

BEST COMPANIES TO WORK FOR

BY MATTHEW J. MOWRY



The 2021 class of 25 Best Companies to Work For is exceptional. And that exceptionalism was especially apparent during the past 18 months of pandemic.

So how did we find these gems? First, we put out a call for companies to apply. Firms complete an employer application detailing not only their benefits, but their policies and programs for creating a great workplace. Then an employee engagement survey, administered by The Employee Engagement Group in Woburn, Mass., must be completed by at least 50% of a company's NH workforce.

Once the employee engagement surveys (which account for 60% of a score) are combined with the employer practices (which account for 40%), the applicant pool is whittled down to 25 companies.

Bruce Mast & Associates, a long-time partner, and Leddy Group organized virtual site visits of the 12 highest scoring companies, with NH executives and HR professionals serving as site-tour judges. Those judges interviewed company CEOs and employee focus groups. Scores from those visits, combined with scores from the employee engagement survey and benefits and engagement practices, helped our main judges refine the ranking of the top 12.

Companies that are named to the list of the Best Companies for four out of five years are inducted into our Hall of Fame, where they remain for two years and assist with judging.

To learn more, join us for Breakfast With the Best on Sept. 30, which will include a keynote address by Jermaine Moore, founder of The Mars Hill Group, who will discuss inclusion in the workplace. Visit businessnhmagazine.com/events/2021-breakfast-with-the-best for details. ■

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Sanborn, Head & Associates

20 Foundry St., Concord • sanbornhead.com



Authenticity is a hallmark of this engineering firm, where employees have a voice. Employees also have literal ownership of the company as Sanborn, Head & Associates is a 20% ESOP or employee stock ownership firm where employees are shareholders.

CEO Barret Cole meets with new employees to orient them to the company's culture and to reinforce the approachable and authentic leadership style of the company.

During COVID, the firm increased its already flexible scheduling. Supervisors are encouraged to reach out to staff more frequently to check in, not only regarding work, but also to check on employee well-being. The firm also provided employees with a one-time Qualified Disaster Relief Payment of \$350 to offset expenses incurred as a result of COVID-19 and sent gift packages to their homes.

This is a company that looks to reward employees. Employees

or shareholders receive performance bonuses, employee referral bonuses ranging from \$500 to \$6,000 and a \$2,500 bonus for receiving the first professional license. And managers give out spot bonuses that range from \$500 to \$2,000. The company also contributes to the ESOP account so employees don't have to invest their own money.

Employees receive not only monetary rewards but also the gift of time off. When the firm achieves its performance goals, all employees receive two bonus vacation days on top of their 15 to 27 paid time-off days and eight hours of paid volunteer service.

It's not all work at the firm, which also produces a cookbook with favorite recipes from staff members among other activities. ■

Engineering and technical consulting firm.

Top Employee Engagement Survey Measures:

My manager is interested in my well being:

98% agree

Management operates in accordance with the firm's overall philosophy and values: they practice what they preach:

98% agree

President and CEO:

Barret Cole

Years in Business: 28

Full-Time Employees:

141 (64 in NH)

Part-time/Temporary or Seasonal Employees:

10 (4 in NH) (Benefits provided)

Years on List: 2