

The background of the page features a silhouette of two people running on a beach. A large, stylized graphic of a hand holding a document is overlaid on the left side. The document has several lines of text and a circular logo at the bottom. The overall color scheme is orange and black.

17th Annual Best Places to Work

2008 honorees demonstrate
“family” doesn’t have to be
squeezed out of larger firms

STORY BY SEAN FITZGERALD

Sadoff & Rudoy Industries

WHEN LIFE THROWS YOU A CURVE, it’s reassuring to have an employer that doesn’t make tough situations even tougher.

For Ricky Bell, a machine operator and 19-year employee of Sadoff & Rudoy, and his wife, Joanie, another former employee of the company, life met its greatest challenge when Joanie was diagnosed with cancer. In the midst of an arduous and financially exhausting treatment regiment, the couple – who met while working for Sadoff & Rudoy – ran into the million-dollar cap for coverage on their health insurance policy. Then the situation became worse – Joanie’s diagnosis was changed to terminal.

The company’s HR staff did some research to identify a new insurance option that would continue to assist with Joanie’s care. Fellow employees held a benefit for the Bells and raised more than \$10,000. And Bell has been given the time he needs to spend with his wife as the cancer continues to take its toll.

“I can work here, with my wife being terminal with cancer, and they tell me ‘let us know what we can do for you.’ This is emotional for me,” said Bell, whose grandfather and uncle have also worked for Sadoff & Rudoy.

And while Bell’s story may be among the most personal of those from the 250-employee company, it’s of little surprise to the rest of the staff. The scrap metal recycling firm pays roughly 90 percent of the premium on its group health insurance premiums.

Illustration by Kate Erbach, New North B2B

The company also has an extended track record of placing a premium on wellness, giving it the same attention and prominence as its well-established safety programs.

In addition to a relatively mature wellness program, Sadoff & Rudoy provides a \$500 wellness benefit to every person – that's employee, spouse and children – on the company health insurance plan. That wellness benefit can be used toward expenses for preventative care such as routine physicals, mammographies or colonoscopies.

"When (the company wellness committee) talks about our programs, we talk about extending them out as far as we can to the family of employees," said Colleen Kollmann, logistics manager and a 24-year employee of Sadoff & Rudoy.

This past summer the company initiated a voluntary stretching program at the beginning of each shift, an effort toward allowing workers in the yard and office staff to limber up and minimize risk for injury on the job. While initially met with a morsel of hokie skepticism, employees have accepted and even embraced the morning routine.

Ricky Bell, who's also the union steward at the company, was one of those doubters on the first day of stretching.

"It's fantastic. It gets the blood going. I use it," he said.

Recognizing the power of its personnel has become one of three core competencies the company has recognized for itself, said Jason Lasky, vice president and one of the third generation owners of Sadoff & Rudoy. It's a philosophy that's always existed, but more recently had been placed in writing along

with accountability and customer confidence.

"We believe there are benefits we can provide our employees, that regardless of their return, make this a great place to work," Lasky said.

Another benefit providing a direct return on investment is the tuition reimbursement program. Kollmann has been working toward her bachelor's degree in supply chain operations management, and has nearly all of it paid by the company. The company has no maximum level to its tuition reimbursement, but rather reimburses a set percent of the tuition to the employee based upon their performance in each class. Kollmann said management has been accommodating of her coursework, allowing her to modify her work schedule in order to take the classes she needs.

The company also supports a variety of employee interests outside of work. Sadoff & Rudoy sets a budget each year to support employee requests to donate to a favorite charitable event, or support a child's sports team. One employee who plays quarterback for the semi-pro Kettle Moraine Titans football team asked the company to help purchase some equipment. Another employee requested a sponsorship for a car he had in a demolition derby.

"I can't think of many requests that we've ever turned down," Lasky said.

Less costly benefits, such as the company's At-a-Boy (or At-a-Girl) program, spontaneously reward employees at any given time with small gift certificates and a note of appreciation.

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