



>group two: 50–249 employees

Where to Apply Now

1. Clif Bar & Co.

>Berkeley, California

Just a few reasons Clif Bar is the mack daddy of midsize companies: Employees have the option to log their 80 hours in nine days and can work out anytime in a health facility packed with fitness machines, two climbing walls, and a full schedule of free yoga, martial arts, dance, and Spinning classes. It only gets better. The energy-bar maker has a generous paid-sabbatical program for its 207 employees, which allows staffers to take two months off every seven years. Tom Richardson, the director of product R&D, moved to Provence with his wife and four-month-old son to focus on rock climbing. "The time away taught me that leading a more peaceful life is legit," he says.

2. Superfeet Worldwide Inc.

>Ferndale, Washington

Instead of selling Superfeet for a huge profit in 2005, CEO Scott Dohner and his partners decided to sell it back to the 75 employees through a stock-ownership plan. "It seemed like the best thing for everyone," says Dohner. Then they began staffing up so that no one has to work overtime. "Come on, we make insoles," says Dohner. "No one's going to die if we have to push a deadline back two weeks." The benefits at this laid-back footwear biz aren't bad, either: Superfeet allows new moms and students to job-share, allowing for full-time benefits, and pays 100 percent of employees' medical, dental, vision, and disability premiums.

3. SmartWool Corporation

>Steamboat Springs, Colorado

The manufacturer of merino-wool socks, base layers, apparel, and accessories strives to be the ideal mountain-town employer, with an annual companywide ski day at Steamboat, a powder-day policy, and generous summer hours. It's not just its outdoor ethos that puts SmartWool in third place. The 63 employees also get 40 paid hours a year working at the nonprofit of their choice, receive \$3,000 toward the purchase of a hybrid vehicle, and can apply for \$10,000 in adoption assistance.

4. Smith Optics

>Ketchum, Idaho

At Smith, it's flextime, most of the time: Get your work done, and you can establish your own hours. In a ski town with world-class mountain biking and fishing, that matters. To help employees of this sunglasses and ski-goggles manufacturer

Salary Negotiation

When applying for a job: 1. Research (salary.com). 2. Don't list targets on any paperwork. 3. When asked for a number, say you'll consider any reasonable offer. "Smart negotiation is an excellent way to reiterate your value," says career coach Barbara Safani.

take full advantage, Smith gives each worker \$900 per year to spend on a ski pass or gym membership. Each week, the 68 Smithies can take one 2.5-hour lunch to ski, bike, run, boat, or fish. As far as the company is

The Runners-Up

6. Horny Toad

>Santa Barbara, California

During lunch, the 56 staffers can take a sea kayak for a paddle or join a game of beach volleyball—HQ is only a block off the ocean. In Horny Toad's Search for Adventure program, employees are matched with developmentally disabled adults to go on Appalachian Trail hikes or Pacific cruises. For parents, Horny Toad subsidizes childcare up to \$2,500, then pays half of annual expenses up to \$5,000. As for medical and dental premiums, you're 100 percent covered.

7. Athleta Inc.

>Petaluma, California

Why Athleta—the clothing catalog of choice for sweaty divas—made the list: three weeks of paid time off after the first year's employment, access

to the entire product line for testing, an on-site fitness center, and a matching fund for the 176 employees to use on massages, race registrations, gym memberships, or language classes.

8. Backwoods Inc.

>Austin, Texas

This once family-owned gear retailer was recently acquired by Nitches Inc., but still offers three annual Use the Gear days, on which employees are paid to get outside to test products. Backwoods' adventure-travel business allows employees and spouses to go fly-fishing in Wyoming or trek in Nepal at cost—or, in some cases, for free.

9. OCSC Sailing

>Berkeley, California

The OCSC wants every employee to sail, so job training includes multiple slots in the school's

classes. Slow day at the marina?

Take one of their 50 boats out for an afternoon on San Francisco Bay. That's in addition to 100-percent-paid medical premiums, meals for instructors working more than three hours, and 100 percent tuition reimbursement for those interested in learning how to skipper a yacht in, say, the Mediterranean.

10. National Outdoor Leadership School

>Lander, Wyoming

You gotta love a company whose sole directive is to teach thousands of outdoor enthusiasts how to charge confidently into the wilds. NOLS also covers all but \$420 of employees' annual medical insurance and puts up to \$400 a year toward "wellness" costs such as gym memberships and vision exams.

concerned, as long as you're wearing a Smith product while recreating, you're product-testing (i.e., "working"). "The president is as interested in outdoor exploits as anyone else," says Greg Randolph, PR communications manager. "He encourages us to get outside. That nails what it's like to work at Smith."

5. Alaskan Brewing Company

>Juneau, Alaska

As if it isn't already cool

enough to make beer in the epicenter of Alaska, this brewery offers more than just suds. Profit sharing? Check. Tuition reimbursement? Done. Three weeks of vacation? That too. An environmental conscience? Yep: The company donates 1 percent of proceeds from IPA sales to helping clean up the Pacific coast. And then there's the 100 percent covered medical, dental, and vision premiums. Drink up, you lucky bastards. —GRANT DAVIS