



BUSINESS & FINANCE

Top Employers Find That in Tough Economic Times, a Healthy, Productive Workplace is More Important Than Ever

Five Organizations Receive APA's Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards, Ten Honored for Best Practices

WASHINGTON, March 2 /PRNewswire-HISPANIC PR WIRE/ -- While the impact of the economy can be felt across all industries, workplaces that continue to invest in employees during tough economic times reap rewards for employer and employees alike, reported the American Psychological Association (APA) at its Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards ceremony yesterday. Five organizations were recognized by the APA for their comprehensive efforts to promote employee health and well-being while enhancing organizational performance.

Companies presented with the American Psychological Association's 2009 Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award were W R Systems, Ltd. -- Engineering Services Division (Virginia), Replacements, Ltd. (North Carolina), Teledyne Brown Engineering -- Huntsville Headquarters (Alabama), WorldatWork (Arizona) and Sandia Preparatory School (New Mexico).

These five organizations reported an average turnover rate of just 11 percent in 2008 -- significantly less than the national average of 39 percent as estimated by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Surveys completed by the winning organizations show that only 25 percent of employees reported experiencing chronic work stress compared to 39 percent nationally, and 85 percent of employees reported being satisfied with their jobs, compared to only 61 percent nationally. Additionally, 87 percent of employees said they would recommend their organizations to others as a good place to work, compared to 44 percent nationally and only 5 percent said they intend to seek employment elsewhere within the next year, compared to 32 percent nationally.

"While there is no denying that the current economic downturn may necessitate some belt-tightening, employers should be careful not to secure this quarter's financial returns at the expense of employee well-being or the organization's long-term success," says David Ballard, PsyD, MBA, APA's assistant executive director for corporate relations and business strategy.

"The five award winners have implemented a comprehensive set of programs and policies designed to optimize outcomes for both employee and employer," adds Dr. Ballard. "Their efforts demonstrate that any type of organization, large or small, has the power and the responsibility to create a psychologically healthy workplace."

Winners also report positive outcomes from their workplace practices for employers and employees alike. Teledyne Brown Engineering's wellness program has led to a 34 percent reduction in absenteeism and employees who participate in the program use a third fewer sick days than those who do not. WorldatWork's healthy, supportive and flexible work environment has helped employees decrease body mass, cholesterol, blood pressure and glucose. Replacements, Ltd. reports an average tenure of longer than eight years and on employee surveys, 93



percent said they feel their jobs are important to the company and 91 percent report that they care about the organization. At Sandia Preparatory School, low rates of absenteeism result in direct cost savings, as substitute teachers are not needed as often and few employees use all of their available sick time. At W R Systems, the company's psychologically healthy workplace programs contribute to a low accident and injury rate and strong employee retention.

Psychologically healthy workplace practices fall into five categories: employee involvement; health and safety; employee growth and development; work-life balance; and employee recognition. Employee participation in decision making, skills training and leadership development, flexible work arrangements, and programs promoting healthy lifestyle and behavior choices are just a few of the programs and policies that contribute to a psychologically healthy workplace.

In addition to the PHWA winners, ten organizations received Best Practices Honors for a program or policy that meets the unique needs of the organization and its workforce. The honorees are Broadway House for Continuing Care (New Jersey); Holtz Rubenstein Reminick (New York); Loft Literary Center (Minnesota); Manitoba Blue Cross (Manitoba); Nevada Cancer Institute (Nevada); Orion Associates (Minnesota); Toronto Police Service (Ontario); Watermark Credit Union (Washington) and Women in Construction Company (Minnesota). PHWA winner Sandia Preparatory School (New Mexico) was also recognized as a Best Practices recipient.

APA's Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award

The Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award (PHWA) program has both local- and national-level components. APA's PHWA spans North America and is designed to showcase the very best from among the winners recognized by APA's affiliated state, provincial and territorial psychological associations. Nominees are selected from a pool of previous local winners and evaluated on their workplace programs and policies in the areas of employee involvement, health and safety, employee growth and development, work-life balance and employee recognition. Awards are given to for-profit and not-for-profit organizations as well as government, military and educational institutions.

Best Practices Honors

The Best Practices Honors is a national recognition that highlights those local winners with a particularly innovative program or policy that contributes to a psychologically healthy work environment and meets the unique needs of the organization and its employees. As with APA's PHWA, nominees come from a pool of previous local winners and are selected through a competitive evaluation and judging process.

More information about the PHWA winners and Best Practices honorees is available at <http://apahelpcenter.mediaroom.com>. Organizations interested in learning more about creating a psychologically healthy workplace or applying for an award in their state, province or territory can visit www.phwa.org.

The American Psychological Association (APA), in Washington, DC, is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 150,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of



promoting health, education and human welfare.

SOURCE American Psychological Association

Contact: