

Best Places to Work in IL 2009

A workplace analysis and competition

Partnership, volunteerism key for top businesses

By Jeremy Stoltz

News Editor

To enhance recruiting efforts and entice the most talented employees available, companies need to focus on and develop basic core values to attract gifted individuals, an industry speaker told a business audience.

“At the end of the day, we realize that our core values, that culture, that’s what drives the company,” Jennifer Wilken, financial advisor for Edward Jones Investments, speaking to a group of honorees at The Business Ledger’s Best Places to Work in Illinois recognition event, held at the Danada House in Wheaton.

Edward Jones employees follow the guideline laid out by two of its preeminent leaders, Peter Drucker and Jim Collins, she said.

Wilken quoted Drucker as saying, “The primary focus of our company is not to create a profit. A profit is a byproduct of success.”

Collins said, “While a company needs to be profitable to exist, they do not exist merely to make a profit.”

One of the main values at Edward Jones is called responsibility-based management.

“The idea is that everybody is fully responsible for a task and they are integral to the overall success of the company,” Wilken said. “Without that, it’s like there is a missing link.”

In order to ensure what Edward Jones calls client service excellence, surveys are given to customers to gauge how well employees are responding to client needs.

A spirit of volunteerism is also necessary to ensure high morale and camaraderie among employees. This can be in the form of internal mentoring and training, as well as external group activities.

“That’s another major aspect that key employees look for when considering a new employer, that spirit of volunteerism,” said Wilken.

Enforcing the fact that every employee within the company is a key member of a partnership will keep employees engaged and help create a cohesive atmosphere that is appealing to potential recruits.



Radio Flyer employees, whose Chicago-based company is world-famous for its red wagons, celebrate the firm’s fourth place ranking among the “Best Places To Work” in the mid-sized division.

“Your employees and your key executives do in fact think of your company as a partnership,” Wilken said. “It goes back to the idea that their responsibilities are going to have an impact on the bottom line.”

Ted Jones, son of founder Edward Jones, had the opportunity years back to take the company public, which would have ensured his status as a multi-millionaire overnight. Yet he chose not to because money had never been his guide.

“I’m so thankful, as a limited partner, that Ted didn’t take the company public,” said Wilken. “But I’ll have you know, I thought of myself as a partner long before it ever became official. And I’m willing to bet that your employees do, too.”

Mid-Sized Companies

(15-249 Employees)

1. Tasty Catering
2. Skender Construction
3. Gerard Design, Inc
4. Radio Flyer
5. Assurance
6. Administaff, Inc
7. Digitas
8. Laurus Strategies
9. Perspectives, Ltd
10. Levenfeld Pearlstein, LLC
11. Lockton Companies, LLC
12. Rose Paving Co
13. National Future Association
14. The Effner Financial Group, Inc
15. Rippinger Financial Group
of Companies
16. Euro RSCG Chicago
17. Sundance Vacations
18. SUA Insurance Company
19. Impact Networking, LLC
20. Kotiz Shifrin Nesbit