

HONORING NORTH TEXAS COMPANIES THAT ARE OUT OF THIS WORLD

Dallas Business Journal

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# BEST PLACES TO WORK



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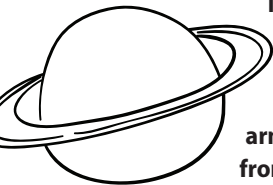


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FROM THE PROJECT EDITOR

# Out of this world



In keeping with this year's science-fiction theme, we asked officials from the winning companies to identify their workforce with various combatants from the iconic *Star Wars* series. More than 60 percent of respondents identified with the Rebel Alliance, a ragtag army made up of individuals fighting together for freedom and justice from forces of evil. Coming in second: the cuddly, courageous Ewoks, who truly fight for their right to party.

It takes all kinds to protect the galaxy. Just as it does to create a positive, encouraging and creative corporate culture.

It's in recognition of these amazing and essential employees that the *Dallas Business Journal* presents the 2011 edition of the prestigious Best Places to Work program.

While often it's the company founder or CEO who captains the ship, the strongest company leaders tell us that the true shooting stars are the Wookiees and Ewoks of the workplace. They have the company's back. They do the heavy lifting. And they fight for — and celebrate — every success of every team member.

It was a tough year to soar to the top of the 2010 Best Places to Work charts. Competition was fierce, in a not-really-recovering economy.

All 52 North Texas-based businesses that were named

winners have certain things in common. When talking about their company culture, they use words like *trust*, *loyalty*, *respect* and *engagement*. And every company remembers one very important thing: Fun matters.

This publication includes excerpts from Q&As with executives from North Texas' top large, midsize and small companies, as determined by Quantum Workplace, an independent research firm that administers the Best Places to Work survey.

It is our honor to shine the spotlight on these companies, allowing them to share their expertise.

And one piece of advice: Let the Wookiee win.



**Katherine Cromer Brock**  
 Managing Editor  
 214-766-7112

## METHODOLOGY

### NOMINATIONS:

The *Dallas Business Journal* began soliciting nominations for its 2011 Best Places program earlier in the year through a variety of outreach initiatives, including advertisements in the weekly newspaper, promotions on [www.dallasbusinessjournal.com](http://www.dallasbusinessjournal.com), and e-mails to *DBJ* Daily Update subscribers.

### ELIGIBILITY:

To be eligible, companies must have at least one office in North Texas, as defined by Dallas, Collin, Tarrant and Denton and contiguous counties, and have a minimum of 10 North Texas employees. It is not required to be headquartered in Dallas-Fort Worth. Inclusion in a category is determined solely by the number of North Texas employees.

### EMPLOYEE SURVEYS:

After the nomination deadline, entries were provided to Quantum Workplace, an independent research company based in Wichita, Kan. Quantum conducts the Best Places to Work surveys for a number of business journals owned by American City Business Journals, *DBJ's* parent company. Each company that applied for the program was contacted by Quantum, and provided a link to a survey for employees to complete. Questions covered topics such as the company's work environment, innovations/new ideas, people practices, personal growth and development, leadership in the organization, employee recognition and how things work day to day. Each survey question was assigned a point value, which was used in determining each company's final score. The highest possible aggregate score was 100. The employee survey process ended in early July. Along the way, company representatives were given regular updates from Quantum on employee participation levels.

### QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

Those companies whose number of responses met Quantum's specifications to guarantee a 95 percent confidence level (with a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percent) were included in the final rankings. The levels of employee participation required to qualify ranged from 85 percent, for companies with 10 to 50 full-time North Texas employees, to 5 percent for companies with more than 5,000 full-time local employees.

### WINNING COMPANIES:

To earn the *DBJ* Best Places to Work designation, companies had to meet or beat a national best practice score for their category, as determined by Quantum Workplace, which administers more than 5,000 employee surveys across the country each year. The best practice score is based on overall participation and performance. Winners were announced at [www.dallasbusinessjournal.com](http://www.dallasbusinessjournal.com); honorees also were announced in select issues of the *Dallas Business Journal's* weekly newspaper. Rankings were revealed at a celebratory awards luncheon held Sept. 22.

### 2012 NOMINATIONS:

The *Dallas Business Journal* will begin accepting preliminary nominations for the 2012 Best Places to Work program this month. See [www.dallasbusinessjournal.com](http://www.dallasbusinessjournal.com) and click Events, and then on Nominations.

### RESEARCH REPORTS:

Quantum provides each qualifying company (those that met employee survey participation requirements) with a free overview report that shows the company's standing vs. others in its category. Quantum also offers more in-depth reports for various fees. Top-ranked companies in each category will receive a free in-depth report from Quantum.

### QUESTIONS:

Please contact Managing Editor Katherine Cromer Brock at [kcromerbrock@bizjournals.com](mailto:kcromerbrock@bizjournals.com) for more information.

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**NO. 2**  
**PEGASUSABLON**

At PegasusAblon, it's all about character.

Skills can be acquired, but you can't train character, company officials say.

"Our base interest in individuals is: Do we like them? Do we believe that we will trust them? Are they individually self-managed? Are they competent, or do they make good decisions?"

Decision-making is not based on education or skill level, but rather a combination of character traits, including lack of ego, trust, self-confidence and a balance of co-dependence and independence, officials say.

Further, Pegasus-

Ablon plays to the needs of its top talent.

"People want to be respected, trusted, appreciated and have stability and a sense of both individual and collective destiny. Top talent doesn't just want this; true top talent demands it both for themselves and for those on their team," company officials say. "I believe that if you get this right, everything else generally works."

Holding to that philosophy, officials say they don't "manage" their employees. They trust them to manage themselves, including their hours, vacation time and other person-

**PEGASUSABLON**  
 Commercial real estate

**FOUNDED:** 2007

**EMPLOYEES:** 16

**ANNUAL REVENUE:** N/A

**TOP LOCAL EXECUTIVE:**

Michael Ablon, partner

**ADDRESS:** 8222 Douglas Ave., Ste. 450, Dallas 75225

**CONTACT:** www.pegasusablon.com

nel issues.

PegasusAblon donates 10 percent of its profits to charity each year.

"We lead by example, but have no individual requirements," officials say. "We don't have anyone on the team that is not a giver by nature, as they would not fit our culture to begin with."



**SKILLS CAN BE ACQUIRED, BUT YOU CAN'T TRAIN CHARACTER.**

**NO. 3**  
**ORGSYNC INC.**



OrgSync began in one house with a close group of friends and an incredible vision.

The idea was simple: make it easier for groups and organizations to communicate and stay organized.

"Living together really helped us to create a family-type culture with a work-hard, play-hard mindset that has stuck with us even after our transition from houses in Austin to an office in Dallas," officials say. "OrgSync employees are

a tight-knit crew; we treat each other like family. We celebrate new sales and client renewals by ringing bells and banging gongs."

When hiring new employees, OrgSync looks for people who are passionate about what they do and aren't done learning and growing professionally. Employees are encouraged to work on projects outside their typical day-to-day to try new things and continue to grow.

Popular benefits

include free breakfast, lunch and snacks, team outings, company swag, boat outings, pool parties and a pet-friendly environment.

OrgSync is expanding its current offices, incorporating break rooms with couches, games and other amenities.

OrgSync officials said Yoda's quote "Do or do not. There is no try" from *Star Wars* exemplifies their company.

"Trying implies doubt and the potential for failure. When our team

**ORGSYNC INC.**  
 Information technology

**FOUNDED:** 2007

**EMPLOYEES:** 30

**REVENUE:** N/A

**TOP LOCAL EXECUTIVE:** Eric Fortenberry, founder and CEO

**ADDRESS:** 13140 Coit Road, Ste. 405, Dallas 75240

**CONTACT:** www.orgsync.com @orgsync

sets our sights on something, we give it our all to achieve it. We don't try, we do."

**NO. 4**  
**KLEMCHUK KUBASTA LLP**

Building "esprit de corps" is a top priority at Klemchuk Kubasta, and company officials spend significant time and energy recruiting and training, ensuring employee engagement and inspiration.

Creativity and initiation are rewarded.

"Many companies see the relationship between employers and employees as adversarial," officials say. "We do not. We realize that every member of our team plays an important role in the success or failure of the entire firm. As such, every member of our team is treated fairly and respectfully. Our policies engender a culture of teamwork and a sense of being a stakeholder in the overall work of the firm, but also encourage and reward individual achievement."

Employees are recognized with bonuses for performance, as well as the periodical Above and Beyond the Call of Duty, or ABCD, awards, which have included spa days, massages and dinner gift cards.

Klemchuk Kubasta routinely solicits, and commonly adopts and implements, employee suggestions and opinions regarding firm procedures, project management, or other aspects of firm operations.

"Whenever possible, we also make a point to recognize the individual team members who provide a great idea so that everyone knows the source," officials say. "Such recognition illustrates to all that innovative thinking is encouraged and rewarded at Klemchuk Kubasta, and gives everyone on our team a personal stake in the success of the firm."

Klemchuk Kubasta officials chose Spock's quote "Live long and prosper" to represent their employees.

"We know that building a great place to work is not a sprint but a marathon. We are in it for the long haul. We understand that building something great doesn't happen overnight, but is built over a lifetime. We challenge ourselves to grow every year, not just numerically, but in innovation and in our ability to serve others."

**KLEMCHUK KUBASTA LLP**  
 Intellectual property law firm

**FOUNDED:** 2009

**TOP LOCAL EXECUTIVE:** Darin Klemchuk, co-founder

**EMPLOYEES:** 22

**REVENUE:** \$3 million

**ADDRESS:** 8150 N. Central Expwy., 10th Floor, Dallas 75206

**CONTACT:** www.kk-llp.com @kk\_llp