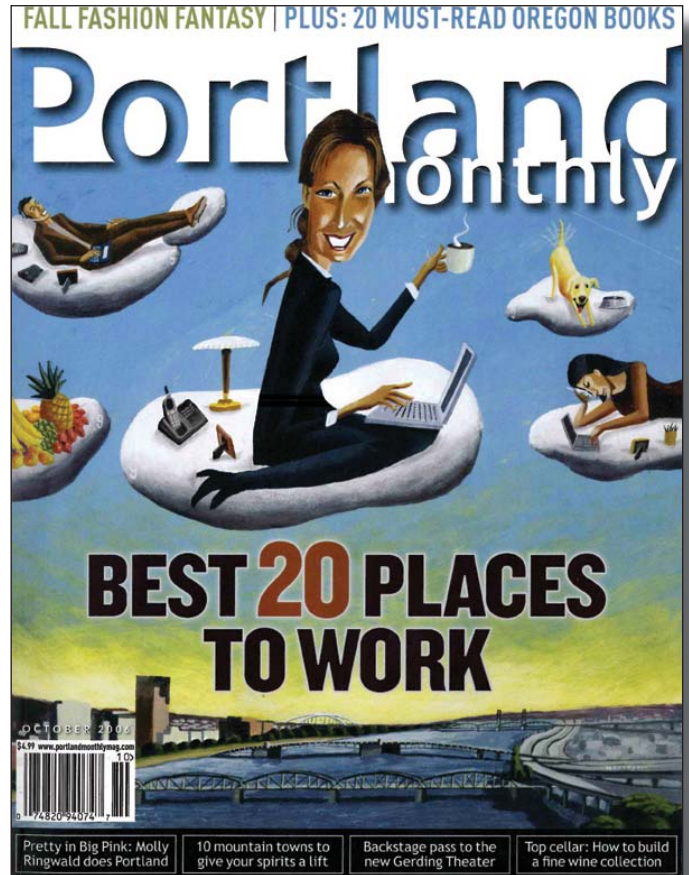


Best 20 Places to Work

Portland Monthly, October 2006

There's a reason it is called the rat race, the grind: It puts food on the table, wine in your glass. A job isn't meant to put you on cloud nine... unless you happen to work for one of the Best 20 Places to Work.

To locate the best places to work in Portland, Portland Monthly turned to the experts: the employees themselves. What exactly makes them so dang happy to come to work? Employees wasted few words talking about salary and company stability. Instead, they waxed on enthusiastically about managers with a heart of gold and generous perks.



GROUP MACKENZIE

YOU'D BETTER BRING YOUR GAME FACE: Competition reigns at Group Mackenzie. "We tend to attract Type A's," explains network manager Becky Brandt. But it's all in good fun, employees insist—at least most of the time. Numerous options exist for channeling competitive temperaments, like the firm's soccer, softball and basketball teams; the yearly Hood to Coast Relay; and the Pole Pedal Paddle race in Bend. Such outside sports and in-house team-building exercises with a competitive bent help foster a collaborative work environment, employees say. "That we want to spend more time with people that we already spend more than 40 hours with each week says something," says one architect.

The atmosphere doesn't mean that big egos rule or that employees are penalized for putting their families first, however. After one architect had a baby, she reduced her hours and still received a promotion.

Another employee telecommutes to be with her kids. "It feels good to know that we're cared about in our professional and personal lives," says Brandt, who recalls the time the company president showed up at her house with a chainsaw to help her cut trees after a storm.

But for one employee, it was the scholarships for employees' dependents that got hers and her kids' attention. Every year, dependents aged 18 to 25 years with at least a 3.25 GPA are eligible for college scholarships that range from \$1,500 to \$2,500 per year for up to four years. "My son has actually gone from years of failing grades to going for A's—and getting them," she says. "Wow." —GK

BUSINESS
Engineering

LOCATION
Southwest Portland

NO. OF EMPLOYEES
122