These outstanding organizations attract top technologists with robust salaries, great benefits and flexible, fast-paced work environments.
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ONLINE Check out videos, slideshows, an interactive map and a smart tool that helps you sort and filter the list of the Best Places to Work in IT.

NEWS ANALYSIS 4 3D printing makes on-demand manufacturing a reality – even in space. NASA, SAP and UPS are all on board.

DEPARTMENTS 60 Shark Tank
As 3D printing gains traction, it could open the door to on-demand manufacturing. Instead of being built in factories, products can now be generated by 3D printers anywhere in the world based on designs included in digital files.

That change could shake up industries and reshape supply chains — if engineers and designers entrenched in conventional manufacturing methods embrace the new paradigm.

“What we need in our design organizations is someone who doesn’t have those cultural biases [and instead says] ‘How do we build this with new technology?’” said John Vickers, principal technologist for NASA’s space technology mission directorate. Vickers participated in a panel discussion on digital manufacturing at this year’s RAPID Printing and Additive Manufacturing Conference in Orlando.

NASA has embraced 3D printing because the technology could save the agency time and money building parts for...
What the agency calls “in-space fabrication and repair.”

“We’re on a long-term journey to Mars at NASA,” he said. “So our goal for in-space manufacturing... is to not have to take all the supplies with us.”

NASA’s plan calls for transmitting stereolithography (STL) design files to spacecraft, where 3D printers will use them to create parts. And of course, that process not only works in space, but also here on Earth. STL files can be sent anywhere in the world, meaning products can be built anywhere there’s a 3D printer and an Internet connection. That means products can be built on demand, as orders come in, reducing the need to maintain inventories of parts or finished products.

**Other Advantages**

On-demand manufacturing isn’t the only advance enabled by 3D printing. The technology also makes it possible to embed sensors in parts as they’re built. Those sensors could provide feedback about how a product functions in the real world, and that feedback could then be used to improve quality of new products yet to be built.

General Electric, for instance, now tracks the engines it makes on the production line and while they’re in use to measure ongoing performance. That data, properly analyzed, can help boost quality, said Dean Bartles, chief manufacturing officer at the Digital Manufacturing & Design Innovation Institute (DMDII).

DMDII is a federally funded research and development organization of UI LABS that focuses on helping manufacturers deploy digital technology to improve processes.

Bartles, who was also at the RAPID conference, sees several emerging trends involving digital manufacturing, including the use of advanced analytics to determine whether it’s more efficient to produce a product or part via 3D printing or conventional methods.

“How strong does it have to be? How light? How cost-effective does it have to be? So
when you’re a designer trying to decide the best way to make the product, he can decide those things,” Bartles said. “It’s an emerging area. I don’t think anyone has a firm answer on how to do it right now.”

That uncertainty, however, didn’t stop UPS and SAP from unveiling plans to launch a distributed, on-demand manufacturing network using 3D printing systems that will be available through UPS Stores in more than 60 U.S. locations.

UPS will also offer 3D printed goods through its Fast Radius on-demand production platform and its 3D printing factory in Louisville, Ky.

Manufacturing for All

The 3D printing services will be available this summer, and it may be possible to complete and ship some orders in the same day, UPS said.

The new service integrates SAP’s extended supply chain software with UPS’s 3D printing machines and logistics network, enabling what UPS called “on-demand industrial manufacturing for companies of all sizes.”

The two companies expect their 3D printing service to appeal to several types of potential customers, including manufacturers that want to reduce their inventories of slow-moving parts, companies that need to build only a small number of products and can’t justify the cost of creating the molds and tooling used in traditional manufacturing, and industrial designers and engineers who want to build high-quality prototypes quickly.

With reports by Lucas Mearian.
These 100 employers keep tech pros happy with productive, rewarding work.

NO. 1 | LARGE
Quicken Loans
Among organizations with 5,000 or more U.S. employees
PLUS, LISTINGS FOR ALL LARGE ORGANIZATIONS

NO. 1 | MIDSIZE
Credit Acceptance
Among organizations with 1,001 to 4,999 U.S. employees
PLUS, LISTINGS FOR ALL MIDSIZE ORGANIZATIONS

NO. 1 | SMALL
Axxess
Among organizations with 1,000 U.S. employees or fewer
PLUS, LISTINGS FOR ALL SMALL ORGANIZATIONS
Jordan LaFramboise’s career track at Quicken Loans is far from typical, but it does say a lot about the depth and breadth of the online mortgage lender’s support for its IT employees.

LaFramboise first joined the Detroit-based company as a vendor analyst in 2003, when he was 29. But he soon quit after hearing a company-sponsored speaker talk about the importance of innovation and collaboration.

Innovation and collaboration are priorities here, allowing ambitious IT employees to sharpen their skills amid a strong sense of community and shared purpose.

Quicken Loans IT employees Bonnie Six, Dan Jones, Linglong He, DaShaun Huston, Mark Coolman, Kristina Kolbas and Josh Zook promote the company’s new Rocket Mortgage offering in a public art space adjacent to their Detroit office.
tance of following one’s passion.

A self-described creative type who sings and plays guitar, LaFramboise says the speaker inspired him to forgo his day job to tour with his rock band. His bosses and colleagues supported his decision, wished him well and told him he would be welcome back if he decided to return. “That moment in time is when I recognized that this place was everything it says it is,” LaFramboise says.

After taking the musical gig as far as he could, LaFramboise rejoined Quicken Loans in 2004. “I gave them a call and said I’d love to come back, and they said sure,” he recalls. Ever since, he has been able to channel his creative talents into IT projects.

LaFramboise came back first as a vendor analyst, then worked his way up, becoming a team leader, a senior vendor analyst, a credit analyst, a quality assurance analyst and a business consultant before transitioning to his current position as a senior innovation consultant.

In his current role, he advocates for and promotes innovation throughout the company. That includes organizing hackathons and leading Bullet Time, a weekly four-hour period when IT team members can work on projects of their own choosing. LaFramboise helps colleagues overcome any roadblocks their projects encounter — determining a project’s technology needs, identifying stakeholders and connecting colleagues working on related projects.

The position lets him stretch his creative muscles in an environment where others always have his back — not unlike playing in a band. “What resonates with me most is the willingness to invest in me. Every time it happens, it’s another piece that makes me feel good for being here,” LaFramboise says.

It’s that culture that employees say makes Quicken Loans a top-notch work environment, earning it the No. 1 spot among large organizations on Computerworld’s 2016 Best Places to Work in IT list. The mortgage lender has been on the list for 12 years in a row and is making its seventh appearance at No. 1.

Linglong He, who has been with Quicken Loans since 1996 and has served as its CIO for the past six years, says she aims to create a great work environment through a combination...
of strategic hiring, proactive management and formal programs designed to support and inspire tech employees at all levels — an approach that is particularly important because the IT team has nearly 1,400 members now and continues to grow.

“Culture drives who we are. You put people together and they feel they’re part of this family, this big team, regardless of what position they’re in,” He says.

Senior business intelligence engineer Jeff Zyla, 31, says he left a Defense Department job in California to return to his native Michigan for a job at Quicken Loans in 2012 because he saw how the company and its employees were effecting change through their work and their community involvement. “I felt like I could come back and have an impact,” says Zyla, who has become active in the company’s mentoring program.

Zyla says he also appreciates the opportunities he has to work with a variety of technologies and on projects that address a range of needs. It’s work that allows him to build skills and engage with others. “I’m learning something new every day from a different person on the team,” he says, noting that the intellectual sharing “happens all the time here. The open workspace and the games sitting around are like social lubricants; they get people talking.”

**Innovation Takes Center Stage**

Reminding team members how important their contributions are simplifies the job of attracting and retaining top technologists, according to He. “We are a mortgage company, but we treat Quicken Loans like a technology company,” she says. “That’s really important — our tech team feels great because they feel they can make an impact.”

As CIO, He has established several innovation programs designed to keep IT employees engaged. In addition to Bullet Time and an annual 24-hour hackathon, there’s a month-long competition called Why Wait?
in which IT team members collaborate in exercises involving a specific technology.

During one recent challenge, leadership gave IT team members a month to build something with LEDs. The IT staffers used the lights to create “presence indicators” that show when team members are on their phones or at their desks, or if they’ve received a high-priority email.

Quicken Loans also has a companywide event called Pitch Day, in which any employee can submit ideas that are then vetted by business leaders for their creativity, feasibility and potential business impact. Employees whose ideas are selected get a chance to pitch them to a panel of executives and managers — a presentation held in front of a live audience of a few hundred team members that’s also broadcast live to all 15,000 employees. The creators of the winning ideas are paired with project managers to move their concepts forward.

A People-First Culture

Employees agree that initiatives like those contribute to making Quicken Loans a stimulating place to work in IT, but they say what really sets the company apart is its continuing attention at all levels to building a culture where relationships matter and people come first.

“I work with people who are curious, who care about what they do every day,” says Bonnie Six, a 62-year-old senior vice president of IT compliance and servicing. Six joined Quicken Loans in 2001, attracted by the ability to work full time from her home in New Hampshire and by the company’s culture of camaraderie. “Everyone is always striving to be the best they can be and to help others around them to be the best they can be,” she says.

IT staffers repeatedly describe their work environment as a collaborative and supportive setting where individuals are encouraged to develop and share their ideas and where leadership is concerned about each team member. Everyone, from the executive level on down, often says “we” — and not “I” — when describing their daily jobs and day-to-day experiences.

“You’re not just a number, an employee on their spreadsheet. You’re a person here,” says Anne Pichini, 29, who left summer yoga sessions are held regularly at Campus Martius Park in the heart of downtown Detroit, just a short distance from the Quicken Loans headquarters.
a career teaching fourth grade and middle school math to become a training consultant with Quicken Loans’ TechU training program in June 2015. TechU oversees technical, business and soft skills training for IT professionals — including instructor-led classroom-style learning, online internal and external training, and a new program where newly hired IT employees shadow more experienced team members.

Pichini says she’s impressed by the company’s sense of community — how it treats employees to perks like ticket giveaways, how it sponsors formal and informal mentoring, and how it invests in the rejuvenation of the city of Detroit. She also likes how company leadership has supported her from the beginning — for example, by sending her to a well-known training conference in Denver just a few months after she joined the company.

As CIO, one way He brings IT employees together is by setting up virtual teams, which promote collaboration, caring and team member fulfillment in a variety of ways. There are currently eight such teams within IT, each made up of anywhere from a handful of members to upwards of 50 people who generally meet every two weeks to further their team’s particular mission or agenda.

The teams’ areas of focus aren’t necessarily strictly work-related. The IT Gives Back team, for example, organizes volunteer and community involvement events open to all IT employees. The IT Talent, Retention, Rewards and Career team (nicknamed Trac), works on establishing clear expectations and career growth options for each IT team member. Trac also identifies and creates resources that IT workers can use to develop their skills, and it helps shape the company’s rewards and recognition program.

The IT Communities team, meanwhile, supports upwards of 30 active internal IT communities where like-minded work-
ers can discuss and develop best practices around specific tech-based subjects or skills— .Net, JavaScript or jQuery, for example—or disciplines such as business analysis and project management.

Above all, He says her priority is to ensure that the IT team doesn’t lose that sense of camaraderie that employees at every level of the organization say they value.

“Team members are empowered when they feel more connected,” she says, adding that she aims to ensure that connections exist throughout the ranks by stressing the need for communication and transparency. IT leaders, including He herself, can be found mingling with workers during the day, asking people about their work, their families and their outside interests.

“It’s really about having those personal connections. It’s not just about being in the conference room talking about projects,” He explains. She says she strives to recruit people—for leadership positions and rank-and-file jobs alike—who share that philosophy.

Six says she too has that in mind when she interviews potential employees. “When we hire, we absolutely hire for culture. We want candidates who feel good about being part of the team,” she says. “We are looking for people who are flexible, who are willing to grow. We look for people who think it’s OK to question the status quo.”

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Among organizations with 5,000 or more U.S. employees

**1** Quicken Loans  
No. 3 for benefits / No. 3 for training / No. 8 for retention / No. 9 for career development  
This Detroit-based online mortgage lender empowers employees in multiple ways. For example, “Why Wait?” is a monthlong program in which IT staffers compete to create innovative systems with specific technologies. Employees may also spend up to four hours a week on projects of their choosing.

**2** USAA  
No. 10 for retention  
USAA employees feel a sense of purpose and report high levels of job satisfaction thanks to the San Antonio, Texas-based insurance company’s mission to serve military families. For several years, USAA has offered a career development program called VetFIT, in which 28 veterans participate in a 12-week Java training course followed by a 10-week internship.

**3** Genentech  
No. 1 for benefits  
Professional development initiatives at this South San Francisco biotech company include the Personal Excellence Program (PEP), a 10-month self-improvement course in which participants support one another as they strive to develop select skills and qualities. IT employees also can take part in volunteer projects and other events organized through Genentech’s Community Champions program.

**4** Owens Corning  
This Toledo, Ohio, manufacturer strives to create a dynamic environment that offers employees opportunities to grow professionally. An IT development program for college graduates includes an international trip with the CIO, and staffers have opportunities to collaborate with colleagues around the globe. Campus amenities include an on-site physician, a credit union and a market.
University of Notre Dame

No. 7 for training

This Indiana educational institution offers its IT employees competitive compensation, top-notch resources and advancement opportunities. IT staffers can take advantage of the unique benefits that come with working at a university, including tuition coverage for workers and their families, a beautiful campus and free or discounted tickets to shows and sports events.

University of Notre Dame IT employees (front row) Elleigh Dylewski, Caitlyn Faust and (back row) James Smith, Joan Huang, Martin Klubeck and Richard Nimtz.

Prudential Financial

No. 5 for benefits

IT employees at this Newark, N.J.-based life insurer enjoy a flexible, collaborative work environment where they deliver critical systems that support company growth. The company’s CIO hosts a career day and an employee appreciation day, and workers are encouraged to engage in efforts to promote science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education.

Kaiser Permanente

No. 2 for benefits

Tech professionals at this Oakland, Calif., health maintenance organization take pride in building, designing and maintaining systems that save and support lives. In 2015, the Kaiser IT department was recognized for its advanced use of electronic health records. The team also launched an integrated, enterprisewide video platform for remote doctor visits.

Sharp HealthCare

This San Diego group of healthcare facilities encourages tech staffers to share innovative ideas on topics ranging from improving their immediate work environment to supporting Sharp’s overall mission. The IT department’s Employee Action Team helps promote improvements to the employee experience. Awards programs recognize achievements monthly, quarterly and annually.

Cancer Treatment Centers of America

A spirit of collaboration and a shared dedication to the fight against cancer drive IT employees at this national network of hospitals with headquarters in Boca Raton, Fla. A recent revitalization initiative yielded a higher level of engagement and increased awareness of the contributions that all CTCA employees make to the mission of delivering quality healthcare.
10 Palmetto Health
In 2015, this Columbia, S.C., healthcare facility experienced strong growth, which generated challenging and meaningful work for tech staff. IT supported the integration of a large physician practice and a new 500-physician medical group. Tech workers are entitled to $5,000 in tuition reimbursement each year and have the opportunity to pursue an unlimited number of IT certifications.

11 HCA
IT professionals who work at this Nashville-based provider of healthcare services stay connected via the IT Healthcare Connection (ITHC) program, where techies are immersed in the hospital environment so they can see firsthand the powerful effect of their work. HCA has formal programs to celebrate IT staffers’ contributions and to give employees a chance to recognize their peers’ efforts.

12 Adventist Health System
This Altamonte Springs, Fla., healthcare organization supports its IT workers with training opportunities and tuition reimbursement. A new performance review model includes individual development plans to support professional growth. A state-of-the-art green headquarters offers a walking path and a cafeteria that serves healthy dishes.

13 ADP
No. 10 for benefits
This Roseland, N.J., provider of payroll processing and tax-filing services offers competitive compensation and a work environment that fosters performance and innovation. ADP also gives IT staffers opportunities to use their technical expertise to benefit national and local charities. Additionally, the company has multiple recognition programs that draw attention to employees’ accomplishments.

14 CDW
The IT organization at this Vernon Hills, Ill.-based provider of technology products and services features an entrepreneurial culture. CDW offers flexible working arrangements, peer-driven recognition programs and discounts on more than 100,000 technology products. Its 1Team program sponsors training sessions, student-mentor programs and team events.

ADP tech employees Alex Bryukhanova, Chintan Patel and (seated) Bernal Cartín and Kristen Knodel appreciate the company’s commitment to innovation.
Motorola Solutions
Schaumburg, Ill.-based Motorola Solutions sees its IT group as a catalyst in its effort to transform from a device company to an IT business—a shift that gives IT staffers opportunities to experiment with mobile, digital, cloud and big data applications. Unique projects for IT include moving the entire user base of 22,000 people to Google Apps in a single day.

18

Principal Financial Group
The IT department at this Des Moines-based financial services provider has adopted agile methodologies to fuel innovation and promote experimentation. The company is transforming its office environment to support that innovation ideology, creating spaces that enhance employee flexibility and mobility and optimize communication, collaboration and connectivity.

16

Jet Propulsion Laboratory
IT workers at this federal research organization in Pasadena, Calif., work on unique projects, such as an initiative to develop technology for a future mission to Jupiter’s moon Europa. These projects require IT staffers to innovate, which they do in a mobile and flexible environment designed to inspire creativity and foster a sense of professional satisfaction.

17

Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
Work/life balance is a priority at this pediatric medical facility. Wellness activities include bike rides and mural walks during the hospital’s Health Information Technology (HIT) week. CHOP is committed to career development, offering an internal training program, tuition reimbursement, stretch assignments and clear paths for professional growth.

19

PayPal
This San Jose-based online payments company offers its technology team opportunities to innovate in an environment that values professional growth, personal needs and fun. PayPal offers competitive compensation and benefits such as untracked paid time off, up to 16 weeks of maternity/bonding leave at 100% pay for new parents, paid time off for volunteer work and reimbursement for educational costs.

15

At PayPal, tech employees like Bimoo KC (front) and Shireesh Tunnuri (rear) are given the opportunity to work with cutting-edge technologies in a fun, supportive environment.
21 Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta
Tech employees at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta can use the organization’s individualized Professional Portfolio tool to help them assess their strengths and identify the areas in which they need improvement. They can also use the tool to showcase their expertise and accomplishments. The IT department has a wellness committee dedicated to planning events like obstacle course adventure walks and on-site yoga sessions.

20 Booz Allen Hamilton
This global consulting firm headquartered in McLean, Va., provides all IT team members with custom workspaces tailored to meet their individual needs. Those personal setups are augmented with advanced technologies and novel office arrangements such as hoteling and lounge areas. The firm offers telecommuting options and flexible schedules as well.

23 Erickson Living
This Baltimore-based developer and manager of continuing care retirement communities offers a wellness program called Take Charge of Your Well-Being, whose purpose is to give people tools that help them focus on their physical, mental, financial and social circumstances. The company also offers flexible work schedules, telecommuting options and an innovative, team-based environment.

22 Cedars-Sinai Health System
IT workers at this Los Angeles healthcare provider have a wealth of opportunities to learn new skills and further their careers. Cedars-Sinai encourages its tech staffers to attend conferences to network, gain expertise and deliver presentations showcasing their achievements, such as the implementation of highly integrated electronic health record systems.

24 DHL Express
Career development is a priority at this Plantation, Fla.-based transportation and logistics company. IT staffers set their own yearly development plans and get on-the-job training and opportunities to pursue certifications. They come up with innovative solutions to customer problems in a think-tank environment, and they have the opportunity to work on charitable projects.
**CA Technologies**

CA Technologies, a systems software developer headquartered in New York, offers its workforce opportunity, purpose and teamwork. Its diverse culture encourages colleagues to inspire and support one another. A large company, CA offers plenty of opportunities for people to grow. IT staffers may move across functions or businesses, and they can take advantage of comprehensive career development programs.

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**VMware**

This Palo Alto, Calif., provider of cloud and virtualization software and services promotes a culture of collaboration, honesty and service to the community. VMware encourages IT staffers to innovate and act as R&D pioneers. Employees may take up to 40 hours off per year to volunteer, and the company organizes wellness fairs, fitness events and weekly social gatherings.

**Applied Materials**

IT is central to the corporate mission of this Santa Clara, Calif.-based maker of semiconductor production equipment. Company leaders are committed to promoting from within: Management identifies employees who are likely candidates for future promotions and supports them by offering them challenges and opportunities that provide valuable experience.

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**Discover Financial Services**

The IT department at this Riverwoods, Ill.-based financial firm has an employee-centric culture that’s engaging, trusting and transparent. Staffers are encouraged to develop innovative products and meet with leaders to discuss the company’s future. Discover offers substantial paid time off, on-site fitness facilities, volunteer opportunities and a flexible work environment.

**Raytheon**

IT employees at this Waltham, Mass.-based aerospace and defense company work on building critical infrastructure such as air traffic radar systems and satellite communications equipment. Staffers collaborate around the globe on innovative projects, such as programming robots and working in 3D virtual environments, in a flexible, diverse and supportive atmosphere.
Cerner

Innovative health and wellness benefits are a hallmark of Kansas City, Mo.-based Cerner, which provides clinical and administrative IT systems to the healthcare industry. The company recently expanded its Healthe at Cerner wellness program to include on-site physical therapy and chiropractic care, a progressive maternity support program, and offerings designed to promote brain health and fitness.
31 SAS Institute
No. 9 for benefits
SAS, a business analytics and services provider based in Cary, N.C., creates exciting challenges for IT workers, who have opportunities to try OpenStack, responsive UI, Dev-Ops and agile development. Amenities include subsidized on-site day care, a free on-site healthcare center and pharmacy, a free fitness center, free breakfast on Fridays, free beverages and subsidized gourmet cafeterias.

32 Southern Co.
IT pros at this Atlanta-based energy company take on a range of challenging duties, from deploying smart grid technologies to supporting the first fully digital U.S. nuclear power facility. Southern Co.’s IT intellectual property program exceeded its goal of delivering $1.5 million in value in 2015, with employees generating more than 1,000 innovative ideas that resulted in about 100 patent filings.

33 Ascension
This St. Louis-based healthcare system strives to support training and innovation among the technologists who work in its Ascension Information Systems (AIS) operation. In 2015, the organization increased its annual educational reimbursement stipend from $3,500 to $5,250 per employee. Additionally, Ascension has numerous e-learning offerings, including live webinars and online certification study guides.

34 Humana
This health insurance company in Louisville, Ky., organizes a three-day event called “Cultivating My Career” that gives employees a chance to learn about career-enhancing topics. Other programs include on-site training sessions, networking groups that create opportunities to connect with colleagues and give back to the community, and wellness programs that offer monetary incentives.

35 FedEx
Challenging IT professionals to find ways to use the latest technologies is a core principle at FedEx, a Memphis-based shipping services company. To inspire people to innovate, the company offers growth and learning initiatives designed to help its team of more than 4,000 IT employees stay up to date on emerging technologies and work across functions.
Nationwide

To ensure that its IT workers are prepared to further their careers, this insurance company in Columbus, Ohio, holds learning and innovation events, sponsors hackathons that bring cross-functional teams together, and provides peer-led educational sessions. Nationwide also offers mentoring and tuition reimbursement, and it has expanded its recruiting program in an effort to build a diverse workforce.
37 **International Paper**

At this Memphis-based global manufacturing company, the IT Innovation Council encourages every tech staffer to think creatively and challenge the status quo. The council provides a mechanism for submitting ideas, and it secures funding to support development and implementation of the top ideas. International Paper also offers employee recognition programs, employee-initiated clubs and social outings.

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38 **RSM (formerly McGladrey)**

This Chicago-based provider of audit, tax and consulting services focuses on hiring the right people and giving them the tools they need to work creatively. Clearly defined teams make it easy for staffers to map their career paths, and RSM is committed to promoting from within. This approach enables IT pros to become highly trained in in-demand fields.

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40 **Navy Federal Credit Union**

The IT team is playing a key role in this Vienna, Va.-based financial institution’s expansion plans. A dedicated IT training and development manager uses integrated talent acquisition and development processes to boost culture and engagement, and an organizational change management team helps develop detailed plans to build the tech department.

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39 **Johns Hopkins Medicine**

IT employees have opportunities to work in multiple technology disciplines at this Baltimore healthcare organization. That allows them to develop a range of skills while contributing to the mission of a world-class institution. Johns Hopkins offers generous paid leave and supports volunteerism — in 2015, employees participated in efforts to feed the hungry and mentor low-income young adults.

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41 **CSX**

This Jacksonville, Fla.-based rail freight transportation company offers tech employees a career path program that highlights new opportunities, provides additional levels of growth and encourages upward movement within IT and other departments. A Business Leadership Program promotes core management skills via mentoring, training and employee recognition and award events.
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facebook.com/hcaits

BNSF Railway

No. 4 for career development

This Fort Worth, Texas, freight transportation company offers competitive compensation and on-site day care. The company’s headquarters features a fitness center, a walking path and a large corporate art collection. To support IT career development, BNSF offers challenging assignments, training programs, tuition reimbursement and mentoring.
PPG Industries
No. 3 for career development
Pittsburgh-based PPG, a global supplier of paints, coatings and other materials, has an IT strategic funding program designed to encourage tech employees to explore opportunities and test and develop innovative solutions for their businesses or functions. A global mentoring program connects some 160 IT supervisors and tech professionals with mentors and mentees from different continents, business areas and/or IT functions, allowing them to collaborate for mutual career enrichment.

Pricewaterhouse-Coopers
No. 6 for benefits
This New York accounting firm has set up a real-time recognition tool that employees can use to applaud noteworthy individual or team performances in areas such as leading by example, delivering quality, championing flexibility and building relationships. Since the program launched in 2014, employees have used the tool to send 109,000 messages – 81,000 of which included monetary awards. PwC offers a highly competitive benefits package and makes ongoing development a priority.

The MITRE Corporation is looking for two SENIOR SYSTEMS ENGINEERS with Oracle Identity Management Suite experience. Other positions are available in software application engineering, IT, and analytic computing.

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A GREAT BIG THANK YOU.
Here’s to the associates of Nationwide IT who make this a great place to work. Your passion for innovation and technology makes a real difference for our members, our partners, and the communities we live in and serve. Thanks for everything you do.
**45 Kroger**

The technology team at this Cincinnati-based grocery store chain aims to deliver innovative tools to both internal users and customers. Recent developments include an online grocery shopping service, mobile apps for shopping lists and store maps, and a service offering personalized digital coupons. Kroger’s IT department holds hackathons and hosts meetups where employees discuss new technologies.

Our IT professionals make it possible for us to deliver exceptional pediatric care every day by developing the latest in healthcare technology. Computerworld recently named Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta one of 2016’s “Best Places to Work in IT” because we are focused on driving innovation in healthcare.

At Children’s, a career in IT is as rewarding as it is challenging. If you would like to join our growing, award-winning team, visit choa.org/itjobs.
46 Intermountain Healthcare
At this Salt Lake City healthcare system, IT employees have the latitude to be creative in finding new approaches to solving problems. The Intermountain Innovations program encourages staff to explore ways to help deliver better, more efficient patient-centric care. Employees also enjoy a strong benefits package, which includes education assistance programs.

48 Vanguard
The IT crew at this Wayne, Pa.-based financial services company recently delivered new mobile apps to help the company’s workforce be more flexible and mobile. Vanguard offers a variety of career development initiatives and has a policy of promoting from within. The office environment features state-of-the-art technology designed to promote collaboration, flexibility and creativity.

47 AT&T
All IT employees at this telecommunications provider, headquartered in Dallas, know what specific skills they will be expected to develop as their roles evolve. A learning portal shows people the curricula required to obtain needed skills and allows individuals to develop personalized training plans. Using this system, AT&T IT employees completed 760,000 hours of training in 2015.

50 Mitre
This Bedford, Mass.-based not-for-profit, which operates multiple federally funded R&D centers, offers its IT employees opportunities to work on critical challenges in areas such as defense, healthcare and cybersecurity. Mitre offers an above-average compensation package that includes a generous retirement plan. Other perks include flexible work schedules and telecommuting opportunities.

49 Aflac
This Columbus, Ga.-based insurance company is committed to developing a diverse, well-prepared IT talent pool. An IT apprenticeship program helps recent college graduates gain the experience needed to become capable IT professionals. Aflac makes an effort to recruit women and has a diversity council that offers networking opportunities and supports employees’ personal and professional development.
For the eighth year in a row, Cedars-Sinai has been recognized as a great place for IT professionals to grow their careers.

Our Enterprise Information Services (EIS) team is focused on implementing leading-edge technologies and innovative solutions to transform how clinicians deliver patient care in a fast-paced healthcare setting. We’ve implemented a comprehensive medical record system across our entire network — more than 90% of our physicians place electronic orders, 100% of our nurses document online and greater than 95% of medications are barcode-scanned at the bedside.

But this is just the start. We require an elite team of IT professionals to continue taking us to the next level. And that’s where you step in.

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**WHAT ASPECTS OF YOUR JOB ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?**

- Being fairly compensated for the work I do: 96%
- Working in an enjoyable environment: 96%
- Having the means and opportunity to further my career: 93%
- Having access to training and opportunities that further my skills: 92%
- Working in a challenging environment: 88%

**RATE YOUR BENEFITS**

Percentage of respondents who were very satisfied or satisfied with the following:

- Paid time off: 89%
- Work/life balance: 85%
- Base salary: 77%
- Tuition/certification reimbursement: 49%
- Child care: 16%

**RATE YOUR IT DEPARTMENT MORALE**

- Very good: 38%
- Good: 18%
- Fair: 8%
- Poor: 4%

**WHAT BENEFITS MEAN THE MOST?**

- Health insurance: 79%
- Paid time off: 79%
- Profit-sharing/employee stock ownership program/401(k)/403(b) plan: 70%
- Flexible hours: 67%
- Bonuses: 65%
Recent college grad Lauren Delisle interviewed at Credit Acceptance two years ago at the suggestion of a friend, with little expectation of leaving her job in product support. But once the interviewer started talking about the company’s PRIDE values and its “Big Hairy Audacious Goals” — to hit a stock price of $1,000 per share, to sell 1 million auto loans and to be a top 10 place

Credit Acceptance

A collaborative, high-performance culture that values employees’ opinions keeps technologists engaged as they move up the ranks. 

Credit Acceptance IT employees, shown here outside of the company’s Detroit-area headquarters, appreciate a culture where their input is sought out. “We listen to employees and try to remove any roadblocks so they can succeed,” says CIO John Soave.
to work — Delisle knew she had stumbled upon an organization with a serious plan for growth.

Instead of a cutthroat and competitive environment, however, Delisle found the Credit Acceptance culture to be casual and collaborative. After the company security guard gave her a friendly shout out by name when she returned for a second interview, Delisle, now 25, was convinced she had found a match.

“I liked that everyone in the company is chasing after a shared goal — it didn’t seem like your average work environment where everyone works 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is done,” says Delisle, who was promoted from the IT help desk to a business intelligence analyst position after a little more than a year. “Everyone comes together and works together regardless of their skill level.”

That collaborative spirit is just one of the attributes that helped the 1,500-person Southfield, Mich., auto financing company claim the honor of being the No. 1 midsize employer on Computerworld’s Best Places to Work in IT list for the second year in a row. Unlike other companies that pay lip service to creating a high-performance, team-based atmosphere, Credit Acceptance is the real deal, according to IT managers and employees, who cite the company’s efforts to foster a listening culture in which people endeavor to be positive, respectful, insightful, direct and earnest — and thereby uphold Credit Acceptance’s five core values, as embodied in the acronym PRIDE.

“Every company strives to be a meritocracy, but a lot of things can get in the way — some personal and some political,” says CIO John Soave. “Credit Acceptance is a place where performance is recognized and people are given opportunity. We listen to employees and try to remove any roadblocks so they can succeed.” A 13-year veteran of Credit Acceptance, Soave is one of the employees who was given an opportunity to succeed. He came up through the analytics and sales ranks and now, as CIO for the past three years, manages a $31 million budget and oversees a growing IT team that is currently made up of 175 people.

For Dragon Stevanovic, lead enterprise business systems database administrator, a six-
month contract assignment turned into a permanent job 15 years ago, and he has never looked back. The opportunity to take part in sophisticated data reporting projects and work with the latest tools — most notably, Oracle Database 12c, Oracle’s E-Business Suite release 12 and VMware — make the job interesting and keep his engagement level high. “I feel comfortably challenged here. I work on great projects with great technology and great people,” says Stevanovic, 51. “I don’t see myself leaving.”

‘The Google of Subprime Auto Financing’

Promoting participation in employee-run committees is one way Credit Acceptance fosters a grassroots culture and embraces its PRIDE values, according to Kelli Gilpin, who came on board a few months ago as the company’s first employee engagement manager. Those committees include the Great Place to Work committee, whose members try to come up with ideas for further improving the company’s work environment, and groups that promote health and wellness, organize social events and community service initiatives, and pursue a wide range of other interests and issues.

Kristopher Brosnihan, who joined Credit Acceptance six months ago and whose wife also works at the company, says his new employer offers a winning combination of a laid-back atmosphere and a team-based
culture. Nerf gun fights, March Madness basketball shoot-outs, and decked-out cubicles with giant blow-up palm trees provide a nice counterbalance to the serious side of deploying technology. “It’s like we’re the Google of subprime auto financing,” says Brosnihan, 32, a business analyst for the IT department’s sales experience team. “We’re here to do serious work, but there’s still a fun aspect.”

While the committees tackle their share of lighter causes — championing perks like gym memberships and free high-bandwidth Wi-Fi for streaming media in the office — they also take on serious projects like food drives and other charitable efforts. One group recently sponsored a water drive to help the citizens of nearby Flint, Mich., where high levels of lead have been found in the public water supply.

But it takes more than an enjoyable atmosphere and a commitment to the community to make a company one of the Best Places to Work in IT. For many people, a solid benefits package is a priority when it comes to evaluating prospective employers, and Credit Acceptance succeeds on that score, offering perks such as a 401(k) matching contribution, 19 days of paid time off during the first year of employment, college tuition reimbursement, profit-sharing and merit bonuses, and benefits for parents who are adopting children.

**Employee Opinions Matter**

Ensuring that employees have a voice in everything from potential benefits programs and community service projects to new business initiatives is one of the principles ingrained in the Credit Acceptance culture. In fact, the PRIDE values themselves were born out of feedback from employees who were asked what kind of team members they’d like to work with, rather than a mandate from the C-suite. “Whenever something is driven from the bottom up versus a leader telling you what to believe or how to act, it creates a different vibe,” Gilpin says. “People organically buy into PRIDE because it came from them.”

A lot of the feedback comes from companywide surveys and town hall meetings. Once a quarter, all employees are asked for ideas on how to improve the
work environment. CEO Brett Roberts addresses each submission in writing in advance of a town hall meeting where employees get to vote on which ideas should get top priority. Executives are held accountable for explaining why an issue or suggestion will or will not be acted upon.

In IT, new team members are asked about their recruiting experience and onboarding process. And IT regularly canvases users throughout the company to get feedback on its performance and suggestions for improvements.

Heres’ an example of how the process works: Over the course of several town hall meetings, IT employees voiced a desire for more business training and career development opportunities. Management responded by setting up a series of presentations by business leaders and providing access to a variety of outside leadership training programs, Soave says.

In another case, a question about whether IT management was delegating adequately gained enough consensus that changes were eventually made, including establishing committees and presentation forums to make it easier for junior team members to participate in decision-making. “In most companies, managers are the masters of the domain and give employees direction,” says Darryl Beck, 40, manager of enterprise shared services, who joined Credit Acceptance about a year ago, after spending 12 years as an IT consultant working on-site at many companies. “Here, the team has ownership, and management is very open to new ideas.”

Performance evaluations, done twice annually, are viewed as an exercise in listening and a way to help employees reach their goals. Delisle experienced the collaborative nature of the Credit Acceptance performance evaluation process shortly after her first one-on-one meeting with a new supervisor, where she mentioned her desire to be promoted within a year. The supervisor responded by letting her know about big projects that could win recognition, and the cooperative approach paid off. “It was like a team effort,” Delisle says. “I could tell he was giving me a push to help me go get my goals.”

Inspiration and Recognition
Credit Acceptance’s regular town hall meetings also serve as a forum for recognizing employees who go the extra mile, both in their work and in demonstrating the company’s PRIDE values.

Brandon Brubaker, 31, a business analyst on IT’s sales experience team who’s been with Credit Acceptance for four and a half years, received a PRIDE award last September for his...
work as part of a team that created a mobile app for the sales department. Aware of the need to get the app up and running quickly, Brubaker and several colleagues worked together to provide user support for it, including hosting daily webinars to make sure everyone was sufficiently trained prior to the formal launch.

“It’s gratifying to know the level of work you do is recognized at a high level, not just within the department, but companywide,” says Brubaker. “Your peers know you are working hard for a common goal, and it gets everyone on the same page as to how you want to do things and treat customers.”

As part of an initiative called Workplace Heroes, the company likewise uses town hall meetings to call attention to employees who inspire, like Hong Fu. A senior developer on Credit Acceptance’s loan servicing systems team, Fu grew up in China during the 1960s Cultural Revolution, eventually working her way into a top-tier U.S. engineering program and a successful career in IT.

Rael Mussell, 40, vice president of IT support, takes Credit Acceptance’s commitment to its people very personally. A couple of years ago, Mussell’s wife got sick, and when he told his boss, he was encouraged to take all the time off he needed. “I didn’t come back to work for two months, and they didn’t skip a beat,” he says. “Everyone just kept asking how my wife was doing—that’s just the culture we have.”

STACKPOLE, a frequent Computerworld contributor, has been writing about technology for more than 20 years.
3 CareerBuilder
Innovation is a watchword at CareerBuilder, a Chicago-based provider of recruitment software and services. Engineers solve interesting business problems using big data, mobile and cloud technologies. Employees enjoy competitive benefits and compensation, reimbursement for training costs, special summer schedules, a casual dress code, telework options and team outings and retreats.

4 Miami Children’s Health System
Tech pros at this provider of pediatric medical care in South Florida feel empowered by the variety of tasks and projects they’re offered. Employees use cutting-edge technologies and have access to senior managers who are engaged and exacting. MCHS encourages employees to manage their schedules to accommodate their personal needs.

2 Halifax Health
No. 2 for career development / No. 5 for retention / No. 6 for training
Staff well-being is a priority at this Daytona Beach, Fla., healthcare provider, where team members are offered free health assessments, free gym memberships, wellness classes and a weekly health food marketplace. A reorientation program called Cornerstone helps IT employees connect their jobs to Halifax’s overall mission.
5 **Autodesk**  
No. 3 for career development / No. 4 for benefits  
Employees at this San Rafael, Calif.-based maker of CAD software are welcome to innovate at the Autodesk Pier 9 Workshop, a 12,000-square-foot facility featuring state-of-the-art tech tools. Perks include a wellness reimbursement, flexible schedules, telecommuting and, in some locations, treadmill desks and dog-friendly offices.

6 **FINRA (Financial Industry Regulatory Authority)**  
No. 7 for benefits  
This Rockville, Md., nongovernmental regulator of securities firms offers a robust parental leave benefit, pays up to $5,000 per child for adoption-related expenses and funds emergency backup elder and child care. FINRA also allows employees to take two paid days off per year to do volunteer work.

7 **CHG Healthcare Services**  
The collaborative environment at this Salt Lake City healthcare facilities staffing firm creates opportunities for IT employees to contribute to their employer’s mission of “putting people first.” Perks include flexible schedules, a casual dress code, paid time off for volunteer work and an annual employee appreciation week with catered lunches and team parties.

8 **Avanade**  
No. 9 for training  
IT pros at this Microsoft-centric consultancy and services provider work on global deployments of new systems. An award-winning training program offers an extensive lineup of classroom, online and hands-on courses, and the Seattle-based company pays for all tech certifications. Avanade offers employees $2,000 per year toward goods and services that support work/life balance.

9 **Akamai**  
Career development is a priority at Akamai, a Cambridge, Mass.-based provider of cloud computing and content delivery services. Frequent promotions and a wealth of training opportunities help people grow, and video games, Ping-Pong, foosball, free snacks and Pi Day celebrations keep them happy. Employees can work remotely and take time off as needed, thanks to an unlimited vacation policy.
10 Informatica
Technologists at this Redwood City, Calif., provider of enterprise data-integration software get to work with cutting-edge tools in data management, data integration, data quality and data security. Benefits include unlimited personal time off for most U.S. employees. A program called Informatica Involved helps employees engage in various charitable and community events.

11 Lafayette General Health
Career development is a priority at this southwestern Louisiana healthcare organization, where every IT employee meets with a senior leader to discuss career plans and skills development. Employees grow professionally by taking classes, attending conferences and taking the helm of innovative projects with the guidance of senior leadership.

12 RSA
RSA, the Bedford, Mass.-based security division of EMC, offers employees competitive salaries and bonuses, world-class benefits and challenging growth and development opportunities. Amenities include fitness centers, game rooms, cafeterias and break rooms stocked with snacks. A community giveback program allows employees to take up to 24 hours per year to volunteer.

13 Cars.com
IT employees at Cars.com often lead the decision-making process when it comes to determining which technologies to adopt and deploy. The Chicago company recognizes employee achievements and awards spot bonuses to staffers who share their expertise with the public via speaking engagements. Other perks include happy hours, video games, table tennis, company parties, gym discounts, and flexible scheduling and telework options.

14 Baird
A strong corporate culture built around respect and teamwork guides employees at this Milwaukee-based wealth management, capital markets and private equity firm. Senior leaders, aware of the critical role technology plays in Baird’s success, regularly meet with the IT team. Monthly cultural events, celebrations and volunteer outings make for a collaborative work environment.
15 DriveTime Automotive Group
No. 8 for career development
IT is at the heart of everything this used car retailer and financing company does — nearly 50% of the employees in its Tempe, Ariz., home office are IT employees. A rich and innovative tech environment offers lucrative IT career paths. In the past year alone, 34% of DriveTime’s IT employees were promoted.

18 Enova International
This Chicago-based global provider of financial services awards its Enovator of the Year prize to an outstanding technologist, and its Spotlight program lets IT staffers recognize co-workers’ achievements. Perks include a 24/7 snack kitchen, free meals delivered to those working late, summer hours, tuition reimbursement and after-hours rides home.

17 Securian Financial Group
Two key employee groups help IT staffers stay engaged at this St. Paul, Minn.-based financial services and insurance company. The ASSET group encourages people to participate in charitable activities and social events like IT Goodie Day. And the Inspiring Women in Technology group offers support to women in technical roles and hosts coding days for girls.

19 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina
No. 8 for benefits
IT employees at this Durham, N.C., nonprofit health insurance provider have access to multiple training opportunities through a program called Blue University. An initiative called PitchIT gives IT employees a chance to pitch ideas to improve quality and agility, reduce waste and increase value.

16 AARP
IT employees at this Washington-based advocacy organization for people aged 50 and over know their work is valued, thanks to regular open forums with leadership, informal lunches with the CIO and a peer recognition and rewards program. AARP has a robust tuition assistance plan for all employees, and the IT department has its own formal professional development program.

The AARP IT team includes (front row) Fatima Abugideiri and Sharron West, and (back row) Brian Mannle, Kush Singh, Beth McAvoy and Marcus Wood.
20 Mphasis

Outstanding employee performance is the hallmark of this New York-based U.S. subsidiary of Mphasis Ltd., an IT service management company with headquarters in Bangalore, India. The firm is committed to building and sustaining personnel practices that add value to both the organization and the individual. Its Integrated Leadership Development program identifies employees who are ready to take on larger and more influential roles. Mphasis also has a robust rewards and recognition framework to acknowledge and celebrate IT achievements at all levels.

21 ARI

No. 10 for training

IT innovation is a priority at this Mount Laurel, N.J.-based fleet management services company, which devotes 25% of its annual operating budget to IT research and development. In addition to its comprehensive in-house employee development program, called ARI University, a tuition reimbursement program covers 100% of the cost of external education and training. A peer-recognition program with a Facebook-like social interface allows employees to recognize and reward their colleagues for jobs well done.

Miami Children’s Health System has recently been named by Computerworld as one of the “100 Best Places to Work in IT” for 2015. Our team is committed to molding the future of healthcare by innovating to meet the evolving needs of patients, providers, and other healthcare organizations. Transformation starts here.

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EMPLOYERS BY THE NUMBERS

PAID TIME OFF

19 days of paid time off are provided after one year of service, on average.
27 days of paid time off are provided after 10 years of service, on average.
* Vacation, sick and personal days, excluding holidays

TOP 5 COMPENSATION BENEFITS
Percentage of organizations that offer the following benefits:

- 401(k)/403(b) plan 100%
- Employee referral bonus program 89%
- Individual employee performance bonuses 88%
- Overtime pay 80%
- Profit-sharing or employee stock ownership program 48%

COMPENSATION
90% of organizations have budgeted for salary increases for IT employees in 2016.
84% have budgeted for bonuses for IT employees in 2016.
3.4% Average budgeted salary increase for IT employees (among companies that provided a response).

AVG WORKWEEK

Percentage of organizations where the average workweek is...

- 35-40 hours: 33%
- 45-50 hours: 8%
- 41-45 hours: 59%

WHERE THEY ARE
Percentage of organizations in the following regions:

- South Atlantic 31%
- North Central 25%
- Pacific 14%
- Mid-Atlantic 12%
- South Central 9%
- New England 6%
- Mountain 3%

SOURCES: COMPUTERWORLD’S 2016 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT SURVEY

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### EMPLOYERS BY THE NUMBERS

**WHAT THEY DO**

Percentage of organizations in the following industries:

- IT services/consulting: 31%
- Health/medical services: 15%
- Finance: 12%
- Insurance: 5%
- Manufacturing: 4%
- Transportation and logistics: 4%
- Automotive: 3%

[All other industries: 26%]

**STAFFING**

- Average IT staff turnover rate, the latest fiscal year: 9.6%
- Average percentage of IT staffers promoted, the latest fiscal year: 11.7%

**COMMUNICATION**

Percentage of organizations that do the following:

- Offer IT staffers formal mentoring programs: 73%
- Survey IT staffers about job satisfaction once a year: 54%
- Survey IT staffers about job satisfaction more than once a year: 30%

**TRAINING**

- Average number of training days for each IT employee in the latest fiscal year: 7
- Average cost per IT employee for all training in the latest fiscal year: $1,884
- Percentage of organizations that said their training budgets per employee will increase in 2017: 59%

**STAFFING FORECAST**

Percentage of organizations that expect the size of their U.S.-based IT staffs to do the following in 2017:

- Remain the same: 32%
- Increase: 65%
- Decrease: 2%
- Don’t know: 1%

**SOURCE:** COMPUTERWORLD’S 2016 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT SURVEY

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Josh Baker, an IT support engineer at Dallas-based Axxess, doesn’t work directly on the cloud-based software systems his company develops for the home health-care industry. His focus is internal IT support. Yet Baker, 38, knows the products his company sells inside and out. “We all know what we sell,” Baker says, referring to his 59 coworkers in IT at the rapidly growing opportunities abound for technologists at this rapidly growing company, where big ideas that deliver business value are rewarded on the spot. Axxess employees can put up their feet, put on headphones and unwind in the “South Beach” break area, which overlooks the city of Dallas. Other work/life balance perks include flexible working hours and 15 days of paid time off in the first year of employment.
Axxess, a growing software company, which was new to Computerworld’s Best Places to Work in IT list last year and managed to nab the No. 1 spot among small employers this year. “We’re all kind of salespeople for our software,” Baker says. “We all make the effort to know the software.”

Sonya Sobush, 51, a senior product manager who started out in product support, recalls how she asked to test-drive the Axxess software during her initial job interview four years ago. “I didn’t want to go into a company where I hadn’t seen the product,” says Sobush, then a 17-year veteran of the home healthcare industry, specializing in operations. “They provided me with a demo, and I loved the usability of it. It felt right.”

Since then, Sobush, who works remotely, helped launch the company’s software implementation team and developed the training manual for AgencyCore, the company’s flagship product, before moving into product management and now product development of a new home care software application. “I expressed interest and took it upon myself to work in different areas and see where I might find what I like to do,” says Sobush. “As the company grows, the opportunities in IT are expanding. There’s really the opportunity to go wherever you want to go.”

Employees say career opportunities abound at Axxess, which doubled its overall head count between 2015 and 2016 to about 150 and expanded its IT staff by about 25% during the same time period.

The company’s cultural hallmarks of innovation, openness and transparency are reflected in everything from the glass walls, the open floor plan and the light-filled atmosphere of its new seventh-floor offices to the twice-weekly all-company meetings, where anyone and everyone is expected to contribute their observations, experiences and suggestions.
It’s all part of what’s known internally as the “Axxess Way,” which CTO Andrew Olowu says boils down to “the best ideas win.”

“Ideas ride to the top because we know ideas change the world and can come from anywhere,” says Olowu. “We place a high value on innovation. “My job — in addition to delivering products and managing performance — is to propagate that culture into teams,” he says. “I tell people to be an idea person, but not to get too attached to any one idea because a better one may surface.”

**Collaboration Is Key**

It’s the opportunity to collaborate and contribute across a variety of projects that makes Tyler Howes glad he relocated to Texas with his fiancée to join the company a little less than a year ago.

Axxess recruited the 23-year-old mobile engineer when he was a newly minted computer science graduate from Neumont University in Salt Lake City last June.

“The culture here is so diverse, and I get to work with almost everybody,” says Howes, who is currently working on a mobile application and a new notes feature for AgencyCore.

“If you have any questions, you just talk directly to [other] engineers. You don’t need to go through hoops to get answers. People are friendly and always in a great mood,” says Howes, who also appreciates the company’s open-door policy. “If you have a better solution to the current way of doing things, you can feel comfortable about bringing it up and explaining it to upper management.”

Jeff Linton, a 26-year-old Web engineer also recruited.
from Neumont, is one of six developers on a highly collaborative team where ideas flow freely. He says he got a favorable impression of the company during his first six months on the job, because even though he was new he had the opportunity to work closely with Olowu.

“He was helping us release a new product,” Linton recalls. “He would listen to me and let me make decisions. For tech people to be given that [trust and responsibility] is pretty remarkable. That’s huge.”

**Celebrating Diversity**

One thing that sets Axxess apart is the fact that it has an unusually diverse IT organization — more than 30 nations are represented on the team. Yet despite that range of backgrounds, virtually every employee interviewed for this article mentioned feeling like they’re among family at work.

“We celebrate so many different cultural holidays and festivals,” says Shradha Aiyer, 27, a lead mobile engineer, who says she particularly enjoys Diversity Day, which — naturally — celebrates the diversity of the staff with food, music and festivities. “We get to travel the world for two or three hours without leaving work,” Aiyer says. Most recently, the IT group celebrated Tet, the Vietnamese lunar New Year. “We all went out and had Vietnamese food and decorated our colleagues’ desks with lucky yellow flowers,” she says.

The company’s year-end employee appreciation day is like “going back to your grandparents’ house; they make you feel comfortable and relaxed,” Aiyer says. “There are treasure hunts and games and mind puzzles designed for each team. Last year, we did indoor skydiving.”

Flexible working hours and 15 days of paid time off (in addition to state and national holidays like Thanksgiving and Labor Day) in the first year of employment, and days off for birthdays are also much appreciated perks, IT staffers say.

“I was able to take off a bunch of time to get ready for my wedding,” which is coming up soon, says Howes.

“Oh, and every Monday we get food catered for free,” Howes quickly adds. “Free lunch is a good thing. I’m a guy who likes free food.”

Aiyer says she most appreci-
ates the feeling of being valued by the company.

“Working here, there is a lot of freedom. You’re not just another cog in the system. You’re valued for your talents, and the company invests time, money and energy training you in areas where you may be lacking,” says Aiyer, who joined Axxess three years ago after earning a graduate degree in computer science from the University of Texas in Dallas.

Aiyer says she has been able to attend various user experience camps as well as several mobile technology conferences “because I was interested and I asked. Whatever [conferences or training] we need from an engineering perspective, we go. We don’t get pushback from management as long as we’re adding value by attending,” she says.

Official Axxess policy is to reimburse employees for tuition costs up to $2,500 per person per year. But there’s no set maximum reimbursement for continuing or executive education or for earning technology certifications.

Beni Celoach, 41, a senior product manager who has been at Axxess for three years, just returned from a scrum master certification training course.

“It wasn’t cheap, and Axxess is paying for all of it,” she says. “They’re willing to invest in people, and who doesn’t want free education?”

**On-the-Spot Salary Bumps**

IT employees are also satisfied with their pay, describing their overall compensation as “very competitive.” Many have received performance bonuses during their time with the company.

Overall, Axxess has bud-
Targeted for an average 10% salary increase for IT employees for its current fiscal year. It also has budgeted an undisclosed amount for performance bonuses, which Olowu says can often be more lucrative than a regular annual salary increase. “We don’t have [automatic] annual salary increases because we don’t want our engineers to get conditioned to getting raises every year after a performance review,” he explains. Instead, salary bumps are always tied to performance, and they can happen at any time throughout the year.

“We measure the impact on the business. We reward hard work and going the extra mile. That’s rewarded instantly. When our engineers perform well, we instantly provide a salary increase or spot bonus, so you could be part of Axxess for three months and your salary goes up,” Olowu explains. “Even though your base salary is at a certain point, it can rise dramatically if you deliver an important project or have been a leader.”

King is a freelance writer in Ridley Park, Pa.
Small Company Rankings

Among organizations with 1,000 U.S. employees or fewer

1. **Axxess**
   - No. 1 for diversity / No. 4 for retention
   - This Dallas-based provider of cloud software for healthcare organizations encourages IT employees to take ownership of their projects. Tech pros are reimbursed for college tuition and are welcome to pursue an open-ended amount of training. A comprehensive benefits package includes generous maternity and paternity leave plans.

2. **Sev1Tech**
   - This Woodbridge, Va., provider of IT services offers a range of benefits and incentives, such as paid community service days, paid innovation days, referral bonuses and reimbursement for tuition and certification costs. Sev1Tech’s employee recognition program features several companywide awards, such as the Hunter of the Year prize, which includes a $10,000 travel voucher and an extra two weeks of paid time off.

3. **GlobalScape**
   - No. 7 for career development
   - Flexible schedules and a casual dress code are hallmarks of the relaxed culture at this San Antonio, Texas-based provider of file-transfer and secure information-exchange software. GlobalScape also offers employee recognition programs, reimbursement for tuition and training, 100% employer-paid medical benefits and extra time off during the holidays.

4. **Avaap**
   - No. 1 for retention
   - Employees at this Infor-focused IT services and software development company enjoy flexible schedules, great pay, interesting work, supportive colleagues and competitive benefits. Edison, N.J.-based Avaap invests in training and certifications to keep employees current. This year, the company will bring its entire staff to New York to celebrate its 10-year anniversary.

Sev1Tech employees like Daniel Holthouse, Richard Conlan and V-Khye Fan enjoy access to an unlimited number of training days to boost their technology skills.
**Edmunds.com**

This Santa Monica, Calif.-based online automotive retailer supports employee growth by offering an internal internship program, casual meetings with senior executives, “teachback” and “talkback” sessions with industry thought leaders, and the Edmunds Summer Camp, a weeklong experiential learning initiative. A peer recognition program gives people a way to reward their co-workers.

**Tapestry Technologies**

No. 6 for career development

Tapestry Technologies, a woman-owned small business specializing in cyberdefense, offers 100% company-paid health, life and disability insurance, and optional pet insurance. Employees can try out new technologies, test systems and collaborate on projects in the Chambersburg, Pa.-based company’s IT lab.

**NRECA (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association)**

This Arlington, Va.-based organization, which represents consumer-owned power cooperatives, sponsors an IT innovation program that gives its technologists time, resources, tools and funding to solve challenging technical and business problems and develop new ideas that add value.

**Secure-24**

No. 1 for training

IT pros at Secure-24, which provides hosting services to global companies, work with cutting-edge systems and collaborate with leading technologists. The Southfield, Mich. company offers 100% employer-paid health benefits, a cellphone reimbursement plan, flexible scheduling, unlimited vacation days and reimbursement for certifications and training.

**Datto**

No. 4 for training

Perks at this Norwalk, Conn.-based provider of data backup, disaster recovery and business continuity services include free snacks, free lunch every Friday and a variety of games for break times. Datto also offers a comprehensive package of financial benefits, including 100% employer-paid medical insurance and a 401(k) plan with a generous employer match.

Free lunch every Friday is one of several perks that Datto offers employees like Alfonso Costagliola, Kristen Rydberg and their colleagues.
10 Liquidnet

All employees of this New York-based global institutional trading network are entitled to an equity stake in the enterprise, regardless of seniority. Liquidnet also offers 6% matches of employee 401(k) contributions and covers 100% of employee health benefits. The Liquidnet for Good initiative encourages and rewards employee participation in community service initiatives worldwide.

13 NISC (National Information Solutions Cooperative)

No. 8 for training

At NISC, a provider of data-processing and billing services in Lake St. Louis, Mo., IT employees work in a collaborative team environment. Meetings, internal forums, family events, social get-togethers and a “benevolence committee” help foster a sense of camaraderie among members of the tech team.

11 Commonwealth Financial Network

No. 9 for retention / No. 10 for career development

The IT department at this Waltham, Mass.-based financial services company takes an agile, fast-paced approach to work, with micro-scrum teams collaborating both in person and virtually. Perks include prime seats and VIP access at concerts, baseball games and premium golf courses.

14 Connectria

This St. Louis-based provider of cloud hosting services offers its IT employees a state-of-the-art workplace. Perks include fitness centers with personal trainers and tickets to baseball and hockey games. Connectria pays 100% of employees’ health, dental and disability insurance and makes a minimum 3% contribution to their 401(k) accounts, whether the employee contributes or not.

12 Carvana

No. 6 for retention

At this three-year-old Phoenix startup, which provides a one-stop used-car shopping service, IT teams are given the opportunity to work with the most innovative tools and technologies. Carvana covers 100% of employee healthcare and offers employees up to $6,000 per year to pay for tuition, conference registrations and certifications.
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Akamai people work together to design and implement fast, reliable, and secure solutions to protect our customers’ data-center infrastructures—helping our customers avoid data theft and downtime.

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**NIIT Technologies**

This software and IT services provider, whose U.S. headquarters is in Atlanta, encourages innovation through its Ignite platform, where employees can contribute ideas and win prizes if their concepts are chosen for further development. A mentoring program and 14 days of training help IT employees boost their careers. Perks include flexible scheduling, an on-site fitness center and holiday potlucks.
16 **ServerCentral**
IT employees at ServerCentral, a managed data center services provider in Chicago, work with cutting-edge technologies of their own choosing to solve complex problems. A startup-like atmosphere features giant bean bags for napping and a casual dress code. Benefits include telework options, a generous amount of paid time off, unlimited days of training and fully paid health insurance.

17 **Planned Systems International (PSI)**
People who work at this global provider of enterprise IT solutions enjoy flexible schedules, work-from-home options, a casual dress code and a family-friendly, caring corporate culture. Arlington, Va.-based PSI offers tuition reimbursement and encourages employees to take part in external training or enroll in courses via its custom learning management system.

18 **Infovery**
No. 3 for retention
A challenging, collaborative work environment and access to cutting-edge technologies help attract IT professionals to Infovery. The Dublin, Ohio, company, which specializes in enterprise data systems and services, offers flexible schedules and telework opportunities, and covers 80% of health insurance premiums for employees, their spouses and dependents.

19 **Zumasys**
A provider of cloud services, Zumasys treats IT employees to weekly breakfasts and offers a break lounge that has classic arcade games and a pool table. Every year, four to six employees of the Irvine, Calif.-based company get $4,000 to travel anywhere outside of North America. Zumasys donates 1% of its revenue each year to nonprofits nominated and selected by employees.

20 **MetroStar Systems**
A provider of IT services, Reston, Va.-based MetroStar offers techies a chance to work on meaningful projects in support of national security while enjoying the energetic atmosphere of a startup. A professional development initiative called MetroStar University provides training and leadership opportunities. Perks include Wellness Wednesdays, Food Fridays and a game room equipped with video games, foosball and Ping-Pong tables.
100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT

Great culture +
great innovations +
great people =

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CFA Institute

The IT team at this Charlottesville, Va., organization is motivated by CFA’s mission to lead the investment profession in ethics, education and professional excellence. The IT team works with emerging technologies such as gamification, cloud computing and mobile systems. Benefits include a 12% employer contribution to employees’ 401(k) accounts and reimbursement for the cost of pursuing certifications.
22 Rural Sourcing Inc. (RSI)
This Atlanta-based organization is dedicated to bringing offshored IT jobs back to the United States. RSI employees are able to do work they love while living in low-cost-of-living, high-quality-of-life locations. In addition to offering generous compensation, RSI provides training and mentoring opportunities to keep employees engaged.

23 SquareTwo Financial
IT employees thrive at this Denver-based financial services firm, where people are skilled, cooperative and approachable. The IT group works with cutting-edge systems, so techies can keep their skills sharp. Community engagement and volunteerism are priorities, and a new program that supports remote work fosters work/life balance.

24 Champion Solutions Group
No. 5 for career development
An IT services and consulting firm, Boca Raton, Fla.-based Champion offers access to the latest technologies and encourages employees to enroll in training programs and pursue certifications. The company celebrates workers’ achievements with its Innovation and Be a Champion awards, among others.

25 Inspirus
Employees feel valued, connected and empowered at Inspirus, and that’s no surprise because the Fort Worth, Texas-based company develops and markets employee engagement and recognition tools. In addition to multiple reward programs, Inspirus offers perks such as team-building challenges, flexible schedules, catered lunches, sports ticket raffles and gift card bonuses.

26 Vlocity
Engineers play a central role at this San Francisco startup, which offers cloud and mobile software for a variety of industries. Vlocity developers know the company’s software intimately, so they’re able to double as salespeople for the products. IT employees regularly attend meetups and pursue other training and development opportunities. They also get together for happy hours and team-building events.
Perks at this Dallas-based provider of strategic services and custom application development include an employee stock-ownership plan (ESOP), a 401(k) match, 100% employer-paid healthcare and paid sabbaticals. The company has a stated goal of helping every employee grow into a potential leader. Under a cohort model for compensation, all employees at a certain level are paid the same amount, with the goal of encouraging workers to focus on the success of the team rather than individual success.

Employee comfort and creativity are a priority at this Chicago-area provider of Microsoft-centric IT services. Relaxed workspaces designed to foster productivity and camaraderie feature adjustable-height desks and treadmill desks. Employees feel connected and valued thanks to perks such as team lunches and happy hours, an annual summer outing for employees and their families, and a holiday party where employees receive gifts such as GoPro cameras and Amazon Echoes.

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iDashboards technologists like Warren Singh, Brittney Smith and Aaron Olson often build specialty dashboards around trending topics like Star Wars.

At this Troy, Mich.-based maker of dashboard software, IT engineers use their talents not only to develop data visualizations for a variety of industries, but also to build specialty dashboards around trending topics such as Star Wars or Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Employees are rewarded with trophies and monetary bonuses, and the company hosts pizza and beer parties to raise funds for charities.
FOR THE 23rd YEAR IN A ROW, Computerworld conducted a survey to identify the 100 best places to work for IT professionals. In November 2015, Computerworld started accepting nominations from U.S.-based organizations and from non-U.S.-based employers that met the following criteria: They had to have a minimum of 300 total employees at a U.S. headquarters and a minimum of 30 IT employees in the U.S., with at least 50% of their IT employees based in the U.S.

Participants were asked to provide the name and contact information of the appropriate individual at their organization who was familiar with or had access to employment statistics and financial data, as well as benefits policies and programs for the IT department and the organization as a whole.

In January 2016, the contacts at the nominated organizations received a 52-question company survey asking about average salary and bonus increases, percentage of IT staffers promoted, IT staff turnover rates, training and development, and the percentage of women and minorities in IT staff and management positions. In addition, information was collected on the employer’s retention programs, methods of rewarding outstanding performances, and benefits ranging from elder care and child care to flextime and reimbursement for college tuition and the costs of earning technology certifications.

Upon completion of the survey, participants were emailed instructions on selecting a random sample of employees from their U.S.-based full- and part-time IT staffs. All participating companies were required to obtain feedback from employees. The responses to the employee survey went directly to a third-party research vendor. Topics covered in the employee survey included satisfaction with the following: compensation and benefits, training and development programs, and
work/life balance. In addition, employees were asked to rate employee morale in the IT department, the importance of various benefits, and the degree to which they agreed with a variety of statements on topics ranging from career growth to management’s fair and equal treatment of employees.

A total of 24,862 IT employees responded to the employee survey from the final organizations selected as best places to work for IT professionals.

The nomination survey, company survey and employee survey were all conducted via the Internet. The company and employee survey portion of the research were closed in March 2016.

In scoring the responses from the company and employee surveys, company results were weighted based on employees’ importance ratings from the employee component. Approximately half of the total scoring is based on employee responses, with the remainder based on the survey of the company’s benefits and other programs.

The survey process was managed by Mari Keefe, Computerworld’s editorial project manager. A complete description of our methodology is available on our website.

— Mari Keefe and Tracy Mayor

Computerworld has named Sharp HealthCare among the 100 Best Places to Work in IT for the fourth year in a row.

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What Are the Odds That This Is IT’s Biggest Problem?

**TECH SUPPORT STAFFERS** at this online bank decide to try playing the lottery as a group. “The database admins, networking people, sysadmins, command center staff and the storage-and-backup people all joined in on a pool for one of the large Powerball lotteries,” says a pilot fish in on the deal. “The lottery was large enough that, if we were the only winners, we wouldn’t need to work again.” But when the IT director finds out how much of his staff has joined in and what they’ll likely do if they win, he realizes that there could be no one left to monitor production runs, cleanse database logs, reboot Windows servers or fix problems. And even with an army of pricey consultants, the business would be dead in the water. His response? “Once he learned that the pool didn’t win the big prize, he issued an edict: No one was
allowed to have a lottery pool,” fish says. “Officially, there were no more. Unofficially, there were still some within smaller groups. One wag suggested a way to take revenge on the director: If a small group hit, give enough to the others so they could quit, too.”

**What a Deal!**

When a big paper-products company is bought out, it’s time to go into cost-cutting mode. “They came to the IT contractors and said, ‘If you want to remain here, you’ll cut your rate by 10%,'” reports a pilot fish there. “OK, I thought, that’s not great, but 90% of my previous rate is better than having no work and making 0%. Then came the punch line: The ultimatum was retroactive to the beginning of the year — and it was now mid-November. In other words, the company expected IT contractors to work for free for the rest of the year! They lost a lot of good people, and had difficulty getting experienced IT staff after that.”

**How Not to Get the Most Out of Training**

This mainframe application is being migrated to Unix, and for once that means the mainframer responsible for it isn’t getting the chop. “He knew nothing about Unix, but really knew the existing application and was very well liked by the business users,” says a pilot fish on the scene. “The company sent him away for a total of six weeks of training on Unix, shell scripting, editing, C programming and Oracle SQL. Then he returned to the existing application on the mainframe. Six months later, the new application was ready, and this guy was expected to support the new application on the Unix system. Of course, since he hadn’t used any of the Unix-related skills since attending the training, he’d largely forgotten the material. So for a long time, he’d holler my name over the cubicle wall and ask a question like, ‘How do I do a GENER on Unix?’ – the IBM mainframe utility IEBGENER is used to copy files. Being fluent in both systems, I’d holler back, ‘Use man cp.’ ”

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