

Looking for a job with a top-rated employer, or perhaps a way to make your workplace more dynamic? Then look here. The results of the 2008 Great Place to Work Institute surveys are in.



# Best Workplaces in Canada

There is only one way to get on the “50 Best Workplaces in Canada” list – and that’s if your employees put you there.

The Great Place to Work Institute’s Trust Index survey instrument is used by thousands of organizations throughout the world, says Jen Wetherow, director of Great Place to Work Institute Canada. “It is the primary selection criterion used each year when we compile the Best Workplaces in Canada list, and is also used in compiling similar lists for leading business publications around the world, including Fortune and the Financial Times.”

While there is no singular right way to become a great place to work, she says, there are five trust-building dimensions that are commonly found in all the best workplaces: credibility, respect, fairness, pride and camaraderie.

“The first three dimensions account for an organization’s

level of trust,” says Ms. Wetherow. “A great workplace is one in which employees trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy the people they work with.”

While it may sound a bit warm and fuzzy, the institute’s research indicates that trust is the foundation for organizational performance excellence. “Winning companies report an increased ability to attract and retain quality candidates. But it’s about more than just recruitment and retention – the benefits of a high-trust culture permeate every aspect of performance,” she says.

“Increasingly, business leaders are recognizing that you can’t manage an outcome such as employee engagement, but you can contribute to the building blocks of organizational culture.

Culture has been identified as a strategic advantage, and leaders in the most successful organizations are putting a strong focus on trust-building behaviours because doing so is associated with positive outcomes. In fact, independent research by the Russell Investment Group concludes that publicly traded companies on the Fortune list of “100 Best Companies to Work For” are

out-performing standard market indices by a factor of two to three.

“The benefits of creating a great place to work include improved attraction and retention of talented employees, and enhanced productivity as a result of a more engaged workforce,” says Claude Balthazard, director of human resources excellence at the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario.

While there is anecdotal evidence of a virtuous cycle of success and employee satisfaction among top-performing organizations, there are many paths to becoming a great

workplace. “I’m always struck by the diversity of these organizations. There’s a tremendous diversity in terms of the practices. They’re all recognized to be great places to work, but they seem to get there in different ways,” says Mr. Balthazard.

At D.L.G.L. Ltd. in Quebec, one of the 2008 50 Best, achieving a great culture began with a sadly unusual approach. “We’ve inverted the values of governance,” says president Jacques Guénette. “Normally what you hear in the marketplace is that the corporation must create value for the shareholders. That provides license to do almost anything, includ-

ing crazy business plans that call for uncontrollable growth.”

He cites a large Canadian corporation, which went from 30,000 to 90,000 employees and then fired 65,000 people, as an example of what can happen in the quest for shareholder value.

“We’ve turned that around completely and said, ‘Let’s put together an organization that creates value for the employees. Let’s make sure that our employees are happy,’” says Mr. Guénette. “The first consequence of this is that they stick around, gain experience and get very good at what they do. And that allows us to manufacture excellent products, and to deliver very good services.

The result is that we create a lot of value for our clients in that process. And once you’ve done that, there should be value for the shareholders.

“We’ve found,” he says understatedly, “that this works much better than the other model.”

## About the Great Place to Work Institute

The Great Place to Work Institute Inc. is a U.S.-based research and management consultancy with affiliate offices worldwide, including Canada. Since 1980, the institute has been listening to employees and evaluating employers. Today, the Great Place to Work Trust Index survey instrument is the primary

selection criterion used annually to compile the “Best Workplaces in Canada” list. The index is also used in compiling similar lists for leading business publications in over 30 other countries, including Fortune’s “100 Best Companies to Work For” list in the U.S.

# The Winners

RANK	NAME OF COMPANY	# EMPLOYEES	HEADQUARTERS
1	<b>D.L.G.L. Ltd.</b> Information Technology // Software	92	Blainville, QC
2	<b>Enviroics Communications Inc.</b> Advertising & Marketing // Advertising	63	Toronto, ON
3	<b>Nycomed Canada Inc.</b> Biotechnology & Pharmaceuticals // Pharmaceuticals	261	Oakville, ON
4	<b>ITRANS Consulting Inc.</b> Professional Services // Consulting Engineering	99	Richmond Hill, ON
5	<b>Softchoice Corporation</b> Information Technology // IT Consulting	437	Toronto, ON
6	<b>SaskCentral</b> Financial Services & Insurance // Investments	56	Regina, SK
7	<b>IT/NET Ottawa Inc.</b> Professional Services // Consulting - Management	85	Ottawa, ON
8	<b>Trico Homes</b> Construction & Real Estate // Housing	101	Calgary, AB
9	<b>Karo Group</b> Advertising & Marketing // Advertising	80	Calgary, AB & Vancouver, BC
10	<b>Royal LePage Performance Realty</b> Construction & Real Estate // Real Estate	296	Ottawa, ON
11	<b>Ames Tile &amp; Stone Ltd.</b> Construction & Real Estate // Housing	88	Burnaby, BC
12	<b>eBay Customer Support Vancouver Inc.</b> Media // Online Internet Services	811	Burnaby, BC
13	<b>Ceridian Canada Ltd.</b> Professional Services // Consulting - Management	1,491	Markham, ON
14	<b>Online Business Systems</b> Information Technology // IT Consulting	213	Winnipeg, MB
15	<b>Edward Jones</b> Financial Services & Insurance // Investments	1,795	Mississauga, ON
16	<b>AdFarm</b> Advertising & Marketing // Advertising	66	Calgary, AB
17	<b>Grant Thornton LLP</b> Financial Services & Insurance // Accounting	1,648	Toronto, ON
18	<b>Windsor Family Credit Union</b> Financial Services & Insurance // Banking/Credit Services	130	Windsor, ON
19	<b>Urban Systems Ltd.</b> Professional Services // Consulting Engineering	283	Kamloops, BC
20	<b>Fuller Landau LLP</b> Financial Services & Insurance // Accounting	109	Toronto, ON
21	<b>Becton Dickinson Canada Inc.</b> Health Care // Medical Sales/Distribution	247	Oakville, ON
22	<b>Keller Williams Ottawa Realty</b> Construction & Real Estate // Real Estate	206	Ottawa, ON
23	<b>Thomson Carswell</b> Media // Publishing & Printing	693	Toronto, ON
24	<b>CIM (Consumer Impact Marketing)</b> Advertising & Marketing // Direct Marketing	290	Toronto, ON
25	<b>Halsall Associates Limited</b> Professional Services // Consulting Engineering	228	Toronto, ON

RANK	NAME OF COMPANY	# EMPLOYEES	HEADQUARTERS
26	<b>Coastal Pacific Xpress Inc.</b> Transportation	279	Surrey, BC
27	<b>Protegra</b> Information Technology // IT Consulting	72	Winnipeg, MB
28	<b>Sapphire Technologies</b> Professional Services // Staffing & Recruitment	300	Toronto, ON
29	<b>T4G Limited</b> Information Technology // IT Consulting	215	Toronto, ON
30	<b>Ernst &amp; Young LLP</b> Financial Services & Insurance // Accounting	3,938	Toronto, ON
31	<b>Precision Biologic Inc.</b> Manufacturing & Production // Medical devices	51	Dartmouth, NS
32	<b>Leo Burnett Company Ltd.</b> Advertising & Marketing // Advertising	133	Toronto, ON
33	<b>Hill &amp; Knowlton Canada</b> Professional Services // Consulting - Management	208	Toronto, ON
34	<b>Randstad Canada</b> Professional Services // Staffing & Recruitment	310	Ville Saint-Laurent, QC
35	<b>Back in Motion Rehab</b> Health Care // Specialty	64	Surrey, BC
36	<b>Globalive Communications</b> Telecommunications	132	Toronto, ON
37	<b>Omni Companies</b> Financial Services & Insurance // General Insurance	53	Vancouver, BC
38	<b>BanffLodging Company</b> Hospitality // Hotel/Resort	449	Banff, AB
39	<b>Potruff &amp; Smith Insurance Brokers Inc.</b> Financial Services & Insurance // General Insurance	63	Woodbridge, ON
40	<b>Sapient Canada</b> Information Technology // IT Consulting	195	Toronto, ON
41	<b>TD Bank Financial Group</b> Financial Services & Insurance // Banking/Credit Services	43,302	Toronto, ON
42	<b>The PEER Group Inc.</b> Information Technology // IT Consulting	70	Kitchener, ON
43	<b>WCG International Consultants Ltd.</b> Professional Services // Consulting - Management	166	Victoria, BC
44	<b>Skura Corporation</b> Information Technology // IT Consulting	93	Mississauga, ON
45	<b>S.C. Johnson and Son, Limited</b> Manufacturing & Production // Personal & Household Goods	477	Brantford, ON
46	<b>Sandvine Incorporated</b> Information Technology // Hardware	253	Waterloo, ON
47	<b>Parklane Homes Ltd.</b> Construction & Real Estate // Housing	79	Vancouver, BC
48	<b>Campbell Company of Canada</b> Manufacturing & Production // Food Products	1,221	Toronto, ON
49	<b>High Road Communications</b> Professional Services // Consulting - Management	79	Toronto, ON
50	<b>Pinchin Environmental Ltd.</b> Professional Services // Consulting Environmental	229	Mississauga, ON

## About the survey

By Jen Wetherow  
Director Great place to work  
Institute Canada

Most Canadian employers like to think that they are decent, even pretty good places to work. But with today's competitive labour market and the need to make the best use of all talent in a company, the bar for work workplace quality has been rising. Being "good" is no longer enough.

Organizations participating in the Best Workplaces in Canada list have a unique opportunity to find out where they are on their quest to become - or maintain - great workplaces. The rigor-

ous list assessment process provides metrics for tracking progress, benchmarking with the best, and sharing lessons about effective people practices.

Research from the Great Place to Work Institute's best workplaces lists over the past decade in many countries confirms that trust is the foundation for quality jobs and performance excellence. And the good news is that high-trust relationships require behaviours that can be learned and embedded into an organization's culture.

Organizations on the 2008 list of Best Workplaces were all assessed using an employee sur-

vey, the "Trust Index," developed by the global research firm Great Place to Work Institute Inc. There are 57 multiple choice and two open-ended questions that provide an accurate, employee perspective on what it is like to work in the organization.

Each question measures one of the five dimensions of the Great Place to Work Institute's trust-based Model: credibility, respect, fairness, pride and camaraderie. Completed surveys are sent directly to the institute, and results are only ever reported in aggregate form so employees can be confident that opinions are confidential.

Two-thirds of each organization's final score is taken directly from its Trust Index survey. The remaining one-third of each organization's score is taken from the institute's assessment of the company's "Culture Audit" submission. This is a significantly more detailed questionnaire that is completed by senior HR representatives. It helps to provide a more complete picture by capturing the core values and philosophies that underpin people practices.

The organizations on the 2008 Best Workplaces in Canada list come from a variety of industries, range in size from 51 to 43,302 employees and are lo-

cated from coast to coast. Each has taken a different path to creating and sustaining a great workplace, but in the end, each has forged a strong link between culture and performance.

During the 2008 list assessment process, a total of 24,063 Canadian employees were surveyed using the Trust Index tool. Internationally, the Great Place to Work Institute surveyed over 1.2 million employees last year for similar lists around the world.

"On the quantitative side," says Dr. Graham Lowe, a national workplace expert, professor emeritus at the University of Alberta, and partner at the Great

Place to Work Institute Canada, "the best workplaces list data help us to differentiate between good and great organizations. On the qualitative side, the Culture Audit offers us insights into the people practices of very successful organizations that understand the strategic importance of culture."

"It goes far beyond offering the best perks," says Dr. Lowe "You can't compete on perks and benefits alone. It comes down to the quality of the relationships throughout the workplace, the support people are given to succeed in their jobs, and their overall enjoyment of the total work experience."

# Top 3 winners 2008

## The Great Place to Work Model

The Great Place to Work Model is derived from the definition of a great workplace as one where employees trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy the people they work with. At the heart of this definition is the idea that a great workplace is measured by the quality of three interconnected relationships that exist there:

- The relationship between employees and management;
- The relationship between employees and their jobs/organization; and
- The relationship between employees and other employees.

COMPANIES BY RANK		SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GREAT PLACE TO WORK MODEL DIMENSIONS:					
		When asked, <i>"Taking everything into account, I would say this is a great place to work"</i> employees who said "yes"	<b>CREDIBILITY</b> <i>The trustworthiness and competence of management</i>	<b>RESPECT</b> <i>Recognition of personal and professional worth and contribution</i>	<b>FAIRNESS</b> <i>Equitable sharing of opportunities and rewards</i>	<b>PRIDE</b> <i>Value attached to one's job and association with the company</i>	<b>CAMARADERIE</b> <i>Friendliness and sense of community (or "family")</i>
<b>#1</b>	<b>D.L.G.L. Ltd.</b> provides software specializing in the conception, implementation and support of advanced HR systems, payroll, time capture and scheduling, and pension systems.	<b>100%</b>	D.L.G.L. has a clear vision of where it is going and has assured its employees that it will not go public or subvert their interests for the goals of shareholders.	All employees and their families have access to D.L.G.L.'s gymnasium, fitness centre and personal trainer, ville de Quebec kitchen, outdoor terrace, gazebo, bistro chez Claude (equipped with home theatre, pool table, car simulators, massaging chair) and more.	Compensation at D.L.G.L. exceeds IT industry norms. Plus, a quarterly bonus shared among all employees is based on objectives set at the beginning of the year and peer evaluations. Yearly profit sharing is based on hours worked and overall contribution.	D.L.G.L. strengthens team development by supporting lateral movement and cross-functional placements.	D.L.G.L. recently commemorated its 25th anniversary with an evening at a special resort that involved all employees and their spouses. The staff was wined, dined and entertained.
<b>#2</b>	<b>Environics Communications Inc.</b> offers marketing-communications and public-relations services for public, private and governmental organizations.	<b>98%</b>	Each member of the Environics' team knows the overarching goal is to do the right thing: to give the best advice and propose the best course of action, even if it's unpopular.	A culture of collaboration is evidenced by the fact that 50% of Environics' new hires are internal referrals. More importantly, Environics employees are empowered to contribute, and full credit is always given to those who initiate winning concepts.	Environics' systematic approach to rewarding loyalty also helps prevent favouritism. After 5 years, employees receive \$4,000 toward a holiday, plus one additional week of vacation. Other significant rewards are offered after 7 and 8 years of service.	While the Canadian Standards Association doesn't strictly fit into any of Environics' key focus sectors, the firm took on the account because it believes in CSA's commitment to safety and in the impact its work makes on Canadians.	At Environics' 12th anniversary, employees shared memories of their first day on the job, and posted them on their office doors. The initiative sparked gales of laughter, as people circulated the office and read the mostly comical stories.
<b>#3</b>	<b>Nycomed Canada Inc.</b> is a privately held subsidiary of a global pharmaceutical company.	<b>95%</b>	Nycomed's outstanding communications systems include employee surveys, focus groups, a suggestion box, breakfast with the President, pod casts, and town hall meetings. Information flows freely throughout the organization.	Permanent Nycomed employees have access to \$3,000 per year in post-secondary tuition funding or \$5,000 for post-graduate studies. Last year, about 30% of the company's employees took advantage of this perk.	To ensure that employees have a voice within the organization, Nycomed has developed a dispute resolution system employees are able to use without concern for reprisal. They also have a 360-degree feedback process on managers.	Since 1997, Nycomed has dedicated over \$2 million dollars in community support. It also encourages employees to become involved in fundraising and community service.	The HR systems and practices at Nycomed are comprehensive, well-documented and thoroughly integrated. New employees are welcomed with an inspiring letter from the CEO and treated to a departmental lunch.