

July 25, 2014



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the Valley's  
most creative  
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efforts in  
employee  
engagement**

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**2014 HONOREES**

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**EDITOR'S NOTE**

For its inaugural Human Resources Best Practices program, the *Phoenix Business Journal* searched for the Valley's most creative and successful HR programs. This year's winners range from turning staff meetings into talk shows, to establishing unique on-boarding and staff mentoring programs, to rewarding employees at all levels for coming up with the next "big idea." For this special section, we asked each winning company's local HR leader to tell us about the program's conception and implementation.



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**C**ongratulations to the Human Resource Award honorees for 2014. Phoenix has some of the most talented human resource leaders in the country and through their determination and commitment, our community and workforce culture is growing stronger than ever. Many of those receiving awards today have demonstrated leadership and creativity and continue to pave the foundation for others in the HR field.

Lovitt & Touché, a full service insurance brokerage, has been in Arizona for over a century now helping our clients create a path for success. Had we not persevered when faced with a road block or obstacle, just as the honorees have, we would not be able to offer the innovative services and expertise that we do today. At Lovitt & Touché we believe in paying it forward to the community that has helped us along our journey and presenting these awards today is one small step in doing so.

We couldn't be more excited to sponsor this year's Human Resource Award. This program honors the unsung heroes of business in the Human Resource community and is proof positive that Phoenix is moving forward with the guidance of these influential leaders. Here's to this year's honorees!



Sincerely,

**Steve Touché**  
 President, Lovitt & Touché



**I**t is exciting to be a part of the first annual HR Best Practices Awards. HR has traditionally been the unsung hero in every organization and served as the glue between management and the employees. It is great to be part of an award that recognizes the contributions of HR teams to the success of their organizations. At MSEC, I have had the privilege of working with many HR professionals that have implemented innovative and successful programs. It is great to have an award that recognizes the success of these programs.

It is the fact that management and employees nominated the programs implemented by HR that makes receiving this award a strong statement. The statement is "HR is vital to the success of our organization." These best practices result in higher productivity, engaged employees, less turnover and ultimately higher profitability. Being one of the HR Best Practices nominees does not necessarily involve large costs, but instead an innovative spirit and drive for problem solving that helps employees and the organization as a whole.

Our hats off to the individuals behind the programs that are recognized this week as HR Best Practices. Congratulations to all HR Best Practices Nominees and Award Winners!



Warmest regards,

**William L. Smith, Jr.**  
 Arizona President  
 Mountain States Employers Council





**CATEGORY:** SMALL COMPANIES

## RYAN LLC

*In 2004, Ryan suffered a 22 percent voluntary turnover rate, with many departing employees citing work-life balance as their reason for moving on. In 2008, after much research and preparation, the company shifted to a flexible, results-based program called myRyan. Employees now can choose where and when they work, given they can communicate and collaborate with their peers to do their jobs effectively.*

**HR LEADER:** Delta Emerson, executive vice president and chief of staff

**Years in the industry:** 19

**Number of HR employees at your company:** 28 global

**Total employees at your company:** 94 local, 1,843 global

**How your company's winning program was conceived and implemented:** Jaws dropped and heads turned when Ryan made the decision to shift from a face-time

to results-focused environment in 2008. Until that point, draconian policies focused heavily on physical presence: The more hours an employee worked, the more valuable he was considered to be. Low employee satisfaction ratings and high turnover, including the loss of key employees, drove the decision. Employees' voices were loud and clear that they wanted better work-

life balance. After careful planning by a cross-functional task team, myRyan was introduced. It is one of the best decisions we have ever made. It impacts talent attraction, employee retention and overall satisfaction, and we have the ROI to prove it: The voluntary turnover rate has dropped below 10 percent, and we're posting an annual average revenue increase of 15 percent.

**CATEGORY:** SMALL COMPANIES

## ASU FOUNDATION FOR A NEW AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

*Acquiring and retaining talent is the foundation of any organization. The ASU Foundation streamlined its orientation program so that from the minute new employees are hired, they're beginning the process of joining the team — from making benefit choices to buying ASU swag.*

**HR LEADER:** Cheryl Shumate, executive director of human resources

**Years in the industry:** 15

**Number of HR employees at your company:** 2

**Total employees at your company:** 223

**How your company's winning program was conceived and implemented:** From the top down, on-boarding at the ASU Foundation is seen as an essential process for

employee engagement. Setting up the employee for immediate success from Day One, creating a sense of community and a welcoming environment conducive to productivity are comments we hear repeatedly from our new hires. Our process has evolved significantly over the past five years through the efforts of Shelly Yocum, our director of training management. Our program is

interactive; it includes a welcome video, systems training, benefits presentation, building tour, handbook review, 30-day follow-up, campus tour, brainstorming lunch with the CEO, one-on-one time with our chief of staff, and more. This has led to increased employee engagement, higher rates of retention and now a program recognized by our peers as a best practice.



**CATEGORY:** SMALL COMPANIES

## J-CURVE TECHNOLOGIES

*Sometimes the biggest challenge can be knowing you don't have the answers. At J-Curve Technologies, the HR department engaged employees by asking them to submit their "Big Ideas" to improve productivity. As a result, employees became enthusiastic and engaged, and they helped bring about change.*

**HR LEADER:** Lisa Fitch, human resources manager

**Years in the industry:** 14

**Number of HR employees at your company:** 3

**Total employees at your company:** 91

**How your company's winning program was conceived and implemented:** CEO Jim Kaiser and the management team asked employees: "What is your big

idea for enhancing the culture here at J-Curve overnight?" They sought ideas that would promote a positive, inclusive and enjoyable culture for all employees, and that would align with J-Curve's vision to redefine the support industry. We collected 60 entries, narrowed those down to seven to put to an employee vote, then implemented the top 5. The grand

prize winner was a "quiet/peace room" submitted separately by two employees. They each won \$300, and we now have a space to relax and regroup in our office. We also have been implementing other submissions and have Nerf guns on hand, some creatively decorated cubicles, and an employee recognition program in the works.





**CATEGORY:**  
SMALL COMPANIES

**OFF MADISON AVE**

This marketing agency's Ambassador Program is meant to connect employees with their peers and their work environment. At least two staffers serve as ambassadors who are responsible for helping new employees get situated and acclimated; ensuring they have everything they need to thrive from Day One; and fostering a positive, fun work environment overall.

**HR LEADER:** Lorraine Murrietta, partner, vice president and CFO

**Years in the industry:** 21

**Number of HR employees at your company:** 1

**Total employees at your company:** 50

**How your company's winning program was conceived and implemented:** The Ambassador

Program is a signature program at Off Madison Ave. Elements of it have been in place since the company was founded, and it has been fine-tuned over the years as the agency has grown. It has been instrumental in keeping first-year turnover at a minimum in an industry where it's common to move to another company after less than a year.



PROVIDED BY OFF MADISON AVE

Executive Creative Director John Tomkiw playfully punches Ben Galloway with "Hulk hands" at Off Madison Ave. Galloway recently joined the agency as associate creative director and is getting acclimated to the company culture.



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PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

Diamondbacks President and CEO Derrick Hall looks on as Austin Walker, a corporate partnership intern, introduces himself during a First Friday Luncheon.



**CATEGORY:**  
MIDSIZE COMPANIES

## ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

All-employee meetings can be a drag, but the Arizona Diamondbacks transformed their quarterly meetings from lecture to talk-show format. The HR team turned President and CEO Derrick Hall into the D-backs' own version of Jay Leno. Employees are energized by guest speakers and games at their quarterly meetings instead of being bored by department updates.

**HR LEADER:** Marian Rhodes, senior vice president and chief human resources and diversity officer

**Years in the industry:** 27

**Number of HR employees:** 4

**Total employees:** 1,200

**How your company's winning program was conceived and implemented:** When I came to the organization, our all-employee meeting was just that: a meeting.

So I had the idea to make it fun. I wanted to put together something where we could communicate the important information, but also create a fun atmosphere. The result was the creation of what is now called "On the Couch with D-Hall." This hour-and-a-half program has a talk-show format featuring President and CEO Derrick Hall. If anyone

could pull it off, I knew Derrick could. The program became a part of our First Friday Luncheon, where all employees come together to have lunch once a month. During the meeting, Hall gives a recap of the month, introduces new employees, celebrates employee milestones and birthdays, and does a Top Ten and a guest interview on the couch, whether it's one of our players or somebody in the community. Then it concludes with a friendly departmental competition, based on "Family Feud" or "Minute to Win It." The current game is Heads Up, which is a take on charades. At the end, it gives our employees a way to have some downtime and release.



Josh Rawitch and Katie Krause compete in a "Minute to Win It" competition during a Diamondbacks First Friday Luncheon as Derrick Hall referees from the stage.



**CATEGORY:** MIDSIZE COMPANIES

## HARRAH'S AK-CHIN CASINO RESORT

Casinos are a spectacle, a luxury and an HR nightmare. With a diverse collection of divisions and departments, the HR team at Harrah's Ak-Chin needed to address high turnover and issues with service, training and scheduling. So Harrah's created the HR Partner/Client Group process. HR Employee Engagement team members are assigned departments, allowing each group to have a relationship with HR.

**HR LEADER:** Beth Amoroso, director of human resources

**Years in the industry:** 24

**Number of HR employees at this location:** 7

**Total employees at this location:** 700

**How your company's winning program was conceived and implemented:** Harrah's Ak-Chin is a very metric-driven company. Our HR team realized that if we were to significantly impact key measurements (service, turnover, profitability, employee

engagement, etc.) in a meaningful way, we could not use a blanket approach...we had to embed ourselves in departments and really understand the challenges and opportunities specific to different areas. Our client group approach allows us to do this. Each member of the engagement team, including the manager, were assigned client groups. The engagement team member handled all aspects of consulting and performance

management for her client group by analyzing key HR, service and business metrics, identifying root causes, and proposing solutions. Working with specific client groups provided the opportunity to get to know the team members and leaders in the department more deeply, know the job, understand the department environment/culture/history and monitor long-term progress, not just implement short-term solutions.



**CATEGORY:** MIDSIZE COMPANIES

**HENDERSON ENGINEERS INC.**

*You may catch more flies with honey, but at Henderson Engineers they try keep employees happy with the “Fish Philosophy,” a motivational principle born at Pike’s Place in Seattle that focuses on positive attitudes, play, engagement and connectivity.*

**HR LEADER:** Stacey Crabtree, director of human resources

**Years in the industry:** 22  
**Number of HR employees at your company:** 4  
**Total employees at your company:** 413 local, 521 global  
**How your company’s winning program was conceived and implemented:** Our firm as a whole was affected by the economic

downturn, including our Phoenix office. As the economy rebounded, we sought ways to increase employee engagement and overall retention. Some of our team members had experience with the Fish Philosophy, and when our leadership group was approached they thought it fit well with

HEI’s culture of “work hard, play hard.” In conjunction with the Fish Philosophy and a variety of engaging activities (both silly and serious) for our employees, the Phoenix office is building its own uniqueness as one of HEI’s national offices.

**CATEGORY:** LARGE COMPANIES

**HDR ENGINEERING INC.**

*Every young employee needs a good mentor, and at HDR Engineering, the experience is guaranteed. Its nontraditional program offers a Mentor Match-Up for employees to select their own mentors based on personal objectives. They also can choose other mentoring options, such as one-on-one or group sessions.*

**HR LEADER:** Shannon Teixeira, area human resources manager

**Years in the industry:** 17  
**Number of HR employees at your company:** 1 local, 150 global  
**Total employees at your company:** 157 local, 8,500 global  
**How your company’s winning program was conceived and implemented:** The program was conceived as part of a change-

management plan aimed at realigning and improving our area operations. We needed an internal program that would quickly increase employee retention and individual employee development. We implemented the mentoring program with a lot of marketing using branded posters, emails, word of mouth and informational

sessions. We engaged the help of senior management both inside and outside our area to help energize the staff about the concept. To assist with ongoing education, we created program development tools, which included participant handbooks, a comprehensive program guide and a SharePoint site.



**CATEGORY:** LARGE COMPANIES

**INSIGHT ENTERPRISES INC.**

*Health care can be one of the biggest costs for individuals and companies, and Insight employees were feeling the strain of their high insurance deductibles. Instead of letting the sniffles turn into something worse because of delayed care, Insight opened a health center at its headquarters in Tempe to keep employees and their families on their feet.*

**HR LEADER:** Jennifer Fernandez, vice president-human resources

**Years in the industry:** 12  
**Number of HR employees at your company:** 48 in Arizona, 134 globally  
**Total employees at your company:** 1,400 in Arizona, 5,300 globally  
**How your company’s winning program was conceived and**

**implemented:** Anticipating multifaceted business challenges with the implementation of health care reform, we opened an on-site health center in 2013 in Tempe, our largest market. Teammates and their dependents can receive annual exams, immunizations, blood tests, prescriptions, urgent care and other screening

procedures without having to commute to a doctor’s office. As a result, employees are more likely to seek care earlier and be healthier and happier overall. Providing this care also helps Insight avoid emergency care spend that might otherwise be required. We anticipate a break-even return on investment.

# The right people make a world of difference.

Lovitt & Touché would like to congratulate the honorees behind the most successful HR programs in Phoenix.

Lorraine Murrietta  
OFF MADISON AVE

Marian Rhodes  
ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

Beth Amoroso  
HARRAH'S AK-CHIN  
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