

# IN BUSINESS Las Vegas



## BEST PLACES to WORK 2005



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*As a 2003 recipient of the Best Places to Work  
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## FROM THE SPONSOR

### Dear In Business Las Vegas readers:

Congratulations to all the employers of Southern Nevada who make workplace excellence fundamental to their business. You should be proud of your accomplishments this past year, as you have raised the bar for HR excellence for all of us.

We at JobFlash believe that workplace excellence begins with the right hire who meets and exceeds your service standards.

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## ABOUT SNHRA

The Southern Nevada Human Resource Association (SNHRA) is the premier professional association for human resource professionals in the region.

SNHRA has nearly 600 members representing more than 400 organizations. SNHRA provides a wide variety of professional development and networking opportunities for human resource professionals in the Las Vegas Valley, with a diverse membership representing corporations and organizations of various sizes, as well as consultants. Members range in experience from entry level to senior level, and perform both specialist and generalist roles.

The organization's objectives are:

1. To provide opportunities for persons engaged in human resource management to discuss their current challenges and to provide a medium for their mutual self-improvement,
2. To work for the betterment of human resource management practices including but not limited to recruitment,

employment, compensation, training, labor relations, and personnel research which are mutually beneficial to the employee and the employer,

3. To raise standards of performance in all phases of human resource management and to aid in career guidance within the educational systems of the Las Vegas area.

To apply for membership, log on to [www.SNHRA.org](http://www.SNHRA.org) or contact Denyse Wortham at (702) 362-0388.

Congratulations to the 2005 winners of the SNHRA's Best Places to Work competition. Candidates were judged on the following criteria:

- Recruitment and retention
- Performance management
- Employee benefits
- Work-life balance
- Employee communications and morale
- Employee relations
- Inclusiveness and diversity.



## Meet the Judges

### Heather Burkhardt

Heather Burkhardt is the human resources manager for Henry Schein, Inc., a position she has held for 15 years. She handles West Coast human resources for 300 employees locally, as well as for several other western facilities. Burkhardt has been a member of the Carson City and Reno chapters of the Northern Nevada Human Resources Association for her entire tenure in the HR profession.



### Rich Olson

Rich Olson, SPHA, is the human resources manager at Quebecor World Printing in Fernley. A Reno resident since 1990, Olson is a volunteer board member of the Northern Nevada Human Resource Association.



### Dr. Yvonne Stedham

Dr. Yvonne Stedham is professor of management in the Managerial Sciences Department at the University of Nevada, Reno. She received a Ph.D. in business and an MBA from the University of Kansas and undergraduate degrees in economics and business from the Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms Universität, Bonn, Germany.



## ABOUT WORKPLACE EXCELLENCE

The Southern Nevada Human Resource Association's Workplace Excellence Awards honor company chief executives and human resource professionals dedicated to quality, innovative personnel practices. The program showcases the role of human resources in creating employee satisfaction, which has a direct impact on company performance.

The nominated companies were invited to apply for the honor by completing an application that is reviewed by a panel of judges from the Society for Human Resource Management, the world's largest association devoted to HR management.

Representing nearly 200,000 individual members, the society's mission is to serve the needs of human resource professionals by providing the most essential and comprehensive resources available.

As an influential voice, the society's mission is also to advance the human resource profession to ensure that HR is recognized as an essential partner in developing and executing organizational strategy. Founded in 1948, the society has more than 500 affiliated chapters within the U.S. and members in more than 120 countries.

This year, the SNHRA received more than 50 nominations from nonprofits,

government agencies and private businesses. Companies ranged from several to several thousand employees.

What better way to promote and distinguish your company as an employer of choice in our community? Or, to find out what your competitors or other community business leaders are doing to promote employee satisfaction, retention and to generally be a great place to work!

As a nominee, your company receives a listing in the In Business Las Vegas "Best Places To Work" publication. Winners receive a company profile in the special publication, a prestigious award suitable for display, collateral material for recruiting and advertising and a videotaped company profile showcasing your company during the award ceremony.

Besides nominating your company for this prestigious award, you have the opportunity to be a sponsor. Last year's event drew hundreds of nominees from all industries in Southern Nevada and in excess of 500 attendees. Sponsorship is an excellent way to reach key decision-makers for hundreds of local businesses. Visit the SNHRA's Web site at [snhra.org](http://snhra.org) for more information.

# 2005

# BEST PLACES to WORK

# NOMINEES

Alarmco  
American Casino & Entertainment Properties, LLC  
Aristocrat Technologies Inc.  
Astoria Homes  
Barajas and Associates Inc.  
Boyd Gaming  
Centex Homes  
City of Henderson  
City of Las Vegas  
Clark County Credit Union  
Clark County School District  
Colonial Bank  
Connecting Point  
Countrywide Home Loans  
Custom Benefit Consultants Inc.  
Desert Radiologists  
Enterprise Rent-a-Car  
Fremont Medical Centers

Geotechnical and Environmental Services Inc.  
GES Exposition Services  
Hard Rock Hotel-Casino  
Hilton Grand Vacations Club  
Houldsworth Russo & Co.  
JMA Architecture Studios  
Johnson Jacobson Wilcox  
Jones Vargas  
Las Vegas Clark County Library District  
Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority  
Life Care Centers of America  
Loomis Fargo & Co.  
Martin Harris Construction  
MGM Grand Hotel-Casino  
MGM MIRAGE  
Millennium Staffing Services  
Nevada First Bank

Nevada Public Radio  
New York-New York Hotel-Casino  
Orgill/Singer & Associates Inc.  
PBS&J  
Pulte Homes/Del Webb  
Regional Transportation Commission  
Shred-It  
Sierra Health Services  
Southwest Title of Nevada  
St. Rose Hospitals  
Strategic Solutions  
Sunterra Corporation  
The Idea Factory  
The Tan Factory  
TWI Group Inc.  
University Medical Center  
University of Southern Nevada  
Virgin Advertising



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**Non-Profit/Government WINNER****Nevada Public Radio****CEO:** Lamar Marchese, president, general manager and founder**HR Director:** Cynthia M. Dobek**Nature of Business:** Public radio**Location:** 1289 S. Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas NV**Employees:** 27**HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:**

In June 2004, Nevada Public Radio (NVPR) retained a consultant within the public broadcasting industry to assess the station's compensation structure. The purpose of the assessment was to help the station adopt a compensation policy and salary management process based on pay for performance, allowing it to attract and retain a qualified workforce, as well as ensure parity. Through its efforts, NVPR made strides toward:

- Creating, maintaining and integrating into its strategic plan, a successful compensation policy designed to support the mission of the station
- Providing equitable and fair compensation for similar qualifications of work
- Ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

"Nevada Public Radio's human resources practices and policies, we believe, begin with a foundation philosophy of treating people the way we would like to be treated and then hiring great people and encouraging them to do their best work," said human resource director Cynthia M. Dobek. "Nevada Public Radio invests in its employees by providing fair compensation, excellent benefits, great work surroundings, state-of-the-art broadcast and office technology, and most importantly, a work environment that values each individual's contribution to overall group effort. In turn, our employees invest their knowledge, time and passion back into the organization, resulting in high company morale."

Besides maintaining 100 percent paid health insurance premiums for its employees, in October 2004, NVPR

**Cynthia M. Dobek**

implemented its first formal dental and vision policy with 100 percent of premiums paid for full-time employees. Other aspects of coverage include:

- 100 percent coverage on preventative and basic services promoting wellness, with major services covered at 60 percent with a \$25 deductible
- Vision policy benefit increase to \$500, including exam and prescription glasses every 12 months with no co-pay; an allowance is provided for contact lenses and laser vision services
- Fifty percent of premium costs available to part-time employees on a voluntary basis.

In reviewing its options on life and disability insurance, NVPR recently changed carriers and was able to reduce costs and increase benefits to employees. Out-of-pocket expenses can be tax deferred by voluntarily participating in a 125-flex plan.

Conferences and training opportunities are budgeted every year for the benefit of expanding employee knowledge. Personnel attend industry conferences each year and are encouraged to pursue higher education and certification-bearing training.

**Lamar Marchese**

"Our continuing success and longevity starts with a motivated, passionate, creative and dedicated staff," said Lamar Marchese, NVPR's president, general manager and founder. "In reward for their willingness to consistently go beyond the call of duty, NVPR gives back to our employees a comfortable well-equipped work environment and flexible family-friendly schedules for maintaining a work/life balance."

"We're continuing our efforts to increase benefits, provide industry-competitive compensation with performance management goals and appraisals and maintain communication-based employee relations. Employees have a stake in planning our shared future to not only 'do things right' but to 'do the right things' to ensure a sustainable and relevant future for public radio in Southern Nevada."

**Judges' key findings:**

- Work/life balance
- Communications

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## Non-Profit/Government 2nd Place

# Las Vegas- Clark County Library District

**CEO:** Daniel L. Walters

**HR Director:** Bud H. Pierce

**Nature of Business:** Public library

**Location:** 833 N. Las Vegas Blvd., Las Vegas, NV

**Employees:** 686 (637 in Las Vegas)

### HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:

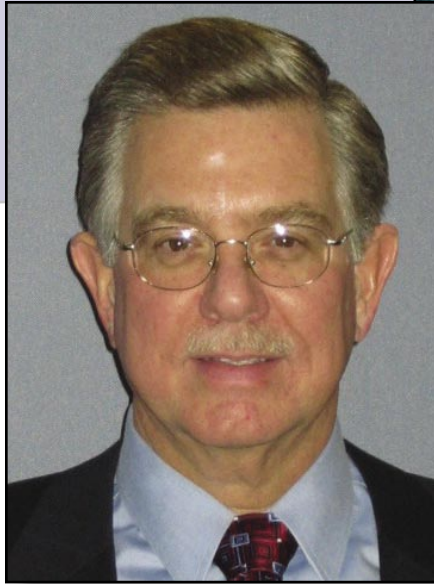
The Clark County Library District provides employees with substantial individual and professional development opportunities. It proactively addresses issues in each department by facilitating team building, supporting participation in professional meetings and conferences and providing ongoing training opportunities. The district also works to ensure a sense of inclusiveness among staff through committee work, an employee-led "staff association" and participation in Corporate Challenge.

In 2005, the district developed its own Diversity Action Plan. The organization devotes two full-time librarian positions to community outreach as part of its diversity initiatives. The district also offers a comprehensive adult and family literacy program.

Full-time Library District employees receive a benefits package equivalent to more than 30 percent of their annual salary, which includes:

- 20-25 percent employer-paid contribution to Nevada PERS
- Health, life, vision and dental insurance for employees and their dependents
- 13 paid holidays, 15 paid vacation days and 12 days sick leave annually

The district communicates with employees through several methods, including an internal Web site, a quarterly print newsletter and system-wide print/e-mail announcements.



Bud H. Pierce



Daniel L. Walters

### Judges' key findings:

- Strategic planning
- Diversity
- Communications

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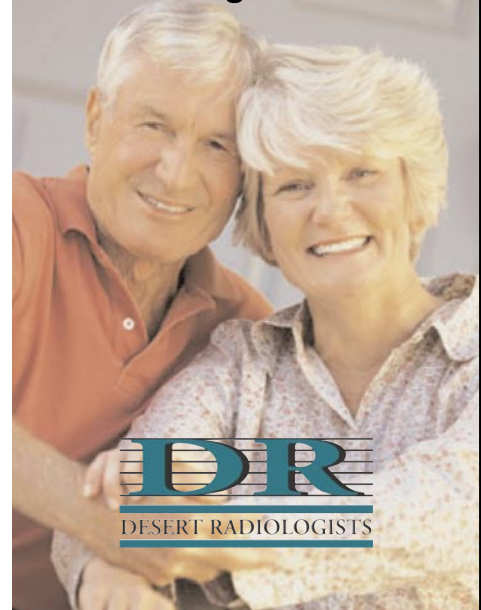
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## Non-Profit/Government 3rd Place

# Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority

**CEO:** Rossi Ralenkotter, president & CEO

**HR Director:** Mark Olson, vice president of human resources;  
Ann Simmons, director of human resources

**Nature of Business:** Special district, local government

**Location:** 3150 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, NV

**Employees:** more than 800



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Rossi Ralenkotter

### HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:

Boasting a turnover rate of just 4.2 percent, the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority (LVCVA) offers its employees a superior pay and benefits package, along with a wide range of programs.

In 2003 the LVCVA adopted a personal time off policy to be used at the discretion of the employee. Full-time employees are eligible for educational assistance after a year on the job, and the organization provides employees with discounted tickets to family attractions in California. The LVCVA hosts both a Wellness Fair and a Financial Fitness Fair, and each fall, invites its insurance representatives to speak to employees about benefit changes.

see **LVCVA**, page 10



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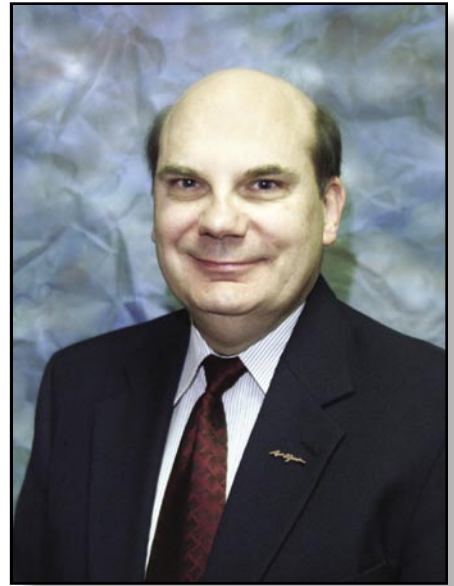
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**LVCVA**, from page 8



Mark Olson

Some of the LVCVA's benefits include:

- Complete medical, dental and vision benefits
- Long-term disability insurance
- A range of life insurance coverage
- Flexible spending accounts
- AFLAC supplemental insurance

The LVCVA recognizes its employees through a number of channels. An MVP Award is used to immediately recognize and reward excellence in service. The organization also delivers service and safety awards.

**Judges' key findings:**

- **Safety awards**
- **Recognition committee**
- **Communications**
- **Donation of PTO hours**

Micro Companies **WINNER****Custom Benefit Consultants, Inc.****CEO:** Candace Maddin**President:** Robin Sylvia**HR Director:** Kenneth W. Bahl, vice president of operations**Nature of Business:** Employee benefits**Location:** 7660 W. Cheyenne Ave., Ste. 109, Las Vegas, NV**Employees:** 20 (11 in Las Vegas)**HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:**

Custom Benefit Consultants (CBC) annual revenue grew 400 percent during the last two years, a testament to the role the company plays in encouraging and rewarding exceptional achievement in a familylike setting.

"It's a collaborative effort from the top down," said Kenneth Bahl, CBC vice president of operations. "This company is not going to reach its goals without helping employees reach theirs."

Each year, CBC leaders set company goals based on the organization's business plan and growth model. Employees then establish individual goals in support of their department and come together to discuss collective objectives, share ideas on how to achieve corporate goals and identify rewards for attaining success. Bonus and raise structures are established in such a way that employees determine what they earn. For example, an employee who achieves 90 percent of his or her goals will receive 90 percent of his or her bonus or raise.

On the sales front, CBC has created an environment that emphasizes individual performance while also recognizing the need for a team approach in some cases. Agent bonuses include both group and individual performance measures in meeting quarterly sales goals. CBC believes this form of compensation structure allows agents to work together toward achieving goals while holding one another respon-

sible for supporting the team.

CBC offers employees a host of voluntary benefits via payroll deduction. The company's standard benefits structure includes:

- 100 percent of the premium for all employees to participate in medical, dental and vision programs
- Paid time off for sick/medical/beravement leave and jury duty
- Paid vacation.

Common themes at CBC focus on family values and opportunity. Employees are asked to share their personal and professional goals with management. Group activities are the norm, rather than the exception. Perks include a winter holiday party in which employees are recognized for achievements and receive an often humorous "memorable moment of the year" award.

Additional morale-building features include:

- Special sales contests, including "Need for Speed," which revolves around an in-house Matchbox racetrack and "Football Frenzy," which features an indoor football field
- Group outings for camping, dinner and sporting events
- Birthday recognitions that include office lunch and cake
- Special candy and gift treats on holidays including Valentine's Day, Easter and Thanksgiving. Contest prizes often involve Visa Bucks, movie nights, spa trips and other types of gift certificates.



**From left: Candace Maddin, Robin Sylvia and Ken Bahl**

In early 2005, CBC employees were challenged to come up with a global idea for community contribution. "Co-workers Benefiting Children" was created to outline targets for financial contribution and volunteer efforts that focus on children. Scholarships, hunger and children's health are among the issues the group decided to tackle. The company actively supports March of Dimes and Children's Hospital of Orange County.

"The biggest thing is our theme of empowerment," Bahl said. "By allowing employees to participate in setting goals for the company, everyone has a vested interest, which contributes to an overall feeling of teamwork and opportunity."

**Judges' key findings:**

- **Comprehensive performance plan**
- **"Co-workers Benefiting Children"**

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## Micro Companies 2nd Place

# Johnson Jacobson Wilcox

**CEO:** Gary M. Johnson, president

**Nature of Business:** Accounting and Taxation

**Location:** 7690 W. Sahara Ave., Las Vegas, NV

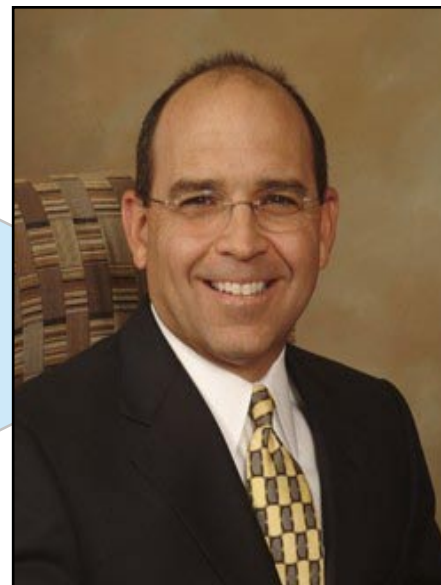
**Employees:** 24

### HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:

Goal setting at Johnson Jacobson Wilcox (JJW) is a collaborative effort between the employee, a partner and the employee's mentor. The process allows employees to see how their individual goals are aligned with company's. Feedback is timely and frequent and performance evaluations are provided for each project. Compensation includes annual performance

increases and participation in the firm's bonus program, which is based on a percentage of the organization's net income.

All employees of JJW are furnished with PDAs and Daytimers, and where appropriate, laptop computers. The company creates flexible arrangements for employees who are starting families and provides fully-paid training opportunities. JJW places high emphasis on professional skills development, pays for



**Gary M. Johnson**

all professional licensing and offers a bonus when a CPA is earned.

JJW offers employees a unique benefits program, which includes:

- Fully-paid PPO health insurance for the employee
- Health care reimbursement plan of \$500 for each person in an employee's family
- Paid life insurance
- Paid vacation time, holidays and sick leave.
- Picnics, holiday parties and tickets

to sporting events are the norm for JJW employees throughout the year. The company also provides employees with a fully-stocked kitchen.

### Judges' key findings:

- Performance management
- Firm retreat
- Bonus program
- Stocked kitchen

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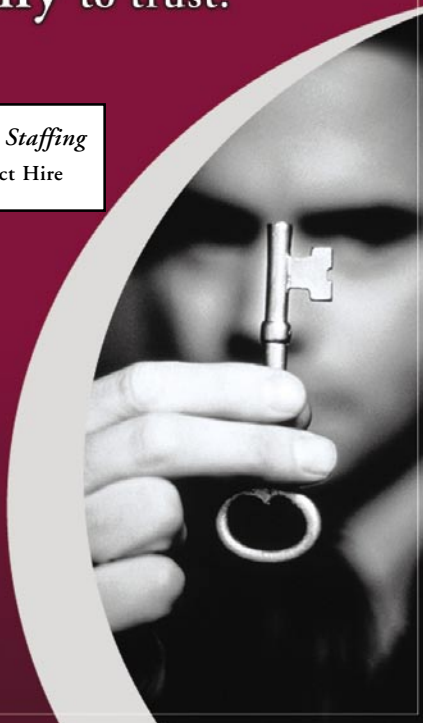
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## Micro Companies 3rd Place

# Virgen Advertising

**CEO:** Merrell Virgen,  
president/creative director  
**Executive Vice President:** Andy Hosak  
**Nature of Business:** Creative  
**Location:** 235 W. Warm Springs Road,  
Ste. 100, Las Vegas, NV  
**Employees:** 35

### HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:

As the largest minority-owned advertising agency in Southern Nevada, Virgen Advertising is a melting pot of many culturally diverse individuals. The firm works diligently to maintain a fun and creative atmosphere, supporting "jam sessions" to stimulate brainstorming and creative thinking.

Virgen is committed to ongoing industry training for its employees, spending more than \$8,000 on staff development last year. Its innovative "WorkZone" accountability internet server posts client jobs and feedback in real time, allowing all employees to view and comment on projects being worked on by other staffers. The company also invests in its employees by acquiring the latest computers, software and technology to ensure efficiency.

Planned social outings help maintain an upbeat and energetic atmosphere at Virgen Advertising.

The agency's principals believe a high morale yields a more creative work environment. As such, team-building events include:

- Monthly trips to Las Vegas shows and events, with the company covering the costs of transportation and entertainment for all employees
- House parties for special events
- Vacations for the entire staff.

Virgen Advertising executives are easily accessible to staff members.



Merrell Virgen



Andy Hosak

All employees are encouraged to interact with one another to help develop strategic communications for clients.

### Judges' key findings:

- WorkZone
- Fun



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Small Companies **WINNER****Orgill/Singer and Associates****CEO:** David Dahan**PRESIDENT:** Eric Springall**In--House Counsel:** Fern Netzky**Nature of Business:** Insurance and investment services**Location:** 8360 W. Sahara Ave., Ste. 110, Las Vegas, NV**Employees:** 75**HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:**

As insurance professionals serving businesses of all size, Orgill/Singer and Associates Inc. understands the sense of security and well being that a comprehensive insurance package provides to an employee and his or her family. Company benefits include:

- Medical insurance, including the choice between an employerpaid HMO or a low-cost Point of Service plan
- Term life insurance and long-term disability/long-term care
- WorldDoc membership
- Access to Employee Assistance Program, which provides mental health counseling
- Membership in the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce.

Orgill/Singer also seeks out corporate discount programs for staff members. Current discounts are offered through Office Depot, Desert Toyota and 24-Hour Fitness. Other voluntary benefits include:

- Dental, vision and short-term disability insurance
- Section 125 flexible spending benefits
- Accidental death and dismemberment coverage and cancer coverage
- 401(k)
- Paid time off, including a minimum of 10 holidays annually
- On-site flu shots.

Orgill/Singer communicates with its employees through an open-door policy. Principals of the company conduct "walkabouts" through each department on a

daily basis. The company maintains an employee-only intranet and is in the process of introducing "Fringe Facts," which will provide employees with detailed explanations of the value of their own specific benefits package. Employees are also encouraged to join and utilize any of the agency's six internal committees.

To stay ahead of the continually changing world of insurance, Orgill/Singer has gone to great lengths to ensure employees are kept abreast of industry developments through on-going seminars and training opportunities. The agency is currently pursuing a government training grant with Manpower to partially fund a program, under which the customer service and administrative staff will participate in a broad curriculum of training. Further, all employee licensing courses and materials and fees are paid for by the company and most continuing education courses are fully reimbursed.

Besides its benefits package and professional development opportunities, Orgill/Singer recognizes its employees in many ways. Managers are empowered with the ability to provide employees with "instant rewards," such as an on-site back massage, movie and event tickets or gift cards to local stores. The company sponsors an employee of the month and employee of the year program and recognizes birthdays, births/adoptions and other milestones in various ways. The agency also provides a healthy breakfast each Friday and sponsors a number of employee events throughout the year.



David Dahan



Fern Netzky

**Judges' key findings:**

- Benefits •Training
- Communications

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## Small Companies **2nd Place**

# Nevada First Bank

**CEO:** Arvind Menon, CEO/president

**HR Director:** Vicky King,  
vice president/human resources

**Nature of Business:** Financial services

**Location:** 777 N. Rainbow Blvd., Las Vegas NV

**Employees:** 89 (84 in Las Vegas)

### HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:

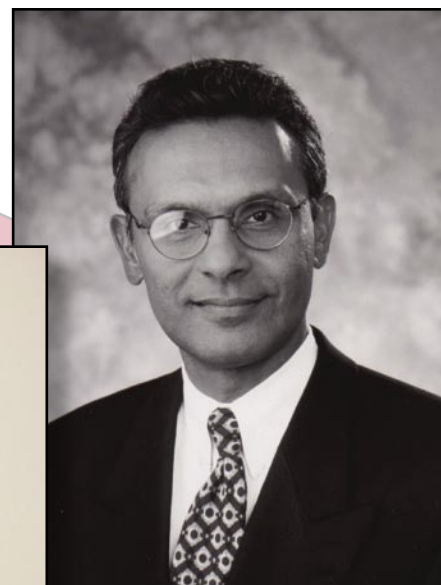
Nevada First Bank provides its employees with an above-average compensation package and offers an incentive bonus program and/or annual bonus to employees based on bank results and individual contributions. Nevada First also utilizes an employee referral program, whereby employees receive cash bonuses for referring qualified candidates who are hired for bank positions. Other employee benefits include:

- 100 percent of insurance premiums for all employees and their dependents, including medical, dental and life insurance coverage
- 100 percent premium for short and long-term disability insurance for all employees
- 401(k) plan with matching contributions after six months of service
- Tuition reimbursement.

Nevada First Bank offers a number of in-house training opportunities for its employees and strives to create a strong work/life balance. A service excellence program recognizes those who go above and beyond in customer service efforts. Managers are encouraged to keep staff members updated on bank products through monthly training sessions. The bank also conducts annual employee meetings with an outside consultant to allow employees to offer honest, confidential feedback.



Vicky King



Arvind Menon

### Judges' key findings:

- Planning
- Performance reviews
- Recognition
- Open book policy

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## Small Companies **3rd Place**

# Southwest Title Company

**CEO:** Dale Puhl, president and CEO

**HR Director:** Shelly Robertson

**Nature of Business:** Title insurance and escrow

**Location:** 8215 S. Eastern Ave., Ste. 100, Las Vegas, NV

**Employees:** 72 (70 in Las Vegas)

### HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:

While Southwest Title Co. has grown 300 percent during the last two years, the company continues to strive to maintain a cohesive team-oriented environment.

Employees are invited to join committees that guide different aspects of the business and staff members take alternating turns working weekend hours to ensure a healthy work/life balance. Community volunteerism is also encour-

aged, and employees receive paid time off to perform community service. Other morale-building features include:

- Free escrow and title services on employee home purchases
- Daily cash "pat on the back" prize to acknowledge good deeds and exceptional service
- Social hour every Friday afternoon
- Regular company breakfasts
- Recognition of employee birthdays
- Personal Christmas gifts
- Weekly trivia games that allow em-

ployees to earn points toward gifts and other prize items.

Southwest Title also distributes a monthly newsletter to provide employees with internal company news and to announce promotions, anniversaries and personal achievements among the staff.

### Judges' key findings:

- **Work/life balance**
- **Paid time off to volunteer**
- **"Pat on the Back" award**

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Mid-Size Companies **WINNER****TWI Group Inc.****CEO:** Steve Barry, president and CEO**HR Director:** Shirley Moorhouse, human resources manager**Nature of Business:** Exhibition logistics**Location:** 2725 E. Desert Inn Road, Las Vegas, NV**Employees:** 101 (70 in Las Vegas)**HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:**

In an effort to hire both qualified and informed candidates, TWI Group Inc. encourages prospective employees to meet with someone holding the position being applied for to provide a better understanding of what the job entails during the interview process. The company then conducts annual performance reviews as well as a company-wide peer review process.

TWI formed an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) to create employee ownership in the company and reward long-term employment. The ESOP consists of 33 percent of the company. Employees sell stock back to the company upon retirement.

TWI staffers also participate in profit sharing. The overall philosophy of TWI's profit sharing plan is that each rewarded employee must be able to see the link between their performance and their reward, and that profit sharing must actively reinforce company goals.

According to TWI Group Inc. President and CEO Steve Barry, the company's human resource policies are designed to provide employees, who are essentially part-owners in the company, with as much information as possible so they become fully knowledgeable about all aspect of the company's operations. Regularly scheduled town hall meetings discuss the financial condition of the company, and an open door policy, grievance committee and suggestion box keep the lines of communication open.

Besides employee ownership in the company, other TWI benefits include:

- 100 percent of each employee's medical, dental, vision, long-term

disability, AD&D and life insurance coverage

- 50 percent of covered dependents medical, dental and vision coverage
- Life insurance equal to two times the employee's salary
- Short-term disability after 90 days service
- 401 (k) plan with a 25 percent match on the first eight percent of the employee's contribution with immediate vesting
- Paid vacation that increases with longevity of employment.

In addition to its vacation policy, TWI provides employees with six days of paid time off (PTO) which can be taken on short notice. PTO is intended to meet urgent, personal needs and unused days may be cashed in at the end of each calendar year. The company also offers a PTO bank, which allows employees to donate extra time off to other employees in need. Additional perks include:

- Ability of employees to use points and miles earned on their corporate American Express card for personal use
- An educational assistance program for job-related training, designed to help employees achieve individual professional growth goals
- Employee of the Quarter program, which rewards two employees per quarter with a \$250 gift certificate.

Managers are also allowed to spend \$100 per year per employee to increase morale, and the company has an established fund that employees can borrow cash from in the event of an immediate, unforeseeable need.

"By consistently applying the company values of commitment, trust, honesty, loyalty, respect and open communication to employees," said TWI Group

**Shirley Moorhouse**

Inc. Human Resources Manager Shirley Moorhouse, "They in turn apply those values to their daily interactions with our customers."

**Judges' key findings:**

- **ESOP**
- **Benefits**
- **Work/life balance**

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## Mid-Size Companies 2nd Place

# Centex Homes

**CEO:** Bradley Burns, division president

**HR Director:** Rochelle Beaver, human resource manager

**Nature of Business:** Construction

**Location:** 3606 N. Rancho Drive, Ste. 102, Las Vegas, NV

**Employees:** 170

### HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:

As part of its comprehensive training program, Centex Homes offers employees a \$2,000 training bonus when they complete nine of 78 training courses offered. The company also encourages use of a customized online Zoomerang survey, which allows employees to provide the company with feedback. Cross-training with the company's subsidiaries is offered to ensure a better understanding of how various parts of the company operate.

Centex offers employees medical and dental insurance coverage from the first day of employment. The company also provides twice an employee's annual salary in life insurance and offers an employee assistance program to help employees cope with life stressors.

Other benefits include:

- Annual company-paid fishing trip to British Columbia for field managers
- President-led company weekend get-away when company achieves "Centexcellence Awards"
- A monthly incentive program called "happy month" which provides perks such as Starbucks gift cards, cleaning service and JW Marriott gift cards.

Centex also sends female employees to "Nevada Woman Day" each year, celebrates Administrative Assistant's Day and supports the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's annual Race for the Cure.

### Judges' key findings:

- Zoomerang Survey
- Weekend trip incentive



Rochelle Beaver



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## Mid-Size Companies 3rd Place

# Colonial Bank

**CEO:** Mark Daigle, president/CEO, Nevada region

**HR Director:** Rita K. Arthur, director of human resources, Nevada region

**Nature of Business:** Financial/banking

**Location:** Financial/banking

**Employees:** 5,600 (103 in Southern Nevada)

### HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:

Colonial Bank in Nevada designed a "stretch goal incentive" plan to acknowledge ways in which daily activities determine long-term organizational success. The plan reinforces the ways in which individual success translates to business success, and rewards individuals who achieve extraordinary results.

Employee benefits include:

- Group health and dental
- Voluntary vision care plan

- Flexible spending accounts
- Group life and voluntary life coverage
- Short and long-term disability
- 401(k) plan
- Paid holidays, vacation, personal days and sick leave.

Colonial-Nevada uses several methods for communicating with employees:

- A bi-annual all-employee rally communicates business goals and performance and creates team spirit. New members are introduced and tongue-



Mark Daigle



Rita K. Arthur

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in-cheek play involving managers and executives reminds employees to have fun with their work.

•A quarterly new employee breakfast with executives allows new hires to hear directly from the company CEO. Positive customer experiences are shared by seasoned staffers.

Employees produce the company newsletter, Colonial Chatter. The publication spotlights awards, achievements and features company news. Employees contribute articles of interest.

### Judges' key findings:

- Cash incentives
- New employee breakfasts



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Large Companies **WINNER****Pulte Homes/ Del Webb****CEO:** Richard Dugas**President:** Sheryl Palmer, Nevada area**HR Director:** Norma Machado, area vice president of human resources**Nature of Business:** Home building and master-planned communities**Location:** 11500 S. Eastern Ave., Henderson, NV 89052**Employees:** 9,825 (526 in Las Vegas)**HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:**

With two informal company mottos — "Work hard... Play hard!" and "Do the right thing and get 'er done!" — Pulte Homes/Del Webb takes great pride in creating a "fun" work atmosphere for its employees.

Pulte Homes/Del Webb has a strategic recruiting initiative that focuses on tapping an often overlooked market — college campuses. Last year the company hired more than 600 students, both as full-time employees and interns. The company also "separates itself from the pack" by continually looking for ways to diversify its employee base to match its customer base.

Key benefits include:

- Competitive salaries
- Sales-based and performance-based bonus programs
- Medical, vision and dental coverage for employees and dependents, including choice of HMO or PPO coverage
- Long and short-term disability
- Choice accounts for pre-tax savings on medical expenses or day-care.

The company also offers no-cost EAP and life benefit services, a generous company match to its 401(k) plan, a discount on the purchase of a Pulte or Del Webb home and tuition reimbursement. Employees also receive paid vacation, work-share and flexible scheduling, as well as paid time off for volunteer work.

In an effort to both challenge and direct employees on a clear path of growth and development, Pulte Homes/Del Webb has developed two

standardized processes. The first, the Individual Development Plan, is a multi-step process by which the employee and his or her supervisor simultaneously rates skill sets across "Pulte Success Factors." The second, the Individual Performance Appraisal, is created annually to assist employees in meeting individual yearly performance goals.

"We've created an exceptional culture that allows people to give 200 percent," said Sheryl Palmer, Nevada area president. "It's a combination of things. People feel good about their environment, their co-workers and their community service. It's unbelievable, really. The work these people do is phenomenal."

Besides its retention programs, Pulte Homes/Del Webb offers employees a number of professional development and mentoring opportunities. Training includes an emphasis on customer service, department cross-training and exchanges on "best practices." Comprehensive computer training is provided, as are communication seminars and courses through the American Management Association. Pulte Homes/Del Webb also utilizes a variety of tools and programs to enhance employee communication and morale.

These include:

- An interactive Web site and newsletter designed to provide news and information
- Birthday recognition with a handwritten note and gift
- Hire date anniversary commemoration
- Employee events, such as bowling tournaments, talent shows, Lake Mead cruises, cooking classes, camping trips

**Sheryl Palmer**

and volunteer activities

- Annual celebration events and children's events. Pulte Homes/Del Webb offers employees a number of recognition and reward programs, including the TOPS award for customer service, the Tier Bonus Program, which is tied to meeting the company's business objectives, and the Spirit Award, which recognizes teamwork and work values.

Third-party survey vehicles indicate Pulte/Del Webb employees are happy with their work environments. A 2003 Denison Culture Survey gave the company a 99 percent rating, the highest score possible.

**Judges' key findings:**

- **Comprehensive use of HR resources**
- **Recruiting**
- **Benefits**
- **Retention efforts**

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## Large Companies **2nd Place**

# Sierra Health Services

**CEO:** Anthony M. Marlon, M.D., chairman of the board of directors & CEO

**HR Director:** Dan Kruger, vice president of human resources

**Nature of Business:** Health care/health insurance

**Location:** 2716 N. Tenaya Way, Las Vegas NV

**Employees:** 2,852 (2,786 in Las Vegas)

### HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:

Taking the approach that no single benefits package fits the needs of every employee, Sierra Health Services (SHS) has created an assortment of voluntary benefits for its employees. Besides paid vacation and a 401(k) plan, other benefits include:

- Choice of three health care plans with domestic partner coverage
- Child-care subsidy
- Long-term care insurance
- Pet insurance
- Scholarship programs
- Fitness club discounts
- A zero percent rate credit card
- Discounts on mortgage closing costs, savings bonds and credit union/group banking membership.

SHS offers on-site training opportunities, such as professional development courses, computer skills training and two levels of management certification. Investment education and individual financial planning are offered at no cost to employees. SHS also works in partnership with Community College of Southern Nevada to provide customized programs to address specific job issues, and offers \$2,500 per calendar year in tuition reimbursement.

Sierra Health Services provides employees with both monetary and non-monetary rewards through its merit review program. The company's "On the Spot" award and Employee Bonus Plan are viewed as highly competitive and innovative in the health-care industry.



Dan Kruger



Anthony M. Marlon, M.D.

### Judges' key findings:

- Development
- Recognition programs



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## Large Companies 3rd Place

# Sunterra Corporation

**CEO:** Nicholas J. Benson, president & CEO

**HR Director:** Pamela S. Davis, vice president of human resources

**Nature of Business:** Vacation ownership

**Location:** 3865 W. Cheyenne Ave., North Las Vegas NV

**Employees:** 5,000 (425 in Las Vegas)

### HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:

Sunterra Corp. provides employees with a progressive package of benefits, including medical, dental and vision insurance, life insurance and short- and long-term disability, a flexible spending account, vacation time and profit sharing/401(k). The company also offers an Employee Assistance Program

that employees and their families may utilize upon day one of employment. These free services include:

- Assistance with mental health concerns, including depression, stress and job pressure, substance abuse and marital/family conflict
- Help with saving for college, retirement, debt reduction and taxes
- Guidance in family issues, such as locating a daycare or eldercare center
- Assistance with legal issues, such as divorce, contracts and civil lawsuits.

Sunterra Corp. also offers tuition assistance, an employee referral program and a "trading spaces" educational exchange program, which helps employees gain a better understanding of how other departments operate. The company ensures team members in each of its locations have access to the same professional development opportunities, and communicates with its employees via weekly E-news, company intranet, monthly staff meetings and employee service activities.

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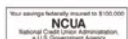
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### Judges' key findings:

- Benefits
- Communications
- Development
- Retention efforts



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Gaming **WINNER****MGM GRAND****CEO:** Gamal Aziz, president/CEO**HR Director:** Miriam Hammond, vice president of human resources**Nature of Business:** Hospitality and gaming**Location:** 3799 Las Vegas Blvd. South, Las Vegas, NV**Employees:** 8,500**HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:**

The MGM GRAND Human Resources Department is a strategic player in determining the direction of the 8,500-employee organization. When the property opened several new high-end venues in 2004, human resources worked hand-in-hand with the company's chief financial officer and with sales and marketing executives to develop comprehensive recruiting and auditioning strategies. The HR department also negotiated with Culinary Union officials to secure new classifications for specialized talent positions that fell outside the parameters of its existing contract, and created customized training and orientation modules for its new additions.

MGM GRAND enjoys a turnover rate of less than 10 percent, compared with the average Strip property rate of 30 percent. The corporation provides a number of training, mentoring and educational opportunities for employees to grow within the company. In 2004, MGM GRAND promoted or transferred nearly 850 employees to elevated positions within the company. In addition, MGM GRAND University offers a complete, no-cost curriculum for line-level and leadership employees who wish to advance their careers. Four of its upward mobility programs include:

- REACH, an intensive six-month program designed to increase confidence, provide supervisory skills, career coaching and counseling and ultimately prepare participants for career advancement.
- Leadership Institute, a prestigious program for high-potential "rising stars" in the executive ranks. Twelve hand-selected



Gamal Aziz



Miriam Hammond

members of the company's leadership team are chosen each year for the 24-week training program. Segments include classes on business strategy, financial management, marketing and sales and relationship management.

- Management Associate Program, a six-month, hands-on training experience for recent college graduates, which includes mentoring and leadership skills development.

- Hospitality Internship Program, which provides summer internships to college students interested in working in the hotel/casino industry.

Other MGM GRAND training programs open to all employees include computer training, E-learning, executive mentorships, English as a second language and



conversational Spanish. The company also provides informational workshops on U.S. naturalization education, offers tuition reimbursement and provides a number of life skills classes. Employees can take free classes on topics ranging from smoking cessation to basic home repair, parenting, budget management and home buying.

In an effort to keep employees apprised of how to maximize their benefits, MGM GRAND has "information kiosks" located throughout the back of the house which employees can use to access personal benefits information 24 hours a day. The kiosks can also be accessed via home computer, and include information on benefits enrollment, payroll and time off, job transfer opportunities and 401(k) access. Some of the benefits offered through MGM include:

- 401(k) retirement savings plan
- Health plan offering medical, prescription, dental and vision coverage as well as annual physical and wellness exams with minimal employee contribution
- Company-paid life insurance
- Pre-tax premium elections (Section 125)
- Dependent care flexible spending account
- On-site child development center
- Behavioral health benefits and Employee Assistance Program
- Free meals and parking
- Discounted dry cleaning.

MGM GRAND also offers family scholarship programs and discounts to 24-Hour Fitness.

**Judges' key findings:**

- HR strategy and planning
- Training and development

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## Gaming 2nd Place

# MGM MIRAGE

**CEO:** Jim Murren, president/CEO

**HR Director:** Cynthia Kiser Murphey, senior vice president of human resources

**Nature of Business:** Entertainment, hotel and gaming

**Location:** 3600 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas, NV

**Employees:** 40,000 (32,000 in Las Vegas)

### HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:

With a recognition that the traditional "family" is changing, MGM MIRAGE has developed new ways to provide benefits for its shifting workforce demographic. The company benefits package includes traditional health care coverage along with additional benefits to attract a diverse workforce.

Employees may choose between the MGM MIRAGE Health Plan and Health Plan of Nevada. Each provides medical, prescription, dental and vision coverage at affordable rates. The newest addition to the company's benefits package includes a Same-Sex Domestic Partner Benefit, which allows same-sex couples to add qualifying domestic partners on their health plan as a married couple would. Dependents of the qualified domestic partner are also eligible for health coverage.

Other benefits available for purchase by employees include:

- Universal life insurance
- Short and long-term disability
- Personal insurance
- Dependent care flexible spending accounts
- Pet insurance.

"We strive to make our company a positive and rewarding work environment for everyone," said Cindy Kiser Murphey, senior VP of human resources for MGM MIRAGE. "A workplace that fosters mutual respect for all of our employees, that provides outstanding



MGM MIRAGE employees



Cynthia Kiser Murphey

compensation and benefits and that encourages diversity of thought, ideas and viewpoints which reflects our diversity backgrounds and experiences. It's a workplace that offers equal opportunity for excellent training, development and advancement. MGM MIRAGE recognizes and applauds excellence in performance; and that inspires pride and loyalty."

MGM MIRAGE has made a commitment to strengthen the communities where its employees work and live. This is accomplished through its corporate philanthropic entities, including the MGM MIRAGE Voice Foundation and Dollars for Doers under its employee volunteer program.

### Judges' key findings:

- Voice Foundation
- Diversity

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## Gaming 3rd Place

# NEW YORK-NEW YORK HOTEL CASINO

**CEO:** Felix Rappaport, president & CEO

**HR Director:** Leonard Wilson, Jr., vice president of human resources

**Nature of Business:** Hotel and gaming

**Location:** 3790 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas, NV

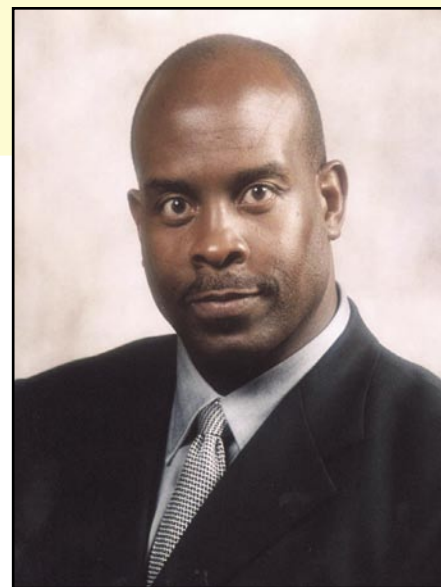
**Employees:** 2,400

### HR practices that have contributed to the organization's success:

New York-New York employees are encouraged to attend classes at the MGM GRAND University. Classes are held on a variety of subjects ranging from career growth to life skills. Line employees are encouraged to apply for the company's REACH program, a series of classes that prepare them for supervisory positions. The property's "MOB" program, "Management on Board," is designed for supervisors who want to move into a managerial role. English as a second language (ESL) is provided for non-English speaking employees and conversational Spanish is available for employees interested in diversifying their language skills.

New York-New York has a number of methods for recognizing employee achievement:

- Managers are authorized to issue Core Valuable Certificates for exceptional performance. Certificates can be redeemed in retail outlets, restaurants or the employee store.
- The property's Innovative Ideas Program encourages employees to share ideas for improving the resort and its guest services. Employees are rewarded when their suggestions are implemented.
- Broadway Stars is an employee recognition program that recognizes



Leonard Wilson, Jr.

outstanding employees with a monetary award, luncheon and logo jacket.

Employees of New York-New York also participate in The Voice Foundation, the company's employee-funded organization. Employees may earmark their donations to specific charities or to an Employee Emergency Relief Fund.

### Judges' key findings:

- Employee Communications
- Broadway Stars

# Preventing turnover critical to building successful business

## Local company helps firms motivate, energize employees

**By Deborah Roush**  
Contributing writer

**D**oug Beckley receives calls from two types of small business owners — those running profitable businesses who want to grow and become more profitable, and those who can't keep employees and are burnt out and overworked.

As president of The Beckley Group, a customized training and office development firm, he says he can help both.

"The estimates these days are that it costs between 50 and 150 percent of an employee's annual salary to replace that employee," Beckley said. "That takes into account the cost to go out and recruit, hire and train a new person and all of the costs of lost efficiency, mistakes and reduced customer service."

And turnover, Beckley said, is especially damaging to small firms. "Turnover is bad for anybody, but it's magnified many times over with a small company. If you only have a few key people and you can't even keep them it can create absolute chaos."

Beckley's job is to help companies get their employees to function at their full potential, reducing turnover.

"The process we use is one that is totally tailored to each client," he said, adding that the first step is an assessment where goals, problems and issues are discussed.

Next his team develops a time-phased training and development program that takes him inside the business.

"We like to spend a half-day per week over a series of months with the company. It's a process designed to create long-term behavior changes. We don't believe in the two-day workshops where the trainer jumps up and down and throws out a bunch of buzzwords and you get a binder because a month later the business is doing what it was always doing," Beckley said.

What are some of the suggestions Beckley makes to businesses? First, recruit and hire the right people. "You have to take a hard look at the people you have on board. If you haven't hired the right people, motivating them won't work," he said.

Next, assess the company's leadership. "You have to train the principals and senior managers within the company so they can be inspiring and effective leaders," he added.

That, he said, includes teaching them to empower employees by sharing information about the business with them — including annual sales, market margins, strategic problems the company faces and other information typically only management is privy to.

"You have to be careful with the information you share, but employees can't be engaged and empowered unless they understand the business and how their role fits into it," Beckley said.

He also suggests passing some management responsibilities onto employees. "Goal setting, training, quality improvement — the things that are really integral to the business are things the employee needs to be part of so they feel like they have a meaningful role in the company."

Beckley said his firm recently helped a small Las Vegas retail organization that was successful and growing but experiencing difficulties finding and keeping good people. "We helped them with their recruiting and hiring process because they didn't have a system in place. When you get into crisis mode, you kind of rush through things and that's what they were doing.

"We put together a new employee training program to help get their new hires up to speed to a level where they could be functional."



**Doug Beckley**

## ResourceGuide

### Nevada First Bank

777 North Rainbow, Suite 100  
Las Vegas, NV 89107  
(702) 310-4000  
[www.nevadafirstbank.com](http://www.nevadafirstbank.com)

### Nevada Public Radio KNPR & KCNV

1289 South Torrey Pines Drive  
Las Vegas, NV 89146  
(702) 258-9895  
[www.nevadapublicradio.com](http://www.nevadapublicradio.com)

### New York - New York Hotel & Casino

3790 Las Vegas Blvd. South  
Las Vegas, NV 89109  
(702) 740-6969  
[www.nynyhotelcasino.com](http://www.nynyhotelcasino.com)

### Orgill Singer & Associates

8360 West Sahara Ave. Suite 110  
Las Vegas, NV 89117-1873  
(702) 796-9100  
[www.orgillsinger.com](http://www.orgillsinger.com)

### Sierra Health Services, Inc.

2716 North Tenaya Way  
Las Vegas, NV 89128  
(702) 242-7000  
[www.sierrahealth.com](http://www.sierrahealth.com)

### Southern Nevada Human Resources Association

(702) 362-0388  
[www.snhra.org](http://www.snhra.org)

### Southwest Title

8216 South Eastern Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV 89123  
(702) 838-0300  
[www.swtitle-nv.com](http://www.swtitle-nv.com)

### St. Rose Dominican Hospitals

102 East Lake Mead Pkwy.  
Henderson, NV 89015  
(702) 616-5000  
[www.strosehospitals.org](http://www.strosehospitals.org)  
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# PREVIOUS **BEST PLACES** to **WORK** WINNERS

## 2004

### Nonprofit/Government

Winner: Nevada Federal Credit Union  
Runners-up: Nevada Public Radio  
Las Vegas Valley Water District

### Micro companies

Winner: Houldsworth, Russo & Co.  
Runners-up: Shred-It Las Vegas  
Johnson Jacobson Wilcox

### Small companies

Winner: Nevada First Bank  
Runners-up: Systems Research & Development  
Vanguard Integrity Professionals Inc.

### Mid-size companies

Winner: JMA Architecture Studios  
Runners-up: Cintas Corp.  
R&R Partners

### Large companies

Winner: Pulte/Del Webb  
Runners-up: PBS&J  
Desert Radiology

### Gaming companies

Winner: The Venetian  
Runners-up: Station Casinos Inc.  
MGM Grand

## 2003

### Nonprofit/Government

Winner: Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce  
Runners-up: KNPR-National Public Radio  
Opportunity Village

### Micro companies

Winner: Johnson Jacobson Wilcox  
Runners-up: Lawrence/Kreeft & Associates  
Colours Inc.

### Small companies

Winner: Orgill/Singer & Associates Inc.  
Runners-up: Desert Radiologists  
Credit Acceptance Corp.

### Mid-size companies

Winner: Nevada Federal Credit Union  
Runners-up: Lionel Sawyer & Collins  
Silver State Bank

### Large companies

Winner: GES Exposition Services  
Runners-up: Manpower Inc. of Southern Nevada  
Golden Gaming Inc.

### Gaming companies

Winner: The Venetian  
Runners-up: Golden Nugget  
Hotel San Remo

## 2002

### Government

Winner: Las Vegas Clark County Library District  
Runners-up: Nellis Air Force Base  
Las Vegas City Firefighters

### Nonprofit

Winner: Nevada Federal Credit Union  
Runners-up: Endeavor  
Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce

### Small companies

Winner: Consultants in Marketing  
Runners-up: Behavioral Healthcare Options  
Wieczorek & Associates

### Mid-size companies

Winner: Rainbow Medical Centers  
Runners-up: Nevada Corporate Headquarters  
Loomis, Fargo & Co.

### Large companies

Winner: The Venetian  
Runners-up: Hotel San Remo  
Southwest Airlines

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