

“ YOU CAN'T WIN IF YOU CAN'T TELL YOUR STORY ”

# ROBIN HARDMAN COMMUNICATIONS

WORK-LIFE AND HR COMMUNICATIONS

# 10 TIPS

FOR A STRONGER  
"BEST PLACE TO WORK"  
SUBMISSION

## *Think Easy.*

**You don't have to do it yourself!** I can help you with any step of your "best company" application process, from strategy to writing. Call me today and let's discuss how I can help you tell *your* story.

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# 10

## TIPS FOR A STRONGER "BEST PLACE TO WORK" SUBMISSION

From *Working Mother* to *Fortune* to the hundreds of regional, industry-based, or topic-specific lists each year, getting onto a "best place to work" list can be a huge benefit to your organization. **Of course you need a great culture and some strong policies and programs to get on one of these lists, but you also must be able to your story.** Here are some ideas that can help:

1

### Think Unique

What makes your company special? What special perks do your employees have that relate directly to your industry (such as discounts on cars for car dealerships, or on financial planning for investment firms)? How do your programs and policies reflect your stated corporate philosophy and values? How do you demonstrate parallels between the way you treat employees and the way you expect your customers to be treated?

2

### Think Narrow

A program confined to one of your sites or departments is generally better than no program at all—unless it clearly supports some elite category of employees at the expense of others. And even an incremental improvement in one of your benefits or programs shows that you are working in the right direction.

3

### Think Broad

Not all programs, practices and policies that support employees fall into categories like "work-life" or "diversity." Do you have policies governing the timing and use of meetings? Do you have systems in place for gathering employee ideas and suggestions? Do you allow employees to advance in their careers through lateral moves, rather than strictly upward? These are the kind of innovations found in many a "best company." Mention them!

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### Think Positive

If you can honestly say "yes" in answer to an application question, say it. If there are some caveats, that's what the "written comments" or "explain" sections are for. Better "yes" with caveats, than "no" with exceptions.

5

### Think Specific

The dynamics are in the details. Exactly how does a program work? What does it cost employees, if anything, and what specifically do they get for that? If it's a back-up child care program, how many days do they get, can they use more than those days by paying on their own, does it include in-home as well as center-based care, is it available to all employees, are providers vetted...etc?

6

### Think General

The details to include are the ones that demonstrate how and why a program works. But don't get carried away and start throwing in every last bit of legalese in your policy. If your health insurance covers domestic partners, it's enough to say that—perhaps clarifying whether that includes opposite- as well as same-sex domestic partners—without going into detail about how employees are asked to document their status.

7

### Think Beyond

Every company has its own names for things. If you've got a program that involves pairing employees with other employees who act as resources and coaches, you've got a mentoring program—no matter what you happen to call it. Don't be so literal-minded that you miss out on opportunities to strut your stuff.

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### Think Nerdy

Crunch those numbers. Showcase any data you have showing how many employees have used a program, or—better yet—what effects the program has had on key factors like demographics, recruitment, retention, promotion rates, customer satisfaction and so on.

9

### Think Concise

In most cases, you'll face word or character limits. Keep copy trim by eliminating: over-generalized language ("We strive to support the work-life balance of our employees in every possible way"), platitudes ("Flexible work arrangements make it easier for employees to have work-family balance") and unnecessary repetition ("We have a paid parental leave policy. Our parental leave policy provides...")

10

### Think Personal

Don't just talk about programs and policies. Talk about people. Tell specific stories about employees that have benefited from the programs you're describing. Add quotes. And remember that here, once again, the dynamics are in the details. An employee says she benefited from tuition assistance? Great. She benefited because she was able to use it to complete her degree, and in that way was able to get a promotion? Even better.

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