

Top Workplaces Where Employees Thrive Award 2017

Your Workplace is accepting nominations for our **Top Workplaces Where Employees Thrive** competition. These awards are aimed at organizations that have created a healthy, productive and creative workplace by establishing a culture built on collaborative dialogue, trust, clear outcomes, tolerance, and teamwork.

To choose organizations worthy of this award we rely on two things:

1. That your organization has a positive culture to foster a thriving workforce built on collaborative dialogue, trust, clear outcomes, tolerance, and teamwork; and
2. That the members of your workforce are engaged at work.

Workplaces chosen for the 2017 **Top Workplaces Where Employees Thrive** list will be announced at the Imagine Your Workplace Conference on June 1, 2017, and will be included in a special cover story of the July/August issue of *Your Workplace* magazine. In addition, the list will be posted for the full year on our website, www.yourworkplace.ca.

On behalf of the *Your Workplace* team, we thank you for your interest in this year's **Top Workplaces Where Employees Thrive** event. We look forward to reviewing your application.

Background

In *Your Workplace* magazine issue 10-5, Dr. Sandy Cotton wrote, *The 10 Principles for a Healthy Workplace*. This article is the basis of the selection criteria for these awards. For simplicity, the original 10 principles have been compressed into five criteria expressed in the words of Dr. Cotton as follows:

1. Collaborative Dialogue

"As communities of practice seek to make sense of turbulent times, their members need to enter into serious, candid, and supportive dialogue about critical issues. Those in formal leadership positions have a responsibility to raise issues and questions for wider dialogue. The emphasis here is on community conversation: not direction or manipulation from one individual or a small group. People in the leadership core can start the process, but it's critical to have the widest possible participation. Visions and core values cannot be imposed; they must be discovered and named by the community that claims them.

In a healthy organization, people feel free to express themselves without fear. And they have the skills to do just that. They have learned to provide their colleagues—up, down and sideways—with supportive feedback about performance and relationships. They know how to avoid triangles, and they know how to make appropriate requests for changes when necessary.

2. Trust

Without trust, our relationships are fragile, fearful, and uncertain. When trust is present, we can relate to each other as confident and affirmed members of a workplace community. Yet trust is so difficult to define: its recipe seems so elusive. In the end, trust is generated by ongoing honest communication, often modeled by leaders. Words and actions literally have integrity—the world becomes predictable.



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3. Clear Outcomes

Too often we get caught up in the weeds and brambles of workplace life. We lose sight of the bigger picture, the shared goals of our collective ventures. We get tangled up in personality differences and personal preferences, confusing these with important outcomes. We seek to control how people work, rather than discussing what their work produces through time. We need to focus on workplace wellness and productivity as shared outcomes. Of course, we are held accountable for meeting our formal goals—serving clients, producing widgets, and generating sales. But we also need to see the quality of the work environment as a significant and enduring goal. Meeting production goals in an environment that corrodes morale and wellness is like strip mining. It works for a while, but in the end, it leaves desolation and despair.

Meaningful and relevant facts can help ground our discussions and differences of perception. That's why accurate, user-friendly record keeping about the work we do and the outcomes we produce is so important. Accurate documentation helps enormously in accountability and performance reviews, as well as those times of trial when budgets are being reviewed. But remember that it is sometimes difficult to measure really important stuff. There's an old adage: we can't measure what's important, so we give importance to what we can measure. Be careful and discerning in the measures that you chose to use, and remember to reward and recognize when outcomes are met, and exceeded.

4. Tolerance

Each of us is a unique bundle of gifts and vulnerabilities. Some things come easily to us; others require a great deal of work and discipline. At times, we discover that there are certain kinds of vulnerabilities that we simply have to learn to live with. There are scores of useful tools for exploring differences in personal style(s) and beliefs. Don't be afraid to incorporate them into professional development sessions. This is one area in which leaders can really model the way: by sharing their own gifts and vulnerabilities non-defensively, they also add another building block to the foundation of trust.

5. Teamwork

Teamwork, which is essentially an intentional approach to workplace collaboration, is wonderful in the abstract but challenging in reality. That's why I always include a session on conflict management styles when I am asked to help with teambuilding. It is absolutely critical that people learn about their personal approaches to handling conflict; otherwise they are at the mercy of their own vulnerabilities time and again.

Real authentic human laughter is an essential ingredient in reducing the stresses of the everyday workplace grind. We need to learn to laugh at gaffes, hang-ups, and foibles, secure in the knowledge that no matter how hard we work at it; none of us will get out of life alive.

People who enjoy eating together rarely engage in interpersonal cannibalism. When we regularly break bread together, we seem to be less inclined to break each other. So make a point of enjoying good food together with the members of your workplace community."



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Nomination

Eligible organizations have created an environment where workers feel their input and effort is valued and respected; where innovation and contribution to improving workplace culture are motivated by leadership and management with input from personnel at every level.

If you think you are worthy of an award, you may choose to self-nominate, or a nominator may choose to nominate you. Both are acceptable and equally weighted. To nominate:

- Provide the name, address, telephone number and email address of both the nominator(s) and the nominee.
- In 500 words or less, the nominator(s) must provide reasons why they believe that the nominee deserves to win, including references to testimonies, articles and/or press releases that support the nominator(s) position.
- Nominations must be supported with letters from non-personnel. Specifically, suppliers, clients, associates community groups, associations etc., explaining how the nominee creates a culture founded on the five criteria: collaborative dialogue, trust, clear outcomes, tolerance, and teamwork.
- The organization will be contacted via the contact information provided by the nominator(s) to accept the nomination and agree to have employees complete a questionnaire inviting feedback on engagement and workplace culture.

NOMINATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED UP TO AND INCLUDING MARCH 27, 2017

Deadlines

Complete the information form below and email to hkennedy@yourworkplace.ca by **March 27, 2017**. Nominated organizations that have been qualified and shortlisted will be notified by **March 31, 2017**. Award winners for the **Top Workplaces Where Employees Thrive** will be announced at the awards presentation on June 1, 2017 in Toronto, Ontario.

DATES	ACTIVITY
Sept. 30, 2016	Nominations OPEN
March 27, 2017	Nominations DEADLINE
March 31	Notify shortlisted organizations
April 3	Thrive Awards Online Survey
April 18	Online Survey closed
May 26	Awards Selection completed
May 19	Collect video presentations from nominees
June 1, 2017	Awards presentation

Audiovisual Production

Once the nomination has been qualified, the nominee will be asked to take advantage of a high-profile opportunity by preparing a two-minute production of what makes their workplace awesome. This production may be shown at the awards presentation at the *Imagine Your Workplace* Conference and will also be available for viewing on our website.



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**It takes a short time to nominate
and the recognition lasts a lifetime!**



NOMINATION FORM

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Name: _____

Job/Position/Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

NOMINEE INFORMATION OR IF SELF-NOMINATING

Name: _____

Job/Position/Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Website: _____ Industry/ Sector: _____

of Employees: _____

Certification

I certify the foregoing information is complete and accurate. On behalf of our organization, I authorize publication by *Your Workplace* of all information and items included in this application including photographs and multimedia items submitted.



Signed this _____ day of _____, 201_____

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(Sign above)

PRINT NAME HERE:



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Methodology

All participating organizations must complete two (2) mandatory components:

1. The employer registration form (to determine eligibility for participation), and
2. The employee opinion survey

Employee Opinion Survey Component

The employee opinion survey has been tested extensively to determine reliability, validity, and independence of the factors in analysis. It is a modified version of an employee engagement survey designed and used by *Your Workplace* for the Top Workplaces Where Employees Thrive Awards (Thrive award) survey. The minimum response rate required by organization size is:

Organization Size	Sample Size	Required Response Rate
Up to 49 employees	All employees	75%
50-99	All employees	60% (30-59)
100-249	All employees	45% (45-112)
250-499	All employees	30% (75-150)
500 or more	All employees	25%

Survey Process Overview

Organizations will be able to set up their survey online. The administration tool will guide you step-by-step through entering your organization's information, adding employees, sending test surveys and the final invitations. This tool sends out unique survey links to each email address you enter and you will be able to see your response rate at all times. The steps are:

1. Enter in your organization's name, contact information, total number of employees and the date you want your survey to close (must be on or before midnight April 18, 2017).
2. Send a few test questionnaires, prior to launching the link to your employee base, to ensure that the system works with your firewall and network.
3. Forward your link to your employees' email addresses. **These are unique links and should not forward to others.** Once a survey has been completed and submitted, the link will no longer be accessible. (Your Workplace can reinstate links, if required. A change order will be drawn up for \$200/hour with a minimum fee of \$200.) If you miss someone, you can add email addresses even after invitations have been sent.



Important: This survey will start April 4 and must be completed by midnight, April 18, 2017. We recommend a two (2) week survey period to maximize your response rate.

For technical assistance using this tool, please contact *Your Workplace*.

Confidentiality Policy

All sponsoring partners and committee members are committed to maintaining the absolute confidentiality of survey participants and will not release the names of participating organizations or individual survey responses. Only the names of organizations selected as recipients of the Top Workplaces Where Employees Thrive will be publicly released.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why should my organization participate?

You will:

- Gain insights on current best people practices and organizational trends across Canada.
- Receive an overall report summarizing valuable data on the practices of top employers Canada for a small fee.
- Obtain a statistically accurate snapshot of your employees' current engagement level.
- Receive national exposure and the opportunity to showcase your organization as an employer of choice if you are selected as a recipient of the award.
- Be granted the opportunity to customize your employee survey by asking up to five (5) additional questions for a small fee.

Plus, being a recipient of this prestigious award is a key element to effectively recruiting top talent, and participation is absolutely free.

What does participating involve?

Participating in the survey will require your organization to invest some time and resources. You will need to identify a “primary contact” for your organization who will be responsible for coordinating the employee opinion survey process and liaising with the YW team.

If we don't participate this year, can we still get a copy of the final report?

No. Only the participating organizations will have access to the report of their individual organizational results. This data is kept strictly confidential.

Can the survey be completed online?

Yes. The survey administration tool is online and allows each organization to set up a unique profile and send out unique links to each employee.

Can the survey be completed on paper?

Yes although this is not desired as *Your Workplace* will be required to enter the data. There is a fee of \$25 per returned survey. Contact *Your Workplace* if you would like to deploy your employee opinion survey on paper. For employees without Internet access, you may want to set up a temporary computer workspace for them to complete their survey. They do require an email account where they can receive the survey link.



If I complete the application form, am I obligated to proceed with participating in the survey?

No. This form simply ensures that you are eligible to participate and that you receive a Participant Toolkit for review.

Is there a minimum size requirement before employers can apply?

No, although a minimum of 30 people per organization is required to provide a statistically valid sample size while retaining the confidentiality of the individuals responding to the survey.

Can we meet with your team to explain our application further?

Due to the large quantity of applications received we are unable to meet with organizations on an individual basis. We will contact you if we require further clarification.

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