

European Special Award Winners 2007



*Building a better society by helping
companies transform their workplaces*

Together with the announcement of the 100 Best Workplaces in Europe, Great Place to Work® Institute recognizes five companies for outstanding practices in building trust, pride and camaraderie in the workplace.

These five European Special Awards recognize - from the employees' perspective - unique and inspiring practices that build great workplaces. The impact of these practices is verified in the employee survey data.

Each Special Award focuses on a particular aspect within the five dimensions of the Great Place to Work® Model®. Through the elaboration of the 100 Best list 2007 the 15 European Great Place to Work® Institutes have nominated candidates for the awards, of which three key nominees have been selected. The final winners have been found based on an extensive review of the nominees' practices and employee survey results. The winners are highlighted in bold among the following key nominees are:

Credibility	Special Award: "I am told the truth"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sapien (Germany) • Sigmar Recruitment (Ireland) • Unimerco (Denmark) 	
Respect	Special Award: "I am treated as a person"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piscines Ideales (Greece) • SAS Institute (Sweden) • W.L. Gore (Germany) 	
Fairness	Special Award: "I am paid fairly for the work I do"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PepsiCo (France) • ConSol (Germany) • Microsoft (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) 	
Pride	Special Award: "This is not just a job"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSU (Netherlands) • Ferrari (Italy) • Novo Nordisk (Sweden) 	
Camaraderie	Special Award: "We have serious fun"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admiral (UK) • ConSol (Germany) • Management Events (Finland) 	



The winners are publicly announced on the European Award event in Dublin on May 15, 2007. The following profiles present the nominees and winners of the European Special Awards 2007.

Key nominees and winner for European Special Award: "I am told the truth"

WINNER - Unimerco (Denmark)

The inspiration for the egalitarian business model at UNIMERCO, a Denmark-based manufacturer of cutting and measuring tools and fastening systems, came from CEO Kenneth Iversen's childhood. Iversen grew up in a Danish village in which the crews of fishing boats split their catch 50/50, with half allocated to expenses, and the remaining 50% split equally among everyone on the boat.

Following this model, UNIMERCO is entirely owned by its 395 employees and managers; 85% of all employees hold shares, and non-managers together own 51% of the company. Thanks to this culture, in which everyone is in the "same boat," UNIMERCO has been in the Top 10 of the Danish List of Best Workplaces every year since 2001, and has appeared on the European List of Best Workplaces every year since 2003.

UNIMERCO also makes sure its owners are well informed about the company's affairs, and everyone receives company information at the same time. A monthly e-mail sent to all

employees includes updates with current accounts, results assessments, explanations of strategy, and the latest news; meanwhile, an e-mail about the company's revenues is sent out *daily*.

To make sure there are no back-office deals, the whole company operates under a shared roof; everyone, regardless of job function, works in the same 20,000-square-meter building, and the CEO works in the middle of the room, accessible to everyone.

Employees also meet on a bi-monthly basis for a one-hour "café meeting," to share coffee with fellow employee-owners and hear updates from managers about the company's financial situation, plus offer ideas and input about the latest initiatives.

Just in case any of the owners isn't clear on the details, employees all receive business training to help them understand the finer points of business.

As UNIMERCO wrote in their Great Place to Work[®] Culture Audit[®], "We communicate openly, and have no taboos. Problems must be solved when they arise, because in this way they are solved in the best way. No subjects scare us or are too sensitive. If we do not dare to communicate openly, how can we then trust one another?"

Key nominee - Sapient (Germany)



Last year, when Sapien, an international IT consulting firm, introduced a new concept for its company philosophy, the so-called “Strategic Context,” members of the Global Leadership Team personally presented it to 90% of employees around the world, in part by leading small-group discussions that lasted up to four hours.

It was just one of many examples of how the managers of Sapien maintain a high level of credibility in the eyes of the company’s employees: 89% of employees surveyed in this year’s Great Place to Work® Trust Index® Survey agreed that they can “ask management any reasonable question and get a straight answer,” and 89% indicated that “management keeps them informed about important issues and changes.”

Managers deliver information through personal phone calls, e-mails, and the CEO’s own blog and podcasts, as well as weekly departmental meetings. The company also has monthly meetings with the entire staff to talk about revenues, project status, and internal employee initiatives. At other times, Sapien’s managers simply practice “management by walking around,” actively demonstrating an interest in employees as people while reaching out for input and ideas.

When some Sapien Germany employees asked their Director, Christian, to help them understand the thinking that went into the company’s quarterly planning, he ended up spending 1.5 hours on the explanation. “If we are convinced that it helps to get our work done

to understand better, then it is a justified and useful investment,” Christian explained.

What really sets Sapien apart is the level of frankness in the company culture. When someone sent an anonymous email to the company a few months ago citing concerns, senior leaders addressed the points one-by-one, openly and candidly in response, and invited the sender to choose a better forum to talk in person.

“Open feedback for the managers is completely normal and is well supported,” wrote one employee in this year’s Trust Index® Survey. “Sapien’s culture of frankness and the interaction with its employees is unique and I have never experienced anything like it before.”

Key nominee - Sigmar Recruitment (Ireland)

At Sigmar Recruitment, an Irish staffing and recruitment firm, employees are nearly unanimous in their perception that managers communicate well.

In this year’s Great Place to Work® Trust Index®, 96% of Sigmar people surveyed agreed that, “management keeps [them] informed about important issues and changes”; 98% said that “management makes its expectations clear”; and 97% indicated that they “can ask management any reasonable question and get a straight answer.”

How do they sustain this level of credibility? Each manager has weekly business meetings



with the team, a forum to discuss business matters and other affairs. And consultants engage in bi-weekly one-to-one meetings with their managers to discuss their satisfaction and goals. In addition to a monthly staff newsletter, the Financial Director sends around regular newsletters or memos on how the company pension is performing.

They also have a bi-weekly companywide meeting chaired by a Director or Manager, an interactive forum to update staff on business activities and allow people to offer up suggestions or ideas. Sigmar also holds quarterly social events where everyone in the company gets together to celebrate - and communicate.

Departments also hold regular brainstorming sessions, at which everyone can make a contribution. These sessions have led to several initiatives, including a re-vamped bonus structure and the company's participation in the Best Workplace evaluation process.

"Within a couple of weeks of starting the job, I got to chat with all the Managers and Directors in the building," commented one employee in this year's Trust Index[®] Survey. "This was not formally arranged, it just happened through the course of days and weeks. I was very impressed, and this contributes to the excellent atmosphere and working environment at Sigmar."

As another person put it, "If we have a problem, we talk to each other about it and sort it out face to face, rather than by email or behind each

other's back. We are treated like adults and the management structure is quite flat."

"It's just great to be treated like an adult and to be allowed to just get on with my work, to be trusted to do a good job," comments another happy Sigmar team member. "I have never had that from an employer before."

Key nominees and winner for European Special Award: "I am treated as a person"

WINNER - SAS Institute (Sweden)

Throughout its history, SAS Institute, a U.S.-based software maker, has concentrated on supporting its people. As far back as 1976, the company offered fun benefits like Friday breakfast goodies and Wednesday M&Ms, not to mention free health care, on-site day care, and a variety of social activities for employees and their families.

This tradition of respect stems from the company's founder, Jim Goodnight, who once said, "If you treat employees as if they make a difference to the company, they will make a difference to the company."

As it has expanded to Europe, SAS Institute has continued this tradition of treating people well. SAS Sweden is located in a beautiful, restored 18th-century castle just north of Stockholm. The company's 104 employees



enjoy a 35-hour workweek and follow flexible schedules; SAS pays for Internet connections for anyone who wants to work from home. Compulsory meetings are held toward the middle of the day so anyone can take part, including those who have children to pick up at daycare.

The sense of respect extends into the business, as well: to encourage employees to develop to their potential while assuming more individual responsibility, SAS Sweden recently took the extraordinary step of removing its Board of Directors; all decisions are now made entirely between the CEO and the manager and group members concerned with an issue. As a result, there is never more than one line of management between any employee and the CEO.

SAS Institute also offers a smorgasbord of health activities, including an on-site fitness facility, a rotating program Weight watchers, yoga, Tai Chi, power boxing, and other activities. They also have smoking cessation classes, pay for a personal trainer, and regularly bring in lecturers to talk about food, stress, work management, and other topics. The company has an on-site restaurant that serves discounted healthy meals (including a daily salad buffet).

In this year's Trust Index[®] Survey, 93% of SAS employees agreed that "people are encouraged to balance their work life and their personal life"; 96% agreed that their "facilities contribute to a good working environment," and 99% indicated

that they are "able to take time off from work when they think it's necessary."

"We have a unique company culture," wrote one employee in this year's Trust Index[®] survey. "I have a lot of faith in SAS as a whole, both now and in the future."

Key nominee - Piscines Ideales (Greece)

Since 1991, the employees of Piscines Ideales (and its 21 franchises) have worked together to build more than 4,500 swimming pools in Greece, including 900 in 2006.

But as this year's Great Place to Work[®] Trust Index[®] employee comments make clear, what really makes Piscines Ideales special is not business success, but the degree to which employees feel that they are part of one big happy family.

Piscines Ideales employees are embraced from the moment they arrive: they are welcomed by the CEO himself, and receive a welcome book that includes the story of the company, pictures of colleagues, and descriptions of company practices and policies.

They are also given the CEO's mobile phone number as soon as they are recruited, and they learn the company's basic values: respect, camaraderie, teamwork, pride, focus on quality, and learning and personal development.

Piscines Ideales also celebrates every birthday in the company with a company-bought birthday



cake; people gather together almost daily to sing the birthday song and blow out candles. The CEO frequently invites employees to his house to celebrate the New Year, and they go out for dinner and dancing to celebrate his birthday.

Employees who get married receive a month's worth of salary as a bonus; those who have children receive three extra days off, plus a financial bonus. When employees' children start their studies at a university, the company gives them a personal computer. The Piscines "family" even goes on vacations together: every year, the company sponsors a trip abroad to an exotic destination for all employees (in 2006, the whole company went to Thailand).

Above all, Piscines Ideales managers regard all employees as potential business leaders; everyone is given opportunities for career development, and no fewer than one third of the company's current franchisees were formerly Piscines employees.

The family treatment has created a sense of devotion to the company's future. As one employee explained in the Trust Index[®] survey, "We have all loved each other truly. We work with fun and we help each other with our heart. We all want to continue like this, and we all want to take our family company even higher."

Key nominee - W.L. Gore (Germany)

For the 1150 employees of Germany's branch of W.L. Gore, an international manufacturer of specialized plastics, staying healthy is easy. The company offers a variety of programs to ensure that people take care of themselves - and each other.

W.L. Gore's company-wide health initiative motivates employees to establish personal goals for improving their health. During "Work-Life Balance Day," all associates are invited with their family members to a program that includes homeopathic treatments of sports injuries, nutrition according to traditional Chinese medicine, and programs designed to help people to "center themselves."

W.L. Gore Germany also promotes sports activities and relaxation methods, and fitness facilities are available at all sites. An in-house campaign promotes bicycling to work, and many people go running together during their lunch break. The company encourages employee participation in such activities as Nordic walking, yoga, and tae-kwon-do.

"Sports has a high standing in our company," says one employee, in a comment on the Great Place to Work[®] Trust Index[®] Survey. "Some important conversations take place during a relaxing run."

Gore's cafeteria is stocked with a choice of organic and healthy foods. And the company pays for smoking cessation seminars, as well as an Associate Assistance Program, which provides round-the-clock counselling with



external experts; employees' partners and families can also use this confidential service.

It is not surprising that, in their Trust Index[®] survey, 92% of W.L. Gore Germany's employees agree that "people are encouraged to balance their work life and personal life," while 85% feel that "this is a psychologically and emotionally healthy place to work."

"The company does all sorts of things to create a familiar and friendly environment where everyone can feel good," wrote a W.L. Gore Germany employee, in a comment on the Trust Index[®] survey. "Who else has an employer who assists with personal concerns and perceives employees as a whole human being?"

Key nominees and winner for European Special Award: "I am paid fairly for the work I do"

WINNER - Microsoft (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden)

The global software giant made the Best Workplaces lists in no fewer than 12 countries this year, including Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden.

Microsoft has several programs to promote a sense of fairness. For example, all employees,

regardless of position, can earn a bonus, with a higher amount given for achievement of goals. And everyone is equally eligible to both earn and buy stock in the company.

Microsoft also has a long-standing philosophy of linking pay to performance. The company's performance management process provides a structured method for employees to obtain feedback on their performance, set specific commitments for the future, and plan their own professional growth. An Annual Performance Review meeting (with a performance check-in and career discussion after six months) provides a concise summary of ongoing performance discussions and ties employees' commitments to the strategic direction of the workgroup and company as a whole.

Microsoft also participates in multiple third-party surveys to ensure that their reward programs and budgets are competitive, and the company has four different incentive plan types according to job role and function. Some divisions, such as MS Hellas, also use a process known as "calibration," which compares employees' current performance and anticipated contribution to determine ratings and rewards. This process aims to reduce the importance of managers' subjective opinions in deciding compensation.

"We all know exactly what is expected from us," wrote an employee at Microsoft Sweden in this year's Great Place to Work[®] Trust Index[®] Survey. "You get rewarded for your efforts and you can succeed without having to be the managers' favourite...."



“There is absolute meritocracy,” wrote an employee from Microsoft Hellas (Greece). “There is neither favouritism nor injustice toward employees caused by personal or friendly relationships. There is an emphasis on ethics and embracing a respectful culture. In that way, you always know where you stand, and you know that good work is definitely appreciated.”

Key nominee - ConSol (Germany)

In their Great Place to Work® Trust Index® survey, 92% of employees at this Munich-based IT consulting and software firm indicated that “people here are paid fairly for the work they do,” 95% said that they “feel they receive a fair share of the profits made by this organization; and 97% feel that they are “treated as a full member here regardless of my position.” Between 98%-100% agree that people are treated fairly regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, or disability.

How does a company earn such a stellar reputation for fairness among its employees?

It helps that 50% of profits are “given back” to employees throughout the company - including apprentices - through a three-part compensation system. The ConSol reward system consists of a base salary; variable bonuses for performance, working late, etc.; and profit sharing, at a percentage dependent

upon position, level of responsibility, and tenure.

“The participation of employees in the company profits is set by contract to an individually agreed upon amount,” wrote one employee, in a Trust Index® Survey comment. “There is no annual stake determined by what someone thinks is best; everyone can figure out his share as soon as the profit is known.”

Adding to the equity of the compensation plan, maximum base salaries are “capped,” which means that managers’ salaries are more dependent upon profits. When the company does well, everyone gets an equal bonus percentage. But when profits are low, managers and those with higher compensation take a bigger hit to their overall pay.

“We not only share the responsibility, but also the success,” wrote one employee, in a Trust Index® survey comment. “Through our employee participation model, all employees obtain the status of co-entrepreneurs.”

Key nominee - PepsiCo, Inc. (France)

PepsiCo France, a 15-year old division of one of the world’s oldest agro foods producers and distributors, has appeared on the Best Workplaces in Europe list in 2004, 2006 and 2007. Even as it has grown to 328 employees, the company’s leaders have continually stressed the importance of teamwork, of



employees developing themselves personally while operating as part of a tight-knit unit.

Part of PepsiCo France's workplace success stems from managers responding to employees' concerns. After a recent survey revealed that employees were dissatisfied with their pay, managers commissioned an external audit to benchmark salaries against those of the competition. While the report revealed that PepsiCo's total compensation was in fact fair for the industry, the company took a lesson and now provides employees with detailed explanations of their combined pay and benefits, through group sessions and customized 10-page documents.

Pepsico France grants stock options and shares profits with employees, paying an average of more than one month's worth of salary every year. And managers are given different compensation tools to allow them to make salary recommendations. Any salary adjustments are discussed to ensure the fairness on an individual level, with a special budget allotted for anyone whose salary falls below the industry norm.

PepsiCo France has also established a reputation as a fair, forward-thinking workplace for women. The company offers full pay for new moms on maternity leave, with no minimum level of tenure required; women also receive an annual raise, regardless of the state of their pregnancy.

"The great attention and respect for work/life balance are valuable, especially for a woman with children in a high responsibility job," wrote one employee in the Trust Index[®] survey. "And let me add, we are in a company that has a woman of Indian heritage as the top worldwide leader. Not bad for integration and equal treatment!"

Key nominees and winner for European Special Award: "This is not just a job"

WINNER - CSU Total Care (Netherlands)

The 348 employees of CSU Total Care, a Netherlands-based facilities management, cleaning, and security company, may be regarded by some as low-skilled workers, but they are leaders in giving back to the community through a variety of philanthropic initiatives.

Thanks to a company policy that grants employees paid leave to volunteer their time, CSU's people have recently supported



numerous campaigns, including helping victims of the Tsunami, working in hospitals, and more.

CSU recently participated in a pilot program aimed at eliminating barriers for the integration of ethnic women to the labour market. And the company created a national initiative called Arena Initiatief, to stimulate work opportunities for groups who have traditionally been disadvantaged in the labour market.

CSU's people also have other reasons to be proud. In addition to being one of the top three cleaning organizations and among the top five security organizations in the Netherlands, CSU has won the top spot on the Dutch list of Best Workplaces, and they earned distinction as a leading learning organization in 2006. After winning the coveted Golden Service Award for the third straight year, employees received a special meal.

CSU has also shown itself to be progressive in how it carries out business. The company's cleaning crews only use natural cleaning products, for example. And employees take pride in of their company's values and relaxed working atmosphere. "What is unique is the feeling that we are free, but also linked to the organization," wrote one employee in the Trust Index[®] survey. "Everybody has the same rules and freedom when it comes to the development in your job."

Eighty seven percent of CSU employees responded positively to statements related to pride: 91% of those surveyed with the Trust Index[®] this year agreed that, "My work has

special meaning: this is not 'just a job'," and 94% indicated they "feel they make a difference" at their workplace. As one employee put it simply, "I am very proud to work for CSU!"

Key nominee - Ferrari (Italy)

Since 1947, the year Ferrari's 125 S first triumphed in competition, the Italian auto maker with the prancing horse logo has become one of the world's most respected luxury brands. No one knows this better than the company's 2670 Italian employees. "We are aware that we are working to perpetuate a myth," says one employee. "Ferrari is unique in the world."

As part of its culture, Ferrari stresses 12 values represented as 12 cylinders of a finely tuned motor. The company's reward programs are also tied to a "racing" metaphor: through the "Grand Prix" program, employees who offer new ideas that are implemented advance around a "track," with anyone passing one of the "pit stops" or the finish line eligible for an award.

Of course, one of the greatest perks of working at Ferrari is the opportunity to take pride in the company's strong tradition and indulge a passion for automobiles. To this end, every employee receives two tickets to the Imola and Monza F1 races, and to the GT championship. They also get to see new Formula 1 and GT cars before they are shown to the public.



Ferrari's people are constantly reminded of their heritage. Within six months of their hiring, employees participate in "Campus Ferrari," a meeting that includes interactive quizzes and multi-media presentations covering topics such as "Do you know your company?" and "Travel into Ferrari's History". The program ends with a dinner exploring creativity and innovation. Photos of past models and race winners appear throughout the factory.

Ninety eight percent of employees surveyed in this year's Trust Index[®] agreed that, "My work has special meaning: this is not just a job," and 99% indicated that they can "make a difference here." On average, 99% of Ferrari employees responded positively to Trust Index[®] statements related to the Pride dimension.

"Many people here wear the Ferrari logo. That means a great attachment to the company and to its values," wrote one employee. "I am proud to be part of this company, where we are all one family, part of a team of excellent people working well together. We work for a common, important, and unique objective: to help Ferrari to continue to be a part of history."

Novo Nordisk (Sweden)

The first reason to be proud to work for Novo Nordisk is obvious: the company provides products and services that directly improve - and even save - the lives of their patients,

including many people in developing countries, who receive drugs at a subsidized price.

Secondly, the company has an inspiring history. Novo Nordisk was founded more than 80 years ago when August Krogh, a Nobel Prize-winning professor of the University of Copenhagen, traveled to the University of Toronto to acquire the formula for insulin. His aim was to begin producing insulin in Denmark to treat people with diabetes, among them his own wife, Marie. Since then, Novo Nordisk has continued Krogh's legacy: to do what it takes to help defeat diabetes.

Another banner of pride at Novo Nordisk is their commitment to the Triple Bottom Line. Under this philosophy, the company measures the quality of life of its people, and the company's benefit to society as large, as equal in importance to profits and revenues.

Under an agreement with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Novo Nordisk committed to reduce their CO2 emissions by 10% by 2014. Novo Nordisk is the first company in Denmark, the second in Europe, and the tenth worldwide to sign this agreement under the WWF International Climate Savers program.

In 2001, Novo Nordisk founded the World Diabetes Foundation as an independent, non-profit organization. The WDF helps directly in developing countries, where 80% of the world's explosion in diabetes is expected to occur. Since 2001, the WDF has supported 72 projects in the developing world, with a direct impact on 26 million people.



Novo's employee volunteer program, "TakeAction!", is designed to encourage and support employees to integrate the company's Triple Bottom Line approach into everything they do. Employees' Take Action! activities have ranged from designing a cookbook with healthy recipes to taking three-week placements in a hospital centre in a developing country, with all costs paid by the company.

Novo also collaborates with NGOs and external research organizations. The Novo Nordisk Haemophilia Foundation (NNHF) was created in 2005 to address the significant need for improving haemophilia care in the developing world; and the Oxford Centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism (OCDEM) serves as a partnership between Novo Nordisk, the UK's National Health Service (NHS), and the University of Oxford. The company also supports the UN initiative, "Unite for Diabetes," by focusing on the needs of children and youth, their families, and social networks. The program has included the creation of a Novo Nordisk Youth Panel and the launch a new global DAWN (Diabetes Attitudes, Wishes and Needs) Youth initiative in 2007.

In responding to the Trust Index[®] survey, 100% Novo Nordisk Sweden employees this year agreed that their work "has special meaning; this is not 'just a job'," while 97% agreed that when they "look at what they accomplish, they feel a sense of pride" and that they "feel good about the ways we contribute to the community."

As one employee commented, "There is a Novo-spirit at this workplace, and I am especially proud to be a part of the Novo-group, which is taking an active role both for the environment and the fellow beings around the world."

Key nominees and winner for European Special Award: "We have serious fun"

WINNER - Admiral (UK)

One wouldn't guess that a 2114-employee private car insurance firm would have a "Ministry of Fun" (MOF), but that's what they have at Admiral, a UK-based company. The Ministry of Fun, or "MOF," was developed to organize fun activities and events for everyone in the company. Each month, the responsibility for leading the MOF moves to a different department in the company so everyone has a chance to get involved and contribute.

Admiral is also home to "Fun Factories." As part of this quarterly program, all managers organize events for their departments. Fun Factories take place on Friday afternoons and are intended to act as a stress buster at the end of the work week.

Past events have included eating contests like, "How Many Marshmallows Can You Fit In Your Mouth?"; "Tache Idol" (a moustache-growing contest); and "How Big is Yours?" for which



employees competed to see who could make a small plant grow tallest in a month's time. They have held artistic competitions, such as "Make a Model of your Manager," "Pimp my Welshcake," and "Dress a Coconut," and sporting events like "Tidy Darts" and "Space Hopper Racing."

The necessity of a strong team spirit exemplified by the founder, Henry Engelhardt, who gives all new recruits a piece of a jigsaw puzzle. This puzzle piece serves to remind employees that to complete the picture, you need all the parts, and every part is as important as the next.

The company celebrates as many events and occasions as possible, including world sporting events, nationally recognized festivities, birthdays, marriages, births, retirements, promotions, summer BBQs, and holiday parties.

At Admiral, 94% of employees surveyed in this year's Trust Index[®] Survey agreed that, "I can be myself around here," 96% indicated that "people celebrate special events around here," and 96% responded that "this is a friendly place to work."

"No matter how busy, there are always events to have fun and relax," wrote Admiral employees, in their Trust Index[®] survey comments. "The philosophy here is that if you like what you do, you are more likely to do it well. Therefore 'fun' plays a leading role in the company, as does a relaxed and friendly environment."

Key nominee - ConSol (Germany)

At this Munich, Germany-based consulting firm, employees can't get enough of each other: many arrange their own casual group activities, using mailing lists to invite each other to cinema evenings, squash, board game evenings, bike tours, mountain hikes, and more.

Recent fun "teambuilding" exercises have included a company trip to the Munich Beer Festival, an annual ski weekend in the Alps, and football and chess tournaments. ConSol's Intranet even has a chat room for people to discuss professional or non-work-related topics, and employees' family members are frequently invited to participate.

Any reason is a good reason to celebrate: successful projects are marked with a barbecue on the company terrace, or in the new on-site garden. An on-site pinball room keeps lunch breaks fun; a conference room becomes a viewing room during the World Cup, Olympic Games, and other major televised sporting events.

People can also bring children and dogs to work as long as co-workers don't mind. And everyone in the company gathers at a restaurant monthly; all employees who celebrated their birthday the previous month are treated to a meal.

The team spirit spawned by all these fun activities is vital to ConSol's business culture. In job interviews, employees are gauged on their



ability to work in a team; meetings regularly take place at the team level; and if a new team is created or a new team is formed, all members of that team move their workspaces to work more closely together.

In responding to this year's Trust Index[®] survey, 94% of ConSol employees agreed that "this is a fun place to work," and 99% feel that "people celebrate special events around here."

Key nominee - Management Events (Finland)

Founded in 2004, Management Events organizes meetings and networking events, primarily for managers in a diverse field of companies. A far cry from typical sales conferences, these meetings are designed to include one-to-one meetings, "idea circles," and other innovative approaches to help participants get to know each other on a deeper level. Last year, the company planned more than 200 events from its 12 European offices, based in six different countries.

Looking at the Finnish branch of Management Events, it becomes clear why the company has fared well: 100% of the Management Events Finland employees surveyed in the Great Place to Work[®] Trust Index[®] Survey this year indicated that they "can count on people to cooperate," while 96% responded positively to statements related to camaraderie in general.

Management Events people work as part of a dynamic team, in which collaboration is second

nature and ideas flow freely. The culture benefits from the dynamic, youthful spirit of its people: the average age of the 50 or so employees is just 28 years.

"I don't know of any other company where the boss takes a team to see the Madonna concert," wrote one employee, in a Trust Index[®] comment.

The company's offices are designed in fun, festive style, with trendy designs, fresh colours, stylish furnishing, art, flowers and plants all around, as well as perks like a lounge with stereo equipment, flat-screen TV, videotape recorder, DVDs, and couches.

Employees enjoy each other's company so much that they have formed their own clubs for videos, karaoke, marathon running, and other activities. Managers and their teams participate side by side while attending cooking classes and wine tastings, attending the opera, or trying their hands at sailing. Recently, the CEO surprised everyone by bringing Lordi, the memorable monster-masked winner of the Eurovision song contest, to perform at the company's summer party.

Management Events' people find plenty of reasons to celebrate, both with clients and each other. Friday afternoon usually finds employees in the company's lounge, enjoying beer, cider, or singing karaoke. The company offers free hot and cold beverages and snacks on site, and pays for the taxi rides of people who work late.

Not surprisingly, 98% of employees agreed with the Trust Index[®] survey that they were "made to



feel welcome when they joined the company,” and 98% of employees conclude that “this is a fun place to work”.

“There is not a more amazing bunch of people on the planet!” says one employee comment. “We are like a big family. Management does not sit in an ivory tower, but spends time with everyone else - as people among people. At Management Events, we laugh often, and are not too shy to swear and laugh directly from stomach.”

