



From this week's Focus

5. Wrightwood Capital

By Michelle Evans March 03, 2008

Why it's a best place to work: No one quit his job at Wrightwood Capital last year. And, in a *Crain's* survey of employees, most said they would be there in 12 months if they had their way.

So why do people stick around?

"Everybody owns into the company," says Teresa Pelletier, 46, an executive assistant at the Chicago-based firm. "I just feel like this is all very open-door, from the CEO office all the way down the pipeline."

Privately held Wrightwood distributes stock options to select employees and allows others to buy equity in the company.

In addition, it offers an average of 30 hours of training on topics such as negotiating deals and maintaining a work-life balance, a perk the company believes helps retain employees.

"People want to be challenged," says CEO Bruce Cohen, 46. "They want to learn. People want to know they will be better off working here in a year. The key to that is being able to show them this is a learning organization."

Michael Eglit, associate director of fund management, values the formalized training but says it's the daily one-on-one contact with senior management that sets Wrightwood apart from competitors.

"We have more opportunity as younger associates to develop early in our careers," Mr. Eglit, 27, says. "I've had equal access and exposure to my senior managers. I feel like my thoughts and views are respected and I'm as important as anyone else in this company."

Wrightwood Capital

2 N. LaSalle St.

What it does: Provides capital and financing for real estate projects

Years in business: 4

Local employees: 75

Worldwide employees: 94