

JHL Constructors tailors bonuses to staff's interests

May 15, 2015, 4:00am MDT



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Best Places to Work No. 1 medium-size companies - JHL Constructors Inc.

JHL Constructors is like a family. At least, that's how vice president Brad Schmahl sees it.

"We take care of each other like a family and we care about each other like a family," Schmahl said.

JHL Constructors, a commercial general contractor that does business solely in Colorado, saw massive growth last year, Schmahl said, but that didn't take away the tight-knit feel of the company.

"When you get up in the morning, and you want to go to work, that's a pretty good perk," Schmahl said. "On the other side of things, if you get up and don't want to come to work, that doesn't bode well."

JHL's senior leadership has developed a habit of rewarding employees with creative bonuses tailored to the employees' interests.

"We do things for employees that are a special-intention reward, not just throw money at them," Schmahl said. "They [senior leadership] do such a good job at giving our employees gifts that really mean something to them."

Schmahl has been with JHL since 2001 when he started there as an intern. When he got out of college, the company told him to talk to whoever he wanted about a job, but it wasn't much of a choice.

"I can very easily say I'm a JHL lifer," Schmahl said.

"There's a lot of awards out there, and being on the leadership side of things, just the amount of pride that our entire leadership team takes in the way our employees talk about our firm, and this one, if we were fortunate enough to win it, would mean the most," Schmahl said. "It really tells us that we're doing something right in cultivating our culture."

Describe your company culture in five words.

Family, Collaborative, Trustworthy, Driven, Awesome.

Tell us three specific ways you ensure all of your employees know they are valued.

Achievements are celebrated whether they are a part of the business or not: Birthdays, a new baby, home purchase, marriage, a successful job well done, 10 and 20 year anniversaries with the company. As a family, we make it a point to celebrate the good stuff together, and we support each other in tough times.

The family of the employee is a part of JHL as well. We love opportunities to involve families, have kids come see Santa during the holidays, enjoy a petting zoo at our family picnic, send home treat bags for Halloween, valentine's day, etc.

Monetary bonuses – even in the down times, employees got something so they knew how much their hard work is appreciated.

What concrete steps do your senior leaders take to create a great work environment for all employees?

Our leadership has learned this business through an open door policy and maintains the same policy now. In maintaining that, our employees know that they have our support in everything they do, knowing that we back them.

Very simply our strategy on talent acquisition is to hire the top talent in the market, the absolute best people you can find, people better than those doing the hiring if possible, and then spending our time and efforts setting them up for complete success and supporting them with all necessary resources. We involve our current employees in the hiring process to make sure the talent is a culture fit. If a prospective team member is not a culture fit, we recognize that the best resume in the world can't overcome that.

Give us some specific examples of how your company creates opportunities for individual development and career growth at all levels of the company.

Employees have the freedom to create their own opportunity under the premise that the sky's the limit for everyone in our company. Two examples:

Eleven years ago, a receptionist was hired to primarily answer phones and open mail for the office. In just a few short years, through the demonstration of her work ethic and willingness to learn, she has become not only our HR director, but also helps run our leasing company and fleet, is a stockholder, champions company team building and morale, handles countless duties for JHL Development, and also serves as JHL's Director of Awesomeness.

Three years ago, we wanted to change our website, and were surprised at how much we would have to pay a third party to design and build a new website. Our marketing director researched how much it was to take classes to learn how to do the same thing. When she found classes to be far cheaper for the company, she nominated herself to go through the classes over 3 semesters, mostly on her own time. When she finished, we had a fantastic new website, that got rave reviews, at a fraction of the cost and time we would have spent with a third party. She has gone on to not only excel in her primary field of marketing but also to primarily manage JHL's information technology systems and support staff.

How would you describe your company in 30 seconds to someone you meet at a cocktail party?

In describing our culture: We're a group of over-achievers driving each other's success, relying upon the experience of our veterans and thriving on the energy of our youth. When our people get up in the morning they want to come to work!

What are the most popular perks you offer to employees?

Offer of family outings to our employees: to sporting events, stays in the Founder's vacation home, tickets to concert outings, golf, clay shooting, participation in company organized charity work, after work team building activities, bonuses & very competitive pay.

Flexible work schedules with results oriented metrics on performance

How does being a Best Place to Work affect your bottom line?

When an employee is genuinely happy and has both motivation and opportunity to succeed, the expectations of our clients and industry partners are far surpassed, which translates to increased profitability and repeat business for our company.