



CONTACT

Traci Fenton
Founder and CEO, WorldBlu
Phone: (202) 251-8099
E-Mail : traci@worldblu.com

WorldBlu Certifies 48 Organizations Globally as “Democratic Workplaces”

ST. LOUIS, MO AND LONDON, UK (April 10, 2012) – WorldBlu, a company specializing in organizational democracy, today announced it has certified 48 organizations as part of the sixth annual WorldBlu List of Most Democratic Workplaces™ 2012, published annually on “Democracy in the Workplace Day.”

Well-known companies to make the WorldBlu List include Zappos.com, HCL Technologies, New Belgium Brewery, DaVita, Great Harvest Bread Company and the WD-40 Company. For-profit and non-profit organizations from across the US, Canada, Mexico, the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, Malaysia, Haiti, India, New Zealand, South Africa and Singapore made the WorldBlu List from a diverse range of industries including, technology, manufacturing, healthcare, retail, services and energy.

The organizations ranged in size from five to 90,000 employees representing over \$17 billion in combined annual revenue. This is the most global WorldBlu List to date, indicating a global movement towards democracy in the workplace.

“People want freedom rather than fear in the workplace,” comments WorldBlu Founder and CEO, Traci Fenton. “WorldBlu-certified organizations model how democracy in the workplace unleashes human potential and builds highly successful organizations that change the world for the better.”

Companies become eligible for a spot on the WorldBlu List of Most Democratic Workplaces™ only after its employees complete the WorldBlu Scorecard™, an assessment evaluating their organization’s practice of the WorldBlu 10 Principles of Organizational Democracy™, with an overall combined score of 3.5/5 or higher. The WorldBlu Scorecard™ was developed based on a decade of research into what makes a world-class democratic company. Organizations from the for-profit and non-profit sectors that have been in operation for at least one full year and have five or more employees can apply for WorldBlu certification.

Organizational Democracy and the Bottom-line

A democratically managed workplace is as much about giving power to the people as it is a smart business strategy that directly impacts the bottom-line.

Manchester, NH-based Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) leader **Dyn** (pronounced 'dine') solicited ideas from their employees through an internal version of Pinterest before moving into their new 25,000 square foot facility. In the last year since fine tuning democratic management, they’ve increased annual revenue from \$10 million to \$17 million, opened offices on the West Coast and in Europe, and more than doubled their employee count.

“Businesses that are open to organizational democracy are usually nimble, resourceful and actively maximizing their human potential,” comments Kim Jordan, CEO of Fort Collins-based **New Belgium Brewery**, which has over 430 employees and boasts a 97 percent retention rate.



Mike Ferretti, CEO of **Great Harvest Bread Company**, a six-time WorldBlu List awardee company with over 230 “freedom-franchises” operating in the US says, “We’re into our third decade in business and truly believe the democratic principles we follow have kept Great Harvest relevant and agile.”

Namasté Solar, based in Boulder, CO, has nearly 100 employees and has sustained a 100 percent compound annual growth rate over the past six years, attributing much of their rapid growth to their democratic decision-making model. “At Namasté Solar we have experienced firsthand how organizational democracy can translate into financial viability, consumer loyalty, community recognition and support,” comments Blake Jones, co-founder and CEO.



Employees at New Belgium Brewery, a WorldBlu-certified democratic workplace.

“DaVita is honored to once again be recognized as the only healthcare and FORTUNE 500® company on WorldBlu’s List of Most Democratic Workplaces,” said Kent Thiry, chairman and CEO of **DaVita**. “At DaVita, we are proud to be a community first and a company second.”

Since transitioning their company to a democratic workplace just a year ago, **Tickled Media**, a publishing company in Singapore with millions of subscribers across Asia, has seen revenues spike 800 percent. CEO, Roshni Mahtani, explains, “Tickled Media’s democratic practices have made its employees happier. They want to come to work and they take ownership for what they do.”

Best Practices in Organizational Democracy

WorldBlu-certified organizations make use of a variety of unique practices that are distinctly democratic, give power to their people, and contribute to profitability, high performance and employee engagement.

At **Achievers**, based in San Francisco and Toronto, their “MasterPlan” vision document isn’t created in the C-suite, it’s drafted, reviewed and updated annually by employees, the Board of Directors, and even clients and posted in part on their giant MasterPlan board. When faced with a recent expansion opportunity, in order to maintain their democratic culture, Achievers created an internal committee of old and new employees called “Culture Up The Office” to spearhead scaling up the culture.



Employees at WorldBlu-certified Achievers stand in front of their MasterPlan Board.

Social media firm **NixonMcInnes**, based in Brighton, England, has monthly “Church of Fail” meetings where all employees are invited to share their failures – in a non-threatening and fun way and ultimately to resounding applause. They also have an employee-elected rewards team to scrutinize and approve all pay rises – right up to the CEO. The company is achieving double-digit revenue growth.



At **Zappos.com**, headquartered in Henderson, NV, there are “Skip Meetings” held twice a year where everyone has the opportunity to interact with their manager’s manager. They share ideas, feedback and solutions, providing a direct voice-of-the-people perspective on how to drive positive change in their departments.

MindValley, a new media publishing company based in Kula Lumpur, Malaysia, employees aren’t assigned a mentor – they pick their own. At **Valtech**’s offices in Copenhagen, Denmark, the global digital marketing agency invites employees to pick their own manager as well.

At **Menlo Innovations**, based in Ann Arbor, MI, rather than working alone, each team member shares a computer with another team member and rotates partners weekly, increasing collective intelligence and team cohesion.

Rather than fear in the workplace, **WD-40 Company**’s CEO, Garry Ridge, believes they are in the “memories business” and has built a culture around creating positive lasting happy memories for employees, consumers, and shareholders.

At **SAYS.com**, a social media company based Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, employees are given the choice of writing their own job descriptions with team members and testing it out, resulting in “micro-innovations” and opportunities for new talents to emerge.

The Link School, a small high school based in Buena Vista, Colorado, models the future of education. It uses consensus-based democracy, where all staff as well as students have an equal input in core decisions.

WorldBlu List organizations also practice open-book management techniques and some companies, such as **Future Considerations** and **Nixon McInnes**, both headquartered in the UK, and **Glassdoor** and **Namasté Solar** in the US, even have open salaries.

“Organizational democracy is inevitable,” comments Fenton. “The Internet, the demands of generations X and Y to have a voice in the workplace, and the Gallup Organization’s report that nearly two-thirds of US workers are disengaged at work are causing businesses to rethink their management models and embrace a more democratic style. The companies that choose organizational democracy will lead their industries, boost their bottom-line, and ultimately build a more democratic world.”

View the full WorldBlu List of Most Democratic Workplaces™ 2012 and read more unique best practices from this year’s list at <http://worldblu.com/awardee-profiles/2012.php>.

About WorldBlu

WorldBlu has offices throughout the US and UK and specializes in organizational democracy and freedom-centered leadership, with organizational and individual members in over 70 countries worldwide. Founded in 1997, WorldBlu’s vision is to see one billion people working in free and democratic workplaces. For more information about WorldBlu, visit the website at <http://www.worldblu.com>.

(Note to editors: Ms. Traci Fenton is available for interviews. Contact information is at the top of the release. The complete list of certified organizations follows.)



The WorldBlu List of Most Democratic Workplaces™ 2012: (A list, not a ranking.)

1. Achievers (formerly I Love Rewards) – San Francisco, CA
2. AIESEC International – Rotterdam, Netherlands
3. areyoufrank? Minneapolis, MN*
4. Axiom News – Ontario, Canada
5. Barrett Values Centre, Ashville, NC*
6. Beyond Borders – Washington DC
7. Boost New Media – Wellington, New Zealand*
8. Chaordix – Calgary, Canada
9. Chroma Technology – Corp Bellows Falls, VT
10. DaVita – Denver, CO
11. DreamHost – Brea, CA
12. Dyn – Manchester, NH*
13. Explore Communications – Denver, CO
14. Future Considerations – London, UK and Madison, WI
15. Glassdoor – Sausalito, CA
16. Great Harvest Bread Company – Dillon, MT
17. Greenleaf Book Group – Austin, TX
18. Guayaki Yerba Mate – Sebastopol, CA
19. Haiti Partners – Port au Prince, Haiti
20. HCL Technologies – Noida, India
21. Ikamva Youth – Cape Town, South Africa*
22. Innovation Partners International – Washington, DC
23. Integrative – Asheville, NC
24. LEARN – Laval, Canada
25. Menlo Innovations – Ann Arbor, MI
26. MindValley – Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
27. Mojo Interactive – Orlando, FL
28. Namaste Solar – Boulder, CO
29. Nearsoft – Hermosillo, Mexico
30. New Belgium Brewing Company – Fort Collins, CO
31. NixonMcInnes – Brighton, UK
32. Orpheus Chamber Orchestra – New York, NY
33. Quick Left, Boulder, CO*
34. Podio – Copenhagen, Denmark
35. Productivity Associates – San Diego, CA
36. Reserveage Organics, Gainesville, FL*
37. Rabbit – London, UK
38. Rypple – Toronto, Canada
39. SAYS.com, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia*
40. STATSIT – Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
41. sweetriot – New York, NY
42. TakingITGlobal – Toronto, Canada
43. The Link School – Buena Vista, CO
44. Tickled Media, Singapore*
45. Valtech – Copenhagen, Denmark
46. WD-40 Company – San Diego, CA
47. Woo-hoo! – Copenhagen, Denmark
48. Zappos.com – Las Vegas, NV

* = Indicates the first year the organization has received WorldBlu certification.