SUNDAY NOVEMBER 19, 2023 The San Diego Union-Tribune 105 companies & organizations in San Diego County that employees rated the best in 2023 WORKPLACES

THE SECRET TO ENTICING WORKERS BACK TO THE OFFICE. 7 10 COOL PERKS THAT KEEP EMPLOYEES HAPPY. 13

SMALL TOP WORKPLACES 2023



ALEJANDRO TAMAYO U-T

There are showers and toilets with electric bidets in the specially designed bathrooms with different themes (space, ocean, Aztec) at TCWGlobal.

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get paid their normal wage for 16 hours of volunteer time. To encourage charitable work, if an employee gets up to 16 hours, they get a paid day off. The company will also match, up to \$5,000 annually, any donation an employee makes to a nonprofit.

"I've never seen a company just give 16 hours for volunteering," Alatorre said.

TCWGlobal probably wouldn't be able to have such a cool office if it was just 148 employees in San Diego. Formerly known as TargetCW, the staffing and payroll agency is a huge international operation and is in more than 150 countries. That includes Hungary, Malaysia, Senegal, Sambia, Barbados, China, Egypt and Finland.

The privately held company was formed in 2009 and seems to go a bit under the radar in San Diego considering its global reach. Most articles about the company are about its happy workplace or charitable giving. TCWGlobal has made roughly \$700 million a year since 2021.

Because of its size, it is able to offer another big perk: Its own medical plan. It covers up to 82 percent of medical coverage for employees and dependents.

Khouli said he understands staffing and payroll aren't exactly exciting professions, so it was important for him to create a workplace that was fun and helped create a strong culture. Wearing Louis Vuitton sneakers and accompanied throughout the campus by his 7year-old boxer, Cooper, Khouli proudly showed off many of the features he designed.

There are walls with LED lights that change color throughout the day; specially designed bathrooms with different themes (space, ocean, Aztec); TV screens that flash announcements and employee birthdays, and HEPA air filters and filtered water throughout. Conference rooms have doors that can switch from opaque to see-through. Besides the rooms with massage chairs, there are showers and toilets with electric bidets in the bathrooms.

The champagne vending machine (probably for the best) can only be turned on by a supervisor. The vending machine is in a room that is decked out with leather furniture, mood lighting and a record player. Nearby are albums by Queen and The Velvet Underground.

Environmentally conscious employees may appreciate the 799 solar panels on the roof. There are various fruit trees outside and the company composts food from its weekly five free breakfasts and two free lunches.

If the culture and fancy office aren't enough for some workers, there are also financial perks that seem to be getting rarer for the rest of the nation's workforce. TCWGlobal offers a 401 (k) plan that allows an annual match of 50 percent of every dollar contributed, up to 3 percent of the total compensation. The company pays up to \$4,000 a year for day care and has a 529 college savings plan that workers can use to pay for continuing education or existing student loan debt

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THE LIST

Fewer than 149 employees in San Diego County

1. Doctor Multimedia

Founded: 2011

Sector: Marketing

Description: Helps doctors make sense of the Internet and online marketing.

Local employees: 65

2. Avista **Technologies**

Founded: 1999

Sector: Chemicals, paint

Description: Avista, a global brand of Kurita, is focused on membrane treatment solutions for reverse osmosis systems, microfiltration/ultrafiltration, and multimedia filtration.

Local employees: 63

3. Raken

Founded: 2014

Sector: Information technology

Description: Its construction management software helps streamline project management.

Local employees: 111

4. Trovata

Founded: 2016

Sector: Enterprise software

Description: With more than \$100 billion of cash managed for nearly 200 enterprise customers, such as Block, Eventbrite and Krispy Kreme, Trovata makes it easy for companies to take control of their cash flow.

Local employees: 88

5. Bandy Ranch Floral

Founded: 2016

Sector: Consumer goods

Description: It has a 46,000-square-foot facility in Vista, which includes 23,000 square feet of refrigeration.

Local employees: 120

6. Kidder Mathews

Founded: 1967

Sector: Agents, brokers

Description: The real-estate firm's specialty areas include industrial, office, retail, investment, multifamily, technology, life

sciences, debt and equity finance, tenant advisory and corporate services.

Local employee count: 74

7. RWM Home Loans

Founded: 1994

Sector: Mortgage lending **Description**: Offers loan programs that can close in less than 17 days.

Local employee count: 98

8. Windward Life Care

Founded: 2004

Sector: Home health care

Description: Clients facing health and mental health challenges, including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, benefit from its staff's expertise and integrated model of care.

Local employees: 110

9. Recon **Environmental**

Founded: 1972

Sector: Consulting

Description: Provides environmental planning and habitat restoration services to public and private sector clients.

Local employees: 57

10. Fairway Independent Mortgage Corp.

Founded: 1996 Sector: Mortgage lending

Description: Has more than 500 branches and 7,000plus employees nationwide.

Local employees: 94

11. Manpower

Founded: 1977

Sector: Staffing

Description: Provides employment opportunities, training and workforce solutions

Local employees: 56

12. Corinthian Title Co.

Founded: 2008

Sector: Title and closing services

Description: Licensed to issue title insurance policies in 28 counties in California.

Local employees: 108

13. C3 Risk & Insurance Services

Founded: 2017

Sector: Insurance consultants and brokers

Description: Specializes in risk management, catering to companies ranging from startups to multinational corporations.

Local employees: 100

14. Marque **Urgent Care**

Founded: 2011

Sector: Physicians practice

Description: A clinic for immediate walk-in care and non-life-threatening emergencies.

Local employees: 56

15. J Public Relations

Founded: 2003

Sector: PR and communications

Description: A global creative communications firm specializing in public relations, social media and content creation

Local employees: 57

16. Rock West Composites

Founded: 2006

Description: Rock West can supply a tube for a DIY project or a custom component with strict engineering requirements. It services multiple markets including aerospace, defense, science, research, energy, marine, medical devices, sporting and consumer goods, and

Sector: Aerospace, defense

industrial applications. Local employees: 139

17. Erickson-Hall Construction Co.

Founded: 1998

Sector: Building construction

Description: Its services include preconstruction, general contracting, construction management, design build and program management.

Local employees: 94

18. Harris & Associates

Founded: 1974

Sector: Engineering **Description:** Improves

communities and creates better places to live through sustainable planning, design and construction solutions.

Local employees: 58

19. Procede Software

Founded: 2001

Sector: Enterprise software

Description: Provides Dealer Management Solutions for the commercial trucking industry.

Local employees: 125

20. Coffman Engineers

Founded: 1979

Sector: Building construc-

Description: Its engineering services include civil, structural, mechanical, electrical, fire protection and corrosion control.

Local employees: 106

21. Red Door Interactive

Founded: 2002

Sector: Marketing

Description: A full-service marketing and advertising agency.

Local employees: 62

22. Rainbow Municipal Water District

Founded: 1953

Sector: Local government

Description: Provides water and sanitation services to the unincorporated communities of Rainbow, Bonsall and parts of Vista, Oceanside and Fallbrook

Local employees: 57

23. Symons Fire Protection

Founded: 1993

Sector: Security and protection

Description: Specializes in the design, installation and repair of fire sprinkler systems for residential and commercial properties.

Local employees: 126

24. Mathnasium

Founded: 2013

Sector: Education

Description: Offers math tutoring, homework help and test preparation services.

Local employees: 50

25. PenChecks

Founded: 1994

Sector: Third party benefits administrator

Description: A statechartered, non-depository

SMALL TOP WORKPLACES 2023

trust company providing a comprehensive suite of retirement distribution services to institutions. third party administrators, advisers and plan sponsors.

Local employees: 99

26. Wilson Turner Kosmo LLP

Founded: 1991 Sector: Law

Description: Its primary practice areas include product liability defense and warranty litigation. employment law, business litigation and class actions.

Local employees: 102

27. Discovery Health Services

Founded: 2002 Sector: Staffing

Description: A local nurse staffing agency.

Local employees: 50

28. TCWGlobal

Founded: 2010 Sector: Staffing

Description: Offers payrolling, staffing, international services, 1099 compliance and audit solutions for temporary workers and contractors.

Local employees: 148

29. San Diego Foundation

Founded: 1975 Sector: Nonprofit

Description: Its causes include helping residents recover from crises like COVID-19 and wildfires. To date, it has granted more than \$1.7 billion to the nonprofit community.

Local employees: 78

30. Kura Oncology

Founded: 2014 Sector: Biotechnology

Description: Helps patients with cancer achieve long lasting remission through targeted treatments.

Local employees: 66

31. Modular Medical

Founded: 2017

Sector: Life sciences

Description: A medical device company focused on the design, development and commercialization of an insulin pump

Local employees: 50

32. Boundless Bio

Founded: 2018 Sector: Biotechnology

Description: It's committed to developing therapies to cancer patients.

Local employees: 70

33. Ro Health

Founded: 2013 Sector: Staffing

Description: A medical staffing and home health agency.

Local employees: 55

34. Lorian Health

Founded: 2001

Sector: Home health care

Description: Provides patients with the care and support they need to recover or manage their condition.

Local employees: 105

35. PeopleConnect People Search

Founded: 2012

Sector: Information technology

Description: A digital identity company, formerly The Control Group. Its products include TruthFinder, Intelius, Instant Checkmate and US Search.

Local employees: 76

36. PBO Advisory Group

Founded: 2011

Sector: Financial services/ insurance

Description: Offers strategic business consulting, human resources, outsourced accounting services and day-to-day operational support to startups, emerging, public, private, government and nonprofit organizations.

Local employees: 62

37. Hilton San Diego Gaslamp Quarter

Founded: 2000 Sector: Hotels

Description: A Hilton Hotel in the San Diego downtown Gaslamp area.

Local employees: 90

38. Serving Seniors

Founded: 1970

Sector: Human and social services

Description: Helps San Diego County's at-risk older adults overcome poverty by providing meals, housing, health and social services, and enrichment activities

Local employees: 86

39. Main **Electric Supply**

Founded: 1946 Sector: Wholesale

distribution

Description: Main Electric is an electrical materials distributor.

Local employees: 57

40. Downtown San Diego Partnership

Founded: 1993 Sector: Nonprofit

Description: The partnership serves as the principal voice and driving force behind the economic prosperity and cultural vitality of downtown San Diego.

Local employees: 100

41. TEAM Risk Management Strategies

Founded: 2003 Sector: Other services

Description: TEAM provides a solution that manages all aspects of household employment including payroll, taxes, insurance, HR issues and employee lawsuits.

Local employees: 70

42. Alpha Mechanical

Founded: 1991

Sector: Heating, ventilation, air conditioning, refrigeration

Description: Alpha Mechanical's capabilities include HVAC, plumbing, and specialty piping.

Local employees: 90

43. Coyne & Associates **Education**

Founded: 1999

Sector: Behavioral and mental health

Description: Covne provides ABA-based intervention services to young children with autism or other developmental delays.

Local employees: 70



Serving Seniors was named a Top Workplace for the tenth year.

44. STN Digital

Founded: 2013

Sector: Marketing

Description: A social-first marketing agency whose expertise is launching brands and building engaged audiences.

Local employees: 80

45. Sun Diego Charter

Founded: 1971

Sector: Bus and limousine

Description: Its fleet, which include the Mercedes Benz Sprinter vans to luxury coach buses, can be used to shuttle attendees to weddings, corporate functions. concerts, sporting events and other places.

Local employees: 68

46. National Conflict Resolution Center

Founded: 1983 Sector: Nonprofit

Description: Built on the principle that every dispute has a solution, the National Conflict Resolution Center serves communities in the public and private sectors.

Local employees: 60

47. Manscaped

Founded: 2016

Sector: Consumer goods

Description: Its products include various grooming trimmers, body wash and briefs.

Founded: 2020

air conditioning, and refrigeration

Description: The familyowned business offers AC repair and installation, heater repair and installa-

49. Mindgruve

Morris

Sector: Law

more than 800 attorneys across 29 domestic and international offices and represents clients across an array of industries that include startups to Fortune 500 companies.

51. Client Solution **Architects**

Founded: 2003

48. Same Day Heating & Air Conditioning

tion and plumbing services.

Founded: 2001

engineers.

Description: The firm has

Local employees: 55

Local employees: 105

Sector: Heating, ventilation,

Local employees: 101

Sector: Marketing

Description: A global digital agency that includes media experts, data scientists and

Local employees: 102

50. Duane

Founded: 1904

Sector: Business services **Description:** CSA is a global solutions to support business partners who are revolutionizing the life sciences industry.

provider of integrated

technology and operational

support services to defense

and federal government

Local employees: 50

52. Sequoia

Consulting

Sector: Biotechnology

Description: A biotech

consulting group that

Local employees: 149

builds and implements

Group

Founded: 2013

organizations.

53. Flores Financial Services

Founded: 1982

Sector: Back-office services

Description: Provides accounting, human resources, payroll and consulting solutions.

Local employees: 79

54. MD7 Founded: 2003

Sector: Wireless communication

Description: MD7 has deep roots in mobile networks and has grown to provide expertise to mobile, electric vehicle charging and satellite

operators worldwide

Local employees: 110

55. CGI

Founded: 1976 Sector: Consulting

Description: Delivers services to clients in the areas of digital transformation, advanced analytics, intelligent automation, cloud and IT modernization and

sustainability Local employees: 52

56. Brewer Crane & Rigging

Sector: Heavy construction

Founded: 1997

and civil engineering

Description: Provides hauling and rigging services as well as equipment that includes 12- to 450- ton mobile cranes and tower

Local employees: 73 57. Doctible

Founded: 2014

cranes.

Sector: Software products/ services

solutions provider that helps doctors, dentists. chiropractors run their businesses more efficiently while improving the overall patient experience. Local employees: 55

Description: A software

58. Perficient

Founded: 1997

Sector: Information technology **Description:** A global digital consultancy transforming

how the enterprises and

customers and grow their

businesses. Local employees: 50

brands connect with

59. Cognella Founded: 1997

Sector: Printing **Description:** Creates teacher-driven, studentcentric higher education

course materials in print and digital formats under three imprints: Cognella Academic Publishing, Cognella Custom and

Cognella Active Learning.

Local employees: 75 60. Wintrust **Financial**

Founded: 1991 Sector: Investment

management

Description: Provides traditional commercial and community banking services, wealth management guidance, mortgage origination, commercial insurance premium financing, shortterm accounts receivable financing and certain

administrative services. Local employeess: 58

61. Spinal Elements

Founded: 2003

Sector: Medical devices/ products **Description:** A designer. developer and manufacturer

of surgical solutions for spinal disorders. Local employees: 119

62. CBIZ

Founded: 1996 Sector: Financial services

and insurance

Description: Delivers financial and employee business services to organizations as well as individual clients.

Local employees: 50

63. Cidara Therapeutics

Founded: 2013

Sector: Biotechnology

Description: Cidara is developing targeted immunotherapies designed to save lives and improve the standard of care for patients facing cancers and other serious diseases.

Local employees: 73

64. TrumpCard

Founded: 1995 Sector: Distribution

Description: Specializes in the transportation of domestic heavyweight shipments in the time sensitive, high value and

mission critical arenas. Local employees: 81

65. Pacific Point Healthcare Services

Founded: 2016

Sector: Home health care **Description:** People turn to Pacific Point Home Health or Hospice when they need

health care services at an

assisted living facility or their home.

Local employees: 91 66. American Council on

Exercise **Founded: 1985**

Sector: Education **Description:** A resource for health and fitness professionals and the public. It provides scientific research

industry.

67. Physical Rehabilitation

Sector: Rehabilitation **Description:** Its physical therapists use orthopedic and sports medicine

Local employees: 126

68. Climatec, A **Bosch Company**

Sector: Building

construction

Description: Provides

Local employees: 70

impacting the fitness Local employees: 80

Network **Founded: 1991**

practices to treat a wide range of injuries.

Founded: 1975

building technology and energy solutions.

customer service, employees look for ways to process loan applications faster and more effectively.

"We collaborate, evaluate and make decisions that we can all back —and that really is the secret sauce to yielding meaningful results," she said.

With transactions falling, the company developed a "Welcome Home" program to help real estate agents generate new business. For example, loan officers share ideas with agents on how to tap their personal networks to find buyers and sellers.

To generate new ideas, Livingston said it's important to create new staff opportunities through education, listen to their needs and empower them "to be the best person they can be."

It can be as simple as creating a book club, as one employee suggested, or a "wellness circle" when another employee wanted to promote taking 5,000 steps a day.

Booz Allen Hamilton for clued-in senior management

The Virginia-based consulting firm in civil, defense and national security, founded in 1914, counts 1,510 employees in San Diego.

"They are very knowledgeable on all aspects of the day-to-day performance of each individual they oversee," said one employee, "as well as being very open to helping problem solve and answer questions specific to each individual's tasks."

Jennie Brooks, the executive vice president responsible for the San Diego offices, said managers get a monthly email nudge with best-practice ideas. A monthly podcast introduces new employees and an annual employee "experience survey" is used to gauge what's working well and what needs improvement.

Employees have monthly "snapshot" conversations with their managers and can seek guidance from upper-level managers or take advantage of a career coach.

Individual teams decide how best to accommodate employees' flexible work schedules and the company has noticed that some employees choose to work for Booz Allen because of its hybrid work options.

"We emphasize combining the convenience of tech solutions without losing the importance of personal connection," Brooks said.

Her advice to other companies: "Solicit as much employee feedback as possible to understand

SPECIAL AWARDS

These workplaces were chosen based on standout scores for employee responses to specific survey statements

Leadership

I have confidence in the leader of this company: A.O. Reed & Co., EVOTEK and RECON Environmental

Direction

I believe this company is going in the right direction: **Vividion Therapeutics**

Managers

My manager helps me learn and grow: **Charles Schwab**

New Ideas

New ideas are encouraged at this company: **RWM Home Loans**

Doers

At this company, we do things efficiently and well: **Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers**

Meaningfulness

My job makes me feel like I am part of something meaningful: **National Conflict Resolution Center**

Values

This company operates by strong values: **Community Interface Services**

Clued-in Senior Management

Senior managers understand what is really happening at this company:

Booz Allen Hamilton

Communication

I feel well-informed about important decisions at this company: **Bandy Ranch Floral**

Appreciation

I feel genuinely appreciated at this company: California Institute of Arts & Technology

Work/Life Flexibility

I have the flexibility I need to balance my work and personal life: **Trovata**

Training

I get the formal training I want for my career: **Estancia La Jolla Hotel & Spa**

Benefits

My benefits package is good compared to others in this industry: **Dr. Bronner's**

what's working and what isn't. Be mindful of your employees' circumstances. Leverage different methods of communication that cater to their preferences and needs."

Showley is a freelance writer.



NINA THOMPSON

Nina Thompson, director of public relations for the San Diego Humane Society, adopted Chica last year. The Humane Society provides a 15 percent discount for employees.

S.D. COMPANIES OFFER PERKS FOR THEIR PET LOVERS

Benefits include discounted insurance, adoption reimbursements and bringing furry friends to work

BY HANG NGUYEN

Katie Alatorre adopted not one, but two mutts thanks to a company perk.

TCWGlobal, a San Diegobased staffing company, offers employees a \$100 reimbursement to offset adoption fees or supplies costs. Since 2017, it also began providing a 10 percent discount for pet insurance via Healthy Paws that covers accidents and illnesses.

"It's amazing that they care about this," said Alatorre, a global operations training lead who adopted Odin in 2020 and Nala last year. She also took advantage of her company insurance for Odin.

A growing number of companies are becoming more petfriendly. By providing discounted pet insurance and adoption reimbursements as well as permitting pets at work, companies hope to decrease employees' stress and increase their productivity.

"As an animal shelter," said Nina Thompson, director of public relations for the San Diego Humane Society, "we know that pets are one of the greatest joys in life. We want to ensure that our staff has the tools needed to take care of their own pets."

In addition to pet insurance, employees at the San Diego Humane Society receive discounted Purina for Professionals food and pet training classes. Spay and neuter services, microchips and adoptions are free.

Thompson adopted a 9-yearold pit bull terrier mix late last year. Because she adopted Chica from her employer, Thompson was able to activate 30 days of free pet insurance thanks to the San Diego Humane Society's partnership with MetLife.

"It gives you peace of mind" to know that Chica was covered while she figured out insurance. She decided to continue with MetLife after the free period expired. Thompson pays \$95 a month, which includes her company's 15 percent discount for employees and \$20 wellness program. The wellness addition covers 100 percent of preventative care, which includes vaccines for rabies and leptospirosis, a bacterial disease spread through urine.

Insuring animals is a rising trend. The number of both cats and dogs insured in the U.S. has nearly doubled in three years to 4.85 million in 2022, according to the North American Pet Health Insurance Association.

Sempra, which owns San Diego Gas & Electric and has more than 5,000 employees in San Diego County, began offering pet insurance in 2021. Its employees enjoy an average savings of 30 percent compared to similar plans from other pet insurers. Workers can choose plans that offer 50 to 90 percent reimbursement and can see any veterinarian they choose. The plans cover accidents, illnesses, surgeries, hospitalization, prescription medication or therapeutic diets.

Since 2019, Kidder Mathews, a commercial real-estate firm, has been providing insurance for cats and dogs that costs less than \$10 a month.

Other companies provide different pet perks. For example, Ro Health, a San Diego-based staffing company, since 2019 has been letting dogs come to the office on Tuesdays.

In 2020, Dr. Bronner's, a Vista-based consumer goods company, introduced the bringyour-dog-to-work policy.

"Being a company that advocates for animals, it only made sense to allow employees to bring their fur friends to work," said Nicky Mujica, HR specialist for Dr. Bronner's. "Having such a benefit allows employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance ... Studies have shown that having a pet and spending time with them can reduce anxiety and stress and boost mood and productivity."

Nguyen is a freelance writer.

THE AWARDS ARE DETERMINED BY EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS

BY BOB HELBIG

Great workplaces aren't created by accident. They are built and nurtured. The Top Workplaces awards recognize the employers that do it well in the eyes of their employees.

The heart of the San Diego Top Workplaces award is the employee survey process. Energage administers a 24-question survey to employees, who are the sole deciders of whether a company culture merits recognition.

This is the 11th year The Union-Tribune has partnered with Energage, an employee survey company based in Exton, Pa., to celebrate exceptional workplaces.

There is no cost to participate in Top Workplaces and no obligation to purchase any product or service.

For 2023, 3,674 organizations were invited to survey their employees. Based on employee survey feedback, 105 have earned recognition as Top Workplaces.

To participate in the Top Workplaces awards for 2024 or for more information: Go to the nomination page at sandiegouniontribune.com/nominate

In the current job market, companies continue to focus on recruiting, retaining and motivating employees. It's more paramount than ever for companies to be intentional about a culture that prioritizes employee appreciation and recognition, Energage CEO Eric Rubino said.

"We really need workplaces that inspire employees," he said. "You have to really acknowledge employees genuinely and consistently."

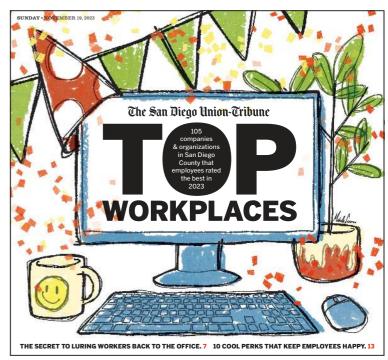
The award is open to any employer with 50 or more employees in San Diego County. Survey results are valid only if 35 percent or more employees respond; employers with fewer than 85 employees have a higher response threshold, requiring responses from at least 30 employees.

Energage tabulates the survey results. Employers are grouped into small, midsize and large to best compare similar employee experiences. Employers earn Top Workplaces recognition if their aggregated employees' feedback score exceeds national benchmarks.

Energage has established those benchmarks based on feedback from more than 27 million employees over 17 years. They are ranked within those groups based on the strength of the survey feedback.

Why isn't a particular company on the list? Perhaps it chose not to participate. Or, its employee survey feedback might have fallen below benchmark scores. Energage runs tests on survey feedback and in some cases may choose to disqualify organizations based on irregularities in survey feedback.

Helbig is media partnerships director for Energage, an employee survey company based in suburban Philadelphia.



U-T COVER ILLUSTRATION BY MICHELLE GUERRERO

