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Civilly the best

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The CE News Best Civil Engineering Firms to Work For 2008

In today's volatile economy, firms can be hard-pressed to find the right balance between budget constraints and employee and client satisfaction. Formulating the ideal recipe for these best practices is unique to each organization, its mission, and its workforce. CE News honors the civil engineering firms that meet and even exceed this often strenuous challenge.

Among this year's top-ranked firms are organizations that still manage to offer a variety of benefit programs that foster employee appreciation and promote team building. Many even provide a sense of community by financially supporting local organizations and encouraging volunteer work during business hours. These attributes and more are found in each of the companies included on the 2008 Best Civil Engineering Firms to Work For list.

The participants

This year's eighth annual Best Firms to Work For list is the result of participation from 152 firms across the nation. Along with a 5-percent increase in participation (80 new firms) compared with 2007, this year's list also boasts a 10-percent increase of newcomers placing in the Top 50. These increases occurred at the same time when 11 of 2007's Top 50 firms did not participate again. Such an influx of new, highly ranked organizations has created a different pool of firms for this year's list.

Many of the Top 50, including the top three, are small to medium-size firms. Participating organizations range in size from 10 to more than 2,400 employees, while the age of their organizations span centuries. Created in 1887, the oldest firm is 120 years wise, while the youngest firm was formed last year.

Private ownership is again the most common business structure for participants, with 133 firms, or 87.5 percent of firms, privately owned. The median number of private owners for these firms is 12. One-hundred and thirty-three participating firms also have a board of directors, with a median number of six members. All but 13 firms have a personnel/human re-sources department or dedicated staff members.

Seventy-two percent of respondents reported an annual growth of 10 percent or greater in 2007, while 23 percent of firms reported an annual growth rate between 1 and 9 percent. Only 3 percent of firms had stable or unchanged revenue in 2007 and 2 percent of firms re-ported revenue decline.

Although business success is often calculated by financial gains and losses, firm achievement can also be measured by a successful corporate environment and culture. As many as 99 percent of firms said their greatest strength is the internal "encouragement of growth and improvement," while more than 90 percent of firms say they're proficient at employee recognition, open and honest communication, and presenting a good work/life balance.

And it's true. Thirty-eight percent of firms offer domestic partner benefits, while 44 percent have a formal paternity leave policy. The Top 50 firms offer small perks that add up. Eighty-seven percent of firms have a business casual dress code, and 62 percent have an official wellness program. Sixteen percent of firms surveyed offer dry cleaning services, 12 percent offer no-interest computer loans, and 18 percent offer pre-tax commuter passes.

Here are the official rankings! Along with the list of Top 50 and Honorable Mention firms, the best practices of the top three firms are celebrated. The sidebar, "[Polishing your firm](#)" (down at the bottom) divulges the collective top improvement priorities for this year's ranked firms. Additionally, this year's program honors six firms with superlative awards.

New to the program this year is the [Environmental Business Journal \(EBJ\)/CE News Best Environmental Service Firms to Work For](#). Learn about this exciting new program and its Top 20 and Honorable Mention firm. Read on to discover what it takes for your firm to rise to the Top 50!

for a period of time before compensation.

Firm-size rank	Top 15 medium-sized firms
1	Walter P Moore
2	Fehr & Peers
3	Simpson Gumpertz & Heger
4	Morrison-Maeirle, Inc.
5	Traffic Planning and Design, Inc.
6	West Yost Associates
7	Provost & Pritchard Engineering Group, Inc.
8	Winzler & Kelly
9	V3 Companies Ltd.
10	Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc.
11	Parkhill, Smith & Cooper, Inc.
12	Tighe & Bond, Inc.
13	Atwell-Hicks
14	Barr Engineering Company
15	DKS Associates

Large firm ranking

With more than 500 employees, the Best Large Firms To Work For include overall No. 9-ranked David Evans and Associates, Inc. A more specialized workforce combined with deeper pockets, and therefore more resources, yields the large firm an advantage in many areas.

Reportedly growing at an average of 20 percent or greater, this year's top-ranked large firms not only offer their employees more benefits on average, but they also provide them with an opportunity to work on more high-profile projects for bigger clients. On average, these top-ranked large firms added more than 175 employees to their workforce in 2007, no doubt a response to their tremendous growth!

Firm-size rank	Top large firms
1	David Evans and Associates, Inc.
2	Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, Inc.
3	Parametrix
4	Langan Engineering & Environmental Services
5	Stanley Consultants

Polishing your firm

Most of today's civil engineering firms are working hard to procure new business and complete quality work, while keeping their employees and clients happy—a difficult task at best. But, then there are those firms that are pushing the envelope, standing at the edge of innovation and working to improve their organizational infrastructure by refining internal communications, adding employee health/wellness programs, and community initiatives, as well as beefing up their training/professional development programs.

Like a silversmith who polishes each piece until his reflection is visible, the Top 50 firms are working hard to build organizations that reflect their core values and advance their goals. Following are four of the most common improvements the Top 50 firms