

OPINIONS

# Keep 'em smiling ...

In the April 2002 issue of PharmaVOICE, we asked how companies are keeping employees motivated, incentivized, and smiling on a regular basis.

We want to know what types of "personal" incentives are keeping employee turnover to a minimum.

## Beyond the Basics

A friendly work environment goes a long way. Flexibility to move your schedule around to accommodate issues related to family/kids also is important. An industry-size salary, and a fair bonus system based on work effort combined with good insurances and 401K savings opportunities are other more basic requirements.

**Anna Buckley**  
SENIOR MEDIA PLANNER  
CMI INC.

## Building Comradery

Obviously, recognition on a company or industry level is important. But I think the day-to-day expressions of support are vital as well. These could include happy hours or dinners to just get everyone together in a festive atmosphere outside of the office so that people get to know each other on a different, perhaps more personal level; e-mails and memos complimenting some important completed task or project sold; even small supplies of donuts for breakfast, cookies after lunch etc. to give people a break from their day and a small unmentioned thank you for their work. These may be minor, but I believe they keep people going, making them feel good about working there and that they are appreciated.

**Mike Reynolds**  
DIVERSION MAGAZINE

## An Educated Employee is a Happy Employee

In an effort to motivate and incentivize employees, in February 2001, ArQule's marketing communications department instituted the "Employee Education Program." This program is founded on the belief that if employees know more about the industry in which ArQule operates (drug discovery), the pharmaceutical industry, and drug discovery in particular, they will be more enthusiastic, more motivated, and more interested in, and engaged with, the success of ArQule.

The program is simple — reprints of rele-

vant articles are circulated to all employees. Articles are derived from variety of sources including the "Wal Journal," industry publications, and news/financial publications and are at that can be understood by all employees (everyone from our receptionist to our P.H.D. chemists). To encourage readership of these articles, a series of quiz questions derived from the article itself are circulated with each article. Employees who submit correct answers to all questions by a set deadline are rewarded with a prize which has the ArQule logo on it (T-shirt, pen, laptop bag, travel mug, etc.). For select quizzes, one or a few prizes are offered (rather than a prize for everyone) — prize winners are chosen randomly from among those employees submitting correct answers. These prizes have included tickets to a local sporting or theater event, or a gift certificate.

In addition to earning prizes for each quiz, participants receive a reward point for each quiz they complete. These reward points can be used like airline frequent-flyer miles — employees can cash in points during the year for great prizes such as concert tickets (one of our scientists just won two luxury box tickets to a Paul McCartney concert), premium seating for sporting events, and even a chance to play in a celebrity golf pro-am tournament. The executive assistant to the CEO took her step-daughter to the N'sync concert with tickets she won through the program.

Half of ArQule's 400 employees participate in the program. Feedback has been tremendous — employees feel as though they are learning about ArQule, the process of drug discovery, and the pharmaceutical industry. They love being rewarded for their efforts and many have a great sense of pride about the prizes they earn. As a result of this program, many employees feel more engaged in the success of ArQule.

Will this education program retain an employee who is unhappy in their current position? No, but we firmly believe that the program makes the work environment at ArQule an even better experience.

**Christine Quern**  
DIRECTOR, MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS AND  
PUBLIC RELATIONS  
ARQULE



## Keeping All Involved

At VisionLine Media we have several core items that keep our employees interested in continuing to make VLM better. We evoke decision-making policies that involve cost-efficient measures of creating, designing, and producing a show. The entire "team" receives a bonus when a show gets completed prior to the established time. Individuals receive a commission on the net revenue upon job completion. We have employee profit sharing. And, for our sales people, we have a fast-start bonus in the first quarter of each year.

**Frank Burns**  
VISIONLINE MEDIA

## Making a Difference

I think one of the biggest reasons turnover is low across inChord is that each employee has the opportunity to make a significant difference as part of a team that works together to provide clients with innovative solutions.

Keeping employees smiling starts with hiring those who are self motivating and passionate about what they do and who are inherently driven to expand upon their existing talents. As our company has grown, we've added formal training initiatives to allow for sharing skills across teams and personalized development programs to help each employee grow by investing in their specific needs. Personal incentives across the organization include everything from formal recognition programs to simply empowering managers to find what makes each of us tick and acting upon it — anything from concert tickets to an impromptu half-day off work after a major project success.

In addition to personal rewards, the environment and culture of each company is expressed in ways that are motivating. At our

Gerbig, Snell/Weisheimer (GSW) office in Columbus, the space itself reflects a culture of creative spirit that encourages idea exchanges among teams. For example, the agency established several “family rooms” with names such as Big Pickle and Brainstorm, which are furnished and decorated around fun themes to encourage creative thinking.

At our interactive company, Blue Diesel, the office furnishings and decor reflect a progressive, cutting-edge environment. Another motivating thing is having fun — we take time to celebrate our successes and to simply enjoy getting to know one another so when we do face challenges, we're that much more driven to pull together and work through it. It's truly a different marketing communications company and that feeling is one that attracts top talent and keeps them here. As once an intern at GSW 10 years ago when we had only 40 people, I myself rejoined GSW as they expanded and my career was evolving. For the past four years, I've had the privilege of seeing it grow and now marketing it as inChord, a company of more than 500 associates across seven companies worldwide.

**Caren L. Henry**

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING  
INCHORD COMMUNICATIONS INC.

## Cross-Training

The incentives Peregrine Pharmaceuticals offers to retain employees are stock options, a good workplace atmosphere, and we strive to promote from within. We also permit employees to change disciplines within the company as long as they can meet the requirements for the new job function. This expands the employees' job experience and gives the company cross-trained employees.

Most of our employees like working in cutting-edge medicine because of the challenges it provides and knowing that they are saving people's lives.

**Edward Legere**

PRESIDENT AND CEO  
PEREGRINE PHARMACEUTICALS INC.

## Employee Appreciation

We have a large number of personal incentives that we think are helpful in keeping our employee turnover rate to a minimum. In addition to a very competitive benefits package (including 401K, short- and long-term disability, 12 paid CommonHealth holidays, paid vacation, flexible spending account, legal plan, etc.), we offer a wide variety of employee appreciation packages. Some specifics:

- The Money Purchase Plan — Once an employee has been with the company two

years, 10% of their salary is matched by the organization each year and put away for the employee in an interest-bearing account. Employees are able to direct where the money is invested. The money remains in the account for the duration of their tenure with CommonHealth.

- WPP (parent company) stock options are automatically awarded each year to staff members who have been with the organization for two full years. They are then exercisable in three years.

- Family Day — during one work day in the summer, CommonHealth sponsors an annual “Family Day” picnic, which allows employees the chance to relax and have fun with their colleagues and family members. Always an entire-day event, Family Day is held off-site at a number of different locations, and all attending are given the opportunity to experience a wide variety of activities — everything from swimming to fishing, softball to tennis, roller blading to arts and crafts. Of course, there is always a large amount of food and beverages to appeal to all palates.

- The employee “Thank You” program — a strictly colleague-nominated program, which allows co-workers to say “thanks” to one another when someone goes above and beyond the call of duty. Depending on the good deed being commended, employees are given gift certificates for dinners out at local establishments, movie coupons, music store coupons, etc.

- Employee referral program — for jobs that become available within the CommonHealth network, if an employee refers a candidate and that candidate gets hired by the company and stays for at least six months, the referring employee receives \$3,000 compensation.

- The John F. Zweig Odysseus Award program — a program created to honor one of the founding members of CommonHealth. Created to inspire employees to map out their own visions of personal and professional challenges and growth, helping to finance the best of these dreams. Interested employees submit a proposal to the Odysseus committee — one that explains the personal “journey” they would like to take and how it would benefit not only them, but CommonHealth and the community, as well. Past recipients have been given funding to take motivational courses, develop a Website for hospital-bound children, take a trip to Nepal, benefit N.J.-based artists by having a gallery to showcase their work (and purchase works for display at CommonHealth companies).

- CommonHealth University — During company time (9 a.m.-5 p.m.), staff members are given the opportunity to attend classes on a wide variety of industry-related and/or job-specific topics. Classes are taught both by internal and external experts.

- Tuition reimbursement program for full-time, benefits-eligible employees who choose to continue their education toward a higher degree or course that relevance to their job at CommonHealth.

- Every Monday, CommonHealth brings in bagels for employees in honor of employees celebrating a birthday that week. Employee birthdays are posted in the kitchen so others will know who to thank for the bagels that week.

- Each year on the anniversary of their employment with the organization, employees receive a delivery of one rose for every year they have been employed with CommonHealth.

- There are no set number of allowed “personal” or “sick” days — it's up to the employee and their manager to determine what is (and is not) reasonable.

**Beth Porteous**

VP, CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS  
COMMONHEALTH

## Recognizing the Extra Mile

Cline, Davis & Mann recognizes those that go the extra mile with an “above & beyond award” given to about 10 people every quarter. Pictures of the awardees are proudly displayed on a board in the lobby, a memo is sent to the company highlighting their efforts, not to mention a good old fashion financial incentive.

In addition, CDM offers generous bonuses, beautiful office space, and great clients. What could be better?

**Debbie Renner**

VP, ASSOCIATE MEDIA DIRECTOR  
CLINE, DAVIS & MANN

## A Well-Balanced Company

We have a few programs for employee retention: summer hours (close at 1:00 every Friday during the summer); company sports teams (softball, flag football) and we're good!; all-company outings — usually something competitive like paintball or football; and annual anniversary celebrations (this year Rick French took the whole agency and guests to see Jimmy Buffet for our fifth anniversary).

We also have very robust benefits for all associates. Finally we were ranked by *Inside PR* as the agency with the “Best Work/Life Balance” in the nation.

**Britt Carter**

VP  
RICHARD FRENCH & ASSOCIATES