

2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey

1. Ranking Background and Rules

Welcome to the 5th annual *Structural Engineering & Design* Best Architecture Firms To Work For ranking! This ranking will recognize the top architecture firms in the country based on their workplace practices, employee benefits, employee retention rates, and much more. Winners will be announced at the Best Firms To Work For Summit, September 28th-29th, 2010 at The Palazzo, Las Vegas, Nevada. September 2010.

For the purposes of the *Structural Engineering & Design* Best Architecture Firms To Work For ranking, architecture is broadly defined to include architecture, interior design, and landscape architecture services. The ranking compares firms, not departments or business units. All eligibility requirements must be met by your firm and all questions must be answered based on the firm.

The *Structural Engineering & Design* Best Architecture Firms To Work For ranking is managed by Stagnito Media and executed by ZweigWhite.

Entry Requirements (applicants must meet *all* of the following requirements):

- At least 51% of firms' 2009 fiscal year gross revenue must have been derived from the practice of architecture.
- Firms must have a minimum of 10 full-time employees; at least 5 of whom are architects, interior designers, or landscape architects.
- Firms must be headquartered in the United States or Canada.
- Firms must complete every question marked with an asterisk (*) on this survey (the "corporate" survey).
- For firms with 25 EMPLOYEES OR MORE, a minimum of 25% of the firm's staff must complete a second survey (the "employee" survey), which will be made available after your firm's corporate survey has been completed.
- For firms with LESS THAN 25 EMPLOYEES, a minimum of 50% of the firm's staff must complete a second survey (the "employee" survey), which will be made available after your firm's corporate survey has been completed.

We encourage you to use the [PDF version](#) of the survey to work on a draft before submitting your survey online. The final survey must be submitted online.

While you will be able to complete the PDF version of this survey electronically, you will only be able save the file if you have Adobe Acrobat (not just Acrobat Reader). We strongly encourage you to do a test-save before inputting your answers to this PDF file.

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Entry Fee: Participating firms will be charged \$200 if the corporate survey is completed by March 5 and \$250 if the corporate survey is completed after March 5. Upon completing the corporate survey online, you will have the choice of paying this fee immediately by credit card or requesting an invoice.

Deadlines:

By April 23, 2010:

1. Your firm's corporate survey must be complete and submitted online.

By May 21, 2010:

1. All entry fees must be paid, and
2. Your firm must meet the minimum employee survey participation requirement.

After this date, entry fees are non-refundable.

Firms that do not meet all three of these criteria will not be considered for the final ranking.

Results: The 2010 winners of the Best Architecture Firms To Work For will be announced at the 2009 Best Firm To Work For Summit, September 28th-29th, 2010 at The Palazzo, Las Vegas, Nevada. Honorable mentions will also be recognized.

In addition to receiving consideration as one of the 2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For, your firm's entry fee will also entitle you to a summary of your firm's employee survey results. This report will be distributed via e-mail to the primary contact by September 3, 2010.

Privacy: Neither Stagnito Media nor ZweigWhite will, under any circumstances, disclose the names of firms that apply but do not make the list of winners or honorable mentions. However, the data submitted by all firms will be used in a summary report that will be made available to all participants, as well as other clients and customers. All data in this report will be presented in an aggregate format only; no one will be able identify your firm as a participant.

ZweigWhite and Stagnito Media may wish to report details of individual winning firms' entries. All survey data will be made available to publication editors for the purposes of editorial coverage, with the exception of those questions marked "NOT FOR PUBLICATION."

Questions? We encourage you to contact us if you have questions or concerns about the data, privacy, or process. Please contact Sarah Nasznic at ZweigWhite, snasznic@zweigwhite.com or 1-508-651-1559 x3213.

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2. Timeline for the 2010 Best Firms To Work For ranking

This timeline outlines the dates information is due and the dates firms can expect to receive information. If you have any questions regarding these dates, please contact Sarah Nasznic at ZweigWhite, snasznic@zweigwhite.com or 1-508-651-1559 x3213.

March 5, 2010

- The deadline to submit your corporate survey and save \$50 on your entry fee.

April 23, 2010

- The deadline to submit the corporate survey.

May 1, 2010

- Sarah Nasznic will contact all firms who still need the minimum percentage of employees to complete the employee survey.

May 21, 2010

- Your firm must meet the response minimum for the employee survey.
- The \$250 entry fee is due.

July 23, 2010

- Sarah Nasznic will e-mail the preliminary ranking results to all participants.

August, 2010

- Early registration deadline for the 2010 Best Firms To Work For Summit, September 28th-29th, 2010 at The Palazzo, Las Vegas, Nevada.

September 3, 2010

- Your employee survey summary report will be e-mailed to your firm.
- Advertising orders must be placed for the October issue of *Structural Engineering & Design*, which will report the final results. Additional information regarding magazine advertising will be supplied in early August.

September 28-29, 2010

- The Best Firms To Work For Summit and awards ceremony will be held at The Palazzo, Las Vegas, Nevada.
- Results of the 2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For ranking will be reported in *Structural Engineering & Design*.

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3. General Information

Please remember that *all* questions with an asterisk (*) are required, and the system will not let you advance to the next page without answers to these questions.

Questions should be answered considering your workplace right now, unless otherwise indicated. If the question states "in 2009", consider the 2009 calendar year (January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009). Financially-related questions specifically ask for you to consider your 2009 fiscal year. If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Nasznic at ZweigWhite, snasznic@zweigwhite.com or 1-508-651-1559 x3213.

- * 1. Please provide your firm's name, location, and web site. (*firms must be headquartered in the United States or Canada to be eligible*)

Firm name:

Firm headquarters city:

Firm headquarters state:

Firm web site:

- * 2. What percentage of your firm's 2009 fiscal year gross revenue was derived from the practice of architecture, interior design, or landscape architecture? (total across all three types of services)

Percentage of fiscal year gross revenue: %

- * 3. Was at least 34% of your firm's 2009 gross revenue derived from the practice of:

- Landscape design
- Interior design
- Neither

- * 4. What are your firm's areas of practice? (*e.g., commercial building design, residential, etc.*)

- * 5. Please list the city and state for each of your firm's branch offices (excluding the headquarters office): (*Write N/A if your firm has only one office.*)

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* 6. In what year was your firm established?

7. Did your firm receive any of the following awards in 2009? (*check all that apply; if your firm did not receive any awards, please leave blank*)

Design (e.g., AIA Housing Awards, Institute Honor Awards)

Non-design (e.g., The Zweig Letter Hot Firm List, Best Firms To Work For, ENR, SMPS Annual Marketing Award)

Other (*please specify*):

* 8. How many ...

full-time employees
does your firm
currently have? (*must
be at least 5 to be
eligible*)

architects, interior
designers, or
landscape architects
(total) does your firm
currently have? (*must
be at least 5 to be
eligible*)

* 9. Does your firm have a personnel/human resources (HR) department or any dedicated personnel/human resources staff?

No

Yes. *How many employees are dedicated to HR? (full-time equivalent)*

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* 10. Under what form of ownership is your firm organized?

Proprietorship

Partnership

LLC

Professional Corporation (PC)

Private Corporation (C-Corp)

Private Corporation (S-Corp)

Public Corporation (*please skip to #14*)

Other (*please specify*):

11. If privately held, how many owners does your firm currently have? (*not including ESOP owners*)

* 12. How many new owners did your firm add in 2009? (*not including ESOP owners*)

* 13. What activities are you doing to prepare for your firm's eventual ownership and/or leadership transition?

We have a formal ownership transition plan

We have a select group of professionals that receive leadership training

We have a select group of professionals who have been told they are being groomed for future leadership positions

We regularly update the stock value for our firm

We have an ESOP

We have identified key attributes of future owners and assess employees using them

We have a formal succession plan for top management

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* 14. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] What was your firm's...

2009 fiscal year gross revenue: \$

2009 fiscal year net service revenue: \$

(NSR: gross revenue minus subconsultant fees and reimbursable expenses)

* 15. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] Which of the following best describes your firm's growth or decline in gross revenue over the past three fiscal years?

Average annual growth of 30% or more

Average annual growth of 20% - 29%

Average annual growth of 10% - 19%

Average annual growth of 1% - 9%

Stable (unchanged for three years)

Average annual decline of 1% - 9%

Average annual decline of 10% or more

* 16. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] Which of the following best describes your firm's average annual net pre-tax, pre-bonus profit or loss (as a percentage of net service revenue) over the past three fiscal years?

25.0% or more average annual profit

20.0 - 24.9% average annual profit

15.0% - 19.9% average annual profit

10.0% - 14.9% average annual profit

5.0% - 9.9% average annual profit

4.9% or less average annual profit

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4. Culture

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* 17. Please summarize your firm's mission, vision, and/or core values:

* 18. Which of the following three words best describe your firm? **Please select only three.** If you select more than three choices, you will not receive credit for this question.

- Client focused
- Family atmosphere
- Flexible
- Team oriented/collaborative
- Entrepreneurial
- Caring/philanthropic/compassionate
- Supportive of individual desires
- High-tech
- Respectful
- Focused on integrity
- Full of pride
- Fun

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* 19. Using the scale below, please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
Our firm abides by its mission, vision, and/or core values.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Our firm has a non-discriminatory culture regarding age, gender, race, and religion.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Our firm is ethical in its business practices.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Our firm compensates staff fairly and equitably for the work they do.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Our firm distributes a fair share of profits to staff.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Our firm strives to improve.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
There is no reason (legal, ethical, or other) that would invalidate our firm's ability to be honored on the Best Firms To Work For ranking.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

20. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] If you disagree with any of the above statements, please explain.

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* 21. What does your firm do to ensure a diverse, nondiscriminatory culture?

- Specifically recruit women
- Specifically recruit minorities
- Offer a range of benefits that appeal to different people
- Hold diversity seminars
- Offer paid time off for religious holidays
- Other (*please specify*):

* 22. Does your firm offer any of the following work options?

- Flex time/flexible working hours for all staff
- Flex time/flexible working hours for select staff
- Telecommuting for all staff
- Telecommuting for select staff
- Job sharing for all staff
- Job sharing for select staff
- None of the above

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* 23. Describe how your firm was involved in supporting the architectural community in 2009. *(Benefits about professional association membership and licensure benefits are included in Professional Development and are not considered here.)*

The firm employed interns or co-op students working toward a professional degree related to your firm's field of practice.

The firm provided scholarships to temporarily employed students, including interns or co-ops, working toward a professional degree related to your firm's field of practice. *(Do not consider tuition reimbursement programs for permanent staff here, since that benefit is considered under Professional Development.)*

The firm provided scholarships to non-employee students working toward a related professional degree.

The firm supported staff in taking leadership positions for professional associations or committees, such as being an officer or committee chair. *(This includes providing time-off with pay (non-vacation or PTO) and financial support to uphold the responsibilities of the position.)*

The firm organized staff to mentor school children to promote math, science, architecture, and/or engineering (including, but not limited to, programs such as Future City, ACE Mentor Program, Girl/Boy Scouts).

The firm had one or more staff member serving as an adjunct professor at a college and/or university.

The firm encouraged staff to write white papers and articles, including providing administrative support for such activities. At least one employee with your firm must have had a white paper or article published in 2009. *(Bonuses for staff related to publication are included in the Benefits section).*

The firm encouraged staff to present technical papers at industry events. This includes providing administrative support in preparation and then time-off with pay (non-vacation or PTO) and financial support for at least one staff member to make a presentation in 2009.

The firm is currently involved with industry research (such as new materials, technologies, design methods, or client needs).

Other *(please specify):*

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* 24. Does your firm have any involvement in philanthropic or community services activities? If yes, how so?

- No involvement
- The firm organizes volunteer work/fund raisers/blood drives and encourages staff participation (*e.g., Corporate Challenge, Habitat for Humanity, river clean-up, tutoring*)
- The firm gives staff designated paid time off for volunteering
- The firm matches staff donations to charities
- The firm allows staff to use company resources for volunteer work (*e.g., phone, copier*)
- The firm donates to charities (*excluding match*)
- The firm does pro bono work for a charity or community organization
- Other (*please specify*):

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* 25. Does your firm provide any of the following company-sponsored social events?

- Breakfasts/lunches/snacks (*ice cream social, bagels for meetings, Friday lunch cookouts*)
- Happy hour
- Golf tournament
- Athletic events
- Holiday parties
- Family picnics
- Goal-oriented celebrations (*meeting project or company financial goals*)
- Company anniversary celebration
- Staff service celebration
- Entire staff corporate retreat
- Staff outings (*movies, bowling*)
- Staff and family outings (*theme parks, bowling, sporting events*)
- Annual meeting
- Baby/wedding showers
- Birthday celebrations
- Retiree parties/reunions
- Staff contests (*Halloween costumes, chili cook-offs*)
- Other (*please specify*):

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* 26. What are the characteristics of your firm's physical workspace(s)? *(If your firm has more than one office, consider the majority of offices when providing your responses.)*

- Clean
- Organized
- Well-maintained
- Located near major highway(s)
- Office has room to grow if staff size expands
- Workspace décor was decorated with consideration of employee input
- Employees may decorate individual workspaces *(art, lamps)*
- Employees may play music in their individual workspace
- Lounge/communal rooms with entertainment *(game tables, TVs, massage chair, reading nook)*
- Kitchen/cafeteria
- Lockers/showers
- Outdoor seating area/grill
- Lactation room (or established accommodations)
- Windows/natural light
- Ergonomic furniture and equipment
- Fresh air ventilation
- Other *(please specify):*

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* 27. What does your firm do to practice sustainability in your offices?

- Office spaces have ample windows/natural light
- Office(s) are located in "green" buildings (*including, but not limited to, LEED-certified buildings*)
- Office(s) interior incorporates "green" principles (*e.g., recycled materials, low-fume materials*)
- Office(s) location/site design incorporates "green" principles (*near public transportation, urban setting, renovated historic building, green stormwater management*)
- Paper recycling program
- Aluminum and plastic recycling program
- Energy-efficient appliances
- Supports/encourages staff to obtain education and/or registration for providing sustainable services to clients (*including, but not limited to, LEED Associate or LEED Fellow*)
- Has a sustainability or a green practices coordinator or committee
- Purchases renewable energy credits (*e.g., Green Tags*)
- Pays for renewable energy from power company
- Other (*please specify*):

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* 28. Does your firm offer any of the following feedback mechanisms for employees to share ideas about the firm?

- Anonymous suggestion box (physical or electronic)
- Employee satisfaction surveys (administered in-house)
- Employee satisfaction surveys (administered by an independent third party)
- Staff retreats (outside the office)
- Staff meetings (within the office)
- Face-to-face meetings with executives for all staff
- Open-door policy
- Exit interviews
- None of the above
- Other (please specify):

* 29. Does your firm develop a working strategic business plan (a written document outlining future performance goals and tactics of the firm, which is shared with all staff)?

No

Yes (please describe the process):

30. If your firm acquired or merged with another company in 2009, what steps is your firm taking to integrate the firm and help all employees feel comfortable with the new situation?

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* 31. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] Has your firm had any formal complaints regarding employee-related manners, such as wrongful termination or sexual harassment?

No

Yes (please specify):

* 32. Is your firm's revenue data shared firm-wide, with *all* employees? (*gross and/or net service revenue*)

No

Yes, annually

Yes, semi-annually

Yes, quarterly

Yes, monthly

Yes, other (please specify):

* 33. Is your firm's profit data shared firm-wide, with *all* employees? (*profit margin, EBITDA, and/or contribution*)

No

Yes, annually

Yes, semi-annually

Yes, quarterly

Yes, monthly

Yes, other (please specify):

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* 34. With whom is *project* financial data shared? (*project revenue, profits, fees, chargeability, etc.*)

All employees, firm-wide

All employees on the project team

Only the principal-in-charge and the project manager of the project team

Only the principal-in-charge of the project team

Other (*please specify*):

* 35. If your firm has conducted staff surveys or interviews, what is done with the feedback?

Have not conducted staff surveys or interviews

Analyzed for trends

Considered for strategic planning

Implemented recommended changes

Filed for review

Shared with management

Shared with all staff

Other (*please specify*):

* 36. Does your firm distribute to all staff a written procedure for handling employee grievances?

Yes

No

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* 37. How often does your firm typically replace computers? (*actual hardware for desktops/laptops*)

Every ____ months for
CADD staff

Every ____ months for
other
professional/technical
staff

Every ____ months for
project managers

Every ____ months for
other employees (HR,
marketing, finance,
etc.)

* 38. Does your firm have an established system or schedule for upgrading hardware and software?

No

Yes (*please explain*):

* 39. How does your firm provide information technology (IT) support to staff?

- Full- or part-time dedicated IT staff are on-site in all offices
- Full- or part-time dedicated IT staff are on-site in some offices
- Have personnel whose primary job function is not IT but who fulfills IT needs
- Phone support is provided to all employees
- An intranet or e-mail helpdesk is available to all employees
- Do not provide IT support

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5. Recruiting and Retention

Please remember that *all* questions with an asterisk (*) are required, and the system will not let you advance to the next page without answers to these questions.

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* 40. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] How many employees... *(do not include interns, co-op students, or contract staff)*

Were with your firm as of December 31, 2009?

Joined your firm in 2009?

Left your firm voluntarily in 2009?

Left your firm involuntarily or were fired for cause in 2009?

Were laid off in 2009?

* 41. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] How many *management* employees... *(including chief officers, managing partners, principals, associates, managers, and supervisors)*

Were with your firm as of December 31, 2009?

Joined your firm in 2009?

Left your firm voluntarily in 2009?

Left your firm involuntarily or were fired for cause in 2009?

Were laid off in 2009?

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* 42. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] How many *non-management* employees...
(including professional/technical staff and non-professional technical staff)

Were with your firm as
of December 31,
2009?

Joined your firm in
2009?

Left your firm
voluntarily in 2009?

Left your firm
involuntarily or were
fired for cause in
2009?

Were laid off in 2009?

* 43. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] Did your firm conduct layoffs in 2009?

Yes

No

44. If yes, did your firm provide severance pay?

No

Yes. What was the average number of weeks?

45. If yes, were any outplacement services provided?

Yes

No

46. If yes, did your firm provide continued company-paid health coverage to
laid off employees? (*not including COBRA*)

No

Yes. For how many months?

47. If your firm provided any other services to laid off employees, please
describe below.

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* 48. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] What were the top three causes for voluntary turnover in your firm in 2009? *(as determined by exit interviews or anecdotally, if your firm does not conduct exit interviews)*

- Commute time
- Employee moves to another geographical area
- Unmet compensation demands
- Personality conflicts
- Recognition/reputation of the firm
- Position was not challenging enough/perceived lack of opportunity
- Retirement from profession
- Long hours/too many demands from work
- Other *(please specify):*

* 49. What was the greatest source of new hires for your firm in 2009?

- Company web site
- Referrals/word of mouth
- Print advertising
- Internet advertising
- College recruitment (including alumni programs)
- Recruiter/employment agencies
- No new hires in 2009
- Other *(please specify):*

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* 50. Does your firm compensate current employees for referring candidates?

No (skip to #54)

Yes, if candidate is hired and stays employed for a set time

Yes, if candidate is hired (no stipulations)

Yes, if candidate is interviewed

Other (please specify):

51. If your firm compensates employees for referrals, how does your firm compensate employees for referring candidates?

Monetary reward that varies depending upon the position the candidate is suited for

Standard monetary reward for all positions

Non-monetary reward such as compensatory time off, etc.

Other (please specify):

52. If your firm compensates employees for referrals, when is the reward given?

At the time of hire

Three months after hire

Six months after hire

One year after hire

The reward is given in increments

Other (please specify):

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53. If your firm gives a monetary reward for referrals, what is the:

Minimum amount for non-management staff: \$

Maximum amount for non-management staff: \$

Minimum amount for management staff: \$

Maximum amount for management staff: \$

* 54. How many employees were promoted to a new position or title in 2009?

* 55. Among current employees, what is the median employee tenure? (*the median number of years each person has worked for your firm*)

Among management employees (number of years):

Among non-management employees (number of years):

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6. Performance Management and Recognition

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* 56. Which of the following actions can lead to employee recognition?

- Outstanding leadership skills
- Bringing in a large project or a new client
- Exceptional client service
- Getting published or speaking at an industry event
- Earning notoriety for a project
- Contribution to charitable organizations
- Extraordinary contributions to a project
- Working extra hours
- Contribution to professional organizations
- Team player attitude
- Technical excellence
- Other (*please specify*):

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* 57. What types of recognition for excellent work does your firm give its employees?

- Do not recognize individual work
- Cash/check (*separate from regular paycheck*)
- Extra vacation time
- Event tickets
- Gift certificates/gifts
- Personalized gifts
- Public announcement (*at meetings or in company newsletter*)
- Informal party
- Employee of the month designation
- Employee of the year designation
- Letter of appreciation/thanks from president/board
- Other (*please specify*):

* 58. Who chooses staff for recognition?

- Peers/employee vote
- Supervisor/manager/team leader
- Vice president/principal/corporate officer
- Clients
- Board of directors
- Recognition committee
- Other (*please specify*):

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* 59. Does your firm evaluate performance and communicate expectations for *all* employees on at least an annual basis?

Yes

No

60. If *management* employees are reviewed, are subordinates involved in the process (such as with a 360 degree review)?

Yes

No

61. If your firm reviews employees, are peers involved in the process (for managers and/or non-managers such as in a 360 degree review)?

Yes

No

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7. Compensation

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* 62. Does your firm benchmark your compensation structure against other firms to stay competitive?

No (*skip to #65*)

Yes, annually

Yes, every two years

Yes, every three to five years

Other (*please specify*):

63. What benchmarking methods has your firm used during the past three years?

We analyzed our compensation structure ourselves using various industry reports, salary surveys, etc.

We hired an outside consultant to benchmark our compensation structure

We participated in a peer review program that included benchmarking of our compensation program

Other (*please specify*):

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64. If your firm benchmarked its compensation structure within the past three years, how did it use the results?

- We *increased* compensation for *all* employees whose compensation was not on par with the ranges that were determined to be competitive
- We *increased* compensation for *select* employees whose compensation was not on par with the ranges that were determined to be competitive
- We *decreased* compensation for *select* employees whose compensation was not on par with the ranges that were determined to be competitive
- We *increased* compensation for employees in select geographical markets that were determined to have a higher cost of living and/or labor
- We *adjusted* compensation packages for new employees
- Other (*please specify*):

* 65. How often does your firm review individual employees' salaries? (*per employee- please do not write in "constantly" unless your firm reviews every employee's salary, every day*)

- Annually
- Every 6 months
- Every 3 months
- Other (*please specify*):

* 66. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] Did your firm administer pay cuts in 2009?

- No
- Yes (*please explain and let us know if the cuts were reimbursed*):

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* 67. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] Did your firm have a salary freeze (a policy of no raises or raises only under special circumstances) in 2009?

No

Yes (please explain and let us know if the freezes were lifted in 2009 or 2010)

* 68. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] What percentage of your firm's permanent staff received a salary increase/pay raise between January 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009?

%

* 69. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] What was your firm's median percentage increase in base salaries for permanent staff between January 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009?

%

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* 70. Did your firm offer any of the following bonus plans to full-time, permanent employees?

- Equity-based incentive plans (*compensation designed to emphasize the long-term success of the firm*)
- Holiday bonuses (*compensation tied to a date on the calendar, typically given out in December*)
- Performance bonuses (*compensation given to individual employees if pre-determined performance criteria or specified goals are met*)
- Profit sharing (*a percentage of pre-tax profits set aside for owners and/or employees regardless of individual performance*)
- Project bonuses (*compensation given to team members if pre-determined, individual, and/or team project goals are met*)
- Referral compensation (*compensation awarded to employees for recommending a candidate who is hired by the firm*)
- Retention bonuses (*unscheduled compensation primarily awarded to help firms hold on to key employees*)
- Sales commissions (*individual incentive pay tied to a sales goal and added directly into an employee's paycheck*)
- Service awards (*one-time gifts for dedicated years of service*)
- Signing bonuses (*compensation given to "key" hires as a means to recruit new talent*)
- Spot bonuses (*unscheduled, one-time, individual reward that goes above and beyond project bonuses*)
- None in 2009, but we typically offer some of the types of bonuses mentioned above
- None of the above

* 71. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] What percentage of your firm's staff (full-time, permanent, salaried) received a bonus in 2009? (*including all bonus plans listed in #70; write 0 if none*)

%

* 72. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] How much did your firm pay out in bonuses in 2009? (*including all bonus plans listed in #70; write 0 if nothing*)

\$

73. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] What was the overall median *performance* bonus amount in 2009 for:

Management employees: \$

Non-management employees: \$

2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey

74. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] What was the overall median *project* bonus amount in 2009 for:

Management employees: \$

Non-management employees: \$

75. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] What was the overall median *spot* bonus amount in 2009 for:

Management employees: \$

Non-management employees: \$

* 76. How does your firm compensate *permanent*, salaried (exempt) staff for overtime?

- Exempt employees do not work overtime
- Exempt employees work overtime but are not compensated for it
- Paid overtime for all exempt employees
- Paid overtime for *some* exempt employees
- Compensatory (comp) time off
- Overtime is considered in bonuses
- Other (*please specify*):

* 77. Does your firm have a 401(k) plan? If so, did it make any contributions to that plan for all permanent staff in fiscal year 2009?

- No, do not have a 401(k) plan
- Yes, have a 401(k) plan but firm did not make contributions in 2009, although we normally do contribute
- Yes, have a 401(k) plan but firm never or rarely makes contributions and did not in 2009
- Yes, have a 401(k) plan and firm matched a certain % of employee contributions to the plan
- Yes, have a 401(k) plan and firm contributed a set \$ amount to that plan
- Yes, have a 401(k) plan and firm made discretionary contributions to that plan as firm profits allowed

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* 78. Other than a 401(k) plan or bonus or profit-sharing plans, what other types of benefit plans are offered to permanent staff?

- None
- Pension plan
- Deferred compensation plan (DCP)
- Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP)
- SIMPLE IRA with employer contribution
- Stock option plan
- Phantom stock plan
- Other (*please specify*):

* 79. Are all permanent employees eligible for at least one type of retirement benefit plan offered by your firm?

Yes

No

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8. Benefits

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- * 80. How many hours per week must a part-time employee work to be eligible for all of the same benefits that full-time staff are eligible for?

hours:

- * 81. Including ALL paid time off (vacation, sick, and personal), what is the median (across the firm) number of days of paid time off employees earn/receive per year? (*excluding holidays/office closings and floating holidays*)

Median number of days of PTO per year, all employees:

Median number of days of PTO per year, management employees only:

Median number of days of PTO per year, entry-level employees only:

- * 82. How many days is your office closed for holidays? (*per year, please include floating holidays*)

- * 83. Does your firm treat vacation, sick leave, and personal days as separate categories or are they lumped together into one category for flexible paid time off (PTO)?

Vacation, sick leave, and personal days are separate categories

Vacation, sick leave, and personal days are lumped into one category for paid time off

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* 84. Are employees allowed to carry vacation time from one year to the next?

Yes

No

* 85. Does your firm pay for accrued, unused time off when an employee leaves the firm?

Yes, our firm is required to do so by law (see your state's Department of Labor web site for additional information)

Yes, our firm pays accrued, unused time off (but we are not required to do so by law)

No, our firm does not pay accrued, unused time off (we are not required to do so by law)

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* 86. What percentage of the premiums for health, dental, life, and/or disability insurance benefits does your firm pay?

Important notes, read before continuing!

- If your firm doesn't contribute toward the premium but does offer the insurance, write 0 for the percentage paid.
- Write N/A beside the types of insurance that are not offered by your firm for employees or their spouse/family.
- If your firm pays a different percentage for some employees (i.e., upper-level managers) than for most employees, indicate the percentage paid for most employees.
- If your firm offers more than one plan option and the percentage paid varies for the different plans, provide the highest percentage paid for the basic plan.
- Do not indicate a range for the percentage paid; if you do, the lowest number in the range will be used as your response because we will assume that this is the most common percentage paid.
- Every blank must have a response indicated for a complete entry.

Medical, % paid for employee:

Medical, % paid for family:

Dental, % paid for employee:

Dental, % paid for family:

Vision, % paid for employee:

Vision, % paid for family:

Life, amount times salary (i.e. 1x, 2x, etc.) paid for employee:

Short-term disability, % paid for employee:

Long-term disability, % paid for employee:

2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey

* 87. What is the current annual deductible *per employee per year* for your basic health insurance plan?

\$

88. Was your medical insurance deductible increased from plan year 2009 to 2010?

No

Yes (please state how much it went up)

* 89. Does your firm currently offer domestic partner benefits? (*benefits offered to non-married partners that are the same as those offered to an employee's spouse*)

Yes

No

If you are unfamiliar with the requirements of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), please review the [information provided by the U.S. Department of Labor](#) before continuing. (Opens in a new window.)

* 90. Is your firm subject to the requirements of the Family and Medical Leave Act?

Yes

No

* 91. Does your firm have an official, standard maternity leave policy?

Yes

No

2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey

* 92. Which of the following applies to employees taking maternity leave at your firm?

- Employees may apply disability insurance benefits to receive income during leave
- Employees may use paid time off, vacation, or sick leave
- Employees may take an unlimited amount of unpaid leave
- Employees may take a limited amount of unpaid leave
- Employees may take a limited amount of paid leave (firm pays 100% of employee's salary; not including PTO)
- Employees may take a limited amount of paid leave (firm pays ____% of employee's salary; not including PTO)

* 93. Does your firm have an official, standard paternity leave policy?

Yes

No

* 94. Which of the following applies to employees taking paternity leave at your firm?

- Employees may apply disability insurance benefits to receive income during leave
- Employees may use paid time off, vacation, or sick leave
- Employees may take an unlimited amount of unpaid leave
- Employees may take a limited amount of unpaid leave
- Employees may take a limited amount of paid leave (firm pays 100% of employee's salary; not including PTO)
- Employees may take a limited amount of paid leave (firm pays ____% of employee's salary; not including PTO)

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* 95. What other types of insurance benefits does your firm offer?

- Accidental death and dismemberment insurance
- Auto and/or home insurance discounts
- Cancer insurance
- Identity fraud expense insurance
- Travel insurance
- Life insurance for spouse or dependents
- Long-term care insurance
- Orthodontia insurance
- Professional liability insurance
- Supplemental disability insurance
- Pet medical insurance
- Other (*please specify*):

* 96. Does your firm offer employees any of the following?

- Flexible spending account (FSA)
- Health reimbursement arrangement (HRA)
- Health savings account (HSA)
- Medical savings account (MSA)
- None of the above

2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey

* 97. What types of health-related benefits does your firm offer?

- Co-payment reimbursement
- Naturopathic/chiropractic/massage therapy assistance
- On-site health club
- Discount or contribution for health club membership
- Wellness program, such as providing health snacks, flu shots, massages, or on-site yoga
- Weight management program dues (such as Weight Watchers)
- Employee assistance program (EAP)
- Prizes for achieving wellness goals (such as quitting smoking or losing weight)
- None of the above
- Other (*please specify*):

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* 98. What other types of benefits does your firm offer?

- Direct deposit of paycheck
- Company car or car allowance
- No-interest computer loans
- Flexible spending account for child care expenses
- Dry cleaning services
- Paid pet care during business travel
- Cash bonuses for technical presentations or published articles
- Company reserve investment account to supplement company income during slow times
- Project incentive agreements to reward exceptional performance and profitability
- Pre-tax commuter passes
- Relocation assistance
- Business casual dress code (except for important meetings)
- Business casual dress code on Fridays only
- Sports team sponsorship
- Company store or corporate logo apparel
- New baby or marriage gifts
- New employee welcome program (e.g., lunch coupons)
- Other (*please specify*):

2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey

* 99. Does your firm offer any of the following holiday gifts to employees?
(excluding annual or year-end bonus)

No, we do not offer any holiday gifts

Holiday party

Holiday cash gift

Holiday non-cash gift

Other (please specify):

* 100. On a case-by-case basis, does your firm allow staff to take leaves of absence or sabbaticals (extended time away from work, usually without pay)?

Yes

No

2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey

9. Professional Development

Please remember that *all* questions with an asterisk (*) are required, and the system will not let you advance to the next page without answers to these questions.

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* 101. Does your firm offer tuition reimbursement for *design/technical* courses-for-credit at a college, university, or technical school?

Yes, we offer FULL reimbursement for 100% of course fees, with no limit on the number of courses in a year or dollar amount spent in a year (may include grade restrictions)

Yes, we offer FULL reimbursement for 100% of course fees, with limitations on the number of courses or dollar amount spent in a year (may include grade restrictions)

Yes, we offer PARTIAL reimbursement (may include grade restrictions)

No, we don't offer tuition reimbursement, but we have in past years and we hope to again soon

No, we don't offer tuition reimbursement

* 102. Does your firm offer tuition reimbursement for *business (e.g., MBA)* courses-for-credit at a college, university, or technical school?

Yes, we offer FULL reimbursement for 100% of course fees, with no limit on the number of courses in a year or dollar amount spent in a year (may include grade restrictions)

Yes, we offer FULL reimbursement for 100% of course fees, with limitations on the number of courses or dollar amount spent in a year (may include grade restrictions)

Yes, we offer PARTIAL reimbursement (may include grade restrictions)

No, we don't offer tuition reimbursement, but we have in past years and we hope to again soon

No, we don't offer tuition reimbursement

2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey

103. Who is eligible for tuition reimbursement for courses-for-credit taken at a college, university, or technical school?

- All full-time employees
- Part-time employees
- Management employees
- Non-management professional/technical employees
- Non-management non-professional/technical employees
- Other (*please specify*):

104. When are employees eligible for tuition reimbursement?

After ___ months with
the firm (write 0 if
immediately):

* 105. Does your firm offer reimbursement for books/supplies for courses-for-credit?

Yes

No

* 106. How does your firm handle time off for courses-for-credit taken at a college, university, or technical school?

- Firm provides a set amount of paid time off per year for coursework
- Firm provides time off with pay to meet obligations
- Firm allows time off without pay to meet obligations
- Firm allows staff to use flex time, so that time missed for courses is made up
- Firm does not provide any time off for staff taking courses (vacation time or PTO must be used)
- Other (*please specify*):

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* 107. Does your firm have a formal mentoring or coaching program in which experienced staff are paired with new staff to help protégés gain skills and/or to assist with career development?

- No
- Yes, for all new employees
- Yes, for new professional/technical employees
- Yes, for new administrative employees
- Yes, other

* 108. Does your firm offer any of the following types of training?

- Do not offer any training
- Do not offer any training that has a cost, but we have in past years and we hope to again soon
- Offer in-house training by firm employees
- Offer in-house training by an outside consultant
- Offer online training system
- Offer reference books or materials for self-study
- Offer outside training seminars, conferences, or classes
- Offer executive coaching
- Offer a corporate university program
- Offer user groups or roundtable discussions (focused on employee training/development)

2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey

109. If your firm provides in-house training, what is the content?

- Licensing exam review
- Software training
- Business skills training (e.g., writing, project management)
- Technical skills training (e.g., design methodology)
- Vendor-sponsored product education
- Site safety training
- Other (please specify):

* 110. Who is eligible for firm-provided training?

- All employees
- All professional/technical employees
- Some professional/technical employees
- All administrative employees
- Some administrative employees
- N/A, firm does not provide any training

* 111. Does your firm have a training budget?

- Yes
- No, we don't have a budget, but we have in past years and we hope to again soon
- No

* 112. How much did your firm spend on training in fiscal year 2009 per employee? For this calculation, consider the total number of employees on the last day of your fiscal year. Also include the cost of outside consultants, training materials, and off-site training expenses; also include cost of in-house labor at straight salaries for the portion of time spent on training [for both the "trainers" and the "trainees"].

\$

2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey

113. In light of the current economy, what changes did your firm make regarding training and related spending? *(Note this question is not graded; it is for research purposes only.)*

We are doing more peer-to-peer training (mentoring, brown bag lunches, staff led software training, etc.)

We are encouraging no-fee or low cost training to earn CEUs like free webcasts, magazine offered PDH programs, local opportunities, etc., and limiting travel as much as possible

We reserve training that requires travel for leaders or future leaders only

Training is only supported if an employee asks and management approves it. We are very limited in what we spend right now

We decreased our budget/spending, but are still supporting training as much as we can

We increased our budget/spending to try to improve our staff's knowledge and skills while we are slow

* 114. Does your firm give individual employees their own budget for training/continuing education costs? *(management approval is assumed)*

Yes, for all employees

Yes, for professional/technical employees

Yes, for management employees

No, we don't give employees their own budget; requests are handled on a case-by-case basis

No, we don't give employees their own budget, but this was our protocol in the past and we will do it again when the economy improves

Other *(please specify):*

* 115. Does your firm pay for professional registration exams?

Yes, pay for preparatory classes

Yes, pay for the exam application/registration fee

Yes, provide paid leave for taking exams

No

2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey

* 116. Does your firm pay professional registration fees for employees?

Yes, for one state

Yes, for more than one state

No

* 117. Does your firm pay for professional society memberships for employees?

Yes, pay professional society annual membership dues

Yes, pay professional society meeting fees

No

2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey

10. Corporate Survey Wrap-up

Please remember that *all* questions with an asterisk (*) are required, and the system will not let you advance to the next page without answers to these questions.

Questions should be answered considering your workplace right now, unless otherwise indicated. If the question states "in 2009", consider the 2009 calendar year (January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009). Financially-related questions specifically ask for you to consider your 2009 fiscal year. If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Nasznic at ZweigWhite, snasznic@zweigwhite.com or 1-508-651-1559 x3213.

* 118. Please tell us why your firm should be honored among the Best Firms To Work For:

119. What, if any, are the top five improvements or changes your firm made in 2009?

Congratulations, you're almost done with the corporate survey!

All we need to do now is tie up a few loose ends...


2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey


- * 120. Please provide contact information for the person whom you would like to designate as the primary contact for your firm's Best Firm To Work For application.

Primary contact name:	<input type="text"/>
Primary contact title:	<input type="text"/>
Contact mailing address:	<input type="text"/>
Contact city:	<input type="text"/>
Contact state:	<input type="text"/>
Contact ZIP:	<input type="text"/>
Contact phone:	<input type="text"/>
Contact e-mail:	<input type="text"/>
President's name:	<input type="text"/>
President's e-mail:	<input type="text"/>
Marketing/BD contact:	<input type="text"/>
Marketing/BD's e-mail:	<input type="text"/>
Human Resources contact:	<input type="text"/>
Human Resources e-mail:	<input type="text"/>

- * 121. *(For research purposes only, does not count toward your final score.)* Do you feel that the Corporate Survey adequately covered the important issues that should be evaluated to assess the Best Firm To Work For? If not, what else do you think we should ask about?

- * 122. All firms applying for the 2010 Best Firm To Work For ranking will be charged a processing fee (\$200 if completed by March 5 and \$250 if completed after March 5). You may pay by credit card now or request an invoice.

 I'd like to pay by credit card now (please call Sarah Nasznic at 1-508-651-1559 x3213 after you have submitted this survey).

 I'd prefer to receive an invoice and pay by check or credit card later. Invoices must be paid by May 21, 2010 for firms to remain in contention for the 2010 Best Firm To Work For ranking.

2010 Best Architecture Firms To Work For: Corporate Survey

The next step is the employee survey. We will send a web link for the employee survey to the primary contact listed in #123. This e-mail will also include a code; please make sure that your employees include this code when they complete the employee survey (otherwise their responses will not count toward your firm).

If you have not received an e-mail regarding the employee survey within 3 business days of submitting the corporate survey, please contact Sarah Nasznic at ZweigWhite, snasznic@zweigwhite.com or 1-508-651-1559 x3213. Please also ensure that this e-mail address is added to your "safe list" in your e-mail application so that you will receive all necessary notifications.

The 2010 winners of the Stagnito Media Best Architecture Firm To Work For will be announced at the 2010 Best Firm To Work For Summit. Honorable mentions will also be recognized.

In addition to receiving consideration as one of the 2010 Best Architecture Firm To Work For, your firm's entry fee will also entitle you to a summary of your firm's employee survey results. This report will be distributed via e-mail to the primary contact by September 3, 2010.

ZweigWhite and Stagnito Media will not, under any circumstances, disclose the names of firms that apply but do not make the list of winners or honorable mentions. However, the data submitted by all firms will be used in a summary report that will be made available to all participants, as well as other ZweigWhite and Stagnito Media clients and customers. All data in this report will be presented in an aggregate format only; no one will be able identify your firm as a participant.

ZweigWhite and Stagnito Media may wish to report details of individual winning firms' entries. All survey data will be made available to publication editors for the purposes of editorial coverage, with the exception of those questions marked "NOT FOR PUBLICATION."

If you have any questions regarding the publication of data, we encourage you to contact Sarah Nasznic at ZweigWhite, snasznic@zweigwhite.com or 1-508-651-1559 x3213.