff lunches and gym reimbursement. The firm is proud of its 96% average employee retention rate.

BARNUM FINANCIAL GROUP

Employees 413 | Firm type Broker-dealer | CEO and Founder Paul Blanco | Location Shelton, Conn.
Broker-dealer MML Investors Services



BARNUM Financial Group provides in-house financial literacy programs and personal consultations to help associates create their own retirement plans.

The firm also offers support for those who attain professional designations, coaching, licenses and watch videos on leadership. Barnum University and the CorpU Leadership curriculum help with professional development, along with offsite training and team-building meetings.

STEWART PARTNERS GLOBAL ADVISORY

Employees 190 | Firm type Hybrid | CEO James Gold | Location New York | Primary Custodian Raymond James Investment Advisor Division | Broker-dealer Raymond James Financial Services



EMPLOYEES at Stewart Partners Global Advisory appreciate that they have a voice at the firm and that their views are taken seriously. Every employee takes part in ownership of the company and has equity, which allows for an entrepreneurial culture.

The firm offers generous PTO, including extra days off during summer. Employees can also take part in seasonal events and food competitions and are allowed to bring their pets to work.

SYM FINANCIAL ADVISORS

Employees 54 | Firm type RIA | CEO Jerry Yeager | Location Winona Lake, Ind.
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



SYM Financial Advisors offers paid time off for its employees to volunteer.

Despite having five locations, associates from the entire firm get together throughout the year to keep up a culture of partnership.

Also, the firm's Fitness Match program encourages good health by providing a reimbursement benefit of up to \$300 annually to help offset employees' fitness initiatives.

ADVISER INVESTMENTS

Employees 83 | Firm type RIA | Chairman Daniel Wiener | Location Newton, Mass.
Primary Custodian Fidelity Institutional Wealth Services



ADVISER Investments hosts a variety of summer outings, including Red Sox games and partner barbecues.

Employees receive generous health-care coverage for themselves and their families and profit-sharing contributions to their 401(k) plans.

The firm also offers in-house seminars and mentoring programs to associates.

CEDAR BROOK GROUP

Employees 63 | Firm type Hybrid | CEO and Managing Principal William D. Glubiak
Location Cleveland | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services | Broker-dealer Securities America Inc.



CEDAR Brook Group offers employees an unlimited number of PTO after one year of employment.

One top benefit is backup child care or elder care when an employee's regular caregiver is not available. The firm also offers elder-care assistance for employees with aging family members.

Once a month, the firm holds a roundtable discussion, where employees can present their ideas and discuss issues in an encouraging environment.

STRATEGIES FOR WEALTH

Employees 237 | Firm type Hybrid | Partner Jerry Harnik | Location New York
Primary Custodian Pershing Advisor Solutions | Broker-dealer Park Avenue Securities



STRATEGIES for Wealth holds an annual awards lunch to honor employees for their achievements, and offers a “company day,” where advisers and staff take part in team-building activities. Past activities have included volunteering with New York Cares and Habitat for Humanity.

The firm sponsors ice cream socials on Fridays in the summer and an annual holiday party.

Strategies also provides weekly education on financial planning.

SIGNATURE ESTATE & INVESTMENT ADVISORS

Employees 80 | Firm type Hybrid | CEO and President Brian D. Holmes | Location Los Angeles
Primary Custodian: Schwab Advisor Services | Broker-dealer Royal Alliance Associates Inc.



SIGNATURE Estate & Investment Advisors recognizes its employees at monthly meetings for their hard work. Every January, the firm also celebrates a team that has performed well over the previous year.

The company also sponsors bi-monthly chair massages and wellness programs.

At year-end, the company gives a profit bonus and gives away tickets to events. The firm also makes donations to employees’ favorite charities.

MODERA WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Employees 68 | Firm type RIA | CEO and Principal Thomas Orecchio
Location Westwood, N.J. | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



MODERA Wealth Management holds team-building activities throughout the year, and dedicates itself to the community, having a strong tradition of charitable involvement.

Modera has a philanthropy committee that selects a theme for each of its offices.

The firm also believes in supporting its employees through mentorship programs, seminars and career development.

FORWARD INVESTMENT SERVICES

Employees 111 | Firm type Hybrid | CEO and President William Sennholz | Location Marshfield, Wisc.
Primary Custodian Cetera Investment Services | Broker-dealer Cetera Financial Institutions



FORWARD Investment Services offers a 401(k) match and a discretionary profit-sharing contribution. The firm also gives out tenure awards for every five years of employment.

Staff can contribute to the firm’s Pay It Forward program through a payroll deduction with a dollar-for-dollar match. Employees who experience a personal hardship may request funds from that program.

CARSON WEALTH MANAGEMENT GROUP

Employees 50 | Firm type Hybrid | CEO and Founder Ron Carson | Location Omaha, Neb.
Primary Custodian TD Ameritrade Institutional | Broker-dealer Cetera Advisor Networks



CARSON Wealth Management Group hosts quarterly happy hours with executives when stakeholders can ask questions, and it dedicates two days a year to personal development and team-building exercises.

The firm holds an annual innovation program where employees submit ideas and compete to win a monetary prize as well as the implementation of their idea.

MONETA GROUP

Employees 302 | Firm type RIA | Chairman and Managing Partner Eric Kittner
Location St. Louis, Mo. | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



MONETA Group has an annual anniversary and accomplishments celebration, and an incentive program. Through the firm’s “Good Fortune Grants,” employees are randomly awarded \$1,000 to distribute to a charity of their choice. Staff participate in volunteer days donating their time to charities such as Habitat for Humanity.

The firm also organizes off-site team-building activities, which include escape rooms, team lunches and dinners.

TOLLESON WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Employees 164 | Firm type RIA | CEO Carter Tolleson | Location Dallas
Primary Custodian Pershing Advisor Solutions



TOLLESON Wealth Management has a chief talent and learning officer who trains and promotes leadership development. In order to keep ideas current and fresh, the company has an active culture committee that works to formalize new programs for employees.

The firm also encourages company-paid team outings.

The firm offers associates the opportunity to purchase stock in the company.

ADVANCE CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Employees 55 | Firm type RIA | CEO Joseph Theisen | Location Southfield, Mich.
Primary Custodian TD Ameritrade Institutional



EMPLOYEES at Advance Capital Management are committed to giving back to the community. The firm has partnerships with local and national charitable organizations, through which it arranges volunteering outings for employees.

Associates receive recognition through employee appreciation luncheons and awards given out for certain anniversaries.

WESTWOOD WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Employees 52 | Firm type RIA | CEO Brian Casey | Location Dallas
Primary Custodian Pershing Advisor Solutions



WESTWOOD Wealth Management, a division of Westwood Holdings Group Inc., offers an “idea lab” and an “all hands area” to bring employees together to exchange ideas. The firm emphasizes a team-based culture by creating an entrepreneurial and collaborative environment.

Westwood believes in community service, often volunteering with Habitat for Humanity.

The firm offers a retirement plan with a 6% company match, vested at 100% automatically.

BRONFMAN ROTHSCHILD

Employees 96 | Firm type Hybrid | President and COO Mike LaMena | Location Rockville, Md.
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services | Broker-dealer Bronfman E.L. Rothschild Capital



BRONFMAN Rothschild offers a retirement plan match of 4%, 100% of which is automatically vested. Additionally, associates have town hall meetings where they share success stories and recognize staff for their hard work.

Employees have early dismissal on Fridays in the summer and yoga classes once a week.

**Bronfman Rothschild is being acquired by NFP Corp. and will be combined with Sontag Advisory.*

CAPTRUST

Employees 492 | Firm type Hybrid | CEO Fielding Miller | Location Raleigh, N.C.
Primary Custodian Pershing Advisor Solutions | Broker-dealer Capfinancial Securities



CAPTRUST honors employees with excellence awards for their achievements at the firm.

It also promotes a healthy lifestyle by providing nutritious drinks and snacks, along with its Healthy Lifestyle Reimbursement program.

Associates also can participate in fitness challenges with other Captrust team members.

SYNERGY WEALTH SOLUTIONS

Employees 152 | Firm type Broker-dealer | CEO Brian Roberts | Location Chesterfield, Mo.
Broker-dealer MML Investors Services



SYNERGY Wealth Solutions, a MassMutual Agency, presents an Adviser of the Year award to the top-producing adviser at the firm.

Employees also enjoy birthday celebrations and have access to a shuffleboard table in the office break room, where breakfast is provided every other month.

The firm supports personal and professional development, keeps overtime to a minimum, and invites family members to attend events.



CASSADAY & CO.

Employees 49 | Firm type RIA | CEO and President Stephan Q. Cassaday
Location McLean, Va. | **Primary Custodian** Pershing Advisor Solutions

With forty of its staffers 40 or younger, Cassaday & Co. has become proficient in meeting the needs of a millennial workforce. President and CEO Stephan Q. Cassaday shared several strategies the firm employs to keep this cohort happy. One of the most significant is the annual employee satisfaction survey, which is conducted with the entire staff to elicit highly detailed feedback on the organization and its leadership. Respondents are asked to comment, for example, on how the firm makes them feel valued, how it supports them in their growth and development, and how the leaders are performing. The executive team dedicates

an off-site meeting exclusively to focusing on the results. To his surprise, Mr. Cassaday found that it is the smaller things that make employees happy, even more than compensation. These include monthly meetings that inform the staff about the results of closed-door executive meetings and informal recognition, such as giving token chips to recognize jobs well done (especially appreciated by operations and back-office staff), and spontaneous cash bonuses to those who have stepped forward to deliver extraordinary service. Mr. Cassaday's operating philosophy is simple: "I treat people the way I want to be treated."



MORTON CAPITAL

Employees 35 | Firm type RIA
Co-CEO Jeffrey Sarti | **Location** Oak Park, Calif.
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services

"After we reached 20 employees, we realized the complexities of the business changed and we needed to institutionalize our processes," said Jeffrey Sarti, co-CEO of Morton Capital. The leadership of the 35-employee firm took a very intentional approach to maintain its culture and camaraderie in the interest of healthy growth and succession planning. One of its most effective strategies was to codify its vision ("empowering families to enjoy their lives") and core values (excellence, empowerment, empathy, ethical behavior and enjoyment). The result has been a happy staff, which starts with the value placed on enjoyment. "It's not just okay to enjoy your work, but it's important," Mr. Sarti said. "And if someone is not feeling that enjoyment, we are proactive about finding out why." Empowerment is encouraged through very detailed and descriptive career paths for employees, who in turn feel they control their own destiny. Built into these paths is the ability to transition to different roles within the company, which also ties in with enjoyment, Mr. Sarti said. Empathy is supported by encouraging diversity, with the workforce intentionally recruited for backgrounds outside of finance. "We want different kinds of ideas at the table," Mr. Sarti said. "It's energizing and it contributes to the camaraderie."

PER STIRLING CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Employees 36 | Firm type Hybrid
Managing Partner J.P. O'Sullivan
Location Hills, Texas
Primary Custodian Fidelity Institutional Wealth Services
Broker-dealer B.B. Graham & Co.



The mission statement of Per Stirling Capital Management can be summed up in two words, "business karma," said Bob Phipps, director and co-founder. The practice has 36 employees across four offices. "If you take outrageously good care of your clients and treat the members of your team like family, everything else will take care of itself," Mr. Phipps said. Examples of this good care include:

- Above average salaries with payouts of 65% to 78%.
- Considering the adviser as owner of the client relationship, not the company.
- Actively encouraging the promotion of female staff members, who make up half the staff and senior management.
- Sharing half the company profits with the top advisers.

"We want them to feel incentivized to help the younger



EXECUTIVE WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Employees 37 | Firm type Hybrid | Founder Albert P. Herzog III
Location Brighton, Mich. | **Primary Custodian** TD Ameritrade Institutional | **Broker-dealer** Private Client Services

As the leaders of Executive Wealth Management contemplated the firm's legacy several years ago, they realized a major change in direction was necessary, said managing director Michael R. Chechel Jr. "We wanted to transition away from having individual silos within the company," he said, referring to the numerous adviser practices previously operating within the organization. With a focus on unifying the practice, leadership decided to take ownership of all the clients and supported this change by developing a new culture. Some of the steps they took



PRIVATE OCEAN

Employees 34 (does not include Mosaic Financial acquisition) | **Firm type** RIA
Founder and CEO Greg H. Friedman
Location San Rafael, Calif.
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services

Cultivating employees' connections to the company — and each other — is one of the primary goals of the twice-a-year off-site retreats Private Ocean holds.

"Everything is by design," said Greg Friedman, founder and CEO.

Retreat activities include:

Different seating. Participants are assigned to a new team every four hours to

work on projects. Groups are diversified by office locations, work roles and leadership.

• **60-second shout-outs.** Individuals are assigned someone they don't know well and must interview the person and his or her colleagues to learn of an accomplishment the previous year that made them proud. The researcher then gives a short speech about it.

• **Communication/public relations exercise.** Employees talk in small groups about why they like working at the firm, and also learn how to convey this message to listeners according to their communication style.

"The common thread of being a 'Best Place to Work for Financial Advisers' is you have to work at it — through communication, team building and acknowledging people," Mr. Friedman said.



advisers and staff, which leads to higher profits for the firm and better client experiences," Mr. Phipps said.

At annual reviews, employees are encouraged to give constructive input on the company and every other team member, including senior management, in order to improve the work environment.

"Our management philosophy is opposite of other firms'," Mr. Phipps said. "Here, the client is the boss, the adviser works for the client, and the firm works for the adviser."



included:

- Creating new company values based on trust, compassion and community, which are discussed and displayed constantly.
- Communicating the company's economic progress with all offices via an intra-office blog.
- Encouraging public recognition of employment anniversaries and small and large jobs well done.
- Building trust with employees through fun activities such as ice cream socials, BBQ Fridays and birthday lunches.

Employees are "100%" happier, Mr. Chechel said. Now all of them enjoy the same perks and procedures, and they share in the vision of the company as a whole.

"If you're doing it on a constant basis, that's when it works. Your [company] reputation ripples out into the community and it makes clients happy, too," he said.



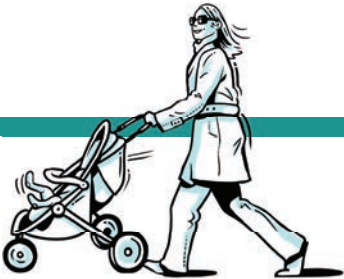
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ACCREDITED INVESTORS WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Employees 45 | Firm type RIA | CEO and Founder Ross Levin
Location Edina, Minn. | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services

ACCREDITED Investors Wealth Management aims to make sure that its employees are relaxed by offering on-site private meditation rooms. The company shows its appreciation for employees by issuing Thank You Awards. Staff present these to other workers who they feel have been helpful, as an act of appreciation. Employees also are recognized through monthly Culture Constitution Awards that recognize team members for supporting the firm’s core values.

The firm is focused on the health and wellness of its staff, offering access to a gym, treadmill and standing desks, and ergonomic hardware, as well as fresh fruit and veggie delivery.

HALBERT HARGROVE GLOBAL ADVISORS

Employees 34 | Firm type RIA | Chairman and CEO Russ Hill
Location Long Beach, Calif. | Custodian Fidelity Institutional Wealth Services



HALBERT Hargrove Global Advisors offers employees an incentive equity plan in which it grants shares of the company to associates. The firm pays for sabbaticals after 10 years of service and has unlimited vacation time.

There also is an emphasis placed on reaching goals. Associates receive yearly recognition for AUM milestones, years of service and education goals. Employees participate in a number of charities, such as the Ronald McDonald House and the Aquarium of the Pacific. The company pays for continuing education, such as graduate degrees, and associates can relieve stress with monthly yoga classes and games like ping pong.

PROVISE MANAGEMENT GROUP

Employees 31 | Firm type Hybrid | CEO Raymond Ferrara | Location Clearwater, Fla.
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services | Broker-dealer Kestra Financial



PROVISE Management Group believes in supporting women and diversity in its workforce, with 60% female employees.

The firm supports health by paying for all or part of employees’ health club membership or other fitness program.

It celebrates its employees with an appreciation lunch or breakfast, and rewards them for stellar performance.

Provisе offers flexible work schedules and a family environment.

RTD FINANCIAL

Employees 37 | Firm type RIA | Chairman and CEO Richard Busillo
Location Philadelphia | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



EMPLOYEES at RTD Financial meet every summer for unique activities that have included ax throwing and race-car driving. The company has a Fun Committee that organizes activities for employees. Associates have picnics in the park during the summer and do 5K races together.

The firm offers special hours in the summer; employees can leave work early on Fridays between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Associates also can receive an incentive bonus from a portion of the firm’s revenue each year, and there’s an education budget for professional development.

PROVENANCE WEALTH ADVISORS

Employees 45 | Firm type Hybrid | Managing Director and Financial Advisor Eric Zeitlin
Location Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. | Broker-dealer Raymond James Financial Services Inc.
Primary Custodian Raymond James Investment Advisor Division



TOP EXECUTIVES at Provenance Wealth Advisors recognize the firm’s employees at meetings by mentioning the good work they’ve done within the community.

Employees can use a quiet room to take a break, along with having weekly “stress busters” with snacks and contests during busy seasons.

The company offers generous paid time off and alternative work schedules, and it does not have a dress code.

Employees also can enjoy company-sponsored outings at their favorite restaurants.

MCKINLEY CARTER WEALTH SERVICES INC.

Employees 37 | Firm type RIA | President and Chief Investment Officer David H. McKinley
Location Wheeling, W.Va. | Primary Custodian Fidelity Institutional Wealth Services



MCKINLEY Carter Wealth Services Inc. acknowledges its employees’ accomplishments in a companywide email and with its creative Thumbs-up Awards. Employees are also recognized for their efforts with quarterly birthday lunches and national recognition days.

The firm values family time by offering flexible hours to balance family and work life, as well as the option to work from home when appropriate.

The company also believes in supporting its employees’ professional development goals by offering workshops.

REGENTATLANTIC

Employees 49 | Firm type RIA | CEO George Stapleton | Location Morristown, N.J.
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



REGENTATLANTIC celebrates its employees with two large firm parties a year and presents its Better Way Awards to employees who go above and beyond for their clients.

The firm also provides summer Fridays, during which employees can work half days and dress casually.

Another nice perk is \$5 lunches, where associates place their order and pay only \$5, while the company picks up the rest of the bill.



WEST FINANCIAL SERVICES INC.

Employees 38 | Firm type RIA | President Glen J. Buco | Location McLean, Va.
Primary Custodian Fidelity Institutional Wealth Services



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WEST Financial Services Inc. offers its employees a flexible work schedule, excellent compensation and benefits, and a bonus incentive for outstanding achievement. Associates can enjoy casual Fridays and dress-up days such as for a favorite sports team or Halloween. The company celebrates weddings, baby showers and holiday gatherings.

It also awards employees who exemplify the company's principles in their work through a program known as the President's Circle, and employees can enjoy various company outings, such as happy hours and bowling nights.

PRIVATE VISTA

Employees 38 | Firm type RIA | Managing Member James M. Weil | Location Chicago
Primary Custodian Pershing Advisor Solutions



14

PRIVATE Vista gives its employees bonuses for exceptional work and limits meetings to regular work hours. When overnight travel is required, the firm offers monetary incentives or paid time off. Private Vista offers its employees flexible hours and early Fridays.

The firm holds a year-end meeting where associates are recognized for their efforts. There is also an employee experience committee that meets monthly to review issues such as enhancing employee benefits.

To relieve stress, employees can enjoy a massage from a masseuse in the office. The firm also organizes get-togethers at nearby restaurants, along with go-kart races and bocce ball.

CONCORDE INVESTMENT SERVICES

Employees 30 | Firm type Hybrid | CEO and President Jason Kavanaugh | Location Livonia, Mich.
Primary Custodian Pershing Advisor Solutions | Broker-dealer Securities America Inc.



15

CONCORDE Investment Services hosts an annual holiday party and summer outings for its employees, 70% of whom are female. Concorde employees also take part in community service outreach and projects such as "Leah's Happy Hearts," an organization that collects blankets for children with cancer.

The firm offers flexible work hours and allows employees to work from home. It also promotes the teaching of financial literacy at a young age. Children of employees who come in for bring your kids to work day learn about business and financial plans. At the end of the day, the children present their plans to Concorde executives, as well as to the other children.

TDC INVESTMENT ADVISORY

Employees 46 | Firm type RIA | Manager Cleves R. Delp
Location Maumee, Ohio | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



16

TDC INVESTMENT Advisory offers its employees a wellness program in which participating employees receive 10% of their premiums back in the form of a health savings account. The firm also provides financial education workshops, seminars and classes.

Employees host various events at each other's homes and enjoy themed potlucks. Colleagues and spouses can also be part of a softball team that the firm has participated in for nearly a decade. The company says its goal is not work-life balance, but work-life integration.

FRAGASSO FINANCIAL ADVISORS

Employees 48 | Firm type Hybrid | Chairman and CEO Robert Fragasso
Location Pittsburgh | Custodian TD Ameritrade Institutional | Broker-dealer Private Client Services



17

FRAGASSO Financial Advisors provides its employees with great work schedules, holiday schedules, appreciation lunches and happy hours. The company also offers profit-sharing, employee stock ownership and company-paid life insurance.

Pet lovers can participate in bring your dog to work events. On three-day weekends, the office closes early, and employees can enjoy social events some Friday afternoons. Many employees also volunteer at various organizations throughout Pittsburgh during work hours.

WESTMOUNT ASSET MANAGEMENT

Employees 30 | Firm type RIA | President and Chief Investment Officer James Berliner
Location Los Angeles | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



18

WESTMOUNT Asset Management awards employees with spot bonuses for exemplary performance on specific projects and achievements. Associates who have made extraordinary contributions to the firm and its growth over time are eligible to become equity partners.

The firm implements a variety of regularly scheduled social events and outings to promote team bonding. A Culture Committee is dedicated to improving the office culture through various firmwide events, and Westmount helps employees who have a long commute by establishing satellite offices.

FRONTIER INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT CO.

Employees 33 | Firm type RIA | Principal Brian Hattendorf
Location Dallas | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



19

FRONTIER Investment Management Co. treats its staff to monthly lunches, regular happy hours and rotating Friday afternoons off. The firm encourages its employees to learn and grow, and shows its appreciation by taking them on trips, such as one to Cancun, Mexico.

Frontier allows flexible hours to accommodate school events or taking family members to the doctor. The firm also supports employees with business education workshops and/or conferences.

ALTFEST PERSONAL WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Employees 38 | Firm type RIA | CEO Lewis J. Altfest
Location New York | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



20

AT ALTFEST Personal Wealth Management employees have the opportunity to provide regular feedback at one-on-one lunches with senior leaders, as well as engagement studies held twice a year firmwide. The firm covers the entire medical premium for its employees and offers a cost-sharing program in which employees receive \$4,600 per year or more if they choose to go on a spouse's medical plan.

The firm also supports employees taking leadership roles within volunteer organizations outside of the firm and hosts monthly office happy hours to promote team building and a positive workplace.



BERMAN MCALEER

Employees 21 | **Firm type** Hybrid | **CEO** David L. Berman | **Location** Timonium, Md.
Primary Custodian National Financial Services | **Broker-dealer** Kestra Financial Inc.



Giving more than just lip service to its corporate values of fulfillment, trust and respect, the firm of Berman McAleer engages a relationship coach once a year to work with the entire staff.

"At the end of the day, we genuinely want our employees to be fulfilled and happy," said David Berman, co-founder and CEO. "Also, in order to be productive and efficient as a company, I need this very diverse group coming together as a team."

The coach, who works with groups and individuals, conducts personality assessments and teaches skills such as empathetic listening and how to communicate in a way that matches the listener's needs or processing style.

The coaching has been profoundly impactful because people are more willing and able to express themselves in constructive ways, Mr. Berman said. It has given employees an understanding of how their coworkers think, and has provided the tools to work through and minimize conflicts — whether at work or at home.

"We believe that if you invest in and build up the individuals, you get higher quality work," Mr. Berman said. "They will be trying harder because they will be fulfilled by the success of the company."



CIC WEALTH

Employees 15 | **Firm type** RIA | **CEO** Ryan Wibberley
Location Rockville, Md. | **Primary Custodian** Schwab Advisor Services

CIC Wealth is a good example of how a company's culture reflects its top leadership.

"When issues pop up, I personally intervene. I talk to the parties, bring them together," said Ryan Wibberley, the firm's founder and CEO. "I tend to be the bridge of all people."

As role model in chief, he sets the tone for the 15 employees in two offices by modeling empathy and emotional intelligence. Mr. Wibberley and his team strive to create an environment where employees feel safe to test the limits of their abilities.

"We want people to always feel they can take an idea and run with it, within reason," he said. "We constantly tell them to try to do something a better way, to 'break everything.'"

A basic philosophy of the firm is that advisers should enjoy those with whom they're working. And that goes for clients, too, as the firm has been known to fire clients who create too much anxiety or distress for advisers.



LEGACY WEALTH MANAGEMENT INC.

Employees 22 | **Firm type** RIA | **CEO and President** James J. Isaacs
Location Memphis, Tenn. | **Primary Custodian** Schwab Advisor Services

"I took a lot about what I didn't like about corporate America and made sure it wasn't part of our practice," said Jim Isaacs, president and CEO of Legacy Wealth Management Inc. and a veteran of the health-care and consumer product industries.

One of the firm's initiatives was to focus on core values:

1. "Clients always come first," in terms of a fiduciary manner.
2. "A commitment to honesty and integrity," whether working with clients or coworkers.
3. "Compassion for clients and each other."
4. "A culture that values teamwork and knowledge."

Focusing on these values has changed the way the staff communicates with prospective clients, Mr. Isaacs said. Compassion, for instance, influenced advisers to provide examples of how they have served individuals in similar circumstances, instead of describing all the potential services the firm offers.

Compassion also underlies the firm's generous sick- and care-taker-leave policy that allows employees to attend to the needs of their children, elderly parents or even pets.

The core values, shared on the company website, "say to everyone that this is our culture. It shows everybody you care," Mr. Isaacs said.



RICHARD P. SLAUGHTER ASSOCIATES INC.

Employees 16 | **Firm type** RIA
CEO Brooks Slaughter
Location: Austin, Texas
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services

Asked to describe the culture of his 16-person firm, Brooks Slaughter, CEO of Richard P. Slaughter Associates Inc., summed it up as "gracious problem-solving" and "interacting graciously" — mantras that are repeated in meetings all the time,



MIRACLE MILE ADVISORS

Employees 19 | Firm type RIA | Managing Partner Brock Moseley
Location Los Angeles | Primary Custodian TD Ameritrade Institutional



I'm a 'law of attraction' person," said Brock Moseley, CEO of Miracle Mile Advisors. "I want to attract employees who share my same value system."

Mr. Moseley's goal since establishing the firm 11 years ago has been to create an environment where employees feel they have room to grow professionally and personally.

Some of the ways he nurtures this environment include:

- An open-ended vacation policy, allowing employees to take time off as necessary.

- Monthly group activities outside the office, such as yoga or boxing classes.
 - Extensive mentoring, whether it's a partner guiding an employee or an employee guiding another employee.
 - Financially supporting employees' pursuit of professional development and certifications.
- "I want [employees] to be inspired to make a career with us," Mr. Moseley said. "An 'authentic' bond between employee and firm leads to more successful client relationships, which in turn grow in length and depth and wallet share."



he said.

"You can't teach culture or innovativeness. We hire people who are great with people and we teach them the technical aspects," Mr. Slaughter said. "Similar to developing a diverse portfolio, you want a diversity of employees."

When three employees planned to relocate for their spouses' jobs, Slaughter Associates allowed them to work remotely rather than lose them. The long-distance employees travel to the home office about six times a year.

Even though the practice is relatively small, it employs a full-time mentor/coach who works with each employee to address issues such as time management, presentation skills, meeting skills, etc. This professional also facilitates communication between different departments to determine best practices and align corporate messages and strategy.

All employees enjoy stock options, too.

The firm limits its annual growth so as to maintain the culture, Mr. Slaughter said, which is why they've never had any layoffs, even in 2008.



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BSW WEALTH PARTNERS

Employees 25 | Firm type RIA | Managing Principal David Wolf
Location Boulder, Colo. | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



BSW Wealth contributes 3% of each employee's salary to their 401(k) plan, even if the employee doesn't participate. The firm will match another 3% the employee contributes.

The advice firm also offers tuition reimbursement for advanced or post-graduate degrees, paid sabbaticals after 10 years, and recognizes hard-working employees at weekly meetings.

Additionally, the firm's Wellness Wednesdays promote meditation practice.



TRUE NORTH ADVISORS

Employees 24 | Firm type RIA | CEO Scott Wood
Location: Dallas | Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



TRUE North Advisors rewards employees through nominations for "Employee of the Month," in which the winner receives a PTO day and an awesome parking spot for the month.

Every year, the firm hosts a fun Halloween costume party and a Thanksgiving potluck. Employee birthdays or anniversaries are celebrated with a breakfast and gifts.

The firm also offers in-house workout classes to relieve stress, including Zumba and yoga.



WEALTHQUEST

Employees 24 | Firm type RIA | CEO Wade Daniel | Location Cincinnati
Primary Custodian TD Ameritrade Institutional



WEALTHQUEST is all about family and provides half-day Fridays throughout the year so employees can spend time with loved ones.

The firm also offers a company-paid service or mission trip for employees and a companion once every three years.

Along with these great benefits, the company offers generous compensation and retirement benefits.



CENTER FOR FINANCIAL PLANNING

Employees 27 | Firm type Hybrid | Managing Partner Timothy Wyman | Location Southfield, Mich.
Custodian Raymond James Investment Advisor Division | Broker-dealer Raymond James Financial Services Inc.



THE Center for Financial Planning prides itself on keeping its staff positive and optimistic. It offers meditation training and massage chairs.

The firm also shows appreciation through activities, including bowling and curling outings, and it allocates two days a year for employees to volunteer in the community.

In addition, employees can show off their cooking skills at chili cook-offs.

MOISAND FITZGERALD TAMAYO

Employees 15 | Firm type RIA | Partner Charlie Fitzgerald | Location Orlando
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



MOISAND Fitzgerald Tamayo values its employees by hosting an awards ceremony for individuals and highlighting teamwork efforts. Staff can receive gift cards for putting in extra effort.

The company also offers catered food during adviser meetings, along with outdoor lunches.

The firm allows its employees to take every third Friday off and provides assistance with employees' financial plans.

VIEWPOINT FINANCIAL NETWORK

Employees 15 | Firm type Hybrid | Owner and Senior Adviser Benjamin W. Wong | Location Pleasanton, Calif.
Primary Custodian National Financial Services | Broker-dealer Commonwealth Financial Network



VIEWPOINT Financial Network hosts games and quizzes at work, and celebrates special occasions and events. It also sponsors outings to play bocce ball.

Employees receive a stipend to cover a portion of health-care plans and time off to support mental health and family issues.

Executives at this company believe that "happy employees will serve clients better, if they enjoy what they do."

INTEGRATED FINANCIAL PARTNERS

Employees 28 | Firm type Hybrid | CEO and President Paul Saganey | Location Waltham, Mass.
Primary Custodian LPL Financial | Broker-dealer LPL Financial



INTEGRATED Financial Partners values hard work and acknowledges the accomplishments of its employees. Associates who go above and beyond are awarded at their annual conference, and the company has office parties to build and promote relationships within the team.

The firm also promotes stress relief during the day through office trivia games in the breakroom and encouraging a healthy work-life balance.

TYCOR BENEFIT ADMINISTRATORS INC.

Employees 19 | Firm type Hybrid | President J. Timothy Corle | Location Berwyn, Penn.
Primary Custodian National Financial Services | Broker-dealer Kestra Financial



TYCOR Benefit Administrators Inc. has a bonus program, and employees also can receive gift cards for their positive impact.

The firm offers counseling for marital or financial problems, for example, and substance abuse assistance.

Staff participate in crockpot Tuesdays, and associates who are sports fans can enjoy activities such as pools for March Madness and NFL Pick'em.

PETERSEN HASTINGS INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

Employees 20 | Firm type RIA | CEO Jeffrey Petersen | Location Kennewick, Wash.
Primary Custodian TD Ameritrade Institutional



PETERSEN Hastings Investment Management hosts monthly activities that encourage unity among the staff, including office Olympics, Taco Tuesdays and breakfast burritos.

The company brings in a masseuse to help with stress and shows its appreciation toward associates by leaving small gifts on their desks.

Its CEO leads a mentorship program, allowing associates to learn and grow in their professional and personal lives.



INVESTMARK ADVISORY GROUP

Employees 17 | Firm type Hybrid | Managing Principal and CEO Michael C. Kusick | Location Shelton, Conn.
Primary Custodian National Financial Services | Broker-dealer Commonwealth Financial Network



INVESTMARK Advisory Group offers boat trips, summer parties, group lunches outside the office, and discounted or free tickets to family entertainment and sporting events.

Not only does the company care about de-stressing, it's also concerned about the overall well-being of employees. It offers good compensation and health-care benefits, along with free financial planning advice.

MULTNOMAH GROUP

Employees 17 | Firm type RIA | Managing Principal Erik Daley
Location Portland, Ore. | Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



EMPLOYEES at Multnomah Group appreciate that their firm has a flexible work schedule and offers unlimited PTO days once the employee has been with the company for at least a year.

To encourage professional development, employees can attend various conferences and receive education reimbursement for advanced or post-graduate degrees.

In addition, the firm makes profit-sharing contributions to help employees save for retirement.

HEMINGTON WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Employees 15 | Firm type RIA | CEO and Co-Founder Eileen O'Connor | Location Falls Church, Va.
Primary Custodian TD Ameritrade Institutional



HEMINGTON Wealth Management stands out for its diversity, with 55% female employees. The company offers mentoring and monthly meetings with the CEO.

It specializes in serving “breadwinner women” — female professionals balancing the demands of work and family.

Hemington employees enjoy summer outings and yoga Fridays, as well as team participation in an annual charity day.

ARMSTRONG FLEMING & MOORE INC.

Employees 17 | Firm type Hybrid | Chairman and Founder Alexandra Armstrong | Location Washington, D.C.
Primary Custodian National Financial Services | Broker-dealer Commonwealth Financial Network



FOR employees at Armstrong Fleming & Moore Inc., it's all about trust, honesty and respect when providing written financial plans to help clients attain their goals. That care and help extends into the community.

Employees tackle the issue of hunger through volunteer work. They have packed 475 boxes of food for the Capital Area Food Bank in the Washington metro area to combat hunger, obesity and heart disease.

SHP FINANCIAL

Employees 19 | Firm type RIA | Partner Keith Ellis | Location Plymouth, Mass.
Primary Custodian Fidelity Institutional Wealth Services



SHP Financial creates a relaxing environment for its employees by offering chair massages and monthly in-house yoga classes. Employees are offered half days before the holidays and throughout the summer.

Employees also are given days off between Memorial and Labor Day.

SHP Financial also supports volunteerism. Employees at the firm help out Habitat for Humanity.

AEPG WEALTH STRATEGIES

Employees 29 | Firm type RIA | Founder and President Steven Kaye | Location Warren, N.J.
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



AEPG Wealth Strategies emphasizes teamwork and personal development. The firm recognizes educational achievements by employees annually and celebrates staff appreciation days with fun outings and activities, such as picnics and escape-room experiences. AEPG offers unlimited golf lessons to employees and holiday lunches.

The firm also celebrates milestone years of service and promotes a positive work-life balance with flexible hours and work-from-home days.

LASSUS WHERLEY, A SUBSIDIARY OF PEAPACK-GLADSTONE BANK

Employees 20 | Firm type RIA | CEO Clare E. Wherley | Location New Providence, N.J.
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



LASSUS Wherley appreciates the value of women in the financial advice industry — 90% of its financial advisers are female.

The firm offers a bonus program, and employees can receive tuition reimbursement and assistance for advanced or post-graduate degrees.

The company also allows for flexible work hours and casual Fridays when there aren't client meetings scheduled.

GREENSPRING ADVISORS

Employees 19 | Firm type RIA | Partner and Managing Director J. Patrick Collins Jr.
Location Towson, Md. | Primary Custodian Fidelity Institutional Wealth Services



GREENSPRING Advisors allows employees to recognize one another for living out the core values of the company. Employees can display hand-written thank you notes on the Praise Wall, and will be entered into a monthly raffle.

The firm offers Monthly Team Happy Hours with scavenger hunts and mini-golf tournaments, along with monthly team lunches. During holidays, the office sometimes closes early, or employees may receive an additional day off.

NCA FINANCIAL PLANNERS

Employees 28 | Firm type Hybrid | CEO and President Kevin Myeroff | Location Mayfield Heights, Ohio
Primary Custodian Pershing Advisor Solutions | Broker-dealer Royal Alliance Associates Inc.



NCA Financial Planners cares for the community with its charitable contributions through its Pay it Forward program, with donations going to a charity of the employee's choice.

Staff participate in annual team-building events and financial education workshops and seminars, and can bring in their favorite board games for monthly game-day luncheons.

The firm also offers tenure bonuses and flexible work schedules.

WACKER WEALTH PARTNERS

Employees 17 | Firm type RIA | CEO Ryan Caldwell | Location San Luis Obispo, Calif.
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



EMPLOYEES at Wacker Wealth Partners enjoy staff events such as bowling, archery and art, along with team-building excursions. The company also offers employees flexible schedules to promote a balanced life.

The firm has a charitable gift-matching program along with paid time off for volunteering.

The company applies its “Clients First” values to its employees to create a positive, encouraging atmosphere.

SMITH ANGLIN FINANCIAL

Employees 22 | Firm type Hybrid | Managing Partner Steven W. Anglin | Location Dallas
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services | Broker-dealer Purshe, Kaplan, Sterling Investments



SMITH Anglin Financial plans social events and birthday celebrations for its employees. It also allows staff to take time off to spend with their families.

The firm provides professional education and conferences away from the office to enhance professional development.

Associates appreciate the “warm and friendly workplace where all employees can have a voice in the direction of our firm.”

BARTHOLOMEW & COMPANY INC.

Employees 26 | Firm type Broker-dealer | President Thomas J. Bartholomew
Location Worcester, Mass. | Broker-dealer Commonwealth Financial Network



BARTHOLOMEW & Company Inc. allows casual Fridays and celebrates employees when company goals are reached, along with milestone anniversaries. The firm offers paid sabbaticals, bonuses and generous vacation and holiday time. Employees can select charities to receive donations from their Anniversary Fund.

Staff are encouraged to share their ideas for improvements, which the firm thoughtfully considers.

WILLIS JOHNSON & ASSOCIATES

Employees 15 | Firm type RIA | CEO and President Willis Johnson | Location Houston
Primary Custodian Fidelity Institutional Wealth Services



WILLIS Johnson & Associates makes a 3% to 6% contribution to every employee's 401(k), based on tenure. It contributes an additional 1% for each pre-set goal met throughout the year, with a max of +4%. The firm also pays for time off when overnight travel is required.

WJA employees enjoy themed potlucks, jean days and early closings for team activities, such as bowling, cooking and painting classes.

MEYER CAPITAL GROUP

Employees 16 | Firm type RIA | President Thomas C. Meyer | Location Marlton, N.J.
Primary Custodian Schwab Advisor Services



MEYER Capital Group offers back-up child care or elder care if an employee's regular caregiver is not available.

The firm has on-site personal development workshops and financial education seminars. It provides a flexible workplace and encourages employees to follow their passions.

The company is proud that its associates have an average 15-year tenure, compared to the national average of five years.

5 ways Best Places rank higher with staff

As *InvestmentNews* celebrates its second class of Best Places to Work for Financial Advisers, we'd like to use the opportunity to shed some light on the practices that most set apart the winners from all other entrants.



NUMBERSGAME
MATT SIRINIDES

In order to be considered for the award, 75% of a firm's staff had to respond to a questionnaire containing a series of 78 statements grouped into five categories. Staff

members could either agree or disagree with each statement. Here are five areas in which firms chosen as Best Places differed most from those that didn't make the list.

1. Leadership: "There is adequate planning — and follow-through — of departmental objectives." +13%

With two years of data, this statement with two components (planning and follow-through of objectives) saw the greatest delta between winning firms and their competition.

Adequate planning lends not just organization to processes but also helps align expectations and strategy across the firm. Follow-through on planning sets a tone that execution is an expectation, and lends credibility to firm leaders. When plans are made and dropped, what message does that send?

Unkept promises can undermine leadership, and Best Places excel at fostering a follow-through culture.

2. Corporate communications: "Changes that may affect me are communicated to me prior to implementation." +15%

No one likes to be left in the dark, especially in the workplace

— and particularly when it concerns one's own job function. This isn't even an issue of speed, as the statement indicates that communications simply need to happen prior to implementation. As a best practice, relaying crucial information around changes to roles and responsibilities are critical — Best

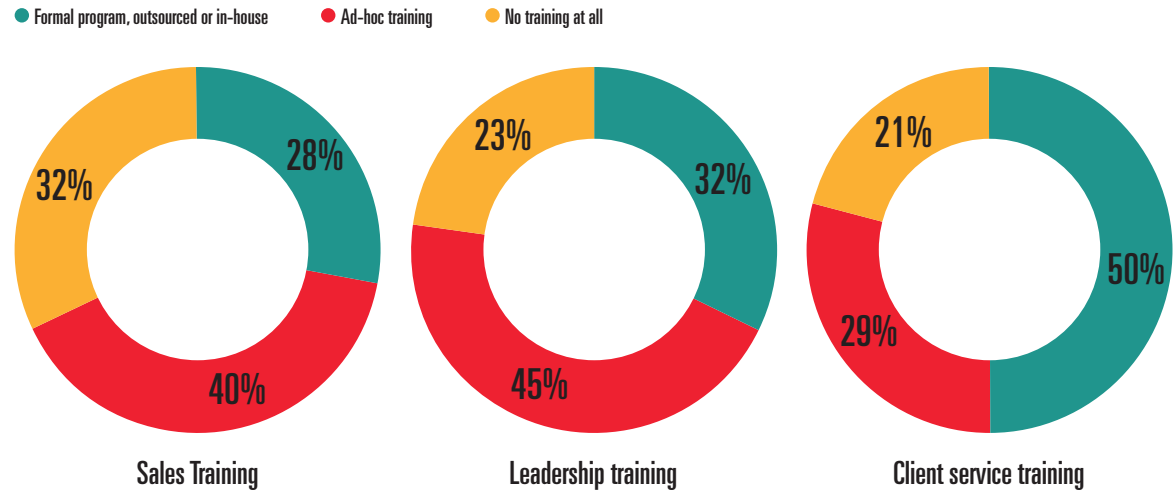
Places know it, and their staff approve by a sizable margin.

3. Training and development: "The organization provided as much training as I needed." +13%

InvestmentNews' compensation & staffing benchmarking research has found that just 50% of

independent advisory firms offer staff formal training programs for client service, 32% for leadership and management, and just 28% for sales and business development. So it's no surprise that best places differentiate themselves by having such programs. In fact, 83% of Best Places have formalized a succes-

METHODS USED TO TRAIN STAFF



Source: 2017 *InvestmentNews* Compensation & Staffing Study

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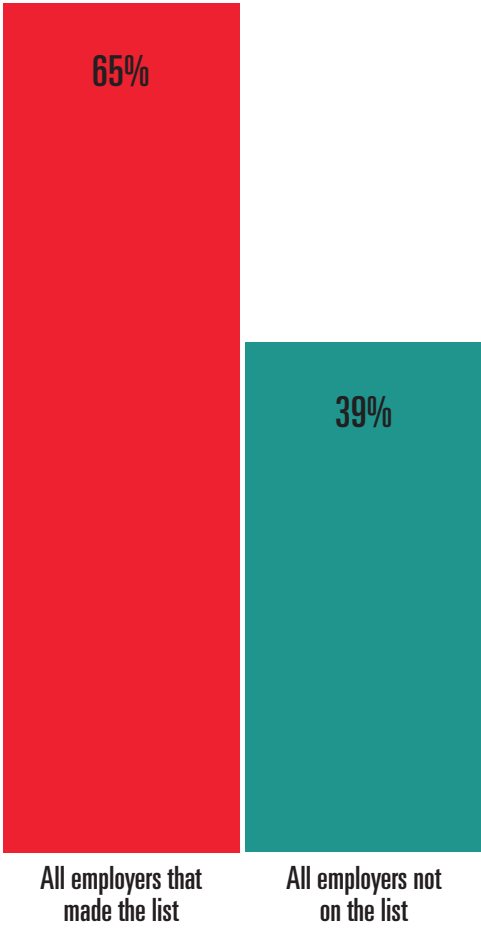
sion plan, versus 58% of non-winners — which speaks to their out-sized focus and dedication not only to continuity in the business but also toward ensuring the next generation of firm partners and leaders are prepared to take the reins.

4. Pay and benefits: “I’m satisfied with retirement plan benefits.” +15%

About 11% of firms not named a Best Place don’t offer retirement benefits at all, whereas every Best Places firm does. In fact, 11% (versus 0%) offer employee-stock-ownership plans — allowing staff to buy into the firm’s upside.

The statement “I’m satisfied with the amount of health care paid for” also saw high delta between the groups (+12%), underlying the gap in sentiment for this other crucial benefit. About 65% of Best Places’ firms pay 50% or more of health-care premiums for their staff, compared to 39% of non-winners.

FIRMS PAYING 50% OR MORE OF INDIVIDUAL STAFF HEALTH-CARE PREMIUMS









Source: 2019 InvestmentNews Best Places to Work for Financial Advisers

5. Overall engagement: “I feel this organization has created an environment where I can do my best work.” +9%

Overall engagement, of course, relies on all of the above, and Best Places firms exemplify how to create an environment where one feels valued. Employees want to have a seat at the table, with ample training, competitive benefits and a future in which they feel vested within the organization.

msirinides@investmentnews.com
Twitter: @statsfromIN

Firms that made our list	EMPLOYER RESPONSES	Firms that didn't make our list
79% Additional paid time off for volunteering	TIME OFF 	68% Additional paid time off for volunteering
69% Telecommuting option		63% Telecommuting option
67% Flexible hours or compressed work week		58% Flexible hours or compressed work week
81% Partially paid parental leave policy		63% Partially paid parental leave policy
37% Employees eligible for health-care plan on first day	HEALTH & WELLNESS 	21% Employees eligible for health-care plan on first day
27% Company pays 100% of employee's medical premium		21% Company pays 100% of employee's medical premium
19% Company pays 100% of employee's dental premium		11% Company pays 100% of employee's dental premium
11% Company pays 100% of employee's vision premium		17% Company pays 100% of employee's vision premium
63% Workplace facility for fitness	FINANCIAL PERKS 	16% Workplace facility for fitness
99% 401(k) or related retirement plan (76% of both groups provide a match)		89% 401(k) or related retirement plan (76% of both groups provide a match)
97% Financial assistance for certifications		89% Financial assistance for certifications
48% Financial assistance for advanced or post-graduate degrees		32% Financial assistance for advanced or post-graduate degrees
49% Onsite personal development/stress management workshops		37% Onsite personal development/stress management workshops
65% Financial education workshops		58% Financial education workshops

Firms that made our list	EMPLOYEE RESPONSES	Firms that didn't make our list
96% I understand the long-term strategy of my firm	FIRM LEVEL 	90% I understand the long-term strategy of my firm
97% I have confidence in the leadership		91% I have confidence in the leadership
89% I have a good understanding of how the firm is doing financially		76% I have a good understanding of how the firm is doing financially
93% The firm gives me enough recognition for good work		83% The firm gives me enough recognition for good work
88% Changes that affect me are communicated prior to implementation		73% Changes that affect me are communicated prior to implementation
95% I would recommend working here to a friend		86% I would recommend working here to a friend
89% I was provided enough initial training for role	TEAM LEVEL 	76% I was provided enough initial training for role
95% Technology issues are resolved promptly		84% Technology issues are resolved promptly
95% I am in an environment where I can do my best work		86% I am in an environment where I can do my best work
90% I am encouraged to explore growth opportunities		79% I am encouraged to explore growth opportunities
87% There is room for me to advance	PAY & BENEFITS 	78% There is room for me to advance
88% My pay is fair		77% My pay is fair
92% I am satisfied with the benefits package overall		79% I am satisfied with the benefits package overall
91% I am satisfied with the retirement plan benefits		76% I am satisfied with the retirement plan benefits
89% I am satisfied with the amount of health care paid for		77% I am satisfied with the amount of health care paid for
92% I am satisfied with the amount of paid time off		87% I am satisfied with the amount of paid time off

Source: 2019 InvestmentNews Best Places to Work for Financial Advisers