So just what does it take to be a Best Place to Work in the Inland Northwest, and how should we recognize those that achieve such stature? Those are the key questions a small group of us posed nearly a year ago, when we first sat down to talk about bringing a Best Places To Work program to our region.

The notion is important because we believe that for a region to be economically vital, it must have employers who understand what it takes to attract and retain talent. We instinctively know we had such employers here, but we wanted a valid metric for validating our perception. We found that by contracting with Best Companies Group, a Hartsburg, Missouri research firm that does employee engagement studies like this all across the country, mostly for business newspapers like the Journal.

Nearly 50 employers in our region participated in a rigorous survey process to measure employee engagement. Both from the employer side and, most importantly, from the employees’ perspectives. Though participating in the process was free to employers, there was much work to do. They also had the option of purchasing a comprehensive report from Best Companies Group to use as a benchmark for where they stand with their employees, where they excel, and where they have work to do.

In order to participate in the program, an employer needed to have been in business for at least a year and have a minimum of 15 employees in our region, which we defined as a five-county area that includes Spokane, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties in Washington, and Lincoln and Bonner counties in Idaho. Nearly 50 employers tentatively signed up by the deadline in early June, and while some canceled later, many went through the entire program process, which ran into the summer. Those that did participated in a two-part survey process conducted by Best Companies Group that ultimately scored each company as a Best Place to Work. Part one (25 percent of the score) consisted of participation in the process and employee engagement studies like this one, and part two (75 percent of the score) consisted of a confidential employee survey used to rate employers, their strengths and weaknesses, and ultimately determine whether their workplace is the best.

To participate in this program, we defined the Inland Northwest as a region, which we defined as a five-county area that includes Spokane, Stevens, Pend Oreille and Lincoln counties in Washington, and Bonner and Lincoln counties in Idaho. The program committee decided to create four categories of companies based on the size of their U.S. workforce, knowing that larger companies have more resources to dedicate to human resource initiatives. We established those categories as enterprise (1,000 or more employees), large (300-999 employees), medium (100-299), and small (15-50). In the following pages, you will see short vignettes of each of the employers that made our list, organized by rank within their size category. The top-scoring employer in each category was honored in this publication and also at an awards event held on Sept. 7. Just to be included on our list is a huge win; to be the winner in a category is an extraordinary achievement.

Take a look at the brief pieces on each of the Best Places to Work employers in this publication, paying special attention to how they have found countless ways to help their employees succeed. Follow their example, and you, too, could be recognized in the future as a Best Place to Work in the Inland Northwest. We plan to relaunch the program early next year for the 2017 analysis.

There’s reason to celebrate. We found countless ways to help their employees succeed. Follow their example, and you, too, could be recognized in the future as a Best Place to Work in the Inland Northwest.

Our work matters because you do.

When you work at Providence, you’ll learn the power of your smile and the value of your knowledge. You’ll help comfort those in need, and reach those who need it most. You’ll be part of creating healthier communities together. Whether your role calls for reassuring words, healing hands or innovative thinking – or all of the above – you’ll know your day was well spent.
Gallagher Benefit Services is a division of Arthur J. Gallagher & Co., a U.S.-based global insurance brokerage and risk management services company established in 1927. It is the third-largest insurance broker in the world.

Invests in its people and their development. Utilizing the management tool known as Anchors, the company allows each employee to identify individual needs and long-term desires for professional development. Additionally, individual development plans are developed to help each team member identify advancement goals and the means to reach them, and regular attendance at leadership workshops or other formal leadership education programs. Gallagher encourages employees for top performance and service to customers.

In the office, long hours are kept to a minimum to encourage a healthy work-to-life balance, and employees enjoy monthly “Happy Committee” events and the office celebrates with Casual Fridays. And the company doesn’t hesitate to help its employees’ involvement in their community, actively supporting leadership roles in various volunteer organizations with paid time off during office hours. Team members’ interests are encouraged and supported through the company’s match for charitable contributions of up to $1,000 per year.

Congratulations to the recipients of the Inland Northwest Best Places to Work employee recognition program! You exemplify what it means to be great, stand out from the crowd, and forge new pathways that create lasting employee engagement.

For 130 years, the People of Providence have been providing the best and most advanced medical care to the residents of our region. Just as it was in 1886, the people who make up the Providence family are the organization’s greatest asset. Today, more than 7,500 caregivers in eastern Washington bring their expertise and commitment to Providence each day. They provide leadership and innovative thinking to ensure that quality and compassionate health care is available today, tomorrow and long into the future.

Providence is here because of the dedication of these amazing people. Together, we celebrate your success — and that’s exactly what HUB International can enjoy. To find out more about the Northeast and Long-term goals — scoped, scaled and tailored for your business.

You deserve to have access to the kind of deep expertise — scoped, scaled and tailored for your business. To find out more about the Northeast and Long-term goals — scoped, scaled and tailored for your business.

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Northwest Farm Credit Services

Northwest Farm Credit Services is part of the 100-year-old Farm Credit System—the largest single provider of credit and financial services to American agriculture. A financial cooperative, it provides financing and related services to farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses, commercial fishermen, timber producers, rural homesteaders, agricultural cooperatives and rural utilities in Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington and Alaska.

Northwest FCS is proud of its employees’ development—it provides tuition assistance for advanced or postgraduate education—and their contributions outside the office. It offers support for employees to participate in charitable work, providing paid time off up to three days per employee annually for community involvement and volunteer activities during work hours.

Peer-to-peer each employee has two $250 awards to give annually, and recognition programs celebrate team members’ accomplishments. Cash and extra time off are regularly among the employee rewards for stellar performance.

Not satisfied with the status quo, the company is committed to training, career development and ongoing education for its employees. Equally focused on diversity, Northwest FCS awards four $2,000 minority scholarships annually to support achievement among students in agricultural, finance and business. Two scholarships are also awarded annually to children of Northwest FCS employees. Valuing its employees’ experience and knowledge, the company offers semi-tenure options to tenured employees to allow them to continue working if they desire. This benefits all, as these team members pass along their knowledge to younger employees.

Northwest FCS employees benefit from company-wide fitness and nutrition campaigns, including subsidized Fitbit, wellness prizes, free on-site biometric screenings and flu shots, Weight Watchers at Work, and an on-site mammography coach. Among others things, designated “wellness champions” in each office actively support team members’ wellness efforts, including organizing healthy catered meals during employee celebrations and sponsorship of community events such as charitable walks or runs.

The company also provides assistance with health club memberships for employees and their partners.

Numerica Credit Union serves about 119,000 members throughout Eastern Washington and North Idaho and has $1.5 billion in assets. It offers a broad array of products and programs for its employees, including an extra day off per year called “family day,” which comes with $50 to spend with family. Other benefits include onsite dry cleaning, weekly food trucks, discounted gym memberships, an onsite gym, and Weight Watchers and fitness classes. During break times, there is ping pong, basketball, lawn games Wii Fit and access to CEO does fireside lunchon chats with employees quarterly, alternating with regular communications.

Numerica Credit Union was named one of America’s Best Large Employers, based on employee feedback and scores from hundreds of surveys. Survey respondents were asked to rate their experience at their current employer on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very poor and 5 being very good.

The survey found that employees are most satisfied when management communicates with the company and its employees. They are also most satisfied when management is open and honest. Employees who feel that their managers are open and honest have a higher overall satisfaction level.

In addition, employees who feel that their managers are open and honest are more likely to recommend their company to others. This is especially true for employees who feel that their managers are open and honest about company policies and procedures.

Overall, employees who feel that their managers are open and honest are more satisfied with their jobs.

Washington Trust Bank is pleased to offer a variety of programs to help employees achieve their financial goals. The bank offers a comprehensive retirement plan, including employer contributions, and a 401(k) plan with matching contributions. The bank also offers a stock purchase plan, which allows employees to purchase company stock at a discount.

Washington Trust Bank is also committed to providing employees with educational opportunities. The bank has a tuition reimbursement program, which allows employees to receive reimbursement for tuition costs at accredited universities. The bank also offers a scholarship program for children of employees who are enrolled in college.

In addition, Washington Trust Bank offers a variety of wellness programs to help employees maintain a healthy lifestyle. The bank offers on-site fitness centers, weight loss programs, and smoking cessation programs. The bank also provides access to wellness resources, such as fitness classes and nutrition counseling.

Washington Trust Bank is dedicated to providing a positive work environment for its employees. The bank has a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion, and is proud to offer a range of employee benefits that support a healthy work-life balance.

Washington Trust Bank is committed to helping employees achieve their career goals. The bank offers a variety of training and development programs, including on-the-job training, workshops, and online courses. The bank also offers a mentorship program, which pairs employees with experienced professionals to provide guidance and support.

Washington Trust Bank is committed to making a positive impact in the community. The bank supports a variety of local organizations, including United Way, Habitat for Humanity, and local schools.

Washington Trust Bank is proud to offer a competitive compensation package, including base salary, bonus opportunities, and attractive benefits. The bank is committed to providing employees with a rewarding and fulfilling career at Washington Trust Bank.
Lee & Hayes, PLLC
Spokane
www.leehayes.com

Lee & Hayes, PLLC, is a law firm that focuses on intellectual property, litigation and corporate law to provide counsel to innovative companies around the world. The Spokane-based company also has seven offices in major markets across the country. It offers a comprehensive suite of intellectual property services, from analysis, counseling and reporting to corporate services ranging from business formation, mergers and acquisitions, and securities and litigation.

Lee & Hayes in-house team, which is called 601 West, is Unlike in the legal field. It utilizes state of the art proprietary tools and extensive business experience to arm its attorneys and agents with data-driven analysis and consulting to inform client’s overall business strategy.

Lee & Hayes take an equally unconventional approach with its workplace, where it fosters an environment that is fun, positive and builds camaraderie. Time-Out Thursdays are a bi-monthly event at which colleagues can chat and connect over donuts, bagels and refreshments. A pool table is a break room centerpiece, where friendly competitions are regular occurrences.

The company encourages diversity, continued learning opportunities, new ideas and an entrepreneurial spirit. It also puts a premium on the family life of each team member. At Lee & Hayes, employees take advantage of flexible work schedules and the ability to work from home. Health and wellness are emphasized, with employees encouraged and supported in their individual fitness pursuits. The firm provides healthy snacks in the office, an active wellness program and stand-up work stations. Additionally, each employee receives a Fitbit activity tracker, and intra-office fitness challenges offer regular events and prizes to motivate team members in reaching their goals. The firm encourages diversity, continuous learning, new ideas and an entrepreneurial spirit. Its Diversity Committee is comprised of team members with a wide variety of personal and professional backgrounds, including the CEO, attorneys and professional staff. They share a strong commitment to increasing the firm’s diversity.

As strong as its team, the firm regularly recognizes employees’ commitment and work that exceeds expectations with employee appreciation gifts and cash incentives.

Northwest Specialty Hospital
Post Falls
www.northwestspecialtyhospital.com

Northwest Specialty Hospital is a physician-owned facility offering multiple specialties ranging from surgery and urgent care to family medicine and gynecology. Employees enjoy company-sponsored events such as Silverwood Days, sporting events, BBQs and holiday parties, as well as discounted lunches and a Starbucks coffee stand. For wellness, the hospital offers staff a weight loss challenge, access to a dietician, and discount gym memberships. Another interesting perk is elderscare assistance to employees’ aging family members, including transportation and other resources.

etailz, Inc.
Spokane
www.etailz.com

etailz, Inc., operates five niche e-commerce websites carefully curated for consumers seeking anything from eco-friendly beauty products to trendy home goods. Additionally, the company is recognized as an industry expert for its years of selling on the Amazon marketplace. Health and fitness is also a focus at etailz, where employees can take advantage of $250 annual wellness-activities reimbursement, weekly company-sponsored summer barbecues, a well-appointed on-site gym and locker room facilities, and free daily lunchtime fitness classes.

Merchant e-Solutions is an Atlanta-based payment processor helping merchants securely through multiple channels. The company’s new offices offer pool and shuffleboard tables, vintage arcade games, and hanging ceiling fans. For its team to relax during the day, it also hosts monthly happy hour times for the team to engage and socialize after work, as well as events for bowling, pool, and pizza. The company’s catered lunches and end-of-season parties are further evidence of its focus on employees.

Sonderen Packaging
Spokane
www.sonderen.com

Sonderen Packaging is a custom, folding carton manufacturer. The family owned business is a big believer in employee activities. From the ping pong table in the lunchroom to holiday parties and family picnics, to the Sonderen Olympics, the company brings its employees together. Among the perks it offers are a four-day work week and discounted memberships at YMCA. Its “Fight for the Brand” program hands out gift cards to employees for being recognized by their co-workers for going above and beyond, and on their birthdays, employees get to spin a wheel to receive a birthday gift.

HUMANIX
509-467-0062
208-664-8958
humanix.com

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Empire Health Foundation
Spokane
www.empirehealthfoundation.org

Empire Health Foundation is a private health conversion foundation formed in 2008 that believes health goes beyond the impact of the medical community alone. Its core belief is that health outcomes are influenced by external factors such as the availability of resources to meet daily needs like food and shelter, access to quality education and job training, access to job opportunities and access to preventive care. The Foundation’s work is aimed at addressing these problems upstream, investing in sustainable changes that result in a healthier community.

Stewarding philanthropic assets totaling roughly $80 million, the foundation invests in ideas and organizations that improve access, education, research and policy with the overiding goal to create a healthier region.

More than a place to work, the Empire Health Foundation office in downtown Spokane is an exciting, dynamic and engaging environment where successes are celebrated. Peers and supervisors send “shout outs” to recognize top performers, these also included in weekly staffwide emails. The foundation recognizes accomplishments at least twice a year, specifically showcasing the work of individuals. With its goal of creating sustainably healthier communities, Empire Health Foundation strives to provide nothing less for its team members. It offers employees a comprehensive, optional wellness program that provides regular biometric screenings to identify health-risk factors.

Professional wellness coaches customize wellness plans for employees, who can earn an incentive wellness bonus for measurable improvements in their health.

Among its employees, the foundation seeks to build a diverse workforce that reflects the communities it serves, and encourages inquiries from such candidates.

The foundation is at the forefront of change in community health with the programs supported through its grants and understands that staff development is critical to accomplishing its goals. This visionary approach requires foresight from team leaders, and the organization realizes this.

Last year it invested in the “Cerebyte” initiative for its Program Team. This intensive, five-month career development program seeks to build transformational leaders, to the benefit of the foundation and the communities it serves.

SRM is an acquisition, development, construction-management, and property management company specializing in multifamily, senior housing, and mixed-use development in the Western U.S. Geared toward active employees, it offers holiday activities such as rafting, volleyball, dodgeball, an biornball, and has a rooftop basketball court for their use, as well as discounted gym memberships. It also offers flexible shifts to accommodate family needs and institutes revised summer hours. Employees also can volunteer during work hours for Habitat for Humanity. Birthdays bring not just cake, but a monthly “birthday poem.”

Humanix is a staffing and recruiting firm that has placed more than 86,000 employees, connecting businesses to people who bring talent, skills and knowledge to the job. The company puts work/life balance at the forefront for its employees, providing them with opportunities for a flexible schedule that can include a four-day work week and working remotely.

Working at this ESOP company, Humanix employees enjoy profit-sharing and the value associated with employee ownership. Snow cones and popcorn are daily treats in the office, and a week-end- ing wrap treats accomplishments with wine and beer. With a nod to valued employees’ experience, the company offers reduced hours for those nearing retirement.

The company seeks to keep employees engaged in a number of ways, including company picnics on Lake Coeur d’Alene, annual holiday breakfasts, monthly appreciation parties, an “end of tax year” party, and Bunco parties. Among the wellness offerings are a walking club, weight loss competitions, and a monthly wellness newsletter. It also offers tuition reimbursement for continuing education, and 55 hours of annual training and professional development.

MOSS ADAMS LLP
Certified Public Accountants | Business Consultants
www.mossadams.com

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Here to Help You Grow™
Transitions is a nonprofit whose mission is to end poverty and homelessness for women and children in Spokane, by providing housing and housing support, a day center for homeless women, a licensed child care center, and a job training program. Though operating as a small not-for-profit enterprise, it is able to offer benefits typically offered by larger for-profits, including covering 100 percent of the health-care premium for employees, and provides an annual employee appreciation dinner and gifts.

Cooney Law Offices
Spokane
www.jcooney.com

With compassionate, effective representation, Cooney Law Offices, PLLC, is a boutique law firm that places emphasis on the needs of individuals. The firm’s attorneys bring a breadth of experience to bear in the practice areas of auto accidents and personal injury, DUI and other criminal defenses, estate planning and probate, and family law. Laser focused in effectively serving clients, Cooney attorneys and staff nonethe- less listen and have fun with active involvement in First Fridays events as well as birthday and holiday festivities. During the week, employees’ personal and family needs are met through flexible work arrangements and such things as school events and children’s doctor visits.

Inland Power & Light Co. is a mem- ber-owned cooperative committed to providing safe and reliable service to customers at competitive rates. Organized in 1937, the cooperative serves 39,000 members in 13 counties across Eastern Washington and northern Idaho. The company values the work its employees, providing attractive bonuses based on individual and departmental goals, and awards its Vision Bonus in recognition of a team member’s input that leads to operational improvements. Employees find a healthy bit of company support for their health and wellness, with an active involvement in First Fridays events as well as birthday and holiday festivities. During the week, employees’ personal and family needs are met through flexible work arrangements and such things as school events and children’s doctor visits.

Stay Alfred is a vacation rental and corporate housing company that operates in 11 cities and employs about 60 employees. Corporate culture appears to be a focus, given its employee offerings such as “Beer Friday” and “Thursday Lunch,” as well as “after-hour camaraderie.” In terms of wellness, the company offers discounts to local gyms, subsidized FitBits and FitBit challenges, standing desks, and a chin-up beam. Employee communi- cation is also key, as it provides “at least monthly” employee updates from its CEO, as well as twice-annual reviews.

Inland Power & Light & Co.
Spokane
www.inlandpower.com

Spokane Housing Authority
Spokane
www.spokanehousing.org

Spokane Housing Authority provides affordable housing units and administers rental assistance programs in the region. The agency has an incredibly low 3 percent employee turnover rate and conducts “stay interviews” between employees and its executive director. It offers a paid time-off (PTO) program that includes 27 days after the first year of employ- ment and a 40-hour cash-out option. It also provides healthy living programs and activities, including a workplace walking challenge in which employees sign up for a 10-week challenge and record their steps, earning “destina- tions,” and entries into drawings.
## Best Places To Work INW

### Ranked by quality of workplace

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<th>Rank</th>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Top Local Exec.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Website/Phone</th>
<th>Contact/Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Headquarters</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Employees</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Gallagher Bassett Service, Inc.</td>
<td>216 W. Second Ave., Suite 400, Spokane, WA 99201</td>
<td>Mark Wilkerson</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gbg.com">www.gbg.com</a></td>
<td>(509) 815-2007</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mark.wilkerson@gbg.com">mark.wilkerson@gbg.com</a></td>
<td>Inland Empire</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>15,344</td>
<td>Health Care Insurance Services</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Moss Adams LLP</td>
<td>101 W. Riverside Ave, Ste. 1800, Spokane, WA 99201</td>
<td>Rick Bar</td>
<td>Regional Managing Partner</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mossadams.com">www.mossadams.com</a></td>
<td>(509) 747-2880</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Empire Health Foundation</td>
<td>1111 W. Sprague Ave., Suite 300, Spokane, WA 99201</td>
<td>Tony Chang</td>
<td>President and CEO</td>
<td><a href="http://www.empirehealthfoundation.org">www.empirehealthfoundation.org</a></td>
<td>(509) 315-1323</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>EDO USA, LLP</td>
<td>231 W. Riverside Ave, Ste. 500, Spokane, WA 99201</td>
<td>Darleen Wilkerson</td>
<td>President and CEO</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:darleen.wilkerson@edousa.com">darleen.wilkerson@edousa.com</a></td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Cooney Law Offices, P.S.</td>
<td>1111 N. Post St., Suite 200, Spokane, WA 99201</td>
<td>Richard Denenny</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td><a href="http://www.srmdevelopment.com">www.srmdevelopment.com</a></td>
<td>(509) 315-1323</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Washington Trust Bank</td>
<td>12825 E. Mirabeau Pkwy, Spokane Valley, WA 99216</td>
<td>Mark Wilkerson</td>
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<td>Spokane Valley</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>Financial Services</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Spokane Housing Authority</td>
<td>1350 E. Indiana Ave., Suite 100, Spokane, WA 99201</td>
<td>Jordan Allen</td>
<td>Founder</td>
<td><a href="http://www.spokanehousing.org">www.spokanehousing.org</a></td>
<td>(509) 328-6702</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jordan@spokanehousing.org">jordan@spokanehousing.org</a></td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>Real Estate Development</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Merchants Custom Crating &amp; Pallets</td>
<td>717 W. Sprague Ave, Spokane, WA 99202</td>
<td>Peter Stanton</td>
<td>President</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mccandp.com">www.mccandp.com</a></td>
<td>(509) 209-2074</td>
<td><a href="mailto:peter.stanton@mccandp.com">peter.stanton@mccandp.com</a></td>
<td>Spokane Valley</td>
<td>WA</td>
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<td>Manufacturing</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Healthcare Reserve Group</td>
<td>27810 E. Windmill Pky, Ste 300, Phoenix, AZ 85086</td>
<td>Greg West</td>
<td>President and CEO</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hrcons.com">www.hrcons.com</a></td>
<td>(509) 782-8981</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Transitions</td>
<td>12610 E. Mirabeau Pkwy., Ste. 800, Spokane Valley, WA 99216</td>
<td>Matt Schneible</td>
<td>President and Owner</td>
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*The Best Places To Work® method was managed by Best Companies Group of Pennsylvania, PA. BCG evaluated the data collected from participating companies and determined rankings based on an overall score. The survey results are based on an employer survey of company benefits, policies, practices, and other information. Seventy-five percent of each score was based on confidential employee surveys that evaluated the employees’ workplace experience, engagement, and satisfaction.*

*The Best Companies is an initiative of the University of Michigan, the Society for Human Resource Management, and Working Mother magazine.*
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