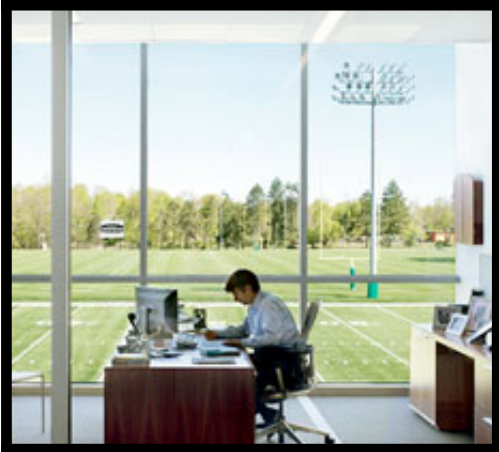


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# **Pushing Back on Two Comments on NY Jets' 2010 Top Small Company Workplace Award**



Some of the most (and most vociferous) comments I've seen related to the announcement of our 2010 Top Small Company Workplaces last week in the June issue of Inc. Magazine – firms whose human capital strategies contribute to their revenue growth and profitability – appear in response to this post by Manish Mehta on The Jets Stream blog, on NYDailyNews.com.

There are 87 comments to Mehta's post on the NY Jets as of this writing. Here's what Bob from garfield had to say:

*Evidently, no one at Inc. is a Jet season ticket holder. If Inc. really wants to see how the Jets PSL sales staff do their job, they should view the movie "THE BOILER ROOM"*

I've seen that movie and the Jets' sales environment is about as far from what's depicted in it as can be. For one thing, the salesmen (I don't recall seeing any women in the workplace in the film) were given zero autonomy in their work. In contrast, here's how the Jets answered the question in our award application, *How does the organization encourage employees to participate in important business decisions?*

*The Jets culture, which is very employee centric and collaborative, enables the senior management of football and business to encourage all employees to share ideas and contribute even in important business decisions. There are number of ways that we foster this participation. The most important way is actually in the design of our new facility. Before we moved to NJ, we had two offices in NYC and Long Island. The distance between the offices made communication and collaboration challenging. In the layout of our new building, open workspaces and open door policies reign supreme. The results have been phenomenal. Managers and employees from different departments can work in small or large groups to develop creative ideas and solutions to important business issues. A great example of an idea generated from this workspace collaboration is the "Opportunity Knocks" sales campaign for our season tickets and seat licenses. With such a well known brand, the Jets needed to let the public know of the rare opportunity available to buy season tickets in our new stadium. Opportunity Knocks was the result. In the football world, our General Manager encourages his staff from pro personnel assistants to the Assistant General Manager to be actively involved in player decisions. The scouts, as they are called, study players from college and other professional teams to develop suggestions and recommendations on who should be drafted on Draft Day or who should be signed as a free agent. There have been many times that an employee will feel passionately about a player that they feel is worthy of the Jets uniform and the decision will be made to go after that player even if the GM is lukewarm on that particular player. On both sides of our business and both sides of the ball, we would not be able to be as successful a football team if the employees were not encouraged to voice their opinions, share their creative ideas or be enabled to think "outside the box".*

Further down in the comments to Mehta's post, greenjohnny wrote:

*Sounds nice, should look good on a belt buckle but who really cares. It's [sic] pretty good that they can make all their employees take two weeks off without pay and still get an award for best place to work for.*

This relates to the Jets' answer to another, topical question in our application, *Over the last year, what kind of impact has the economy had on your business? Please briefly explain how your company has responded?* [Cheap Cialis](#). Here's how the NFL franchise responded:

*Football is not immune from the economic downturn and recession that has gripped the entire country. Our local revenue comes primarily from ticket sales and sponsorships. Our fans (customers) have been affected by layoffs, salary freezes and reductions in work hours. Our sponsors have seen a dramatic decrease in budgets for spending on advertising. Consequently, the Jets have been affected by a slowdown in revenue generated by ticket sales and sponsorship deals. Over the course of 2009, we were challenged to find ways to decrease spending and cut costs. Since our employees are the key to our success, this exercise needed to be done with layoffs as an extreme last measure. Many teams around the NFL in the early part of 2009 were laying off their employees to save money. ... We froze salaries for the year. Since we still needed to find extra savings, we made a crucial decision to furlough business employees for 2 weeks versus eliminating positions. The furloughs were scheduled for the slowest time in our year at the end of June and beginning of July. Employees had to choose 2 out of 4 weeks to take their furlough. The response from employees was positive. They were extremely grateful that they didn't have to say goodbye to a friend. Our senior management participated as well, which made the program very credible. It was tough for our employees to lose 2 weeks of pay, but overall the furlough program worked successfully.*

In short, the Jets took a page from several of our previous honorees faced with tough decisions and chose to share the pain rather than lay anyone off. The fact that senior leadership participated speaks volumes and, as you can see, helped maintain their productive workplace culture of ownership and high employee engagement.

I should mention that as part of our employee engagement research for our award, we conducted interviews with staff from different levels within the Jets' organization, and everything they told us about their employee practices, including what's excerpted above, checks out. Especially for their industry, they are truly a Winning Workplace.

**Related:** For more on the Jets' new workplace environment, including some great pictures, check out this feature from the June Inc. Magazine.

*Photo credit: Nikolas Koenig/Inc.*

View full post on [Winning Workplaces](#)

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