



Friday, April 30, 2010 | Modified: Monday, May 3, 2010

Employee surveys reveal Bay Area's best workplaces

San Francisco Business Times - by [George Khalaf](#)

This year's ranking of the Bay Area's 125 Best Places to Work brought nominations from 354 companies representing employees in 12 counties around the greater Bay Area. Some 147,261 employees were given multiple-choice surveys that resulted in the rankings reported in this section.

To be eligible to participate, companies had to operate in at least one of these Bay Area counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito, Solano or Sonoma.

For this year's project, the *San Francisco Business Times* collected nominations from companies in December and January. Companies electing to participate provided some basic employee and company data. With our research partner, Quantum Workplace, we conducted online surveys of Bay Area employees at participating companies from late January through March 5. Results of those surveys were tabulated by Quantum Workplace, and participating companies were notified. Finalists were asked to provide details of company benefits.

We surveyed only Bay Area-based employees of participating companies, and each company's score was based entirely on its employees' responses to 37 multiple-choice questions in 10 topic categories. While specific employee benefits were not a factor in the ranking determinations, employees were asked to rate their satisfaction with their company's benefits.

Companies were not allowed to enhance their scores with any marketing collateral or promotional materials. This ranking is based solely on the satisfaction of each company's employees.

Methods and categories

Ranking based on satisfaction of each company's employees

This year's ranking of the 125 Best Places To Work in the Bay Area garnered participation from a wide variety of companies. Several outstanding candidates missed being ranked by mere decimal points. Here's a breakdown of this year's rankings:

Size categories

The companies were categorized based on the size of their Bay Area workforce.

Giant companies: 1,501-plus employees.

Very large companies: 501 to 1,500 employees.

Large companies: 101 to 500 employees.

Medium companies: 51 to 100 employees.

Smaller companies: 25 to 50 employees.

Employee participation

Only Bay Area employees were surveyed. In order to qualify, employers were required to get a certain level of participation in the survey by Bay Area employees:

Less than 50 employees: 85%.

51 to 150 employees: 70%.

151 to 500 employees: 50%.

501 to 1,000 employees: 30%.

1,001 to 3,000 employees: 15%.

3,001 to 5,000 employees: 8%.

More than 5,000 employees: 5%.

The questionnaire

Each company's score was based on its employees' responses to 37 multiple-choice questions. These questions measured employee satisfaction across these categories: team effectiveness, alignment of goals, trust with coworkers, individual contribution, manager effectiveness, trust in senior leaders, feeling valued, work engagement and people practices.

Companies participating: 354.

Bay Area employees: 147,261.

Counties covered: 12 (Alameda, Contra Costa, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito, Solano, Sonoma, Marin, Monterey).

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