

. HOW TO .  
**THRIVE**  
**FROM 9 TO 5**

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS

**IN THE MILLIONS-SELLING GENRE OF SELF-HELP LITERATURE,** buckets of ink are spilled teaching people how to be happy. But when it comes to work, even Dr. Phil-o-philes have come to swallow a dose of saturnine suffering. There's a reason it's called the rat race, the grind: It puts food on the table, wine in your glass. A job isn't meant to put you on cloud nine... unless you happen to work for one of these 20 companies.

To locate the best places to work in Portland, we turned to the experts: the employees themselves. We pored over and analyzed 1,397 surveys, then visited each of the top companies on-site. We also spent ample face time with both management and their charges, trying to ferret out strains of bitterness and striving to answer a simple question: *What exactly makes them so dang happy to come to work?* Employees wasted few words talking about salary and company stability. Instead, they waxed rhapsodic about managers with golden hearts, vacation days so plentiful you'd think the company was French, and generous perks: Discounted groceries! Free cars! Dogs at every desk!

And if your company didn't make the list? We're sharing the secrets of workplace happiness with you, so that you can do what you should: Stick a Post-It on this page and slip a copy of the issue under your boss's door. We hope, for your sake, that the message finally gets through.



BY JILL DAVIS AND GILLIAN KLUCAS | PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL SCHMITT

## R&H CONSTRUCTION

**IT ISN'T DIFFICULT TO LOCATE** John Bradley, president of R&H Construction. His desk is next to the entrance, and no hint of a door or wall separates him from employees.

Founded 27 years ago by Bradley and his University of Oregon fraternity brother Bob Fulton, R&H started out working on those pedestrian structures, strip malls. But in an echo of its office space, the company quickly gained a reputation for openness—in this case, to new ideas and ways of building, which explains why R&H crews built the Pearl's Wieden+Kennedy offices.

The company's workplace appeal has much to do with such innovative projects; employees receive considerable latitude to get the job done. "People who leave for more money come back because there is more respect and autonomy here," says one project manager. Employees also report that the company's focus on client satisfaction means that the emphasis on speed over quality—a bugaboo of some construction outfits—does not exist here.

And should employees begin to neglect the work-life balance, Bradley himself will often politely suggest that they pack it in for the evening and go on home. —JD

**BUSINESS****General contracting****LOCATION****Southwest Portland****NO. OF EMPLOYEES****260**