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The San Diego Union-Tribune

TOP WORKPLACES

105
companies
& organizations
in San Diego
County that
employees rated
the best in
2023



Michelle Casanova

THE SECRET TO ENTICING WORKERS BACK TO THE OFFICE. **7** 10 COOL PERKS THAT KEEP EMPLOYEES HAPPY. **13**

SMALL TOP WORKPLACES 2023



ALEJANDRO TAMAYO U-T

There are showers and toilets with electric bidets in the specially designed bathrooms with different themes (space, ocean, Aztec) at TCWGlobal.

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get paid their normal wage for 16 hours of volunteer time. To encourage charitable work, if an employee gets up to 16 hours, they get a paid day off. The company will also match, up to \$5,000 annually, any donation an employee makes to a non-profit.

"I've never seen a company just give 16 hours for volunteering," Alatorre said.

TCWGlobal probably wouldn't be able to have such a cool office if it was just 148 employees in San Diego. Formerly known as TargetCW, the staffing and payroll agency is a huge international operation and is in more than 150 countries. That includes Hungary, Malaysia, Senegal, Zambia, Barbados, China, Egypt and Finland.

The privately held company was formed in 2009 and seems to go a bit under the radar in San Diego considering its global reach. Most articles about the company are about its happy workplace or charitable giving. TCWGlobal has made roughly \$700 million a year since 2021.

Because of its size, it is able to offer another big perk: Its own medical plan. It covers up to 82 percent of medical coverage for employees and dependents.

Khouli said he understands staffing and payroll aren't exactly exciting professions, so it was important for him to create a workplace that was fun and helped create a strong culture. Wearing Louis Vuitton sneakers and accompanied throughout the campus by his 7-year-old boxer, Cooper, Khouli proudly showed off many of the features he designed.

There are walls with LED lights that change color throughout the day; specially designed bathrooms with different themes (space, ocean, Aztec); TV screens that flash announcements and employee birthdays, and HEPA air filters and filtered water throughout. Conference rooms have doors that can switch from opaque to see-through. Besides the rooms with massage chairs, there are showers and toilets with electric bidets in the bathrooms.

The champagne vending machine (probably for the best) can only be turned on by a supervisor. The vending machine is in a room that is decked out with leather furniture, mood lighting and a record player. Nearby are albums by Queen and The Velvet Underground.

Environmentally conscious employees may appreciate the 799 solar panels on the roof. There are various fruit trees outside and the company composts food from its weekly five free breakfasts and two free lunches.

If the culture and fancy office aren't enough for some workers, there are also financial perks that seem to be getting rarer for the rest of the nation's workforce. TCWGlobal offers a 401(k) plan that allows an annual match of 50 percent of every dollar contributed, up to 3 percent of the total compensation. The company pays up to \$4,000 a year for day care and has a 529 college savings plan that workers can use to pay for continuing education or existing student loan debt.

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THE LIST

Fewer than 149 employees in San Diego County

1. Doctor Multimedia

Founded: 2011

Sector: Marketing

Description: Helps doctors make sense of the Internet and online marketing.

Local employees: 65

2. Avista Technologies

Founded: 1999

Sector: Chemicals, paint

Description: Avista, a global brand of Kurita, is focused on membrane treatment solutions for reverse osmosis systems, microfiltration/ultrafiltration, and multimedia filtration.

Local employees: 63

3. Raken

Founded: 2014

Sector: Information technology

Description: Its construction management software helps streamline project management.

Local employees: 111

4. Trovata

Founded: 2016

Sector: Enterprise software

Description: With more than \$100 billion of cash managed for nearly 200 enterprise customers, such as Block, Eventbrite and Krispy Kreme, Trovata makes it easy for companies to take control of their cash flow.

Local employees: 88

5. Bandy Ranch Floral

Founded: 2016

Sector: Consumer goods

Description: It has a 46,000-square-foot facility in Vista, which includes 23,000 square feet of refrigeration.

Local employees: 120

6. Kidder Mathews

Founded: 1967

Sector: Agents, brokers

Description: The real-estate firm's specialty areas include industrial, office, retail, investment, multi-family, technology, life

sciences, debt and equity finance, tenant advisory and corporate services.

Local employee count: 74

7. RWM Home Loans

Founded: 1994

Sector: Mortgage lending

Description: Offers loan programs that can close in less than 17 days.

Local employee count: 98

8. Windward Life Care

Founded: 2004

Sector: Home health care

Description: Clients facing health and mental health challenges, including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, benefit from its staff's expertise and integrated model of care.

Local employees: 110

9. Recon Environmental

Founded: 1972

Sector: Consulting

Description: Provides environmental planning and habitat restoration services to public and private sector clients.

Local employees: 57

10. Fairway Independent Mortgage Corp.

Founded: 1996

Sector: Mortgage lending

Description: Has more than 500 branches and 7,000-plus employees nationwide.

Local employees: 94

11. Manpower

Founded: 1977

Sector: Staffing

Description: Provides employment opportunities, training and workforce solutions.

Local employees: 56

12. Corinthian Title Co.

Founded: 2008

Sector: Title and closing services

Description: Licensed to issue title insurance policies in 28 counties in California.

Local employees: 108

13. C3 Risk & Insurance Services

Founded: 2017

Sector: Insurance consultants and brokers

Description: Specializes in risk management, catering to companies ranging from startups to multinational corporations.

Local employees: 100

14. Marque Urgent Care

Founded: 2011

Sector: Physicians practice

Description: A clinic for immediate walk-in care and non-life-threatening emergencies.

Local employees: 56

15. J Public Relations

Founded: 2003

Sector: PR and communications

Description: A global creative communications firm specializing in public relations, social media and content creation.

Local employees: 57

16. Rock West Composites

Founded: 2006

Sector: Aerospace, defense

Description: Rock West can supply a tube for a DIY project or a custom component with strict engineering requirements. It services multiple markets including aerospace, defense, science, research, energy, marine, medical devices, sporting and consumer goods, and industrial applications.

Local employees: 139

17. Erickson-Hall Construction Co.

Founded: 1998

Sector: Building construction

Description: Its services include preconstruction, general contracting, construction management, design build and program management.

Local employees: 94

18. Harris & Associates

Founded: 1974

Sector: Engineering

Description: Improves communities and creates better places to live through sustainable planning, design and construction solutions.

Local employees: 58

19. Procede Software

Founded: 2001

Sector: Enterprise software

Description: Provides Dealer Management Solutions for the commercial trucking industry.

Local employees: 125

20. Coffman Engineers

Founded: 1979

Sector: Building construction

Description: Its engineering services include civil, structural, mechanical, electrical, fire protection and corrosion control.

Local employees: 106

21. Red Door Interactive

Founded: 2002

Sector: Marketing

Description: A full-service marketing and advertising agency.

Local employees: 62

22. Rainbow Municipal Water District

Founded: 1953

Sector: Local government

Description: Provides water and sanitation services to the unincorporated communities of Rainbow, Bonsall and parts of Vista, Ocean-side and Fallbrook.

Local employees: 57

23. Symons Fire Protection

Founded: 1993

Sector: Security and protection

Description: Specializes in the design, installation and repair of fire sprinkler systems for residential and commercial properties.

Local employees: 126

24. Mathnasium

Founded: 2013

Sector: Education

Description: Offers math tutoring, homework help and test preparation services.

Local employees: 50

25. PenChecks

Founded: 1994

Sector: Third party benefits administrator

Description: A state-chartered, non-depository

customer service, employees look for ways to process loan applications faster and more effectively.

“We collaborate, evaluate and make decisions that we can all back—and that really is the secret sauce to yielding meaningful results,” she said.

With transactions falling, the company developed a “Welcome Home” program to help real estate agents generate new business. For example, loan officers share ideas with agents on how to tap their personal networks to find buyers and sellers.

To generate new ideas, Livingston said it’s important to create new staff opportunities through education, listen to their needs and empower them “to be the best person they can be.”

It can be as simple as creating a book club, as one employee suggested, or a “wellness circle” when another employee wanted to promote taking 5,000 steps a day.

Booz Allen Hamilton for clued-in senior management

The Virginia-based consulting firm in civil, defense and national security, founded in 1914, counts 1,510 employees in San Diego.

“They are very knowledgeable on all aspects of the day-to-day performance of each individual they oversee,” said one employee, “as well as being very open to helping problem solve and answer questions specific to each individual’s tasks.”

Jennie Brooks, the executive vice president responsible for the San Diego offices, said managers get a monthly email nudge with best-practice ideas. A monthly podcast introduces new employees and an annual employee “experience survey” is used to gauge what’s working well and what needs improvement.

Employees have monthly “snapshot” conversations with their managers and can seek guidance from upper-level managers or take advantage of a career coach.

Individual teams decide how best to accommodate employees’ flexible work schedules and the company has noticed that some employees choose to work for Booz Allen because of its hybrid work options.

“We emphasize combining the convenience of tech solutions without losing the importance of personal connection,” Brooks said.

Her advice to other companies: “Solicit as much employee feedback as possible to understand

SPECIAL AWARDS

These workplaces were chosen based on standout scores for employee responses to specific survey statements

Leadership

I have confidence in the leader of this company: **A.O. Reed & Co., EVOTEK and RECON Environmental**

Direction

I believe this company is going in the right direction: **Vividion Therapeutics**

Managers

My manager helps me learn and grow: **Charles Schwab**

New Ideas

New ideas are encouraged at this company: **RWM Home Loans**

Doers

At this company, we do things efficiently and well: **Raising Cane’s Chicken Fingers**

Meaningfulness

My job makes me feel like I am part of something meaningful: **National Conflict Resolution Center**

Values

This company operates by strong values: **Community Interface Services**

Clued-in Senior Management

Senior managers understand what is really happening at this company: **Booz Allen Hamilton**

Communication

I feel well-informed about important decisions at this company: **Bandy Ranch Floral**

Appreciation

I feel genuinely appreciated at this company: **California Institute of Arts & Technology**

Work/Life Flexibility

I have the flexibility I need to balance my work and personal life: **Trovata**

Training

I get the formal training I want for my career: **Estancia La Jolla Hotel & Spa**

Benefits

My benefits package is good compared to others in this industry: **Dr. Bronner’s**

what’s working and what isn’t. Be mindful of your employees’ circumstances. Leverage different methods of communication that cater to their preferences and needs.”

Showley is a freelance writer.



NINA THOMPSON

Nina Thompson, director of public relations for the San Diego Humane Society, adopted Chica last year. The Humane Society provides a 15 percent discount for employees.

S.D. COMPANIES OFFER PERKS FOR THEIR PET LOVERS

Benefits include discounted insurance, adoption reimbursements and bringing furry friends to work

BY HANG NGUYEN

Katie Alatorre adopted not one, but two mutts thanks to a company perk.

TCWGlobal, a San Diego-based staffing company, offers employees a \$100 reimbursement to offset adoption fees or supplies costs. Since 2017, it also began providing a 10 percent discount for pet insurance via Healthy Paws that covers accidents and illnesses.

“It’s amazing that they care about this,” said Alatorre, a global operations training lead who adopted Odin in 2020 and Nala last year. She also took advantage of her company insurance for Odin.

A growing number of companies are becoming more pet-friendly. By providing discounted pet insurance and adoption reimbursements as

well as permitting pets at work, companies hope to decrease employees’ stress and increase their productivity.

“As an animal shelter,” said Nina Thompson, director of public relations for the San Diego Humane Society, “we know that pets are one of the greatest joys in life. We want to ensure that our staff has the tools needed to take care of their own pets.”

In addition to pet insurance, employees at the San Diego Humane Society receive discounted Purina for Professionals food and pet training classes. Spay and neuter services, microchips and adoptions are free.

Thompson adopted a 9-year-old pit bull terrier mix late last year. Because she adopted Chica from her employer, Thompson was able to activate 30 days of free pet insurance

thanks to the San Diego Humane Society’s partnership with MetLife.

“It gives you peace of mind” to know that Chica was covered while she figured out insurance. She decided to continue with MetLife after the free period expired. Thompson pays \$95 a month, which includes her company’s 15 percent discount for employees and \$20 wellness program. The wellness addition covers 100 percent of preventative care, which includes vaccines for rabies and leptospirosis, a bacterial disease spread through urine.

Insuring animals is a rising trend. The number of both cats and dogs insured in the U.S. has nearly doubled in three years to 4.85 million in 2022, according to the North American Pet Health Insurance Association.

Sempre, which owns San Diego Gas & Electric and has more than 5,000 employees in San Diego County, began offering pet insurance in 2021. Its employees enjoy an average savings of 30 percent compared to similar plans from other pet insurers. Workers can choose plans that offer 50 to 90 percent reimbursement and can see any veterinarian they choose. The plans cover accidents, illnesses, surgeries, hospitalization, prescription medication or therapeutic diets.

Since 2019, Kidder Mathews, a commercial real-estate firm, has been providing insurance for cats and dogs that costs less than \$10 a month.

Other companies provide different pet perks. For example, Ro Health, a San Diego-based staffing company, since 2019 has been letting dogs come to the office on Tuesdays.

In 2020, Dr. Bronner’s, a Vista-based consumer goods company, introduced the bring-your-dog-to-work policy.

“Being a company that advocates for animals, it only made sense to allow employees to bring their fur friends to work,” said Nicky Mujica, HR specialist for Dr. Bronner’s. “Having such a benefit allows employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance ... Studies have shown that having a pet and spending time with them can reduce anxiety and stress and boost mood and productivity.”

Nguyen is a freelance writer.

THE AWARDS ARE DETERMINED BY EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS

BY BOB HELBIG

Great workplaces aren't created by accident. They are built and nurtured. The Top Workplaces awards recognize the employers that do it well in the eyes of their employees.

The heart of the San Diego Top Workplaces award is the employee survey process. Energage administers a 24-question survey to employees, who are the sole deciders of whether a company culture merits recognition.

This is the 11th year The Union-Tribune has partnered with Energage, an employee survey company based in Exton, Pa., to celebrate exceptional workplaces.

There is no cost to participate in Top Workplaces and no obligation to purchase any product or service.

For 2023, 3,674 organizations were invited to survey their employees. Based on employee survey feedback, 105 have earned recognition as Top Workplaces.

To participate in the Top Workplaces awards for 2024 or for more information: Go to the nomination page at sandiegouniontribune.com/nominate

In the current job market, companies continue to focus on recruiting, retaining and motivating employees. It's more paramount than ever for companies to be intentional about a culture that prioritizes employee appreciation and recognition, Energage CEO Eric Rubino said.

"We really need workplaces that inspire employees," he said. "You have to really acknowledge employees genuinely and consistently."

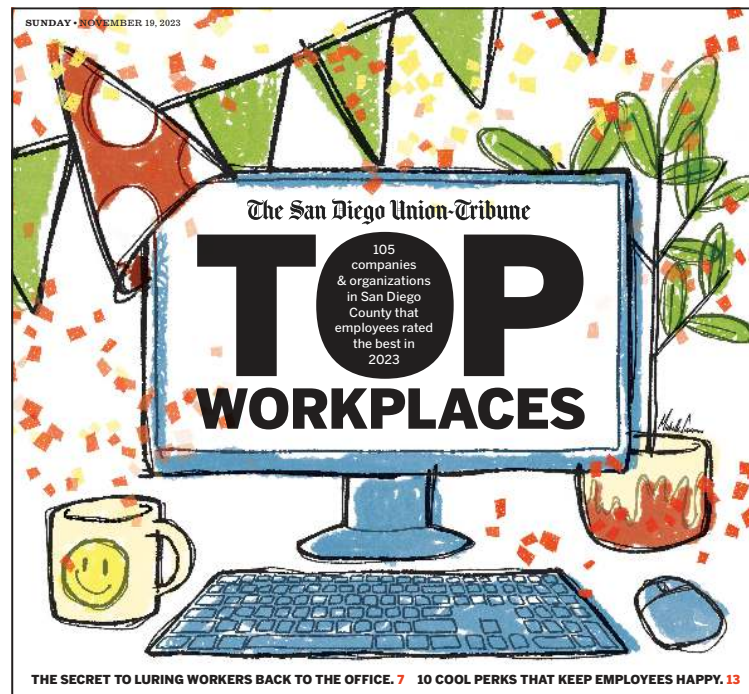
The award is open to any employer with 50 or more employees in San Diego County. Survey results are valid only if 35 percent or more employees respond; employers with fewer than 85 employees have a higher response threshold, requiring responses from at least 30 employees.

Energage tabulates the survey results. Employers are grouped into small, midsize and large to best compare similar employee experiences. Employers earn Top Workplaces recognition if their aggregated employees' feedback score exceeds national benchmarks.

Energage has established those benchmarks based on feedback from more than 27 million employees over 17 years. They are ranked within those groups based on the strength of the survey feedback.

Why isn't a particular company on the list? Perhaps it chose not to participate. Or, its employee survey feedback might have fallen below benchmark scores. Energage runs tests on survey feedback and in some cases may choose to disqualify organizations based on irregularities in survey feedback.

Helbig is media partnerships director for Energage, an employee survey company based in suburban Philadelphia.



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U-T COVER ILLUSTRATION BY MICHELLE GUERRERO

Let's get down to your business.

We  our people.

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