



PPB'S ANNUAL LOOK AT THE INDUSTRY'S BEST WORKPLACES

By Tina Berres Filipski

AS THE ECONOMY CONTINUES TO IMPROVE, retaining talent remains a top priority for all businesses—especially for small-business owners. The best way to ensure retention of top employees is to create an environment of trust, fairness and innovation where employees feel engaged and valued, are comfortable taking risks and are encouraged to thrive.

Since 2011, *PPB* has sought out the best workplaces in the promotional products industry for our annual spotlight. During that time, 48 companies have been recognized and selected from hundreds of employee nominations based on company culture, work environment, career development, team work, leadership and overall employee satisfaction. This year we add 10 more great workplaces to the coveted list. What do these workplaces have that breeds so much satisfaction and admiration among employees? Read on.



FEATURED FILMS

Take a look at the company videos posted with this story at <http://pubs.ppai.org>.



Top Executive
Julie Levi, President

Type of Company
Distributor

Locations
**Chicago, Illinois;
Englewood, New Jersey;
Miami, Florida; Stratford,
Connecticut; London,
England**

Website
www.progressivepromotions.com

Year Founded
1987

Total Employees
35

Company Motto
It takes a team.

Perks
**Flexible work schedules
College tuition reimbursement
401k matching program
Year-end bonuses
\$1,000 paid to employees who stop smoking
\$250 employee referral bonus
Cash bonus for bringing in new clients (even for those not in sales)**



WHAT EMPLOYEES SAY ABOUT PROGRESSIVE PROMOTIONS (UPIC: PPIPROMO): “To work with teams that are caring, creative, responsible and dedicated is a fantastic feeling that makes it easy for me to feel nothing but love for this company that also shares my personal core values,” says Donna Anastasio, a five-year employee. Karin Paredes, who recently celebrated her first year, says, “At PPI, there is a true sense of 360 degrees of appreciation. Not only does the leadership have complete faith in its employees to do the best job possible, but PPI also helps us with any hurdle we may encounter.” Co-worker Jenna Mehler, who has been at the company for five months, says she works with an amazing team. “We are each treated with incredible respect from upper management and are treated like we are extremely important to the company.” Two-year employee Pam Abramowitz says, “I learn something new every day and am encouraged to grow, develop my skills, be proactive and suggest improvements. I feel appreciated and valued by my manager, my colleagues and those who report to me.”

HOW IT DIFFERENTIATES ITSELF AS AN EMPLOYER: Newcomer Jenna Mehler says business cards were waiting on her desk on her first day at the company along with a new hire package (“it made me feel very special!”), and she was introduced to a team of co-workers who were helpful and great teachers. “PPI gives you the freedom to be who you really are and to be as creative and as innovative as you’d like to be,” she says. Another new co-worker Michael Brodesky says he’s worked for other companies in the promotions industry and it’s just different at Progressive Promotions. “Everyone here is energized and glad to be here. My ideas are respected here and I’m made to feel like I matter and I’m important. That kind of respect and feeling comes from the top down.” Anastasio adds, “To be able to live up to our core values and conduct our business in such a way that is in line with them, is something that PPI also considers a significant achievement and worth celebrating.”

“PPI GIVES YOU THE FREEDOM TO BE WHO YOU REALLY ARE AND TO BE AS CREATIVE AND AS INNOVATIVE AS YOU’D LIKE TO BE.” –JENNA MEHLER

Across Progressive Promotions welcomes new hires into the fold immediately, ensuring they feel at home and free to be as creative and innovative as they can. Successes and the team's hard work are honored with monthly congratulatory meetings and frequent company gatherings.



THE INSIDE STORY | Progressive Promotions recognizes and rewards employee accomplishments with frequent, positive feedback in person and by email, spot bonuses, company lunches and pizza parties, summer barbecues, Friday afternoon ice cream parties and car wash vouchers, to name a few. President Julie Levi also holds a monthly company meeting where she applauds recent successes and gives out \$25 gift cards to those who exude the core values through exceptional actions. In addition, supervisors consider CEU points earned for education courses as part of employee reviews and evaluations. The company also uses a suggestion box to solicit ideas to make it a better workplace. Recent examples include the installation of vending machines, incorporating different workspace layouts, and even cosmetic changes to the office, all of which came directly from the employee suggestion box. This year, Progressive Promotions has taken listening to its employees to a new level with its PPI with a Purpose program that allows the company to participate in activities that give back to their surrounding community all the while working together as a team and having fun. In addition to participating in the fundraising efforts for the Promotional Products Education Foundation, PPI is also participating in walks and runs that have special meaning to the staff. It is apparent that everyone supports one another on a number of levels, making it a tightly knit family.



PPB's Greatest Companies To Work For 2011-2014

Distributors

Activate! Promotions + Marketing
AIA Corporation
Akran Marketing
Allegra Print & Imaging
American Solutions For Business
Blink Marketing
BrandVia
Bullpen Marketing
Club Colors Buyer
Commotion Promotions
Concepts & Associates, Inc.
Cotton Candy
ePromos Promotional Products
HALO Branded Solutions
The Image Group
Imperial Marketing
Indoff, Inc.
Jack Nadel International
Mercury Promotions & Fulfillment
Motivators, Inc.
National Premium
Pinnacle Promotions, Inc.
PSA Worldwide
Sonic Promos
Spartan Promotional Group Inc.
Tic Toc
Walker-Clay, Inc.
Sunflower Marketing
Talbot Marketing

Suppliers

A+ Wine Designs
AAA Innovations
ADG Promotional Products
The Allen Company
American Ad Bag
Ariel Premiums
Ash City
Atlas Embroidery
The Book Company
Bristol ID Technologies
Crown Products, Inc.
Evans Manufacturing
Raining Rose, Inc.
Gemline
iClick
Journalbooks/Timeplanner
Calendars
Mid-Nite Snax
Pinnacle Designs
SanMar