

INSURANCE JOURNAL

THE NATIONAL PROPERTY CASUALTY MAGAZINE

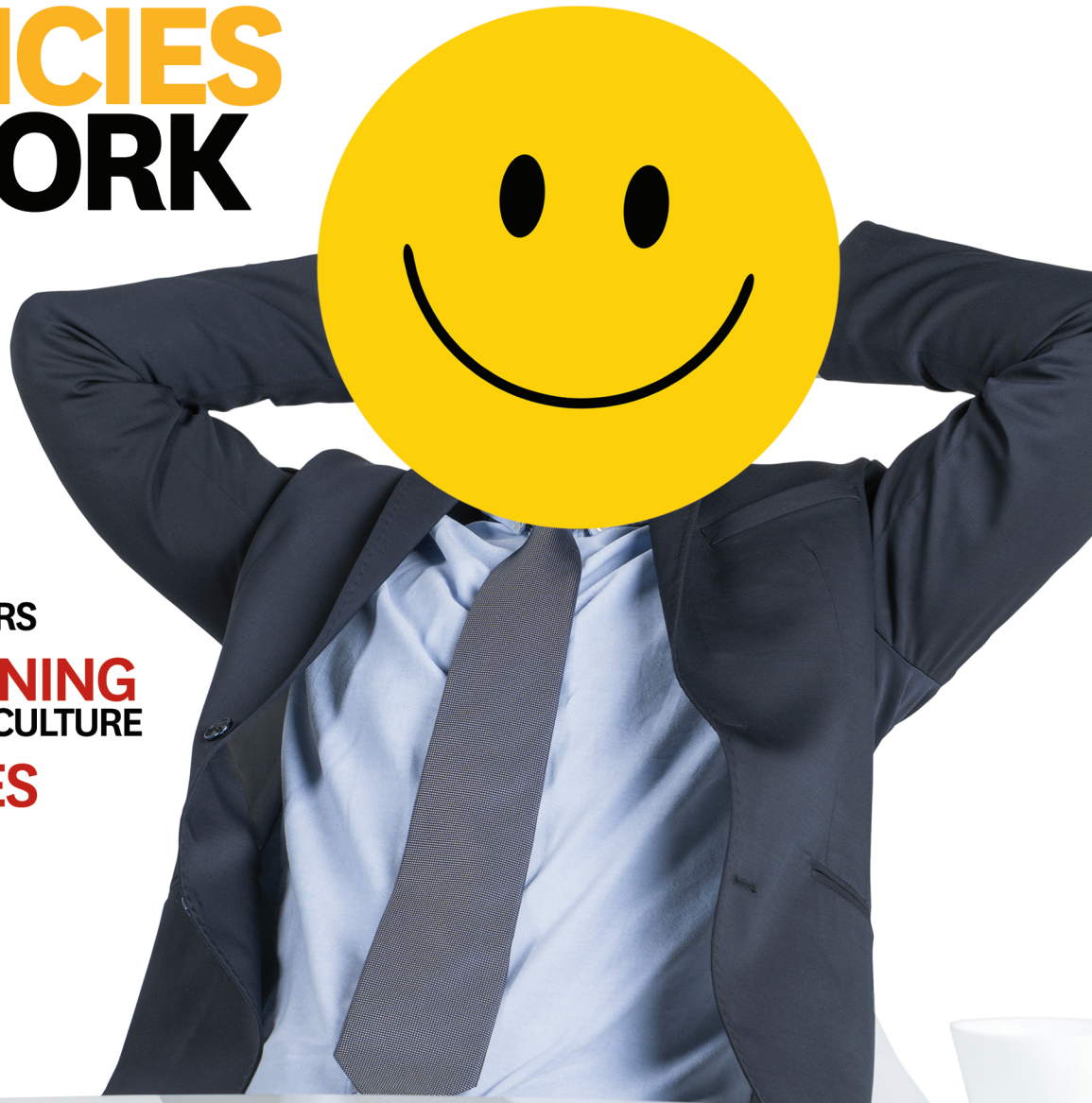
OCTOBER 7, 2019 | VOL. 97, NO. 19

AMERICA'S
**BEST
AGENCIES
TO WORK
FOR**

**TOP
WORKERS'
COMP WRITERS**

**REIMAGINING
CORPORATE CULTURE**

**WEBSITES
AND ADA
COMPLIANCE**



2019 Winners

OVERALL

Higginbotham,
Fort Worth, Texas

EAST

Gold: Ironside Insurance Group,
Boston, Mass.
Silver: Covenant Insurance
Group, York, Penn.
Bronze: Chalmers Insurance
Group, Bridgton, Maine

MIDWEST

Gold: The Bulow Group,
Tinley Park, Ill.
Silver: Military United Insurance,
Columbia, Mo.
Bronze: DSP Insurance Services,
Schaumburg, Ill.

SOUTH CENTRAL

Gold: Hotchkiss Insurance,
Dallas, Texas
Silver: BKCW, Killeen, Texas
Bronze: The Nitsche Group,
Giddings, Texas

SOUTHEAST

Gold: Acentria Insurance,
Destin, Fla.
Silver: Century Risk Advisors,
Boca Raton, Fla.
Bronze: BKS-Partners,
Tampa, Fla.

WEST

Gold: Snapp & Associates
Insurance Services, San Diego,
Calif.
Silver: Morris & Garritano, San
Luis Obispo, Calif.
Bronze: EPG Insurance Agency,
Scottsdale, Ariz.

*Is your agency
on this list?
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AMERICA'S BEST AGENCIES TO WORK FOR



The votes were tallied and the results are in for the 2019 Best Independent Insurance Agency to Work For survey by Insurance Journal.


Employees of the Best Agencies to Work For in 2019 highlight the importance of competitive salaries, employee benefits, training and education, resources, and other employee perks as drivers of satisfaction in the workplace. But it's not all about compensation and benefits. Happiness in the workplace has a lot to do with people, relationships and culture. Employees of the winning agencies cite high personal job satisfaction; rate their relationships with their immediate boss or supervisor as positive; and express a high opinion of their agency's owner or principals and their agency's reputation in the community.

Many employees are grateful the best agency owners support local charities and the community. Employees appreciate the opportunities their agencies provide for them to participate in community service. Employees take pride in working for agencies that are respected and hold strong values and ethics. Employees also appreciate the generosity of their agency owners in sharing revenues in the form of bonuses and trips.

The best agencies also provide ways to help their employees grow – by giving them the tools and technology they need, and supporting them with education, training, annual and performance reviews and, in some cases, mentors. The survey results clearly show employees value this support.

As expected, the winning agencies score high for overall employee benefits including wellness programs and for working conditions including flex-time and alternative schedules that allow employees to work from home.

The best agencies to work for also provide employees with a strong sense of work-life balance, and deliver a workplace environment where employees feel supported wholeheartedly by management and their peers. Many of the employees say they feel like family in their agencies.

Insurance Journal wishes to thank the nearly 2,000 CSRs, account executives, producers, managers and other agency staff who took the time to nominate their independent insurance agency in this year's survey. 

Southeast

Acentria Insurance
Destin, Fla.



A Growing Agency With a Small Business Feel

By Amy O'Connor

Florida-based Acentria Insurance has been busy since its founding by industry veteran Kendall McEachern in 2010. The personal and commercial lines agency has acquired several agencies and now has 50 locations and more than 500 employees in the state of Florida and Southeast region.

But employees who nominated the agency for Insurance Journal's 2019 Best Agency to Work For survey say despite that growth, the company still has its small business culture.

"Acentria is vibrant and growing," said a survey respondent. "The culture is based on a team/family environment in which we all thrive together. Work hard, play harder and give back to the local communities in which we live is at the core of what we do."

CEO McEachern says the agency's leadership team places a great deal of emphasis on creating a positive corporate

culture to ensure employees enjoy coming to work each day and feel meaningful - focusing not on only their professional development but their personal development as well.

"To be recognized as a finalist for one of the Best Agencies to Work is a true honor and testament to the dedication of our team members," McEachern said. "Our leadership is dedicated to providing our team members with well-rounded opportunities to include: benefits packages, retirement planning options, wellness programs, fun activities, team building and our own community give back program."

Employees agreed, saying Acentria management treats them as part of the team.

"I honestly believe our owners, management cares for their employees. They make sure that we have what we need in our jobs and have the tools to do the work. They are gracious to allow opportunities to have time off and encourage

you to take time for yourself and your family," said one survey respondent.

Another respondent cited the management team's regular check-ins with staff as an example of its commitment to employees.

"They know your name and are willing to spend time listening to any concerns you have," said the employee. "When you have positive caring people in top positions it trickles down to affect the whole company. It's nice to know what the expectations are and that they are equal across the board."

Many employees said the #AcentriaCares community give back program is one example of how the agency empowers its team members to get involved in the community, either through donations or by offering paid time off to volunteer.

McEachern said more than \$1 million has been donated to local non-profits through #AcentriaCares.

Employees said the team also bands together to help those in hurricane-impacted areas around the state and country. Many Acentria employees were directly affected by 2018's Hurricane Michael that hit the Florida Panhandle, and employees said the company came together to help them while also helping clients.

"During any hurricane or disaster, this agency

really rises to the occasion...

#AcentriaCares is really more than a tagline," said an survey respondent.

Employees also praised the agency's inclusivity when it comes to hiring, leadership and promotions, saying it is "very fair and supportive of growth from within at all levels." They also appreciate Acentria's access to markets, marketing materials, and the company's investment in sales and marketing tools so they can focus on being the best advisors to their clients.

McEachern said that building a successful agency and creating a positive work environment starts at the top.

"Our leadership team focuses on a positive, family-oriented work environment with an open-door policy. Team members need to have meaning, purpose, be involved and feel like part of the bigger picture," he said.

Acentria employees say being part of a growing agency with great leadership is exciting and they appreciate the agency's commitment to culture no matter how big the company gets.

"I have worked in 5 different agencies throughout my carrier. This is by far the best agency ever. I love everything about them and will never consider leaving this agency," said an employee. ■



The Acentria executive leadership team outside the company's headquarters in Destin, Fla.