



2017 BEST COMPANIES TO WORK FOR IN ALABAMA



BEST COMPANIES TO WORK FOR IN ALABAMA

ANALYSES, MERITS AND INSIGHTS



Being a great place to work isn't just good for employers — it's good for business. That's the philosophy of firms that compete for honors as Best Companies to Work for in Alabama.

Each year, companies submit information about everything from telecommuting policies to insurance and 401(k) plans to clever ways to reward great work. The Best Companies Group evaluates the responses, comparing the views of employers with those of employees and comparing both to the policies of other

companies.

For the second year in a row, investment firm Edward Jones tops the list of large employers. Accounting firm Wilkins Miller has moved up from second place last year to take top honors among small and medium-size firms.

All eight winners in the large category and all twelve in the small to medium category will be honored at festivities at the Hyatt Regency Birmingham-The Wynfrey Hotel on July 27 from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., sponsored by PMT Publishing Inc.

Beyond the honor of ranking high, firms get useful feedback from the process.

Sheila Hodges, chairman of SH Enterprises Inc., notes that, "The end result of this process is a wealth of information that allows our management team to analyze the impact of various benefits, services and processes, as well as additional opportunities the organization may have for creating a stronger work environment to support our team."

At Main Street Inc., Jennifer Williams says her HR team "will analyze the data by department and compare that to the company averages. We use the data to find issues we could improve on and identify what we are doing well."

The companies honored this year are engaged in banking, investments, insurance, information technology, law, logistics, hospitality and many other fields.

Meet the winning companies on the following pages.

The profiles of winning companies on the following pages are by writers Emmett Burnett, Gail Short and Tom Little.

Best Companies winners engage employees with social events and chances for volunteerism.

Previous Page, Top: Wilkins Miller employees try their hand at laser tag.

Previous Page, Bottom: Citrin Law Firm staffers relax on the water.

This page: River Bank & Trust employees support community efforts to wipe out breast cancer.

"We are a culture of caring for work and family. I think that's what sets us apart."

**— Jason Kozon, Financial Adviser/
Regional Leader
Edward Jones**

Creating a culture that helps employees enjoy work —

**"It's just good for business."
— Allen Carroll, CPA, Managing Partner
Wilkins Miller LLC**

BEST COMPANIES TO WORK FOR IN ALABAMA

SMALL-TO-MEDIUM SIZE COMPANIES (15-249 total company employees)

RANK	COMPANY	AL EXECUTIVE AND TITLE	ADDRESS	PHONE	WEBSITE	# OF ALA. EMPL.	INDUSTRY
1	Wilkins Miller	Allen Carroll Managing Partner	41 W. I-65 Service Rd. N., Ste. 400, Mobile, AL 36605	251-410-6700	wilkinsmiller.com	55	Accounting
2	Barfield, Murphy, Shank & Smith	Don Murphy CPA Managing Member	1121 Riverchase Office Rd. Birmingham, AL 35244	205-982-5500	bmss.com	144	Accounting
3	Citrin Law Firm PC	Andy Citrin Owner	1703 Main St. Daphne, AL 36526	251-621-3000	andywins.com	28	Legal
4	River Bank & Trust	Jimmy Stubbs CEO	PO Box 680249 Prattville, AL 36068	334-290-1012	riverbankandtrust.com	137	Banking
5	Byars Wright Inc.	W. Haig Wright II President	PO Box 1309 Jasper, AL 35502	205-221-8664	byarswright.com	35	Insurance (non-healthcare)
6	Alabama Credit Union	Steve Swofford CEO	PO Box 862998 Tuscaloosa, AL 35486	205-348-5944	alabamacu.com	198	Banking
7	Venturi Inc.	Michael Alvarez CEO	360D Quality Cir., Ste. 400 Huntsville, AL 35806	256-705-2000	venturiaerospace.com	120	Engineering
8	Hartmann Blackmon & Kilgore PC	Dennis Sherrin Managing Partner	806 Section St. Fairhope, AL 36532	251-928-2443	hbkcpcas.net	52	Accounting
9	ASF Intermodal LLC	Michael Smith President & CEO	2020-D W. I-65 Service Rd. Mobile, AL 36693	251-287-8150	asfintermodal.com	39	Transportation
10	SH Enterprises Inc.	Sheila Hodges Chairman	1585 Gulf Shores Pkwy. Gulf Shores, AL 36542	251-968-7516	she-inc.net	152	Real Estate
11	White-Spunner Construction Inc.	John White-Spunner President & CEO	2010 W. I-65 Service Rd. S. Mobile, AL 36693	800-471-5190	white-spunner.com	56	Construction
12	Main Street Inc.	Ted Walton President	920 19th St. N. Birmingham, AL 35203	205-323-0293	mainstreetinc.com	103	Financial Services - Other

LARGE COMPANIES (250 or more total company employees)

RANK	COMPANY	AL EXECUTIVE AND TITLE	ADDRESS	PHONE	WEBSITE	# OF ALA. EMPL.	INDUSTRY
1	Edward Jones	Jason Kozon Financial Adviser/ Regional Leader	22394 Mifflin Rd. #202 Foley, AL 36535	251-943-3399	edwardjones.com	324	Financial Services - Other
2	Total Quality Logistics	Mackenzie Collins Group Sales Manager	26000 Bass Pro Dr., Bldg. E200, Ste. 214 Spanish Fort, AL 36527	800-580-3101	tql.com	94	Transportation
3	America's First Federal Credit Union	Bill Connor CEO	1200 4th Ave. N. Birmingham, AL 35203	205-320-4000	amfirst.org	334	Banking
4	Rural Sourcing Inc.	Monty P. Hamilton CEO	455 Saint Louis St., Ste. 1100 Mobile, AL 36602	251-544-9620	ruralsourcing.com	75	Technology
5	Jack Henry & Associates Inc.	Stan Viner General Manager of Sales	7400 Cahaba Valley Rd. Birmingham, AL 35242	205-981-1980	jackhenry.com	199	Technology
6	Warren Averett	Tommy Sisson Birmingham Managing Member & Chief Growth Officer	2500 Acton Rd. Birmingham, AL 35243	205-979-4100	WarrenAverett.com	484	Accounting
7	MAX Credit Union	Greg McClellan CEO	400 Eastdale Cir. Montgomery, AL 36117	800-776-6776	mymax.com	323	Banking
8	Hargrove Engineers + Constructors	Ralph Hargrove CEO	20 S. Royal St. Mobile, AL 36602	251-476-0605	hargrove-epc.com	523	Engineering



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WILKINS MILLER TOPS SMALL-MEDIUM CATEGORY



With a history spanning more than half a century, Wilkins Miller LLC in Mobile provides professional accounting, wealth management, tax litigation, consulting and other services for its clients.

Allen Carroll, CPA, a managing partner at the firm, describes the company as having a family atmosphere for the employees who work there.

The Wilkins Miller perks include flexible work hours to accommodate employees who have childcare and other family responsibilities. The firm also organizes pot luck suppers, birthday celebrations, afternoon socials and Halloween and Christmas parties. Free and discounted tickets for some family entertainment and sporting events also are on the list of perks.

Wilkins Miller employees have even gathered outside the office on occasions to bowl and play laser tag together.

“This all goes back to our interest and desire to have a great environment, and the team appreciates that,” Carroll says. “It’s what we do to create a culture and an organization that people look forward to coming to and spending time with people

they work with. It’s just good for business.”

Moreover, from January through April 15, the office uses creative ways to help make the demanding tax season more pleasant, including offering fresh fruit in the breakroom and establishing special days like “Tax Fairy Thursdays” in which employees anonymously perform random acts of kindness for other staffers.

“We spend more time with our colleagues than we do our families, and so we want to enjoy being with each other,” says Carroll. “We work hard, and we find opportunities to play hard as well.”

The managers at Wilkins Miller also have taken steps to inspire employee buy-in for projects to improve company processes, and they have implemented strategies to prepare staffers for future leadership roles.

“It’s about team engagement,” says Carroll. “That is one of the shortlist of things we’ve done really well, and I think it’s important for good organizations to find ways to engage the team, and that’s what we’ve done.”

The firm, for example, holds debrief-

ing sessions at the end of tax season and other major cycles so employees can examine and discuss what went right during that time and determine which processes need reform, he says. The managers often encourage some of the younger staffers — some who have as little as three years on the job — to lead teams tasked with brainstorming ideas for improving those processes for the next year.

“We’re giving young people a major leadership role in helping to shape a process or major issue for the firm,” says Carroll. “They’re leading us through change and having ownership.”

Wilkins Miller LLC

Allen Carroll, Managing Partner
41 W. I-65 Service Rd. N., Ste. 400
Mobile, AL 36608
Phone: 251-410-6700
wilkinsmiller.com

It’s Dragonboat time in Mobile and the Wilkins Miller team is ready.

SMALL & MEDIUM LEADERS



Barfield, Murphy team members gather for golf.

2. BARFIELD, MURPHY, SHANK & SMITH LLC

Barfield, Murphy, Shank & Smith LLC is a full-service certified public accounting and business advisory firm headquartered in downtown Birmingham. Managing Member Don Murphy, CPA, says it is a place where the managers and employees work together to maintain what he describes as a “family atmosphere and a caring company

culture.”

The firm’s busiest time of the year is tax season, which requires employees to spend long hours at work, says Murphy, who also is one of the firm’s founding members. Consequently, the firm provides the employees with a number of extras to help ease the stress. Those perks range from free ice cream to a masseuse who comes periodically to give massages. The firm even has an in-house concierge service that assists employees with tasks such as taking their cars to a shop for re-

pairs and picking up groceries.

“People think of it as a cost, but it’s really not,” says Murphy. “We make our money off of billable hours, so if I have to take an hour away to get my car fixed or go to the grocery store, I’m losing that productivity.”

The firm also allows employees to have flexible work schedules, so they can, for instance, take time off to attend a child’s school event or take a family member to the doctor.

“When you have good people, you want to provide an opportunity for them to succeed and build a working environment that makes them productive and appreciate it and take ownership in it,” says Murphy. “Those are core values for us.”

Barfield, Murphy, Shank & Smith

Managing Member: Don Murphy, CPA

1121 Riverchase Office Rd.

Birmingham, AL 35244

Phone: 205-982-5500

bmss.com

3. CITRIN LAW FIRM

Just over two years ago, Andy Citrin says he and his law partners set out to make their firm the kind of place where people loved to work.

“When we got the feedback from our attorneys and paralegals and all of the assistants,” says Citrin, “we started implementing them. We wanted to pay them well, but also create a great culture. It has been intentional, and it didn’t happen overnight. It took a while to achieve because it has to grow out organically.”

Through the project, Citrin, who owns Andy Citrin Injury Attorneys with offices in Daphne and Mobile, says he learned one important lesson.

“People aren’t just interested in making money,” he says. “They want quality of life and to enjoy what they do.”

Today, the employee perks at the firm

include flexible summertime work hours for the hourly workers, cash bonuses for meeting monthly goals, fishing trips in the Gulf, as well as an annual, four-day cruise to Cozumel, Mexico. In addition to

“People aren’t just interested in making money. They want quality of life and to enjoy what they do.”
— Andy Citrin,
Citrin Law Firm

the trips, the employees also participate in team-building exercises like bowling and laser tag.

“We work hard,” says Citrin, “and we play hard, but we really try to maintain a

team mentality.”

Each quarter, the entire staff gathers for an “All-Hands” meeting where they have lunch and review the firm’s core values, discuss the issues of the day and welcome new team members.

“We usually have slide shows and a speaker,” he says. “It’s just another way to stay in touch with one another, because we’re growing so much, we don’t want to get to where we don’t know each other.”

Citrin Law Firm PC

Andy Citrin, Owner

1703 Main St.

Daphne, AL 36526

Phone: 251-621-3000

andywins.com

4. RIVER BANK AND TRUST

With 10 locations around Alabama, River Bank & Trust offers its employees a range of benefits, says CEO Jimmy Stubbs.

“From our board of directors and management team to the team as a whole, there’s a culture of caring here,” Stubbs says.

He points to management’s bi-monthly branch meetings, where employees can offer suggestions for improving operations and customer service. In addition, the bank branches have suggestion boxes. If the bank implements an employee’s idea, management rewards them with a gift card.

River Bank & Trust also recognizes employee achievement through Teller Appreciation Week and The Big Fish Award, in which Stubbs honors an employee for going above and beyond, and social events.

“In our business, even though technology plays a large role in banking, it’s still a people business,” he says. “So when a customer comes to meet with a banker, we want to make sure that banker feels valued and important. When a banker feels appreciated, the customer feels appreciated.”

Stubbs says the appreciation days, benefits and perks have all helped to keep employee turnover low. “In our business,” says Stubbs, “customers like to see the same faces or hear the same voices over the phone. This translates into customer retention and a competitive advantage with business development.”

River Bank & Trust Jimmy Stubbs, CEO | P.O. Box 680249 | Prattville, AL 36068
Phone: 334-290-1012 | riverbankandtrust.com

5. BYARS | WRIGHT INC.

Byars | Wright Inc. is an independent insurance agency with offices in Jasper and Gardendale. It is, says its president, Haig Wright II, a place “where relationships matter,” which happens to be a company’s motto.

Established in 1946, Byars | Wright strives to help employees feel appreciated. For example, the agency has a growth bonus pool in which workers get a percentage of any new growth of the agency, as well as honors for top producers who recruit and retain business, Wright says.

Byars | Wright employees also enjoy other benefits, including flexible work hours and free and discounted tickets to sporting and family events.

“Our benefits are very competitive for our industry,” says Wright. “I just have always liked to treat people the way I like to be treated.”

“I think it has helped us to recruit better talent,” says Wright, “and it has helped us retain employees.”

“A true benefit of that is that it has enhanced our relationships with our clients,” says Wright. “Without much turnover, customers get used to dealing with the same person, they develop relationships with that person and establish trust, which is much needed in our business.”

Byars | Wright Inc.

W. Haig Wright II, President | P.O. Box 1309 | Jasper, AL 35502
Phone: 205-221-8664 | byarswright.com



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6. ALABAMA CREDIT UNION

Alabama Credit Union strives to give employees who show promise the training they need to help advance their careers, CEO Steve Swofford says.

“We strongly prefer to promote from within, providing opportunity to those who make a career commitment to the Alabama Credit Union,” says Swofford. “We therefore have an incentive to provide the leadership training necessary to get our staff ready for advancement. Our leadership training takes many forms, including bringing in outside facilitators for specialized skills training and sending them to year-long courses on supervision, employee development, maintaining a

strong culture, etc.”

As a result, Swofford says most of the staffers who have gone through the leadership training and taken management positions have chosen to stay with the company.

Besides leadership training, all credit union employees have the opportunity to serve on a “high performance” team, he says. The team members tackle critical projects together, set goals and present their results.

“This process has been a terrific addition to our culture,” he says. “Employees get the opportunity to work with co-workers they may have never met, learn new skills and display their abilities to management.”

The Alabama Credit Union offers a 5 percent 401(k) match and profit sharing,

as well as a few fun perks such as Jeans Day and its wellness picnics that promote exercise and healthy eating.

Swofford says the positive workplace culture has had a dynamic effect on the credit union’s performance and attracted outstanding employees.

“We’ve heard that ‘culture trumps strategy,’” says Swofford, “but at Alabama Credit Union, we think we have a winning approach where both a terrific culture and a strong strategy work together to achieve success.”

Alabama Credit Union

Steve Swofford, CEO

P.O. Box 862998

Tuscaloosa, AL 35486

Phone: 205-348-5944

alabamacu.com



7. VENTURI INC.

Venturi Inc., in Huntsville, employs engineers, logisticians, technicians and other professionals to design and develop defense systems for the U.S. Department of Defense. Its areas of specialization include system and software engineering, launch operations and logistics.

The aerospace company’s website describes its workplace culture as “employee-centric,” and company Founder, President and CEO Michael Alvarez, says that since establishing Venturi in 2006, he has been on a mission to create a satisfying work environment for employees.

To help do that, the high-tech company rewards employees with annual

performance-based cash bonuses, as well as instant bonuses throughout the year to employees who excel and go above and beyond the call of duty on behalf of the company.

“We use a lot of metrics to discern what level of bonus an employee would get, and we try to do it in such a way that it’s not just about helping the company grow because some people don’t do that. What we try to reward is, ‘How hard did you work for Venturi?’”

And almost from the time he established Venturi, Alvarez says employees have enjoyed biscuits and other breakfast fare served to them at staff meetings. In addition, the company organizes after-work gatherings to welcome new employees. He has even cooked for the

employees a time or two.

After all, Venturi is a company where organizational charts are rarely seen, he says.

“It’s a matter of respect,” he says. “We respect everybody regardless of their title or position. It has definitely helped us to be successful so far.”

Venturi Inc.

Michael Alvarez, CEO

360D Quality Cir., Ste. 400

Huntsville, AL 35806

Phone: 256-705-2000

venturiaerospace.com

The Venturi team celebrates supporting its community.

8. HARTMANN, BLACKMON & KILGORE PC

The Gulf Coast-based Hartmann, Blackmon & Kilgore PC offers public accounting and business consulting services to individuals and small businesses, as well as governments and multi-national entities.

Managing Shareholder Dennis Sherrin believes the firm has created a culture of communication through direct lines between partners and staff. “We have a mindset that our employees are a part of our firm,” he says. “It’s important to engage our staff to grow. We commit to a continuous-improvement mindset.”

Team members are encouraged to approach management with any questions or thoughts they may have. “Every employee has a monthly meeting with his or her work coach to check up on progress and ask questions.”

The firm recruits young professionals with the understanding that their new hires will want to move up within the company. “There’s no doubt we try to help our employees advance,” says Sherrin. The firm provides advancement opportunities regardless of an employee’s initial role when they joined.

In addition to insurance, 401(k) matches, training and flex schedules, the firm offers special “busy season perks” like internal events and lunches to thank staff for bearing the annual rush.

Hartmann, Blackmon & Kilgore PC Dennis Sherrin, Managing Partner
806 Section St. | Fairhope, AL 36532 | Phone: 251-928-2443 | hbkcpcas.net

9. ASF INTERMODAL

On Mobile Bay, full service drayage carrier and transportation broker ASF Intermodal employs more than 80 staff across 13 terminals in the Southeast and Midwest. Last summer, the company expanded into Maryland with a new terminal in Baltimore, and the transport fleet now exceeds 400 trucks on the road.

Senior Project Manager Robbin Stevens believes that the company’s open door policy allows for ease of communication. “ASF Intermodal has an open environment that stimulates employees by offering a relaxed atmosphere,” she says, “where everyone feels as though their thoughts and concerns matter.”

“The leadership is well rounded and has a passion for enabling employees to be the best they can be,” says Stevens.

ASF also seeks to promote existing employees whenever possible. “Promoting from within has been key to ASF Intermodal and their employee retention,” says Stevens. “Employees have the expectations that advancements are possible and could be considered for such.”

Benefits include health care, dental care, gym membership reimbursement, 401(k), annual bonus structure, PTO, fully funded life insurance and AD&D, as well as supplemental coverage including cancer and accident policies.

ASF Intermodal Inc.

Michael Smith, President & CEO | 2020-D W. I-65 Service Rd. S.
Mobile, AL 36693 | Phone: 251-287-8152
asfintermodal.com

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10. SH ENTERPRISES INC.

SH Enterprises Inc. is the umbrella company for several Gulf Coast business including Century 21 Meyer Real Estate, Meyer Vacation Rentals, Meyer Services, Starr Textile Services and Starr Textile Services in Louisiana.

“The success of SH Enterprises depends upon the quality of the relationships between our company, our team members, our customers, our vendors and the general public,” says Michelle Hodges, president and COO of Meyers Vacation Rentals. “In a sense, regardless of a team member’s position, they are SH Enterprises ambassadors.”

Hodges and company believe that staff should have direct access to management. To facilitate clear communication between management and staff. “We expect and encourage our team to voice their opinions and contribute suggestions to improve the quality of our organization,” says Hodges. “We believe the person doing a job is in the best position to think of ways of doing it more efficiently, more effectively and with more ease.”

Over the past year, team members have been recognized for Coastal Alabama Business Chamber’s Island Spirit Award and South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce Diplomat of the Month. “At SH Enterprises, we promote involvement in professional, community and non-profit organizations,” says Hodges.

SH Enterprises Inc.

Sheila Hodges, Chairman

1585 Gulf Shores Pkwy. | Gulf Shores, AL 36542 | Phone: 251-968-7516 | she-inc.net

11. WHITE-SPUNNER CONSTRUCTION INC.

In Mobile, White-Spunner Construction Inc. has provided general contracting, design-build and construction management services since 1981. While the company began with a concentration within the Mobile Bay area, its scope has expanded to serve clients in over 20 states, including several Fortune 500 companies. White-Spunner’s expertise includes multi-family and mixed-use housing; healthcare, retail and education facilities; historical redevelopment; LEED building and more.

Management seeks to encourage personal and professional growth, and makes efforts to recognize individual successes and milestones. In addition to reimbursement for continuing education, White-Spunner invests in employee betterment through in-house training and individual career-pathing plans.

White-Spunner’s benefits package includes a matching 401(k), a variety of bonus opportunities and incentives, continuing education and tuition reimbursement, on-site wellness facilities and fully paid insurance options.

White-Spunner Construction Inc.

Courtney Allen, Marketing & Communications

2010 W. I-65 Service Rd. S.

Mobile, AL 36693

Phone: 251-445-1717

white-spunner.com

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12. MAIN STREET INC.

Birmingham's Main Street Inc. is a data-driven print solutions provider, offering checking, analytics and marketing programs.

"Main Street feels like a family," says Jennifer Williams, director of human resources. "Main Street is large enough to provide our team members the support and tools needed for personal and professional success, but small enough for each individual team member to be recognized and valued for their contributions to our growing business. We treat our employees with respect, try to be as transparent as possible and listen to their ideas on ways we can improve."

"We believe to function properly as a company, communication is key," says Williams. "We have a quarterly employee newsletter, which is culturally-based."

President Ted Walton also sends out a monthly letter with updates on the previous month's financial performance, project updates and employee recognition. He also hosts a monthly "Lunch with Ted" session, inviting six employees to lunch to discuss anything from business to life, family or hobbies.

"Every member of the Leadership Team is caring and compassionate about Main Street's greatest asset, our people," says Williams. "We each have a vested interest in seeing our people grow in this organization either in skill set or position."

The company's comprehensive benefits program includes medical, dental, vision, employer paid short term disability, long term disability, employer paid life insurance, voluntary life insurance, TelaDoc, Employee Assistance Program and 401(k) with a company match. Employees can participate in the Production Training Program to cross-train in all aspects of production.

Main Street also hosts companywide events like Thanksgiving family meals and game day tailgates. Employees can access season tickets to Barons games, and have multiple opportunities to participate in community service projects like the Jimmie Hale Mission.

Main Street Inc.

Jennifer Williams, Director of Human Resources
920 19th St. N. | Birmingham, AL 35203
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EDWARD JONES INVESTMENTS TOPS LARGE COMPANY ENTRIES



Jason Kozon, one of four Alabama Regional Leaders for Edward Jones, is based in the Foley office.

Edward D. (Ted) Jones founded his namesake company in 1922, determined that associates would be treated as partners. They were then. They are now.

“The spirit of Ted is still here,” notes Jason Kozon, financial adviser and one of four Alabama Regional Leaders. “We are a culture of caring for work and family. I think that’s what sets us apart.”

A major perk distinguishes Edward Jones from most competitors — partnership. Every associate has an opportunity to own part of the firm. “This is a big deal in the benefits package,” Kozon says. “Partnership is a unique reward, rarely seen in competitors.” Any associate in good standing with at least three years of service can be offered partnership. Nearly half of associates are owners.

Other favorite features of working for America’s largest investment adviser goes back to its founding philosophy — the culture of caring. Responding to a questionnaire, one employee wrote,

“When associates face personal or professional difficulties, we stand by them. This might mean quick assistance in a natural disaster, paid leave or medical exceptions, cards and emails, or dozens of associates showing up at a funeral.”

After three years with the company, employees in good standing can be offered partnership and nearly half of associates are owners. “Partnership is a unique reward, rarely seen in competitors.”

— Jason Kozon,
Financial Adviser & Regional Leader
Edward Jones

Another worker added, “Volunteerism is fundamental to our culture, and associates love the opportunity to give back. Home-office associates receive one paid ‘Day of Caring’ annually. In our branches, charitable volunteerism during the workday is common and expected.”

Edward Jones, by definition of a financial advisory company, helps clients achieve money goals — retirement, college, wealth management, insurance and many other bangs for the buck. Regulations are intense and so is learning.

“Training never stops,” says Kozon. “It is vital to keep current and we are there to help. And with training and good work, we offer plenty of opportunities for advancement.”

Financial advisers are paid to study for licenses, then go on salary plus earning commissions and bonuses. They eventually transition to commission earnings supplemented by profitability bonuses and profit sharing, even the possibility of limited partnership.

Typically, an Edward Jones branch has one financial adviser and one branch office administrator serving clients in the neighborhoods where they live and work. For example, Kozon is located and serves the Foley area. “The company pays expenses, installs technology and provides the training and support needed to succeed,” he says.

Edward Jones

Jason Kozon, Financial Adviser/Regional Leader

22394 Mifflin Rd. #202

Foley, AL 36535

Phone: 251-943-3399

edwardjones.com

LARGE COMPANY LEADERS

2. TQL

Worker satisfaction with Total Quality Logistics speaks through growth statistics. TQL established its Alabama presence in Spanish Fort in July 2014 with four employees. Three years later it has 63.

The firm brokers freight by networking with more than 60,000 carriers. Hiring has been in rockets, largely because the sky is the limit.

“We don’t promote on tenure. We promote on performance,” says company Group Sales Manager Mackenzie Collins. “If you work hard and do it right,

you will be noticed and you can plot your own advancement path.”

Based in Cincinnati, with two locations in Alabama (the other in Birmingham), TQL is the second largest freight brokerage firm in North America. “Our training is non-stop in a 365 day, 24/7 operation,” adds Collins. “But it is hands-on coaching. There are no walls here.”

TQL advocates hard work but not without fun.

“Chad and I (Chad McMillen, satellite office leader in Birmingham) have freedom to provide the perks we want to reward our teams for good work,” says Collins. In addition to in-house train-

ing, there are in-house ping-pong tables, crawfish boils and intramural sports. But an employee favorite is the Snooze or Cruise Pass. Rewarded for good work, the pass grants permission to come to work two hours late or leave two hours early.

TQL

Mackenzie Collins, Group Sales Manager
26000 Bass Pro Dr., Bldg. E200, Ste. 214
Spanish Fort, AL 36527
Phone: 800-580-3101
tql.com

“If you work hard and do it right, you will be noticed and you can plot your own advancement path.”
— Mackenzie Collins, Group Sales Manager, TQL



3. AMERICA'S FIRST FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Headquartered in Birmingham, AFFCU has a guiding philosophy: “We are

only as good as our employees.” With 19 branch locations, 249,000 members and \$1.5 billion in assets, employees are beyond good. And according to workers, so is the company. It starts at the top.

“Commitment to staff is key to being able to deliver the high level of service our members expect,” says CEO Bill Connor. “That commitment extends from the onboarding of new staff to a robust slate of training and professional development offerings, a generous employee compensation and benefits package and opportunities for staff to be engaged in the communities we serve.”

Training is ongoing, tailored to worker needs. “It’s not just technical push a button here or there,” says Audra Weber, SVP-chief human resource officer. “The training is geared to help in professional development and personal lives.”

Founded in 1936, AFFCU offers financial services to its members who are the owners of the credit union. The company is strong on the total employee,

“Commitment to staff is key to being able to deliver the high level of service our members expect.”
— Bill Connor, CEO,
America’s First Federal Credit Union

their families and community outreach.

CEO Connor adds, “We believe an individual’s employment has a significant bearing on their quality of life, and so we want to provide the best work experience and environment we can for our staff members.”

America’s First Federal Credit Union

Bill Connor, CEO
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Birmingham, AL 35203
Phone: 205-320-4000
amfirst.org



4. RURAL SOURCING INC.

Cars are long gone from the former Buick automobile dealership in downtown Mobile. In its place are more than 80 developers, programming cutting-edge technology.

Rural Sourcing Inc. offers highly specialized IT services for companies across a variety of industries. “We strive to be an employer of choice,” says Trey Sparks, development center director. “RSI works

hard on maintaining our culture and making it a great place to work.”

In addition to work, every software development center (including Mobile) has colleagues volunteering as Cultural Ambassadors. They arrange monthly events from Nerd Olympics to potlucks to coordinating fundraisers and community volunteer events.

Benefit packages include perks that meld traditional with cool. Flexible hours allow work from home as needed, juggle hours with family events, or take a coding break in the company game room.

Development centers span the country, therefore the focus is on transparency between centers and corporate office. Quarterly town hall webinars are held where colleagues log in for interactive sessions with executives. A weekly video from the CEO is distributed, as well as local round up meetings to learn what’s going on within their centers.

Sparks notes, “Our work is challenging. But we train and mentor employees from the first day they sign on.”

Company CEO Monty Hamilton adds, “The bottom line is that we want to be an inclusive place to work where people feel comfortable being who they are.”

Rural Sourcing Inc.

Monty P. Hamilton, CEO

Trey Sparks, Development Center Director

455 Saint Louis Str., Ste. 1100

Mobile, AL 36602

Phone: 251-544-9620

ruralsourcing.com

Left: Monty Hamilton

Right: Trey Sparks

we love local.

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5. JACK HENRY AND ASSOCIATES

Jack Henry was once asked to explain his namesake company's phenomenal success. He answered, "We hired people smarter than we were, treated them better than we treated ourselves, and they treated customers better than we ever imagined." The strategy worked.

One out of five banks in America use JHA systems. The company partners with more than 1,300 financial institutions throughout the U.S. It is listed in Forbes Magazine's Top 100 Best Employers in the U.S.

With three locations in Alabama (two in Birmingham, one in Hoover), JHA offers more than 100 products, including banking technology, payment processing and automated services. And in keeping with the founder's belief, the primary resource of JHA is people.

"Employee focused is much easier to say than to be," says Stan Viner, general manager of sales. "Many companies say they value employees. We actually do what many other companies say."

Employees list among favorite company perks flexible hours, working from home occasionally and telecommuting. Workers are encouraged to volunteer for charity events. But they also participate

in March Madness Bracket Competition (great prizes) and a fierce office rivalry Halloween Costume Contest.

Mike Henry, Jack Henry's son, once said, "Do the right thing, do what it takes and have fun." It is written on the back of JHA associates' business cards.

Jack Henry and Associates

Stan Viner, General Manager of Sales

7400 Cahaba Valley Rd.

Birmingham, AL 35242-6306

Phone: 205-981-1980

jackhenry.com

"Employee focused is much easier to say than to be. Many companies say they value employees. We actually do what many other companies say."

— Stan Viner, general manager of sales
Jack Henry and Associates

BUILDING ACROSS THE SOUTHEAST

For more than two decades, Gray Construction has been meeting the design-build needs for customers around the world, right here in Alabama. Ranking 5th in the nation* and having completed nearly 1,000 manufacturing facilities across the U.S., we understand the unique needs of this highly specialized, dynamic market.

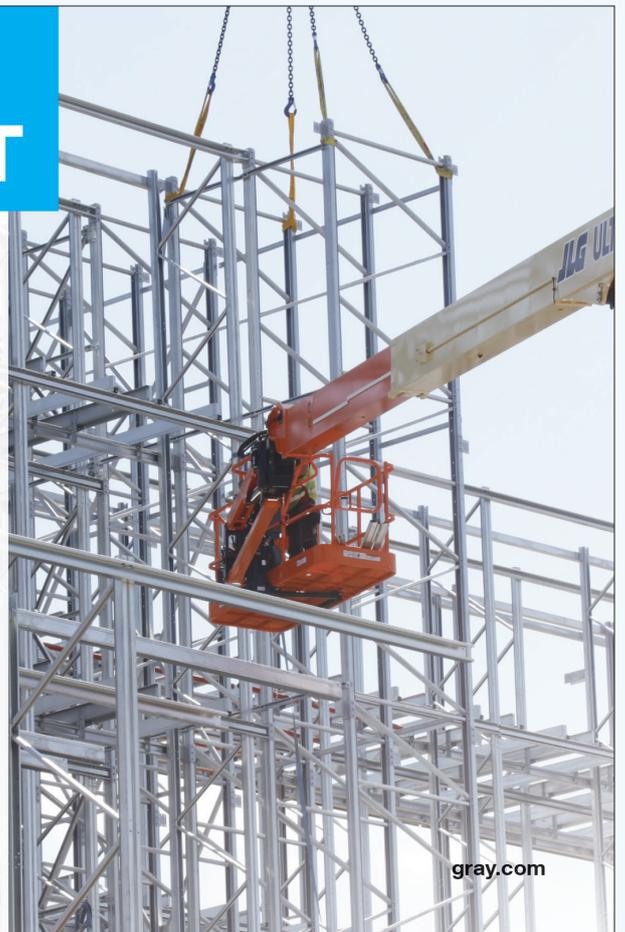
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Engineering | Architecture | Construction

Patrick McCowan
Regional Manager, Southeast Office
pmccowan@gray.com



gray.com

6. WARREN AVERETT

Founded in 1972 as a small Birmingham accounting and bookkeeping business, Warren Averett today is the largest such firm in Alabama and one of the largest accounting firms in the Southeast. More than 800 employees keep the wheels moving. The company calls it “the A-Plus Wheel.”

“It has three spokes,” explains Tommy Sisson, chief growth officer, discussing the company’s wheeled approach. “We hire A-plus talent, deliver A-plus service, to A-plus clients. But we are only as strong as the weakest spoke.”

Employees ensure the wheels of Warren Averett roll. “We don’t require a set time of years before moving up to new company positions,” adds Sisson. “You can advance in your job or move to another area in the company.” He speaks from experience. Company executive Sisson started as a college intern.

With traditional compensation and benefits, the company also offers parental leave for moms and dads. All employees enjoy flexible working hours at work and from home when needed. And when at the office, ‘dress for your day’ is the watchword. Employees wear business casual any day that aligns with their schedule — so that no client meetings means no neckties.

Warren Averett

Tommy Sisson, Birmingham Managing Member & Chief Growth Officer
2500 Acton Rd.
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Phone: 205-979-4100
WarrenAverett.com

“We hire A-plus talent, deliver A-plus service, to A-plus clients. But we are only as strong as the weakest spoke.”

— Tommy Sisson,
Birmingham managing member
& chief growth officer
Warren Averett

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“We never lose sight that our employees make us successful in this institution.”

**— Lynette Cupps,
vice president
of organizational
development
MAX Credit Union**

7. MAX CREDIT UNION

MAX Credit Union offers a wide range of customer financial opportunities, including savings, checking, lending products, insurance and real estate investments. It all started in a cigar box.

In 1955 Maxwell Air Force Base personnel approached a base employee about setting aside money for soldiers’ financial

needs. Sixteen people placed \$125 in a cigar box. The first loan was for \$125.

From then until now, MAX’s emphasis on caring for each other registers highly favorable with employees. “We never lose sight that our employees make us successful in this institution,” notes Lynette Cupps, vice president of organizational development. “It’s great to have you enjoy your job every day, but we also support your family and goals outside of the office.”

MAX also scores highly for encouraging employees and family members to participate in area community charity

events. Approximately 3,000 employee volunteer hours were spent serving the community in 2016.

Communications is key, critical and continuous. “We look at communication as conversation,” says Cupps. “Video blogs, text reminders, social media platforms and quarterly corporate-wide coffee meetings create dialogues between team members.”

As for career growth, entry-level employees have climbed to management positions and the view from on top has room for more. Most jobs have a defined path of advancement. Those wanting to advance know what to do and how long it will take.

MAX Credit Union

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Montgomery, AL 36117
Phone: 800-776-6776
mymax.com

Greg McClellan is CEO at Montgomery-based MAX Credit Union.



8. HARGROVE ENGINEERS + CONSTRUCTORS

Above Hargrove office doors, entryways and meeting rooms is a sign with two words: “One Team.” It reminds employees from new hires to CEO that they are all one body, 1,400 workers

united as one.

“I often say that winners like to play alongside winners,” says Company President and CEO Ralph A. Hargrove. “We recruit and retain top talent because of the relationships built and maintained at Hargrove. This culture runs deep within our team. Strong relationships among talented people produce excellent results and make Hargrove desirable to new teammates and clients alike.”

Nurturing number one employees for One Team is high priority. “Many competitors hire resources for projects and then release them when finished,” says HR Director Chad Vinson. “When we hire, our intent is to keep them long term. We want employees to stay for a long duration.”

Workers give high marks to their company’s benefit package, which now includes pet insurance.

Hargrove is a full-service engineering, procurement, and construction management firm with offices located across the United States. In addition to benefits and security, employees give highly favorable marks for safety, quality and teammate

environment. They also enjoy company-employee family-centered activities, charity events and excellent Mardi Gras parties.

Hargrove Engineers + Constructors

Ralph A. Hargrove, CEO
20 S. Royal St.
Mobile, AL 36602
Phone: 251-476-0605
hargrove-epc.com

“Strong relationships among talented people produce excellent results and make Hargrove desirable to new teammates and clients alike.”

**— Ralph Hargrove, CEO
Hargrove Engineers + Constructors**

A great team helps maintain a great team, says Ralph Hargrove, CEO of Hargrove Engineers + Constructors, noting that “winners like to play alongside winners.”

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