Top Places to Work 2021
THE 150 COMPANIES WITH THE HAPPIEST EMPLOYEES IN THE STATE.
EDITED BY KATIE JOHNSTON
T’S SAFE TO SAY the way we work is being transformed like never before. Corporate practices that have been set in stone for decades — going to an office every day, living near your place of employment, trying to make it seem like your family doesn’t come first — have been upended by the pandemic.

And by and large, it’s workers who are reaping the rewards.

Realizing how productive, and happy, so many employees have been working from home, when their jobs allow for it, employers are letting them work remotely more often and maintain more flexible hours. Seeing people dealing with their children and pets and personal lives over Zoom has made managers realize how much more support they could be giving their staffs in terms of child care.

Employers are increasingly aware their companies don’t exist in a bubble and they need to respond to workers’ needs, as well as to societal changes, especially during these unprecedented times of racial unrest and political upheaval, not to mention a global health crisis. This means doing more to support employees’ mental health and expanding efforts to diversify their staffs to include, learn from, and promote people of all ethnicities and orientations.

Of course, these efforts are self-serving, too. In the midst of a historic wave of resignations and a full-blown hiring crisis, employers know they have to pull out all the stops to attract new employees, as well as to keep the ones they have. And the companies that made The Boston Globe’s Top Places to Work list this year are going gangbusters.

Managers are washing their employees’ cars and delivering champagne to their doors. Parenting coaches are being brought in and free therapy sessions are being offered. Some companies are conducting no-holds-barred “stay interviews” to figure out how to better support existing employees.

To compile our 14th annual Top Places to Work list, the Globe partnered with Energage, the Exton, Pennsylvania-based employee research and consulting firm, to administer anonymous employee surveys rating companies on their flexibility, leadership, values, and more. More than 80,000 employees at 363 companies in Massachusetts participated and 150 employers came out on top, including prominent newcomers such as Encore Boston Harbor and Boston Medical Center Health System. The winners are broken down into four size categories: largest, with 1,000 or more employees; large, with 250-999 employees; medium, with 100-249; and small, with 50-99.

Tsedal Neeley, a professor at Harvard Business School, calls this moment a “work revolution.” And the companies that are really responding to their employees’ needs — the ones willing to ask workers what they want, adjust their policies to fit the moment, and truly put their people first — will be the ones leading the charge.

TO PARTICIPATE IN NEXT YEAR’S TOP PLACES TO WORK SURVEY, VISIT BOSTONGLOBE.COM/NOMINATE.
#1 LARGE COMPANY  
META BOSTON

Though it is part of a major international company, the 500-employee strong Boston arm of social media giant Meta — known until recently as Facebook — has its own culture and personality. Challenging work, creative thinking, and commitment to community all contribute to employees giving their workplace a thumbs-up.

IN A WORD: Connections

VIEW FROM THE TOP: “Everything is talked about very openly internally,” says Perry Stoll, engineering director and domain lead for community and culture. “You’re not going to get better if you can’t talk about the challenges you’re facing.”

COVID CONNECTIONS: When the pandemic shut down the Boston office just months after Kimberly Wilson started her job as office lead for communications, culture, and events, she was intimidated: She’d hardly had any time to develop the sense of belonging she was tasked with creating. But then she was inundated with messages from her new colleagues introducing themselves, sharing office insights, and inviting her to virtual coffee. “It didn’t end up being scary or hard,” she says. “I felt like I belonged.”

INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT: Meta’s social media apps generate an enormous amount of data. Finding efficient ways to process that information is an immense and ongoing challenge. That’s exactly why software engineer Gabriela Jacques da Silva wanted to work there in the first place. “I was looking to come to a place where you could work with really large-scale systems,” she says. “Seeing how people get together to solve these problems is really exciting.” — S.S.