

# SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL



## Medium Business Category Honoree



### Clarkston Consulting

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The mission of Clarkston Consulting is that it will be the most effective and highly sought after integrator of business solutions for its core clients, promoting business growth and market diversification while providing a rewarding and stimulating environment for its stewards.

Clarkston realizes and values the important contributions each employee makes, and conducts an annual Triple-A Employee Satisfaction Survey, which stands for Ask (the tough questions), Act (making recommendations for change) and Adopt (implementing action items). This survey is a Web-based survey facilitated by an outside provider to ensure anonymity and objectivity of the results.

Each year, the company identifies the top five focus initiatives and aligns teams of interested employees at all levels to work together to address improvements, and the

program recognizes and capitalizes on employees driving the firm's most successful changes. Teamwork, attracting high-quality people and pride in the value created for clients rank highest in the survey each year.

New employees on board go through an orientation during which they meet with more than 10 current employees and are introduced to the organization's corporate policies, initiatives and culture. Clarkston believes in solid training programs and has an annual training budget of more than \$4,100 per employee. In 2005, the employees averaged 144 hours in training (the industry average is a budget of \$1,003 and 31 hours per employee). Available resources and tools for employee development include internal training, self study, ELearning, Lunch 'N Learns, formal on-the-job training, Clarkston University, external training and conferences, the Clarkston Connection, career guide, college newhire training "Boot Camp," tuition reimbursement and goal and objective outlining.

The company deliberately maintains an environment in which employees are encouraged and rewarded for constantly expanding their skill sets and stretching

beyond their comfort zones to grow professionally. All Clarkston employees are encouraged to outline short- and long-term goals, are given the opportunity to volunteer for leadership roles on internal committees and internal projects and are empowered to make choices with regard to their training and networking.

Firm management believes that providing an environment that fosters open and honest communication is critical to maintaining a great corporate culture. Management make themselves available for input from employees by organizing project team outings, having direct contact and open door policies, acting as review partner coaches and creating an employee based culture committee. Clarkston pays 76 percent of the medical, dental and prescription benefits provided to employees, and 100 percent of the costs for vision care, life insurance, AD&D and short- and long-term disability benefits.

The firm also participates and supports numerous charitable events that have ties back to the employees and their families, in addition to being involved in several employee-initiated community and family events.