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Datacom is proud to be a sponsor of the 2009 Best Employer Awards

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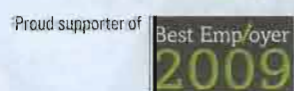
**“STUDYING
BUSINESS
AT ECU
IS ONE OF THE BEST
DECISIONS
I’VE MADE.”**

— ECU Business Postgraduate, Mark McLaughlin.

As proud sponsors of the Best Employer Award 2009, the Faculty of Business & Law congratulates award-winners MODAL (Category: Small Business), Workpower Incorporated (Category: Medium Business) and Georgiou Group (Category: Large Business). This prestigious award reflects how highly your company is regarded in the community. We wish you continued success in 2010.

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BEST EMPLOYERS



CORE COMPONENTS: Neil McGrechan says training and monitoring employees are essential parts of being a good employer. Photo: David Jo Bradley

Putting people first

Jonathan Barrett
5-PAGE
SPECIAL REPORT

- SMALL (10-50 STAFF)**
1. Modal
 2. People Who Care
 3. Conducive

IT'S a good thing Perth consultancy Modal fared well in the Best Employer Awards, considering the small business makes its money from advising other companies on how to improve their practices.

"We set out 16 years ago to practise what we preach and preach what we practise," Modal founder Neil McGrechan said.

He says that preaching and that practice were centred on developing staff.

A lack of "opportunities to progress" was the biggest grievance recorded by workers at small companies, which was also a common theme raised by employees at medium and large employers.

Mr McGrechan said training and mentoring employees didn't guarantee they would stay at the company, but it was an essential part of being a good employer.

"We have a firm belief here peo-

ple need to be the best they can be, and that has from time to time taken them from out of Modal," Mr McGrechan said.

"Some of our best people have left and worked with our customers and competitors, but they still come to our alumni sessions.

"If you grow and develop them ... there's a real possibility they will leave, but there's a real possibility they will stay."

One of the biggest advantages small companies have over their larger counterparts is that they have a larger comparative number of employees promoting their organisation outside the workplace, and fewer detractors.

More than half of the survey respondents from small companies are promoters of their company, which means they are engaged and committed to their employer.

Just under 30 per cent are "passively satisfied", according to Insync, which means they have a job that pays the bills but they may be unwilling to speak highly of their employer.

About 16 per cent are detractors who are disengaged from their employer and probably publicly criticise the company.

Overall, employee advocacy results for small companies compare favourably to larger WA companies with fewer promoters. The willingness to promote a company

is intricately linked to employee satisfaction.

WA state manager at Insync Surveys, Tracie Dawson, said one satisfied employee might tell one friend, while an unsatisfied employee might tell up to 10 friends.

"With our employees on the coalface talking to customers, it's impressive that more WA employees are promoting their organisation and dispelling any negative word-of-mouth," she said.

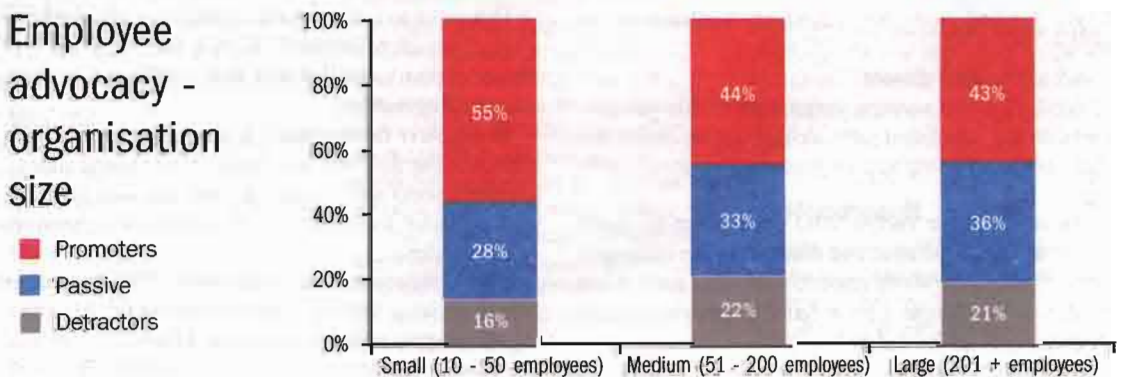
"With this great result, such organisations can view their employees as an extension of their marketing team."

The Insync survey found workers at small companies were generally more content than those at larger organisations.

An employee at WA-based management and technology consulting firm Conducive said: "The company is small enough to feel one can make a difference. The company actively encourages personal development. One feels valued as an employee."

There were, however, some surprising findings. Employee satisfaction with the working environment came in below expectations for workers at small companies, despite it generally being regarded as a strength of small workplaces.

On a positive note, small company employees tend to be proud of their company's reputation and enjoy their autonomy.



SMALL EMPLOYERS - HIGH PERFORMING AREAS		AVERAGE (OUT OF 7)
1	The organisation's reputation	6.06
2	Having autonomy over the way I work	5.91
3	The values of the organisation	5.91
4	Company provides quality products and services	5.88
5	My work contributing to company success	5.87

Source: Insync Surveys | Note: Small employer = 10 to 50 employees