



THE AUSTIN BUSINESS JOURNAL PRESENTS

CENTRAL TEXAS COMPANIES HITTING IT OUT OF THE OFFICE PARK



NICK SIMONITE | ABJ

Convio Inc. CEO Gene Austin (front row, second from left) is considered very accessible by employees, who take pride in participating in Convio Cares Week.

Large Companies

CLIENTS AND COMMUNITY

Convio Inc. has a culture that supports its people and their communities

SANDRA ZARAGOZA | STAFF WRITER

While Convio Inc. is preparing itself for changes after making the leap from private to public company, its employees hope at least one aspect of the company will remain the same: its friendly, collaborative and community-focused company culture.

In fact, some employees felt compelled to chime in about the company's corporate culture in an April engagement survey, which tracks employee activity. Employees took the survey as an opportunity to ask CEO Gene Austin, "How are we going to preserve our culture?" and to tell him that they don't want to lose it.

Convio, which makes fundraising and marketing software for the nonprofit sector, has 261 employees companywide, with 260 in the Austin office. Those who aren't in Austin work in Washington, D.C.; Berkeley, Calif.; or remote sales offices elsewhere.

At Convio, similar to many "best places to work" contenders, the corporate culture starts at the top.

"Gene is one of the most accessible CEOs I have ever met," said Angie McDermott, Convio's vice president of human resources. "He sets the tone and expectations. We are here to serve, and our doors are wide open. When there's an issue, we look into it."

McDermott said Convio's formula for being among Cen-

tral Texas' best places to work is based on five key values: client focus, trust, collaboration, innovation, learning and community.

"One of the first things everybody notices about our culture is that everybody is so friendly," she said. "We really want to support each other to be successful. It's by design and very deliberate."

Before employees are hired, they are put through a inclusive hiring process — prospective employees interview with multiple staffers to make sure that they will be a good fit for the company. This approach helps get employees to buy in to the success of the new hires they bring on, McDermott said.

Given its work in the nonprofit sector, Convio places a major focus on community involvement.

Each year, employees are given three paid volunteer days that they can use on a cause of their choice. Convio also hosts a volunteer fair, has a community involvement committee and gives employee awards. In 2009, employees registered more than 2,200 volunteer hours and donated a total of \$63,884, earning it a high score from the Entrepreneurs Foundation of Central Texas, which issues community involvement score cards.

Employees also get a level of satisfaction from working



CONVIO

LOCAL EMPLOYEE COUNT: 261
ADDRESS: 11501 Domain Drive, No. 200, Austin 78758
PHONE NUMBER: 512-652-2630
WEBSITE: www.convio.com
TOP LOCAL EXECUTIVE: Gene Austin, CEO

at a company that makes its business from serving the nonprofit community.

"I love the fact that we are a for-profit and held accountable, but we serve those who are helping to save the world. That's a beautiful combination," McDermott said.

She said that the company has done away with its fun committee, instead choosing to empower employees to take charge of their own ideas.

"We overruled the fun committee because they aren't fun. The [new] program encourages employees to be spontaneous," she said.

The results have been fun and creative. Employees have organized cookie bake-offs, gumbo cook-offs and home-made beer brewing contests.