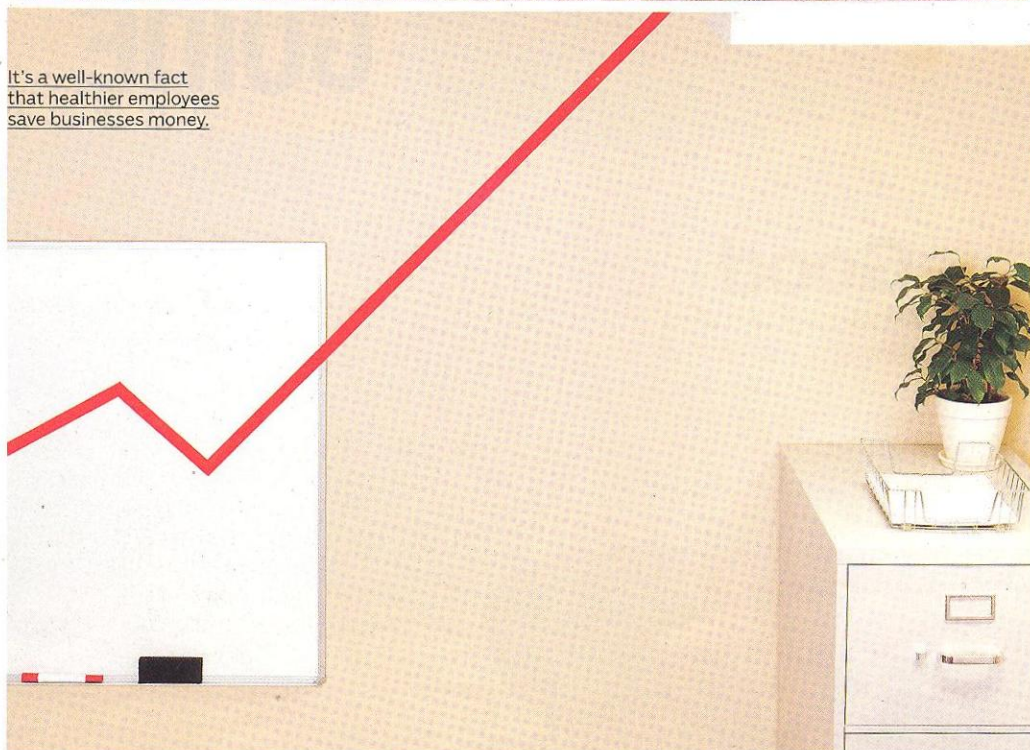


It's a well-known fact that healthier employees save businesses money.



Secrets to Their Success

What makes a great job great? That was the big question we set out to answer with our third annual list of *Outside's* Best Places to Work. Because after two years of celebrating some phenomenal employers, we felt energized—*Look! They're successful precisely because they support a proper work-life balance!*—but also unsure how to proceed. We wanted more takeaway. We wanted to show other businesses the light. So this time around we drilled to the core of our winners' philosophies and practices to look for common strategies. As it turns out, companies from a vast array of industries are following the same enlightened paths.

Now comes your part. If you run a company, take heed of the seven fundamentals detailed here. If you work for a company that, er, needs some guidance, hand this magazine to your boss. (Don't worry, it's *Outside*; they won't think you're giving them management advice.) And if you're looking for a job, flip to the full breakdown of our 50 winners on pages 72–73. Many of them are hiring right now.

1. MAKE 'EM SWEAT

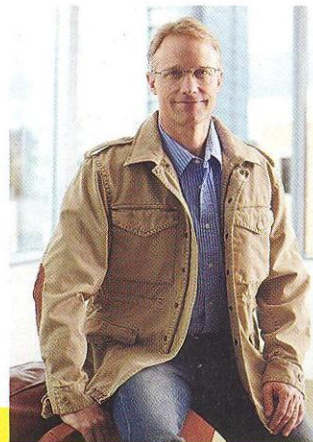
In 2008, **New Belgium Brewery** (#2 on our list) employees Lora Heckman (planning and design), KC McCuiston (facilities), and Jason Trujillo (quality assurance) looked out at the company's 50-acre property in Fort Collins, Colorado, and thought, *Hey, we could put a great cyclocross course here.* So they did. "I'm sure someone looked into insurance," says media relations director

Bryan Simpson, "but we broke the trail pretty quickly." Three years later, staffers take spins during the workday and host a six-week public race series in the fall. Bocce, yoga, and beach volleyball are other popular diversions. "It's harder for the production folks to peel away from the line," notes Simpson, "but they have a Ping-Pong table in there."

[MY COMPANY]

Neil Fiske CEO, Eddie Bauer, #19

When I first arrived here, in 2007, I wanted to take Eddie Bauer back to its roots as an outdoor company. The feedback I got was mostly skepticism. People were like, *We've heard that before.* The company had this amazing 90-year history, but they'd been through this period where they didn't think it was important. The archives were in boxes, scattered around Seattle. My first hire was a brand historian. That made people understand that it wasn't just rhetoric. There's just something about building a brand around the things that you love to do—it translates into a unique culture and motivation. When our First Ascent team summited Everest last May, you can't imagine how much excitement it generated in the office. We'd all had a hand in building the product. People felt like, *Yeah, I helped put them on top of Everest.*



It's a well-known fact that healthier employees save businesses money. But many of our Best Places to Work go far beyond the standard treadmill-and-weights corporate gym with exceptional on-site facilities, wellness programs, and reimbursements for ski passes, gym memberships, and race-entry fees. The Team Sports Committee at **Alaskan Brewing Company** (#17) helped a group of employees train for and climb Mount Rainier, where they planted the company banner on the summit. Nutritional-supplements manufacturer **USANA Health Sciences** (#13) offers a 2,000-square-foot gym that's open 24 hours a day, with a basketball court and classes such as Zumba and CrossFit. At **Smith Optics** (#4), the staff has a locker room and gear room, and the president encourages employees to skip work on big snow days. "You get a ton of grief for