And the Winners Are...
BY ROBERT LEVERING AND MILTON MOSKOWITZ

1 NetApp (Rank last year: 14)
Sunnyvale, Calif. netapp.com
EMPLOYEES 5,014 (U.S.); 2,839 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 12%.
NEW JOBS 528 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $134,716 (salaried); $66,525 (hourly)

How's this for an unlikely success story: Dave Hitz works as a cowboy, then sells his blood to help pay for Princeton (where he rooms with Jeff Bezos), gets into computers, and in 1992 teams up with James Lau and Michael Malcolm to form a data storage and management company called Network Appliance. Under longtime CEO Dan Warrentnoven, NetApp has survived the dot-com crash, grown at two to three times the storage industry average for four years, and in 2006 hit $3.3 billion in sales. But it is employee enthusiasm for the legendary egalitarian culture that catapulted NetApp to No. 1 after six years on our list. Says one employee: “It feels like a small startup company instead of a $7 billion-plus corporation.” Typical of its down-to-earth management ethos, NetApp early on ditched a travel policy a dozen pages long in favor of this maxim: “We are a frugal company. But don’t show up dog-tired to save a few bucks. Use your common sense.” Rather than business plans, many units write “future histories,” imagining where their business will be a year or two out. And the benefits are tops: five paid days for volunteer work, $11,390 adoption aid, and autism coverage—used by 43 employees since 2006 at a cost of $242,452. The company has gained market share during the slump, hasn’t had layoffs, and has more than $2 billion in cash on hand to help it ride out the global financial crisis.

2 Edward Jones (5)
St. Louis. edwardjones.com
EMPLOYEES 14,496 (U.S.); 2,528 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 9%.
NEW JOBS 723 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $77,147 (salaried); $33,624 (hourly)

The stock market collapse reduced partner distributions and bonuses, but Jim Weddle, who heads the brokerage, assured associates the firm had no exposure to high-risk mortgages or financial derivatives and no plans for layoffs. Jones hired 660 new financial advisors in the first ten months of 2008 and is building an addition to its St. Louis headquarters for 500 new employees.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBYN TWOMSEY

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3 Boston Consulting Group

BOSTON boston.com

EMPLOYEES 1,680 (U.S.); 5,029 (outside U.S.)

JOB GROWTH 10%; NEW JOBS 142 (one year)

ANNUAL PAY $141,111 (salaried); $64,894 (hourly)

Management consultant has increased recruitment of minorities (25% of staff, up from 15% in 2004). Offers first-class health insurance; $5 co-pay for doctor visits, 100% fertility treatment coverage.

4 Google

Mountain View, Calif. google.com

EMPLOYEES 12,580 (U.S.); 7,013 (outside U.S.)

JOB GROWTH 40%; NEW JOBS 3,550 (one year)

ANNUAL PAY N.A.

Tech powerhouse marked tenth birthday in 2006. While the company still attracts 777,000 applicants a year, hiring has slowed, and Google recently cut trills like afternoon tea and an annual ski trip.

5 Wegmans Food Markets

Rochester, N.Y. wegmans.com

EMPLOYEES 37,156 (U.S.); 6 (outside U.S.)

JOB GROWTH 6%; NEW JOBS 591 (one year)

ANNUAL PAY $51,350 (salaried); $28,092 (hourly)

Recent offerings at this family-owned supermarket chain: Employees could buy gift cards of up to $250 at a 10% discount to help with food costs; Wegmans is also rolling out free yoga classes at each of its stores.

6 Cisco Systems

San Jose cisco.com

EMPLOYEES 37,123 (U.S.); 28,426 (outside U.S.)

JOB GROWTH 5%; NEW JOBS 2,412 (one year)

ANNUAL PAY $131,703 (salaried); $59,852 (hourly)

CEO John Chambers is focusing on collaborative efforts to give employees more say in decision making. With over $56 billion in cash and investments, Cisco is poised to ride out the business slowdown and has about 500 job openings, mostly across engineering disciplines and in “customer advocacy.”

7 Genentech

South San Francisco gene.com

EMPLOYEES 10,969 (U.S.); 9 (outside U.S.)

JOB GROWTH 5%; NEW JOBS 529 (one year)

ANNUAL PAY $112,202 (salaried); $68,225 (hourly)

The biotech leader continued to resist a takeover by shareholder Roche; it also implemented retention bonuses and severance ranging from 18 to 52 weeks’ pay for anyone terminated after a merger.

8 Methodist Hospital System

Houston methodisthealth.com

EMPLOYEES 10,535 (U.S.); 0 (outside U.S.)

JOB GROWTH 1%; NEW JOBS 67 (one year)

ANNUAL PAY $86,793 (salaried); $60,340 (hourly)

Methodist broke ground on $2 billion in construction in 2006, filled 300 new jobs, and awarded merit pay raises of 3%; Salaried employees who worked long hours after Hurricane Ike got $250 Kroger gift cards.

9 Goldman Sachs

New York gs.com

EMPLOYEES 14,088 (U.S.); 12,686 (outside U.S.)

JOB GROWTH 2%; NEW JOBS 308 (one year)

ANNUAL PAY $144,994 (salaried); N.A. (hourly)

Wall Street survivor turned itself into a bank holding company in September and laid off some 3,000 people across the globe by year-end. Top seven officers agreed to forgo bonuses, but rest of staff was in line to receive performance bonuses, albeit at a lower rate.

10 Nugget Market

Woodland, Calif. nuggetmarket.com

EMPLOYEES 1,536 (U.S.); 0 (outside U.S.)

JOB GROWTH 22%; NEW JOBS 173 (one year)

ANNUAL PAY $16,444 (salaried); $34,490 (hourly)

Sales have yet to slump at this crazy-fun supermarket chain, which in 61 years has never had a layoff.

11 Adobe Systems

San Jose adobe.com

EMPLOYEES 4,253 (U.S.); 3,075 (outside U.S.)

JOB GROWTH 5%; NEW JOBS 343 (one year)

ANNUAL PAY $95,547 (salaried); $70,854 (hourly)

Software innovator known for its egalitarian culture was not immune to the slowdown but got kudos for humane treatment of 600 departing staffers.

12 Recreational Equipment (REI)

Kent, Wash. rei.com

EMPLOYEES 9,780 (U.S.); 0 (outside U.S.)

JOB GROWTH 12%; NEW JOBS 368 (one year)

ANNUAL PAY $92,298 (salaried); $24,527 (hourly)

All employees are eligible for subsidized healthcare coverage. Eligible workers receive an automatic 5% yearly contribution to a retirement plan.
Google
Our former No. 1 did some belt-tightening this year, but don’t feel too sorry for Googlers: They still get perks like free massages, gourmet meals, and onsite car washes and oil changes. This year the staff also received brand-new Dream Phones, the iPhone challenger that runs Google’s Android software (worth about $400).

13 Devon Energy [9]
Oklahoma City devonenergy.com
EMPLOYEES 3,752 (U.S.); 1,512 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 16% NEW JOBS 378 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $186,882 (salaried); $89,690 (hourly)
Money guzzles to employees at the oil and gas explorer and producer. A new 401(k) retirement plan calls for annual company contributions of 11% to 22%.

14 Robert W. Baird [9]
Milwaukee rwbaird.com
EMPLOYEES 2,184 (U.S.); 97 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 4% NEW JOBS 81 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $128,700 (salaried); $41,625 (hourly)
This Midwest-based employee-owned investment adviser thrived despite the meltdown, hiring more than 200 people in 2008.

15 W. L. Gore & Associates [19]
Newark, Del. gate.com
EMPLOYEES 5,481 (U.S.); 2,663 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 5% NEW JOBS 276 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY N.A.
The maker of Gore-Tex celebrated its 50th birthday in 2008 by assembling an archive featuring more than 2,000 stories and images submitted by “passionate champions,” or highly engaged employees.

16 Qualcomm [18]
San Diego qualcomm.com
EMPLOYEES 11,932 (U.S.); 2,395 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 19% NEW JOBS 1,907 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $102,630 (salaried); $73,105 (hourly)
Wireless-components designer keeps new ideas flowing via an award-winning recruitment program. It hires 750 interns a year from 36 countries.

17 Principal Financial Group [11]
Des Moines principal.com
EMPLOYEES 13,343 (U.S.); 2,955 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH -1% NEW JOBS 139 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $86,241 (salaried); $34,596 (hourly)
CEO Larry Zimpelman got a thumbs-up for weekly e-mails he sent during height of the financial upheaval to keep employees up-to-date and reassure them the company was healthy. "Hearing from you was exactly what I personally needed," said one staffer.

18 Shared Technologies [15]
Coppell, Texas sharedtechnologies.com
EMPLOYEES 1,565 (U.S.); 0 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 12% NEW JOBS 463 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $123,390 (salaried); $76,482 (hourly)
When this installer of data and telephone systems hit a slow patch this year, senior managers gave up bonuses. CEO Tony Farella cut his salary 50%, travel costs were reduced, and open positions were left unfilled. Result: not a single layoff.

19 OhioHealth [18]
Columbus ohiohealth.com
EMPLOYEES 11,858 (U.S.); 0 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 7% NEW JOBS 539 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $102,048 (salaried); $84,096 (hourly)
Large hospital system [more than 2,000 beds] will beef up health insurance for staff members without increasing premiums in 2009. Employees now have full coverage for smoking cessation, prescription drugs, and colorectal cancer screenings.

20 SAS [19]
Cary, N.C. sas.com
EMPLOYEES 5,381 (U.S.); 4,795 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 5% NEW JOBS 237 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY N.A.
No layoffs at this leading software supplier. In fact, sales are up, and SAS is hiring. Traditions are important here: fresh fruit every Monday, M&Ms on Wednesdays, and breakfast goodies on Fridays.

21 Arnold & Porter [18]
Washington, D.C. arnoldporter.com
EMPLOYEES 1,296 (U.S.); 79 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 3% NEW JOBS 32 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $172,192 (salaried); $57,779 (hourly)
Law firm offers world-class benefits to staff and attorneys: 18 weeks' paid leave for maternity and adoption, $5,000 for adoption fees, $30,000 for fertility services, free onsite fitness center, on- and off-site child care.

22 Whole Foods Market [16]
Austin wholefoodsmarket.com
EMPLOYEES 5,967 (U.S.); 1,914 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 22% NEW JOBS 857 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $72,215 (salaried); $24,322 (hourly)
Slowing growth, cutbacks in new-store openings, and 100 layoffs haven't curbed the enthusiasm of this young workforce (28% are under age 25).
23 Zappos.com
Henderson, Nev. zappos.com
EMPLOYEES 1,655 (U.S.); 0 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 39%; NEW JOBS 445 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $85,582 (salaried); $23,609 (hourly)
This list newcomer offers free lunches, concierge services, and 100% coverage of health insurance premiums. After he cut 8% of the staff, the CEO received several glowing letters from departing employees.

24 Starbucks
Seattle Starbucks.com
EMPLOYEES 146,700 (U.S.); 70,875 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 6%; NEW JOBS 1,173 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $44,966 (salaried); $42,387 (hourly)
Despite closing 600 stores and laying off 1,200 employees, Starbucks remains an attractive workplace, especially for part timers seeking health insurance.

25 Johnson Financial Group
Racine, Wis. johnsonbank.com
EMPLOYEES 1,300 (U.S.); 93 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 4%; NEW JOBS 45 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $12,304 (salaried); $26,869 (hourly)
Employees at the 63 locations of this financial services company were assured the jobs were safe and kept in the loop about the industry upheaval via town halls and voicemail from the CEO.

26 Aflac
Columbus, Ga. aflac.com
EMPLOYEES 4,493 (U.S.); 6 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 4%; NEW JOBS 45 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $58,661 (salaried); $25,559 (hourly)
Insurer is provider of the largest onsite corporate daycare in the state of Georgia. Aflac's two centers care for 520 children at a modest average cost of $352 a month. Hours were extended to 11:30 p.m. as second shift workers could use the benefit too.

27 QuikTrip
Tulsa quiktrip.com
EMPLOYEES 10,159 (U.S.); 0 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 3%; NEW JOBS 1,469 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $62,936 (salaried); $40,080 (hourly)
Employees are treated so well at this 24-hour convenience chain—wages, benefits, and training—that they stay around for the long haul. More than 200 have been here more than 20 years.

28 PCL Construction Enterprises
Denver pcl.com
EMPLOYEES 4,420 (U.S.); 6,569 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 24%; NEW JOBS 664 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $100,047 (salaried); $79,720 (hourly)
What recession? General contractor (Denver International Airport, Mall of America, and Staples Center) added more than 600 people to payroll in past year and has huge backlog of projects for 2009. Employees benefit because it is 100% employee-owned. No one owns more than 5%.

29 Quicken Loans
Livonia, Mich. quickenloans.com
EMPLOYEES 2,850 (U.S.); 1 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 1%; NEW JOBS 445 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $64,189 (salaried); $40,166 (hourly)
The industry took a huge hit, but mortgage lender Quicken still offers perks (like short days once a week) that many companies in thriving industries don't.

30 Bingham McCutchen
Boston binghamb.com
EMPLOYEES 1,605 (U.S.); 163 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 2%; NEW JOBS 31 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $255,312 (salaried); $215,499 (hourly)
Ex-governors Steve Merrill of New Hampshire and Pete Wilson of California are among the law firm's 343 partners, 21% of whom are women, 9% minorities.

31 CarMax
Richmond carmax.com
EMPLOYEES 16,107 (U.S.); 0 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 1%; NEW JOBS 1,560 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $62,459 (salaried); $31,937 (hourly)
After sales at used-car loss dropped by 17%, CEO Tom Folliard announced layoffs of 255 employees but cushioned the news with a generous severance package of four to 26 weeks' pay.

32 Container Store
Coppell, Texas containerstore.com
EMPLOYEES 2,286 (U.S.); 178 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 4%; NEW JOBS 36 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $45,303 (salaried); $32,546 (hourly)
Sales turned down for the first time in 30 years, but this storage retailer (No. 1 on our list in 2000 and 2001) continued with expansion plans, opening four new stores and refusing to resort to layoffs. Instead it froze salaries for everyone in the company and rallied the troops with introduction of sales contests.

33 JM Family Enterprises
Daytona Beach, Fla. jmfamily.com
EMPLOYEES 4,577 (U.S.); 78 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 2%; NEW JOBS 23 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $34,100 (salaried)
Amid falling sales, many intensely loyal employees at this privately held Toyota distributor volunteered to forgo bonuses. CEO Colin Brown rejected their offers and paid out bonuses, but asked for their support in cutting costs elsewhere in the company.

34 Umpqua Bank
Portland, Ore. umpquabank.com
EMPLOYEES 1,707 (U.S.); 0 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 4%; NEW JOBS 73 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $51,064 (salaried); $28,765 (hourly)
Umpqua's 147 branches in three Western states look like Internet cafes—with coffee on the house. One prized perk: Employees get 40 paid hours a year to volunteer for the cause of their choice.

WHOLE FOODS
All employees at the high-end food seller—like fishmonger Jeff Kudlak in Millburn, N.J.—are encouraged to have fun on the job and come up with creative ways to show their wares. The best ideas are exported to stores around the country.
Microsoft [86]  
Redmond, Wash. microsoft.com  
EMPLOYEES 55,237 (U.S.); 36,484 (outside U.S.)  
JOB GROWTH 15%; NEW JOBS 7,130 (one year)  
ANNUAL PAY $122,399 (salaried); $59,420 (hourly)  
Software king, still growing, has added over 7,500 to payroll since 2007. Managers maintain "morale budgets" to stage fun events (team dinners, outings to sports events or plays) for the troops.

Paychex [53]  
Rochester, N.Y. paychex.com  
EMPLOYEES 12,207 (U.S.); 32 (outside U.S.)  
JOB GROWTH 5%; NEW JOBS 579 (one year)  
ANNUAL PAY N.A.  
Payroll and HR services has rich benefits: 401(k) match of 100% up to 3% of pay, 50% on next 2%; $6,500 tuition reimbursement; free flu shots. Coming in 2009: domestic-partner benefits.

EOG Resources [64]  
Houston eogresources.com  
EMPLOYEES 1,803 (U.S.); 219 (outside U.S.)  
JOB GROWTH 30%; NEW JOBS 416 (one year)  
ANNUAL PAY $158,302 (salaried); $74,427 (hourly)  
Oil and gas producer has a stellar retirement plan, with 401(k) contributions matched 100% up to 6% of pay. Some 80% of employees work flexible schedules. No wonder turnover is only 4.8% a year.

Camden Property Trust [65]  
Houston camdencivic.com  
EMPLOYEES 1,849 (U.S.); 0 (outside U.S.)  
JOB GROWTH –8%; JOBS LOST 18 (one year)  
ANNUAL PAY $62,223 (salaried); $36,210 (hourly)  
Apartment home developer has a lively culture: "Having fun is so essential, we made it one of our values." This year 27 laid-off employees received two weeks' pay per year of service (minimum 12 weeks).

Plante & Moran [44]  
Southfield, Mich. plantemoran.com  
EMPLOYEES 1,558 (U.S.); 0 (outside U.S.)  
JOB GROWTH 4%; NEW JOBS 62 (one year)  
ANNUAL PAY $65,500 (salaried); $35,800 (hourly)  
Who said accountants don't have any fun? Employees from all 17 offices gather one day every year to hear updates on the firm and mingle. Latest event was attended by more than 1,200 staff members.

Rackspace Hosting [32]  
San Antonio rackspace.com  
EMPLOYEES 1,992 (U.S.); 460 (outside U.S.)  
JOB GROWTH 99%; NEW JOBS 729 (one year)  
ANNUAL PAY $59,633 (salaried); $41,688 (hourly)  
Employees are called Rackers at this Internet-hosting firm. Philanthropy committee is called Rack Gives Back. Chairman's BMW convertible is loaned to employees for outstanding service.
44 NuStar Energy
San Antonio, nustarenergy.com

EMPLOYEES 1,319 (U.S.); 347 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 23%; NEW JOBS 245 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $85,149 (salary); $66,660 (hourly)

The pipeline operator and refinery (a spinoff of Valero) shares the wealth: bonuses topping $10,000 and a 401(k) match of 100% for up to 6% of pay.

45 King’s Daughters Medical Ctr.
Ashland, Ky., kdmc.com

EMPLOYEES 3,041 (U.S.); 0 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 4%; NEW JOBS 01 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $76,064 (salary); $61,268 (hourly)

In August, CEO Fred Jackson sent workers an appreciation letter. Tucked inside was a crisp $50 bill for part-timers and a $100 bill for full-timers.

46 American Fidelity Assurance
Oklahoma City, afa.com

EMPLOYEES 1,509 (U.S.); 0 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 10%; NEW JOBS 134 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $95,701 (salary); $93,701 (hourly)

Seller of disability insurance offers wellness programs, an onsite fitness center, and a new All-American Grill featuring healthy foods.

47 DreamWorks Animation SKG
Glendale, Calif., dreamworksanimation.com

EMPLOYEES 1,634 (U.S.); 3 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 18%; NEW JOBS 26 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $112,100 (salary); $135,500 (hourly)

As one employee puts it: “Fountains, lakes, ponds. Amazing free gourmet breakfasts and lunches. Unbelievable movie wrap parties. Lots of free gifts!”

48 Mattel
El Segundo, Calif., mattel.com

EMPLOYEES 5,552 (U.S.); 27,000 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH N.A.; NEW JOBS N.A. (one year)
ANNUAL PAY N.A.

Perks are what you might expect at world’s largest toy company: 13 paid holidays, two paid days to volunteer in schools, two onsite child-care centers, five paid days of parental leave for new mothers and fathers, adoption assistance, half-days on Fridays all year long, and onsite toy stores that offer discounts. In the last quarter of 2008, Mattel eliminated 307 U.S. positions through combination of early retirement, attrition, and layoffs.

49 Intuit
Mountain View, Calif., intuit.com

EMPLOYEES 7,637 (U.S.); 568 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 0%; NEW JOBS 24 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY N.A.

King of personal finance software (Quicken, TurboTax) has gone green, with bottled water banned, mass-transit subsidies for employees of up to $100 a month, replacement of pickup trucks with electric vehicles, and the goal of reducing its carbon footprint by 15% in next three years.

50 Burns & McDonnell
Kansas City, Mo., burnsmcd.com

EMPLOYEES 2,840 (U.S.); 10 (outside U.S.)
JOB GROWTH 15%; NEW JOBS 370 (one year)
ANNUAL PAY $107,900 (salary); $52,000 (hourly)

Employees at the 110-year-old engineering consultancy cite their employee stock-ownership plan as “amazing” and “fantastic.” The ESOP owns 100% of the shares, which are distributed to every single employee; with the average balance exceeding $215,000—turnover here is only 4%.
51 Ernst & Young (57)
New York eyj.com

One-quarter of all manager hires and above are "boomerangs," ex-employees who get credit for their previous time in company, vacation and retirement.

52 Booz Allen Hamilton (81)
McLean, Va. boozallen.com

Revenues were up 18% for the year, and the consultancy had a net increase of more than 500 employees in the second half of 2006.

53 Stew Leonard's (25)
Norwalk, Conn. stewleons.com

The supermarket's founders staged a "road show" at each location to assure employees that their jobs and benefits were safe.

54 Erickson Retirement Communities (63)
Gatonsville, Md. erickson.com

Help for employees impacted by Hurricane Ike: temporary housing in the company's retirement facilities and matched employee contributions to a $100,000 relief fund.

55 Salesforce.com (4) San Francisco salesforce.com

Staff gets six paid days a year to volunteer; 5% of pre-IPO equity was allocated to company's foundation.

56 KPMG (71)
New York us.kpmg.com

Employees received wage hikes averaging 6.7% in October, while the accounting firm passed cut bonuses totaling $108 million. Year-end holiday gift was in favor of a food bank donation.

57 Novo Nordisk
Princeton, N.J. novonordisk-usa.com

Employees who work for this Danish diabetes treatment company enjoy an automatic contribution of 8% of pay to 401(k) plans and a 50% match of employee contributions up to 2% of pay, plus paid holidays and a medical and dental insurance plan for retirees.

58 PricewaterhouseCoopers (90)
New York pwc.com/us

The audit firm's chairman issued updates to employees, saying, "We have no plans to downsize, restructure, or reduce our staffing levels."

59 Scripps Health (56)
San Diego scripps.org

Employees received nearly $900 per person for improvements in patient satisfaction scores.

60 Scottrade (58)
St. Louis scottrade.com

Turbulence led to the firm's biggest day ever on Oct. 10. Quarterly bonuses were maintained; the firm has never had a layoff.

61 Deloitte (29)
New York deloitte.com

Women now hold 22% of top positions at this accounting firm, compared with 6% in 1993. Minorities account for 6% of top positions, vs. 4% in 1996.

62 Griffin Hospital (49)
Derby, Conn. griffinhealth.org

Famous for its patient-centric philosophy, Griffin soothes staff with music in the parking lots, family kitchens, chair massages, and noise abatement.

63 Mayo Clinic (91)
Rochester, Minn. mayoclinic.org

Famed medical clinic has gold-plated medical benefits, including unlimited lifetime in-network benefits, free preventive-care services, and free worldwide Mayo air ambulance service.

64 Milliken (92)
 Spartanburg, S.C. milliken.com

One of last big U.S. textile makers runs its industry's biggest research center, holding 2,200 patents.

65 Texas Instruments (100)
Dallas texas.com

Semiconductor maker cut costs at end of 2008 by offering generous early-retirement packages.

66 MITRE (61)
McLean, Va. mitre.org

CEO of this nonprofit government researcher makes only 18 times what lowest-paid staff member earns. Retirement plan aims to replace 80% to 100% of final salary.

67 Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (45)
Atlanta children.org

Pediatric hospital tackled nurse shortage with 100 Nurses in 100 Days, with prizes for referrals.

68 Southern Ohio Medical Center (79)
Portsmouth, Ohio somc.org

In 2008 this progressive hospital added medical and dental insurance for domestic partners.

69 National Instruments (79)
Austin ni.com

The software company has a laid-back feel (happy hours, acceptable to wear flip-flops). Offers profit sharing of up to 15% of earnings.

70 Stanley (84)
Arlington, Va. stanleyassociates.com

IT consultant to 40 government agencies added 1,200 employees as revenues soared nearly 50%, a result of several new contracts, including a $570 million passport program with Homeland Security.

71 Men's Wearhouse
Houston menswearhouse.com

Operator of 1,177 clothing stores curbed spending but kept its 38-year-end holiday parties. Pay hikes were frozen for those making more than $100,000.

72 Nordstrom (35)
Seattle nordstrom.com

As sales declined, Nordstrom hein fanned out to 12 cities to hold town halls; no cuts were made in pay or benefits.

73 Chesapeake Energy (57)
Oklahoma City chp.com

After natural gas prices plummeted and the stock fell from $74 to $12, CEO Aubrey McClendon rushed to reassure employees that the company would rebound. No one was laid off—and more than 1,100 employees were hired between July and October.

74 Alcon Laboratories (60)
Fort Worthalcon.com

Employees hope the sale of a majority stake to Novartis won't uproot eye-care company's "Texas friendly" culture or generous retirement plan (every $1 contributed is matched with $2.40 from the company).

75 Atlantic Health System
Morristown, N.J. atlnhealth.org

Rewards abound at this large New Jersey hospital: $2,000 for employee referrals; $1,000 for a new idea; $3,000 for leadership.
76 Lehigh Valley Hospital & Health Network (85)
Allentown, Pa. allhec.org
This hospital and physician network has added more than 1,000 employees since 2006; 40% of all new hires are employees referrals.

77 Northwest Community Hospital
Arlington Heights, Ill. nch.org
CEO Bruce K. Crowther meets every new employee and holds town hall meetings twice a year at all NCH locations.

78 Marriott International (73)
Bethesda, Md. marriott.com
Travel slump led to reduced headcount, but hotel chain waives co-pays for preventive care.

79 Baptist Health South Florida (94)
Coral Gables, Fla. baptisthealth.net
Baptist helped out strapped employees with subsidies of $20,000 to $10,000 to first-time homebuyers.

80 Bright Horizons (89)
Woburn, Mass. brighthorizons.com
Thousands of employees (excluding board and execs) at the child-care provider shared a $3.5 million bonus after the chain was taken private.

81 S.C. Johnson & Son (87)
Racine, Wis. scjohnson.com
During the financial crisis CEO Fisk Johnson sent a check-up card to all employees and gave them a two-day holiday break extension.

82 Perkins Coie (93)
Seattle perkinscoie.com
Even support staffers at this law firm are eligible for a technology flexplan allowance, plus performance and year-end bonuses.

83 eBay (58)
San Jose ebay.com
Online auctioneer reduced its global workforce by 10%. Departing workers got generous severance and outplacement help.

84 Juniper Networks
Sunnyvale, Calif. juniper.net
The Cisco competitor offers stock options for new hires, beer bashes, and a culture of "humility."

85 Arkansas Children's Hospital (76)
Little Rock arkchildrens.org
Devotion to children animates this place. One great perk: free meals when the hospital is particularly busy or during bad weather.

86 CH2M Hill (54)
Englewood, Colo. ch2m.com
The engineering firm welcomed 4,000 new staff via an acquisition with $2.5 million in stock and cash.

87 Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe
New York. orrick.com
Law firm paid bonuses to hourly workers despite economic crunch that forced layoffs of 20 lawyers and 20 legal secretaries.

88 Publix Super Markets (91)
Lakeland, Fla. publix.com
The nation's largest employee-owned company. Employees get stock every year—in 2006 they averaged 125 shares, worth $4,608.

89 Herman Miller (86)
Zeeland, Mich. hermanmiller.com
Layoffs at furniture maker were minimized by generous early-retirement packages: three weeks' pay per year of service.

90 FedEx (97)
Memphis fedex.com
Cost cuts included freezing 401(k) matches, execs and CEO pay slashed 10% and 20%, respectively, but no layoffs or hourly wage cuts.

91 Gilbane
Providence gilbane.com
This 135-year-old construction company has annual turnover of 9%, vs. industry average of 28%.

92 Four Seasons Hotels (88)
Toronto foursasons.com
Employees love staying free at any Four Seasons property (three to 20 nights a year, depending on tenure), with 50% off food service.

93 Valero Energy (67)
San Antonio valero.com
Hurricanes Gustav and Ike whiplashed refineries, but CEO Bill Klesse assured employees that Valero would not be severely impacted by financial storms.

94 Build-A-Bear Workshop St. Louis buildabear.com
Employees get about working in the 375 mostly mall-based stores. "I love my job. It keeps me young and happy," said one.

95 Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants
San Francisco kimptonhotels.com
Operator of luxury boutique hotels navigated tough travel climate by motivating employees with new training and reward programs. Kimpton is minimizing layoffs by reducing hourly worker schedules.

96 T-Mobile
Bellevue, Wash. tmobile.com
At year-end the wireless-phon e arm of Deutsche Telekom had avoided layoffs that hit many competitors. Company continued child-care subsidies of between $125 and $200 a month, depending on salary.

97 Accenture
New York. accenture.com
Every employee of this consulting company is assigned a career counselor—and he or she then has thousands of courses to choose from. Average training is 75 hours a year per person.

98 Vanderbilt University
Nashville vanderbilt.edu
First educational institution to appear on our list. Employees and their dependents get a 70% tuition subsidy at any college in the country. Hospital offers a WOW (work on weekends) shift for nurses and other workers who want to be at home during weekdays.

99 General Mills
Minneapolis generalmills.com
Employees stay fit with an award-winning wellness program, including fitness centers, create medical clinics, and health-risk assessments. In California, 114 workers lost 704 pounds in a ten-week program.

100 SRA International (99)
Fairfax, Va. sra.com
Strong growth at the government contractor meant that by the end of 2008, SRA had 341 positions to fill. "When a contract is lost," one employee said, "SRA finds each person a new job in the company and avoids layoffs."

HOW WE PICK
To choose the 100 Best, we conduct the most extensive employee survey in corporate America. More than 61,000 employees from 353 companies responded to a 57-question survey created by the Great Place to Work Institute. Two-thirds of a company's score is based on the survey, which is sent to a minimum of 400 randomly selected employees. The remaining third is based on our Culture Audit, which includes detailed questions about demographics, pay, and benefits, and open-ended questions on philosophy, communication, etc. Any company that is at least seven years old with more than 1,000 U.S. employees is eligible. To nominate your company, go to www.greatplacetowork.com.
—Robert Levering and Milton Moskowitz