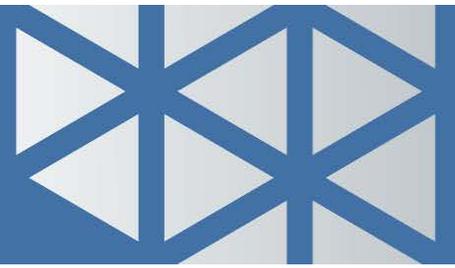


Associates Share Their Insights on Buckingham's Top Workplaces Ranking



Buckingham's ranking as fourth among midsize companies in the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch's Top Workplaces](#) for 2016 is particularly meaningful because the honor was born from the thoughts and feelings of our associates. Their input showed that our mission to create a collaborative, energetic and professionally challenging workplace has come to fruition, and for added satisfaction, our vibrant organizational culture has now been recognized in our community.

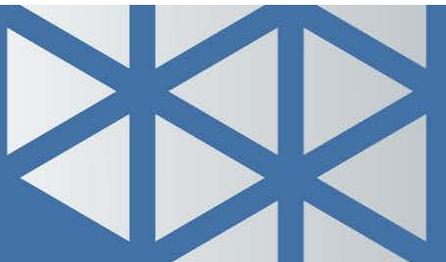
The Top Workplaces award identifies organizations of all sizes and is based on the results of a survey of our associates. The survey evaluated the workplace culture for several criteria that exemplify a strong organization. Historically, organizations recognized as Top Workplaces reflect many of the exact values we at Buckingham hold dear: collaboration, integrity, mastery, empathy, helpful spirit, uncompromising standards and courage.

"People look for and stay with companies where they feel a sense of belonging, where there's a greater purpose, where they sense an alignment of their own personal values with those of the firm," says **Shannon O'Toole Kuhlman**, Buckingham's chief talent officer. "We want our associates to be inspired and use their talents to the betterment of themselves and the firm. It has become increasingly important to provide a culture where people are inspired during their time at work — a place that keeps them engaged and honors the balance they need in life through flexible schedules and PTO policies. We want to cultivate a workplace that offers a sense of pride and ties everyone to a greater purpose."

We asked several of our associates to share why Buckingham is a top workplace for them. Buckingham gives **Lindsay Pearson** a place where she can achieve a **work/life balance** that can be so elusive to busy professionals. The firm's empowered PTO program was introduced in 2016 and gives associates the freedom to take as much time off as they want and need, regardless of tenure. That means a lot to a professional development manager/mom like Pearson. "Empowered PTO has given me the freedom to be more involved with my kid's school activities without feeling guilty or worrying about how much vacation time I have left. It's eliminated the need to 'save' days until the end of the year in case someone in my family gets sick or something else unexpected comes up. This is yet another way Buckingham has shown how much they care about their people."

Buckingham gives **Molly Zerjal** a place to **connect**. Zerjal, a content marketing specialist, oversees the firm's intranet, The Loop, which isn't a typical company intranet. Sure, it might be where organizational announcements are dropped, but there's also trash-talking over respective sports teams, awkward #tbt photos, baby news ... and so much more. If Buckingham is a community, then The Loop is the virtual coffee shop on the corner where we all gather to catch up. "It's where we get to know one another beyond the signature blocks, where personalities emerge and camaraderie strengthens," says Zerjal. "The Loop brings together professional and personal. Success outside the walls of Buckingham is equally important to the success within them, and The Loop is where we share all of it."

Buckingham gives **Tyler Hunter** a place to **grow** through the Associate Development Program, which brings the classroom to the workplace. Associates can sign up for elective-style, peer-taught courses on subjects ranging from the fundamentals of Excel to facilitating difficult conversations to



tips for thriving at work. “Buckingham’s leadership team is committed to developing our associates so we can excel inside and outside of work,” says Hunter, a Web services specialist who has been a student *and* a teacher in the program. “It was extremely rewarding for me to learn from my peers and then pay it forward by passing on my knowledge. Buckingham puts a large amount of care and detail into the development of our associates. It makes me feel like I’m truly at a place where everyone wants you to succeed and will take the necessary steps to ensure that it happens.”

Buckingham gives **Jared Hoffman** a place where his peers **receive recognition** for their achievements. Associates are not only encouraged but awarded for exemplifying the spirit and mission of the firm, for delivering superior service to clients and peers, for implementing new and better ways to do their work. Recognition can come in the form of a night’s stay at a luxury hotel, a gift card or a conference room being renamed in the recipient’s honor. “Our associates are without question the most important part of our firm,” says Hoffman, Buckingham’s managing director of operations, as well as a recipient of the firm’s Mission Award and creator of the Kool Innovation Award. “We recognize those who go above and beyond in shaping our culture, and doing the right thing. We come up with different but distinct ways to say thank you to those who play such a key role in shaping our culture. We encourage and reward new ideas, big ideas, great ideas.”

Buckingham gives **Chris Gluck** a place where he is **part of a team**, literally. When Gluck joined the firm in 2005, it had no rec-league sports teams. That spring, the Bucks softball team threw out its first pitch, and the love and spirit for that squad eventually spawned teams in flag football, volleyball, basketball, soccer, even weekend kickball. But back to the Bucks ... Gluck, who crunches numbers as a business intelligence analyst and as team statistician, says 70 different associates have made at least one plate appearance for the team. “It’s a total melting pot,” he says, “advisors, IT people, fixed income dudes, support staff, you name it. It’s awesome to know that so many associates want to spend time together after hours doing something active. It creates memories that end up getting shared through the office hallways the following day ... and then years later while reminiscing at happy hours and such.” Five straight winning records and two league championships notwithstanding, the Bucks accomplishment that means the most to Gluck was when the team held a fundraiser for the Joplin Missouri Disaster Relief Fund after the town had been hit by a massive tornado in 2011. Associates and friends pledged to donate a chosen dollar amount for every run the team scored during a doubleheader. “We ended up scoring 46 runs that night, well above our 26 runs per doubleheader average, and donations totaled over \$3,200!”

Buckingham gives **Kelli Lanfersieck** a place where an average workday can turn into an event. When she meets with the Associate Experience Committee to plan out upcoming firm functions, their goal is to think big. “We want fun, we want memorable, we want wow,” says Lanfersieck, the firm’s meeting and events manager. “We want to come up with events that you don’t see every day or think that a company of 200-plus could pull off.” So, what have they pulled off? An “Amazing Race”-style day in which teams of associates piled into limo buses and located clues at various landmarks around the St. Louis area, from Busch Stadium to the Science Center. There was also the “Minute to Win It” game night, a carnival-theme outing to the park, and the monthly spin-the-wheel game where two associates vie for prizes such as gift cards, cold-hard cash and airline vouchers. And then there’s food ... chili and crockpot cook-offs, cereal week, treat days and quarterly lunches are also a regular part of Buckingham’s event menu. “We work hard so we can



play hard,” says Lanfersieck. “Our leadership wants our associates to build strong professional and personal relationships with one another across the firm.”

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