

# Focus on well-being helps companies keep employees

Award winners detail wellness initiatives that help with recruitment and retention

AUDREY CARLETON

Recruiting and retaining talent is essential to any strong organization. But accomplishing this while juggling other goals can be a challenge.

With a growing emphasis on mental health and wellness within Canadian workplaces, more organizations are seeing a correlation between their employees' well-being and their willingness to stick around.

Here are a few ways that the winners of the 2019 Employee Recommended Workplace Awards, created by The Globe and Mail and Morneau Shepell and presented on March 19, have improved recruitment and retention by adopting wellness initiatives in the workplace.

## COMPETITIVE BENEFITS MAKE A COMPETITIVE COMPANY

"We don't have enough employees in Quebec to work in every job available, so we have to be a very good place to work so we can keep our employees. ... We try to focus on wellness and on what employees need to have in their life. ... Everybody wants to do sport or have time for training, so we just opened a gym at the office. We just try to listen to what they need and what they want, so they can be happy where they work."

- Elisabeth Paquin, advisor, human resources at Aéroport de Québec Inc., in Quebec City. Winner, mid-sized not-for-profit organization

## SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES IN REACHING PERSONAL GOALS

"We have other support benefits, such as employee wellness programs, where folks can be eligible for up to \$150 per employee for health and wellness related initiatives that they may take on. ... Does \$150 make someone physically fit? No. It won't by itself. But it complements the things that they're doing on their own, or it can be a catalyst to doing something."

- Mark Phillips, chief administrative officer at the Town of Kentville in Kings County, N.S. Winner, small governmental organization

## CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

"We have a culture that's very inclusive, a culture where people look out for each other, and so there is very much a family feeling at OCAS. ... We created what we call a 'fun squad,' and it is a committee of employees who get together ... and the mandate for this committee ... is, No. 1, whatever program that we do should practise inclusion, and No. 2, that whatever events we do are fun. And what I mean by 'inclusion' is we celebrate a lot of things here at OCAS and the fun squad takes a direct role in it. For example, Christmas celebrations, Diwali celebrations, [Lunar] New Year, all those things are celebrated, and we want to create a workplace where, instead of not doing something or not celebrating a particular religious belief, we want to be able to celebrate all of them."

- David Hong, vice-president, customer and employee success at OCAS Application Services Inc. in Guelph, Ont. Winner, small not-for-profit organization



Top Category winners of the Employee Recommended Workplace Award. GLENN LOWSON/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

### 2019 Top Category Winners

BUSINESS STRUCTURE	SMALL	MID-SIZED	LARGE
Privately owned	Sklar Wilton & Associates	MDS Aero Support Corp.	Avison Young (Canada) Inc.
Publicly traded	Herman Miller Canada Inc.	Sandoz Canada Inc.	Pason Systems Corp.
Not-for-profit	OCAS Application Services Inc.	Aéroport de Québec Inc.	CAA Club Group
Governmental	Town of Kentville	Northwestern Health Unit	NB Power

Source: Morneau Shepell, The Globe and Mail

### Employee Recommended Workplaces

#### ORGANIZATION

- Active International
- Administration portuaire de Québec
- Aéroport de Québec Inc.
- Air France KLM
- Alberta Recycling Management Authority
- Allnorth Consultants Ltd.
- Arrow Engineering Inc.
- Avison Young (Canada) Inc.
- Back in Motion Rehab
- Benefits by Design
- Big Bang ERP
- BlackBerry Ltd.
- CAA Club Group
- Calgary Meals on Wheels
- Canadian Mental Health Association of N.B.
- Canadian Pharmacists Association
- CBCL Ltd.
- Citron Hygiene
- Credit Union Central of Manitoba
- Deluxe Payroll
- EfficiencyOne
- EGUS
- Evolocity Financial Group Inc.
- FIRST Insurance Funding of Canada
- Frontier College
- GeoSpectrum Technologies Inc.
- Gore Mutual Insurance
- H&R Block Canada
- Habitat Systems Inc.
- Herman Miller Canada Inc.
- Hi-Tech Business Systems Ltd.
- Ingredion Canada Corporation
- Innovation Credit Union
- Innovative Automation
- Intercon Messaging Inc.
- InvestorCOM
- Jazz Aviation LP
- Klick Inc.
- La Maison Orphée
- Lifemark Health Group
- LivingWorks Education Inc.
- Loopio Inc.
- MacLean Law
- Mainstream
- MDS Aero Support Corp.
- Municipality of the County of Cumberland
- NB Power
- Nestle Canada Inc.
- N.B. Association for Community Living
- Northwestern Health Unit
- OCAS Application Services Inc.
- Orix Geoscience Inc.
- Pason Systems Corp.
- Pensionnat Notre-Dame-des-Anges
- Prime Data Inc.
- Raymond James Ltd.
- Ronald McDonald House Charities SW Ont.
- Sandoz Canada Inc.
- School Boards' Co-operative Inc.
- SFU Childcare Society
- Shaw Communications Inc.
- Sionna Investment Managers
- Sklar Wilton & Associates
- SouthEastern Mutual Insurance
- Special Risk Insurance Managers Ltd.
- Stelvio Inc.
- TD Bank Group
- Thinkific
- Town of Kentville
- Triovest Realty Advisors Inc.
- Util-Assist
- Voices.com
- Workplace Resource
- Zimmer Biomet Canada
- ZLC Financial

Source: Morneau Shepell; The Globe and Mail

### HELPING EMPLOYEES ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN ALL FORMS

"Our company purpose is to help others succeed. And we realize that a key enabler to helping our clients succeed is helping each other internally succeed."

"About three years ago we created a program that we call Spirit 32, ... a whole-person development program. We had, for example, a 16-week mindfulness training program that was part of that. We've done a series of seminars on brain health. We have a naturopath who has come in and given sessions on how to get well and how to boost your immune system. We have a corporate movement program where we try to get people up and moving, we have a healthy snacking centre ... and we have a whole team that works to keep that alive and fresh."

- Sarah Liverance, partner at Sklar Wilton and Associates in Toronto. Winner, small privately-owned corporation

### SPARKING CONVERSATIONS AROUND MENTAL HEALTH

"Over the past couple of years we set up a mental-health committee because we said, 'We just want to ... get rid of the stigma, and start talking about stress management and how stress affects one's performance.'"

"Because we've been able to talk about mental health and physical health and wellness all around and work-life balance ... we've been able to have conversations with employees to say, 'You know what, if you're going through a tough time, take some time off, reach out to our employee assistance program, reach out to someone in the organization.'"

- Carole Morris, director of human resources at MDS Aero Support Corp. in Ottawa. Winner, mid-sized privately-owned corporation

### CULTIVATING SUPPORT NETWORKS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES

"We have a gym, boot-camp classes, yoga classes, a ball-hockey court, hockey at lunch time. And then we have a lot of clubs. Those clubs are fantastic because they're not always in work time, but they get people meeting other co-workers that they don't interact with day-to-day in their work life. So they'll go hiking together, or there's a soccer group, there are some people who go mountain biking. Once they build those connections, they're living more of a healthy lifestyle, and getting out and being physical, which also helps mental well-being, so it's doing all that, but then they're also building connections and relationships with employees and co-

workers. That really helps with retention."

- Heather Hantos, director of human resources at Pason Systems Corp. in Calgary. Winner, large publicly-traded corporation

### SHOWING SUPPORT FOR MENTAL WELLNESS FROM THE TOP-DOWN

Last year, the CEO of Avison Young sat down with the company's staff to share his own experiences grappling with mental health. His candor "broke the bubble" around the stigmatized topic in the workplace.

"I think breaking that fourth wall and just getting everyone to be on the same page and know that they have the company backing them, even if they're going through a tough time, I think that it really resonates with our employees. ... I think with the focus on health and wellness being an underlying thread to our culture, us trying to make sure that employees have enough time to get out and do other things that they enjoy, be with their families, focusing on that, putting emphasis on it, I think it's really helped employees be happier at work. Happier employees are more productive at work, and they want to stay."

- Parveen Sandhi, director of human resources at Avison Young (Canada) Inc. in Toronto. Winner, large privately-owned corporation

### HAPPY EMPLOYEES HELP RECRUIT NEW TALENT ON THEIR OWN

"I feel like focusing on the wellness and health of our employees sort of speaks for itself. Those employees are champions of the organization, and they do a lot of the work in promoting the organization through their own happiness and well-being at work. We can also use them as examples when recruiting, so we can say 'Here are some of the ways that we support our current staff.'"

"We have alternate work schedules for people that have conflicting times in their days. ... We have great benefits that are family friendly and great sick and vacation time."

- Rachel Palichuk, Northwestern Health Unit, with 13 offices across Ontario. Winner, mid-sized governmental organization

### SHOWING EMPLOYEES THEY ARE VALUED AND SUPPORTED

"The more emphasis we have on employee health, like total health or psychological health, it really speaks to new employees coming in because they feel like it's a more inclusive place of employment. And it's helping them understand that they don't have to

be the perfect employee, they're there because of the skills that they're bringing to the job, and whatever else you bring with it, we can help. ... Who they are as a person is really critical to us."

- Shelley Parker, industrial psychologist at NB Power in Fredericton. Winner, large governmental organization

### PROMOTING COMPANY VALUES WITHIN AND BEYOND THE OFFICE

"Our focus is always been on the safety of our members and looking after them, and for us that starts with our employees. So saying that we look after employees helps fulfill that promise, gives them purpose and connection to what it is that we do. When it comes to retention, when you feel actual connection with what the organization's purpose is, and you feel that you share the same values and you feel that you share the same drive, it makes what you do worthwhile. ... Wellness plays a huge part of that culture of looking after people and being people-centric and being member-centric."

"We do a variety of programs. From a physical standpoint we'll have challenges, we have an on-site wellness coach who can help people with their health goals, a wellness committee that looks after activities. But we also take an expansive view of what wellness looks like, so we have a great rewards program that allows employees to recognize each other and give each other points that they can redeem for goods."

- Tony Tsai, AVP corporate communications at CAA Club Group in Toronto. Winner, large not-for-profit organization

### HELPING EMPLOYEES ASSESS THEIR OWN WELL-BEING

"We decided to go on that journey about two and a half years ago, where the organizational context meant it was perfect timing for us to introduce a Total Health Index. It was a big cultural shift, selling to the employees that in order to be a high-performing company moving forward ... we needed to start managing our energy, instead of just managing our time. ... And that's where the Total Health Index started to feed this HR strategy. ... You do your questionnaire, with a personalized, confidential result that you get at the end. So you get basically your score card on 'what's my energy level' or 'what's my balance or my unbalance' in four pillars. The first year we did it, we had a little over 50 per cent participation. When we did it last year, we had close to 85 per cent participation. So that's a good signal that people bought into it."

- Marc St-Pierre, vice-president of human resources at Sandoz Canada Inc. in Mississauga, Ont. Winner, mid-sized publicly traded corporation

### THE ORGANIZATION IS ONLY AS HEALTHY AS ITS PEOPLE

"Our organization is only as healthy as our people. Things that matter to us, matter to our employees and we demonstrate that daily through wellness, diversity and inclusion. We believe it helps us attract and retain the very best people in the industry."

- Camille Paquette-Small, manager, Talent and culture, at Workplace Resource Canada in Toronto, a certified dealer for Herman Miller Canada Inc. Winner, small, publicly traded corporation

Responses have been edited for clarity and length.

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HEALTH GROUP



From left, Tanya Sinclair of the Pickering Public Library, Jason Tafler of Unyte and Shelley Parker of NB Power talk about ways to manage stress at work. GLENN LOWSON/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

# Self care and productivity are not mutually exclusive

Stress management is key to getting results, creating a safe workplace and handling crises

AUDREY CARLETON

It was an event in the personal life of Tanya Sinclair, chief executive officer of the Pickering Public Library, that led her to re-evaluate the state of her workplace's approach toward employee mental health.

When a close friend's son, once an "all-star in high school," went off to university and began to show symptoms of a developing mental illness, she took a look around and realized it was time for the Pickering, Ont., library to adopt new workplace wellness standards.

"Because it was someone that I was close to, it forced me to really think, 'I'm wondering how many employees I have in my workplace that might have similar challenges or might be caring for someone with similar challenges, and does my workplace create an environment that might support an individual who's struggling or support an individual who's caring for those who are struggling?'"

Between 2013 and 2014, Ms. Sinclair turned to the framework provided by the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, which lists 13 psychosocial factors that affect workplace wellness, including organizational culture, workload management and engagement. The library developed a wellness committee and began to roll out programs such as employee wellness surveys, dog therapy and yoga.

Ms. Sinclair says she is glad her workplace looked into these issues when it did. Just one year after the library became an early adopter of the standard, an employee died rather suddenly — putting the organization's skills in handling crises to the test.

"If it wasn't for all of the training that we had undergone in our workplace with our employees and our leaders, we would not have been as well equipped to deal with the sudden loss of a very close co-worker," she said.

Handling stress was the topic of a discussion/panel at the Solving Workplace Challenges summit during the 2019 Employee Recommended Workplace Awards event, created by The Globe and Mail and Morneau Shepell and presented on March 19 in Toronto.



Oscar, a therapy dog with Corporate Canine Therapy, greets event attendees. GLENN LOWSON/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Other panelists featured in the discussion on managing employee stress and anxiety say adopting strategies for incorporating stress reduction, self care and overall wellness throughout the workplace are key to handling and preventing crises.

For panelist Shelley Parker, an industrial psychologist at NB Power, enforcing mindfulness through all levels of the corporation has, quite literally, prevented injury and saved lives. Dr. Parker says staff at NB Power are most prone to physical accidents during company-wide transitions, when their jobs feel out of their control, which can affect their concentration on the work at hand. Teaching staff mindfulness techniques has helped to combat this. "They weren't thinking, they were reacting, they were responding automatically," Dr. Parker explained. "I said, 'I have a solution. It's called mindfulness.'"

So, after getting the company's leadership on board with her strategy, Dr. Parker went into the field to teach staff at NB Power a three-step breathing technique that they can do at any time — in teams or alone, on the job or at home — to check in with themselves, reduce stress and become present in the moment. She also trained crew leads in embedding check-ins into the workflow, to ensure that every employee feels present and prepared to be on-the-job each day.

And these strategies have worked: After adopting them across across the company, NB Power went a record two years without experiencing any employee incidents, Dr. Parker says.

Panelist Jason Tafler, founder and CEO at Unyte, agrees that strategies for self care and mindfulness are essential to a healthy, productive workplace. In fact, it was a lack of regular self care amid working 80- to 100-hour weeks as an executive vice-president at Rogers Communications that led his health to diminish. After he was hospitalized one workday

due to bleeding from a condition he soon learned was Crohn's disease, an inflammatory bowel disorder that is exacerbated by stress, he quit his job to pursue a more balanced lifestyle and, eventually, start the mindfulness training company he runs today.

Whether it's breathing routines and meditation or self check-ins and gratitude exercises, Mr. Tafler says adopting mindfulness techniques are one key way to shift the culture around productivity in the modern Canadian workplace.

"I think we've been sold a bill of goods, unfortunately, in the business system in the Western world, that self care and success or results are mutually exclusive. It's actually the opposite," he says. "When people take time for self care, whether it's mindfulness or other things, and they put themselves first, they then are actually much more able to perform, to be productive, there's improved creativity and focus."

For staff at Pickering Public Library, wellness takes a variety of ever-changing forms — the diversity of which Ms. Sinclair says has been essential to their uptake rate. By offering programs ranging from regular group walks to employee wellness surveys and therapeutic colouring, the library ensures that every employee will be able to find at least one program that works for them.

Ms. Sinclair also says the uptake rate of wellness strategies across the body of staff at the Pickering library has been high because it is employee-driven. Rather than using a top-down approach to implementing new wellness initiatives, the library has a committee of staff across all levels which takes this on.

"We found that if we get the ideas from the employees, they will champion it," Ms. Sinclair said. "They will spread the word, they will help to encourage other individuals to take part."

Special to The Globe and Mail

# Stress a major driver of substance abuse

AUDREY CARLETON

Understanding how to recognize and treat substance abuse in employees is critical to a healthy work force, according to speakers on a panel discussing addictions.

And stress — work-related or otherwise — is a key risk factor for developing an addiction or substance abuse problem, said Bill Howatt, chief of research, work force productivity at the Conference Board of Canada, speaking at the Solving Workplace Challenges summit during the 2019 Employee Recommended Workplace Awards event, created by The Globe and Mail and Morneau Shepell, and presented on March 19 in Toronto.

"When we're trying to manage our emotions, what do some people do to feel good under stress? Self-medicate."

While stress can come from any number of sources, he warns that employers should be mindful of ways that work can cause or exacerbate these feelings. He suggests that employers get "a baseline understanding of where your work force is to understand what their residual stress is and how they're coping."

But risk factors for addiction are not always external. According to Julie Anne Irving, staff psychologist at the Work, Stress, and Health clinic at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), there are a number of inherited traits employees may display that could put them at risk of developing an addiction. "Notably, these are inherited factors," Dr. Irving said. "There's no choosing these things."

Impulsiveness is one of these traits, Dr. Irving says. While perhaps easy to recognize in social settings, it can be challenging to detect in the office, because it so often manifests in positive ways while at work.

"Being able to make really fast decisions [is] often a good quality for some of our employees to have, depending on the workplace," Dr. Irving says. However, these employees may, in turn, have "a little bit of difficulty putting on the brakes and thinking about long-term consequences."

Other traits may become more apparent during social activities outside the office, including "being fun," or having a "preference toward novelty and sensation seeking," Dr. Irving says. She also notes to watch out for co-workers who display a high alcohol tolerance or an ability to drink large amounts without experiencing hangovers.

While recognizing substance addiction in one's organization can be hard, as an employer, learning how to handle it can be even trickier.

"I haven't met, in all my 30 years of working with people, anybody with alcohol dependency, with a substance abuse disorder of any type, that when they walked into my office they didn't know they had a problem," Dr. Howatt said. "The challenge is knowing the solution."

Both speakers agree that the length of time it takes to treat an addiction is one common frustration for employers supporting staff through the process. Dr. Irving estimates that between 40 and 60 per cent of patients undergoing treatment for addiction relapse at some point, and that the course of treatment may last longer than it would for other mental health disorders, such as depression or anxiety.

"Because of the chronicity of alcohol use disorder, we understand that often people will require what's called after-care or ongoing support," Dr. Irving says. "With the right support we can help people to course correct, and they can go on to be quite successful in their recovery."

Dr. Irving also warns employers that those in treatment for addiction are most vulnerable to relapse during the first two months, and that many of the resources available to them, such as group and one-on-one therapy, take place during the day. Employers hoping to best support employees through the treatment process should be adaptable to these needs, giving staff flexibility in their schedule when necessary.

There are numerous other ways that employers can work to support employees undergoing treatment for addiction. One of the simplest is to reduce the peer pressure to consume alcohol at social events outside the workplace, which Dr. Irving says are "one of the most terrifying places for people who have recently stopped drinking or are trying to cut down."

"Make sure you have a mix of events between dry and those that involve alcohol," Dr. Irving suggests.

A preventative approach to handling addictions in the workplace is perhaps the most worthwhile, however, Dr. Howatt says. By helping employees recognize when their stress levels reach a dangerous threshold, employers can reduce their likelihood of developing compulsive behaviours as a coping mechanism. He suggests providing employees with "quick links and surveys" to self-assess their stress levels.

Special to The Globe and Mail



Bill Howatt of The Conference Board of Canada and Julie Anne Irving of The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health talk about substance abuse. GLENN LOWSON/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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# When is cake not just cake?

Retention strategies can range from the cheap and cheerful to more complex strategies

GUY DIXON

There's hard business science behind Popcorn Wednesdays.

Or that celebratory cake in the cafeteria, the office softball team, the Friday potluck, or meaningful perks, such as flexible hours and work-from-home policies.

All are enticements (some softer than others) aimed at the hard challenge of employee retention, a problem dogging countless businesses.

Yet, can retaining talent be accomplished on the cheap with ephemera such as free company swag or cookies in the conference room?

The truth is, there is a cold calculus in retaining employees.

"When people walk out of the organization, I just can't help regretting the investment we've made in those individuals, and the fact that now we're subsidizing the competition," said Dave Reddy, vice-president of human resources at Lifemark Health Group. "And when you talk like that, the business responds."

In other words, when the conversation around morale is less about cake and more about retention numbers, that's when upper management takes action, he noted at a panel discussion on human resources issues at the Solving Workplace Challenges summit during the 2019 Employee Recommended Workplace Awards event, created by The Globe and Mail and Morneau Shepell and presented on March 19 in Toronto.

For instance, physiotherapy clinics are Lifemark's main line of business. Yet, the unemployment rates for physiotherapists in Canada is currently 0.6 per cent, so the competition to retain talent is extreme. About 30 per cent of new hires were quitting the company in the first year and a half. The competition to hire and retain physiotherapists is that fierce.

"It's a war for talent. We have to present the best employment brand," Mr. Reddy said. Sometimes that can mean (somewhat counterintuitively) telling prospective hires about areas in which the company feels it could improve and giving them a very realistic picture of what it's like to work there, so that new hires don't feel led astray when they settle into the job.

Another retention strategy is to focus on high-performing employees who may be at risk of quitting. Mr. Reddy recommends first gauging employees in terms of their future potential at the organization and their historical performance. After judging the higher performers by those criteria,



From left, Paula Allen from Morneau Shepell, Laura Strickler from ADP, Cerys Cook from PUR Co., David Hong from OCAS, Kim Marshall from Innovative Automation, and Dave Reddy from Lifemark explain inexpensive ways to boost workplace wellness. GLENN LOWSON/ THE GLOBE AND MAIL

"select out those you consider to be flight risks to the organization, and zero in on those with action plans," he said.

Every manager in contact with those at-risk, high-performing individuals should then communicate that action plan to them, he suggests. It sends the message that management cares enough to address their concerns meaningfully. "With that conversation alone, you've ticked up engagement about 10 points," Mr. Reddy said.

But then managers have to back this up with real action. One method is to focus on the top three things that the high fliers say personally motivate them. Maybe it is salary. Maybe it is decision making. Go with what they are looking for. Maybe it won't cost the company more than granting simple recognition or greater autonomy.

Just as importantly, this is a retention and morale method that managers can grasp, Mr. Reddy indicated. It's more precise than, say, general team building; it is somewhat deeper thinking than Popcorn Wednesdays, even though all the panelists noted that some lightness, whether it is a scavenger hunt or junk food, helps to ease the mood.

How else can managers improve retention, yet spend little?

In addition to introducing flexible work hours, ADP Canada, which provides payroll software and other human resources services, has been allowing employees to leave early on Fridays, if they meet certain productivity targets or measures, said Laura Strickler, director, human resources business partner at ADP. It is meaningful, she said, because employees get "recognition because they get to leave early, and everybody knows they've left early."

But she warns against applying policies to everyone arbitrarily from on high. "There are times when that makes sense, but some of the best things I've seen is when we've empowered the individual leader. They know their team," she said. Allowing managers to customize work events or recognition to their departments can be more effective.

Some companies are also thinking of eliminating the source of much workplace contention, the annual employee performance reviews, and possibly saving time and money in doing so. "I know a lot of companies are thinking about this. What do you replace it with, though?" asked Cerys Cook, vice-president of people and culture at PUR Co. Inc., which makes aspartame-free chewing gum.

During reviews, she said, "I have found that mostly people are waiting to hear how much money they are going to make at the end of the year or next year. So, they are not necessarily listening to the feedback. What we are thinking of is replacing it with is continuous feedback, all the way through the year. And then all of those conversations feed into that compensation conversation."

It depends on departmental managers, however, to pace those discussions with employees. "Different teams need more feedback than others. [The new policy] is really to customize it for each leader and each team," she said.

ADP is also going through the process of eliminating annual reviews, replacing them with something more meaningful.

"Our leaders are excited about, frankly, not having that conversation and having more regular touch points [with employees]. We say, 'You should know where you stand 52 weeks a year,'" said Ms. Strickler at ADP.

# How the award works

Employees' overall health and well-being is key to their productivity and engagement at work, and that realization has more Canadian companies focusing on how to help their staff stay healthy – both physically and mentally.

As a result, more organizations are creating an array of workplace programs that range from committees that plan fun events, to organizing opportunities to help staff improve their exercise and eating habits and ability to cope with stress.

The Employee Recommended Workplace Award, created by The Globe and Mail and Morneau Shepell, recognizes companies for excellence in achieving a healthy, engaged and productive workforce. It is the only award of its kind that is based entirely on feedback from employees.

Here's how the award works. Employees complete a confidential survey about their physical and mental health, and aspects of their work and life – all elements of Total Health that impact employee engagement and productivity. Once completed, each employee gets an individual report with their overall score. Participating organizations receive a summary report that identifies areas of strength and areas where more work may be needed.

Scores for each organization are tallied from the aggregate scores of their employees. Organizations whose score reaches a minimum statistical threshold earn the Employee Recommended Workplace distinction. This is no small feat. Employee Recommended Workplaces are those companies that were in the top percentile among participants. In 2019, 75 organizations earned the designation.

The companies with the highest overall scores are awarded the Top Category award based on their size and business structure. The winning organizations achieve the top Total Health scores in their categories, representing privately owned, public, not-for-profit and government sectors in small, mid-sized and large businesses. There are 12 Top Category winners for 2019.

Registration for the 2020 Employee Recommended Workplace Award will open on April 3. Visit [employeerecommended.com](http://employeerecommended.com) for more information.

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