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Best Places to Work 2009

Digital Hands places a strong emphasis on collaboration

Winner Overall, Nearly Big category

Tampa Bay Business Journal - by [Robert Yaniz Jr.](#), Editorial Assistant

TAMPA — Digital Hands may specialize in providing technical support to businesses, but the company places just as strong an emphasis on its workplace as on its services. That’s why it’s this year’s overall Best Place to Work and winner of the Nearly Big category.

“Our employees are spending the majority of their lives here,” said CEO Charlotte Baker. “We want to make sure they’re proud of where they are.”

In addition to financial peer incentives that help employees motivate each other, the company’s office space is specifically designed to create a collaborative atmosphere conducive to problem-solving. It features a sustainable wall system, transparent glass walls and open workstations that encourage employee interaction.

The office also provides a café and a lounge area with a Nintendo Wii where employees can play video games and unwind while on break or after hours.

Ken Seitz, solutions architect at the company, said the room allows for social interaction between employees, many of whom work in a call-center environment.

“We try to combine those microsocial aspects at the end of the day,” he said. “When you’re playing the Wii, you can get a chance to talk to somebody that you might not have otherwise.”

Moreover, the management style at Digital Hands is more relaxed than most companies.

“There’s just enough structure to eliminate chaos, but it still gives the latitude for you to have an entrepreneurial spirit,” said Baker.

Despite a tiered structure, the company’s management team maintains an open-door policy, said Seitz.

“It’s very open in communication,” he said. “The guys doing frontline work are given plenty of opportunity and input on how to make things better and offer more value to our customers.”

Digital Hands also hosts a number of ongoing social events aimed at perpetuating the connectedness of its staff.

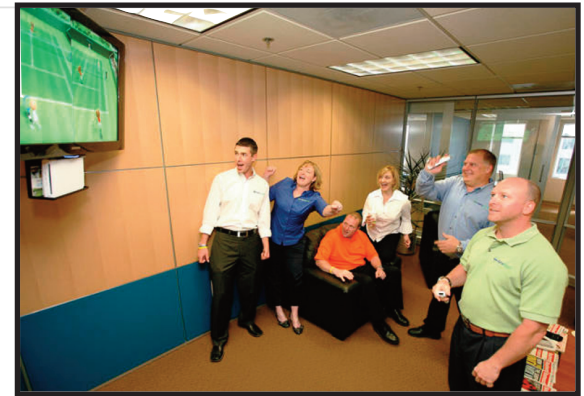
Annual events include the company Christmas party and Entrepreneurial Kids’ Day, in which children ages 5 to 16 are charged with creating an idea for a business.

“The goal is to rally everyone around the cause, to share visions, set values and get everyone rowing in the right direction,” said Baker.

The staff will also be competing in an upcoming charity triathlon, and this year, Digital Hands introduced Rise and Shine ’09. In this yearlong competition, a different team of employees makes breakfast each month, culminating in a vote to decide which team made the best meal.

The company also provides its employees with a competitive benefits package, in-house training opportunities and tuition reimbursement.

“People really care,” said Seitz. “When you have that sort of buy-in and caring about your job, it’s definitely reflective in the workplace.”



KATHLEEN CABBLE

Playing Wii at work are Ken Seitz, solutions architect, Joni Godlove, marketing and communications director, Jim Snell, professional services tech, Charlotte Baker, CEO and co-founder, Mike Sikoryak, director of finance and Mark Geary, VP customer experience & service provider solutions.