

PLUS! SWEET SPOTS: Hometown Willy Wonkas Reveal All p.130

Meet Bill Bateman: The Wing King of Baltimore p.102 / **We Review Wit & Wisdom** p.144

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Baltimore

FEBRUARY 2012

BEST PLACES TO WORK

JOBS TO MAKE YOU HAPPY!

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SALARY GUIDE

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The 25 Best Places to Work

PLUS! A sneak peak
at what Baltimoreans
are doing (and making).

BY CHRISTIANNA McCAUSLAND.

Salary Guide by Evan Serpick.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER MYERS. ILLUSTRATIONS BY ZACHARIAH O'HORA.

If Best Places to Work entries are an economic indicator, things are looking up, Baltimore. ¶ Winners this year impressed us with everything from generous vacation time to fat tuition-reimbursement checks and even *free parking* downtown. These companies offer plenty of fun and unexpected perks, too, as well as career-development potential, and, in many cases, intellectually rewarding work. From spying to anti-spam programming, there are some very cool jobs to be done in and around Baltimore.

BTS

Baltimore and Columbia, as well as divisions in northern Virginia and Texas

Employees: 85 **What they do:** Advanced mobile telecommunications technology for the government and private sector, particularly the Department of Defense. **Why we like them:** They're big promoters of Baltimore and put their money where their mouth is by opening BTS Software Solutions (a subsidiary business) in Locust Point. **Best benefits:** 401k with 100 percent company match up to 4 percent; fully paid health-care premiums for employees and dependents plus a \$1,000 contribution to FSA cards; employees are eligible for bonuses; six weeks paid maternity leave (two weeks paternity).

BTS made this list last year because it wowed with its amazing benefits, like fully paid health care, paid maternity leave, and a generous retirement plan. The young company was also growing by leaps and bounds, which continues today: The number of employees has doubled in the past year and, at press time, BTS was looking for at least 25 new faces and has opened a new office on Fort Avenue.

But what we wanted to know was whether BTS, which was only founded in 2008, could sustain this megawatt lifestyle. To that, CEO

Sean Lane says, "Yes."

At just 31 years old, Lane's optimism could be chalked up to youthful gusto, but the company has a diversified portfolio of contracts and products that don't hinge solely on the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan that appear to be winding down.

Because BTS isn't growing at a typical rate, nothing else is typical, either. "We don't play games with compensation," Lane says. "It's very cut and dry: We pay for your health care, your tuition, and we vest on day one," he says. "We expect high-level performance and we give people responsibility to, if they want, move vertically in our company easily."

An outspoken proponent of turning Charm City into the Silicon Valley of the East, Lane opened his newest business, BTS Software Solutions, in Locust Point (BTS Network Solutions and BTS Integration Solutions are in Columbia). "We have a larger mission to build a greater tech community in Baltimore," he says.

CHARM CITY CAKES

Baltimore

Employees: 15 **What they do:** Bakery specializing in outrageously designed cakes, such as a replica iPhone and to-scale Yoda. **Why we like them:** They're a haven for artistic types but have the business savvy to stay in business, and

grow, to boot. **Best benefits:** 401k with employer match; profit-sharing; eight (yes, eight) weeks paid vacation, including fully paid staff retreat to a sunny locale each February.

The plug may be pulled on the filming of *Ace of Cakes*, the reality show that put Duff Goldman's eccentric bakery on the global map, but the bakery continues to grow. Specifically, a location in Los Angeles opened last summer. It was this aggressive trajectory that wooed Mark Muller away from law school in 2008 and into the world of fondant.

"We're extremely fortunate because we're structured as a small business with the platform of a large business," says Muller, the bakery's studio manager, via cell phone from the new L.A. shop. "We work around the world now."

Even as it grows, Charm City Cakes retains the funky, MICA-esque vibe that made it appealing to The Food Network. The Baltimore location has a rooftop deck and a basement lounge with sofas, a television, and a place for band practice. It supports numerous charities, though the most characteristic is its sponsorship of Charm City Roller Girls.

Goldman's commitment to employees can be seen in things like the paid staff vacation each year and the fact that he gives a percentage of the profits from his licensing and merchandising to employees annually.

METHODOLOGY

Companies or their employees nominated themselves on our website and then the hard work began: The research to find a couple of dozen great firms out of the hundreds banging on our door.

But the very first question we ask is one that radically thins the ranks of nominees: "Are you hiring

substantial numbers of people in the next year?"

Winners needed to be both financially sound now and in the recent past. So we troll the depths of national financial and legal news right up to deadline to look for anything that spells trouble: An SEC investigation, a class-action suit involving employees, a pending acquisition or

merger, or recent significant layoffs are all deal-breakers for this list. Companies also need to be held in high regard by their employees. (We interview staffers.) And, of course, they have to cooperate with our research.

While small companies often can't compete with the generous benefits of larger ones, we wanted to

include small and medium-sized firms, too. Though they might not have 100 percent insurance reimbursement or a high 401k match, the smaller firms we chose have some sort of other appeal for their employees, be it dynamic leadership, a fun culture, or an especially meaningful mission, such as curing

sick kids, building spaceships, preventing the next 9-11, or creating the next clever Super Bowl ad.

In short, we were looking for workplaces that employees really want to roll out of bed for, ones with a bright future, and with serious rewards, be they financial, in the form of perks, or intellectual gratification.

CYBERPOINT

Baltimore

Employees: 89 **What they do:** Delivers cyber-security products and services to a wide range of customers. **Why we like them:** The benefits are simply off the charts. The company even hired a security guard to look after employee cars and provide escorts after some vehicles were vandalized. **Best benefits:** Generous 401k contributions and profit-sharing; six weeks paid time off (to start); \$500 annual Professional Development Allowance; free parking downtown; CONTINUED ON PAGE 114

Case Study

LAWYER

Salary: \$75,000

In the legal field, salary depends largely on the type of law practiced, the type of firm, and years of experience. The attorney we interviewed works for a small firm in downtown Baltimore that specializes in civil cases, including contracts and torts. She is in her first year at the firm after completing law school and a one-year clerkship. She acknowledges she could earn more by starting out at a larger firm (the mean salary for attorneys in Maryland is \$83,740), but says she values spending time at a small firm. "The hours are better, the environment is less cut-throat, and the type of work you get to do is more exciting," she says, though she concedes that she will probably look at larger firms—and salaries—in the coming years.



AOL Advertising/ Advertising.com

Location: Baltimore **Employees:** 5,768 (188 in Baltimore) **What they do:** Online advertising and brand development. **Why we like them:** Even though this Baltimore biz was consumed by AOL, it still keeps its quirky start-up style and creative spirit. **Best benefits:** 401k with match; stock options based on performance; employees eligible for annual bonuses; 100-percent tuition reimbursement; six to eight weeks of paid maternity leave, free parking downtown with special spaces for hybrids and bikes.

Tom O'Hara, 35, was drawn to what was once known as *advertising.com* by its innovative ideas and the charisma of the company's founding leaders. He's now an account director. In the 12 years he's worked there, the company was bought by online's Goliath, AOL.

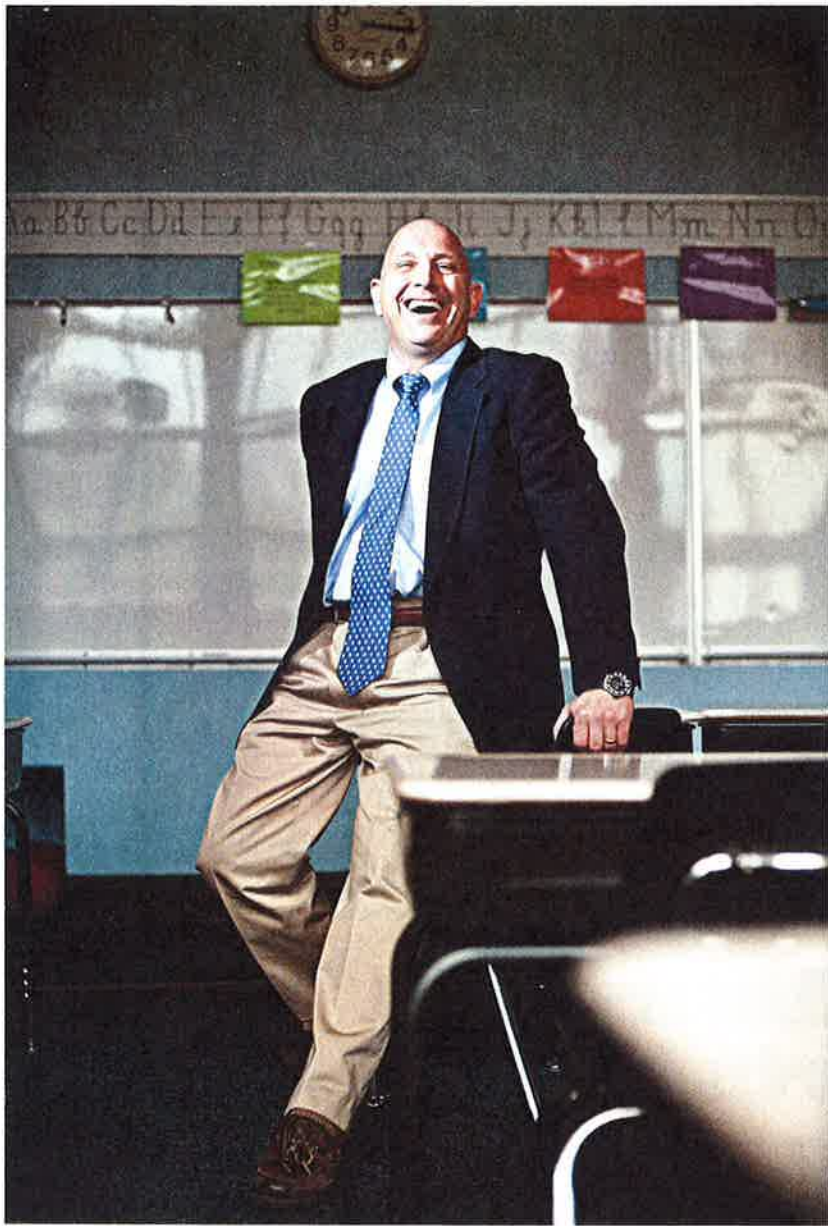
"AOL has taken every opportunity to ensure that the start-up feel of our Baltimore office has remained intact," he says. "We've always been a very successful part of AOL and the leadership recognizes that has a lot to do with the people who are here and the environment we maintain."

That environment includes a very fun office with flat-screen TVs (the company threw a tea party and fancy-hat contest during the rebroadcast of the royal wedding last spring), a pool table, a Ping-Pong table, and a conference room where you can drive golf balls. Sometimes the roving beer cart arrives in time for happy hour.

"People are jealous of our relaxed work environment," says Katie Dukes, 28, a business analyst. "We're constantly uploading office photos to Facebook and our friends will post how envious they are." Her favorite event is the summer grill-off when staff contestants get an allowance to buy food for a cookout on the waterfront promenade, with their colleagues as the judges.

"I also love our location on the waterfront and that there's lots of free parking," says Dukes. There's easy access to day care in Tide Point, there's a gym, and the location is commutable by water taxi.

AOL Advertising is progressive in its benefits. O'Hara was the first staffer to receive health benefits for his partner Mike. About two years ago, when the couple adopted a child, the company provided adoption assistance and paternity leave.



Calvert School

Location: Baltimore **Employees:** 112 **What they do:** Private, coed education for grades pre-K through eight. **Why we like them:** They understand that education isn't just for students, but for faculty, staff, and their families, too. **Best benefits:** Calvert pays 100 percent of health and dental for employees (90 percent for dependents); access to Kiddie Calvert on-site day care; tuition reimbursement up to 50 percent; free gym and inexpensive fitness classes; 403b with match; generous vacation time in addition to the school's holidays.

Baltimore has lots of first-rate private schools where faculty and staff get to work with involved parents and motivated kids. What sets Calvert School apart from the pack is the fact that it cares about the education of its faculty and staff, too, not just the paying student body. Most notably, the school not only helps offset tuition costs for the children of staff, but also offers tuition remission for area independent high schools when the Calvert program ends at eighth grade.

Second-grade teacher Patrick "Shep" Shepherd, 49, *pictured*, has used this benefit to the fullest. He has children at Calvert, Garrison Forest School, and Boys' Latin (a fourth is in college).

"I've always felt that not only am I providing a great education for the students I work with, but my family is being cared for, as well," he says.

It's a perk that extends to tuition assistance for grown-ups, too. In addition to footing the bill for continuing-education seminars and the like, Calvert helped pay for Shepherd's master's in early education at Loyola University of Maryland.

There's also an emergency fund that staff can tap—no questions asked—for unexpected expenses, and the amount is paid back without interest through wage-garnishing.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 113 there are mothering rooms for new moms and children are welcome in the workplace.

We like happy endings as much as the next magazine, which is why we like Joe Di Mattina. He read about CyberPoint in *Baltimore's* "Best Places to Work" list last year and darned if they didn't hire him.

Di Mattina, a 30-year-old software engineer, was sick of commuting. "I wanted to live a more urban lifestyle," he explains. Now he rides his bike to work, and he loves that he works in a place where everyone knows his name and ties are *verboten*.

Employees at CyberPoint need to want to be in Baltimore City, too. "The owner has made it very clear that he will keep the company headquarters in Baltimore, and he wants to give back to Baltimore," Di Mattina says. CyberPoint currently runs a mentoring

program with a local city school, for example, and adopted a giraffe at the Maryland Zoo.

DAP PRODUCTS INC.

Baltimore

Employees: 450 in Baltimore; 850 nationally **What they do:** Manufactures and markets caulk, sealants, adhesives, and patch-repair products for DIYers and pros. **Why we like them:** They've taken Baltimore's manufacturing spirit and modernized it for today's workforce. **Best benefits:** 401k with several matching options; stock-purchasing plan; free parking; 80-percent tuition reimbursement; closes early on Fridays during the summer; potential for 100-percent paid maternity leave based on length of service.

Laura Arvizu came to Baltimore from Mexico to help DAP Products build its sales

force in her home country. What she found here was a home away from home.

"I chose this company because it was international," says the customer-service representative. "It's very diverse and open, and I've felt very welcome here." As the mother of a 4-year-old, she also appreciates that it's family-friendly. "My supervisor is very understanding that having a 4-year-old sometimes requires things on short notice."

Employees talk a lot about DAP as a friendly place with a familial feel. Chris Hill felt that firsthand when he was hospitalized after a medical emergency last year.

"During my time, from the executive staff down, they were very supportive with flowers and cards and baskets," he says. "And the paychecks continued. I was out six weeks, so that took a load off my shoulders."

DLA PIPER

Baltimore

Employees: 400 in Baltimore, 8,700 globally
What they do: International law firm with offices in 30 countries. **Why we like them:** Committed to creating a culture of diversity and inclusion in its offices. **Best benefits:** Profit-sharing; domestic partners eligible for health benefits; financial incentives to purchase hybrid cars; tuition reimbursement; discount gym memberships; flexible scheduling as the work allows.

Big law firms aren't traditionally considered bastions of diversity, nor are they thought of as welcoming to individual needs. But DLA Piper is doing its part to change all that. The firm understands that employees who are comfortable at work produce better results, whether that means they feel safe regardless of their ethnicity or sexual identification, or they are able to work a flexible schedule to balance home needs with those on the job.

"We define diverse people as all women, racial and ethnic minorities, and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender [LGBT] community," says Genhi Bailey, national diversity and inclusion director. "Of course, it's much broader than that. We also look at issues related to alternative work arrangements and multi-generational issues."

"When I first started out of law school, there was this idea of 'face time,' where you were supposed to show up before the partners and you shouldn't leave until after they were gone," explains Anthony Ashton, partner and chair of the Baltimore diversity committee. "I can say, unequivocally, that's not how people work here." Particularly with the Blackberries and laptops issued to many staffers, work schedules have become more fluid.

"There's no need to sit in your office, just to make sure people see you," he cracks.

As a large, international firm, DLA Piper offers its employees a lot of benefits, but it maintains a smaller feel in the Baltimore office, which employs just 380 people. From a benefits perspective, we were a little taken aback by the fact that this giant of a firm doesn't have a matching 401k plan. However, they do have a three-tiered profit-sharing program with a minimum contribution of 6 percent of compensation. And, as part of the company's Global Sustainability Initiative, you can get \$2,000 to help buy a hybrid car.

GANTECH INC.

Columbia

Employees: 95 **What they do:** Full-service IT consulting, primarily with state and local agencies. **Why we like them:** Their use of virtual desktop technology makes for an extremely flexible work environment. **Best benefits:** Employees pay just \$10/month for all benefits (including dependents); 401k with 4-percent match; referral and year-end bonuses; tuition reimbursement; monthly free lunch; flexible work schedule.

Gantech may have been founded by Thomas Laskowski, but Mia Millette, vice president of strategic operations and a software developer by trade, still thinks of the company as her baby.

Case Study

PROGRAMMER

Salary: \$103,000

Our programmer has worked in his mid-size technology firm for 10 years. He started, with a master's degree in computer science, at \$65,000 and has seen his pay steadily increase with time and good performance. "In this industry, if you're good at your job, you can usually expect to earn steady increases for inflation, plus a couple points, every year," he says. At his company these days, people coming in with a bachelor's degree in software development tend to earn in the \$55,000 to \$65,000 range, while those with master's degrees would start at \$75,000 to \$80,000. The mean annual income for computer programmers in Maryland is \$61,770, and our state has the fourth-highest concentration of programmers in the country.



"I was employee number 20 when I came in 2006, and I had a hand in creating the employee culture," she explains. "I made sure we created an environment that was how I wanted the company to treat me."

Millette has five children, so flexibility to work from home was key. "In this day and age, flexibility is paramount," she notes. Gantech is a progressive IT firm that uses virtualization technology so employees can work from anywhere. It's a benefit that also attracted Christa Stolarik, an account executive and mother of three, who left a software company because she was traveling too much. Not only was she able to cut her traveling at Gantech, the company even created a mothering room for her when she had her third child.

Millette describes it as a "work-hard, live-well" corporate culture that's passionate about technology and driven to help the company meet its potential. (Gantech is routinely on national lists for its fast growth.)

INTELLIGENT SOLUTIONS FOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS, LLC (ISIS)

Columbia

Employees: 50 **What they do:** Provides engineering services, primarily to the Department of Defense. **Why we like them:** Although most employees are contractors on client sites, ISIS doesn't treat its people like just another number in the faceless contractor world. **Best benefits:** Company pays 10 percent of your salary into your 401k without the employee contributing a dime; 20 starting days of paid time off; 100 percent fully paid medical, dental, and vision insurance for employees and dependents.

Jim Moser, 50, has worked in the aerospace industry for 30 years. A veteran of big companies, he says it's common for workers to be reduced to just a number and that, "as a contractor, you can be out of sight, out of mind." He knew that from his previous employer and wanted to work for a smaller, more family-friendly place. He found it at ISIS.

Moser has a daughter with a rare birth defect that requires special medical attention, so he scrutinized the ISIS health benefits rigorously. Those benefits have covered everything from supplies to nursing assistance so she can go to school, "and after the basic deductibles, none of it comes out of my pocket," he states. "Because of Philip Green [ISIS founder], we're not in the poorhouse."

Employees speak of Green, a retired U.S. Army signals analyst, with reverence. Like Green, many employees are former military (74 percent are veterans), including Mary Wells, 52, a program manager and retired Army. "A lot of people retired from the military have strong team loyalty, dedication to duty, and cohesiveness, because it's bred into you in the military," says Wells. "You can see those attributes in the people Phil hires. They have loyalty to Phil and to the company." Which explains the employee retention rate of 95 percent.

Case Study

CEO

**Salary: \$200,000,
plus 5 percent equity**

Compensation packages for chief executives vary wildly from industry to industry and company to company.

Apple's new CEO, Tim Cook, is the highest paid in America, earning \$378 million in 2011. Locally, Constellation Energy chief executive Mayo Shattuck tops the list, making \$15 million last year, but most CEOs earn more modest incomes—the mean annual income for chief executives in Maryland is \$142,720—and tie their fortunes to those of their companies. The CEO we spoke to runs a mid-size mobile technology firm with 20 employees, earns a base salary of \$200,000, and has a 5-percent equity stake in the company. "For me, it's more of an equity play," says our CEO, who's served in that capacity for several companies. "When I look at a potential company [to work for], I look at the products and the market, not the salary. I'm after upside."



IMRE

Location: Sparks **Employees:** 79 in Sparks, 88 total. **What they do:** Marketing and PR agency targeted to health care, home and building, financial services, and sports. **Why we like them:** They understand that agency work can be a grind but reward hard work with fun perks. **Best benefits:** Two weeks paid sabbatical leave plus \$1,000 bonus for full-timers achieving three, eight, and 12 years tenure; performance bonuses; half-day Fridays in the summer; tuition reimbursement up to \$2,000/year.

IMRE claims to be hiring up to 20 people in the new year, which is great news for creative types who've been particularly beat up by the recession. Yet agency work, when you can get it, can be a stressful with occasional bouts of long, thankless hours.

IMRE keeps folks happy with all the fun and games a creative environment should have, like a Wii, a corral of Razor scooters, a kitchen loaded with Starbucks, a fountain soda machine, and the occasional "flash party." In addition to discounted gym memberships, employees also get a \$200 quarterly mind-body bonus to use for "anything that fosters relaxation, creativity, or self-awareness."

There are serious benies, too: The company pays for life insurance and generously contributes to health insurance. As an added bonus, IMRE drops \$1,200 into everyone's health savings account to help pay for co-pays and other costs.

For people who like a fast-paced, creative environment where no day is the same, IMRE is a good fit.

"I work with lots of really great, energetic, enthusiastic people," says Katy Funk, 28, a senior account executive. "And the CEO and president are always there checking in. Having the CEO or president thank you when you're stressed and working hard means a lot."

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY APPLIED PHYSICS LABORATORY (APL)

Laurel

Employees: 5,000 **What they do:** Non-profit center for engineering, research, and development focused on national security. **Why we like them:** They support the best and brightest in their endeavor to solve critical challenges for places like the Department

of Defense, NSA, and NASA. **Best benefits:** Employer match to retirement is 2:1 up to 4 percent; employer makes 2.5 percent of salary contribution to retirement; some cash awards for performance; children of staff eligible for college scholarships; three weeks paid vacation and seven sick days; tuition reimbursement. **Like some of its** industry peers on this list, APL is a place where extremely smart and talented people are set free to do important, innovative work. APL is located on a sprawling, 399-acre campus that might make you think of a college,

especially when you see the recreation area with its tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts, the cafeterias, or the scenic duck pond. Like a preeminent college, APL draws talented scientists and engineers with its top-notch laboratories and opportunities to do very cool work.

"The intellectual capital here is phenomenal," explains Jay Turner, 60, a program manager who joined APL when he retired from the Department of Defense. "But the employees are down-to-earth and practical. You need to be a team player to tackle a really hard problem set. If you're not driven to solve the impossible, this might not be the place for you."

APL-ers love that challenge. It's what attracted Shaylyn Joy, 25. "The work here is really cutting-edge," she says. "It's different here, because we're not profit-driven, we're doing work that is meant to help the country, often soldiers."

KEY TECH

Baltimore

Employees: 25 **What they do:** Developers of high-tech products with a focus on medical, industrial, and consumer devices. **Why we like them:** A creative, casual office environment that fosters innovative product development. **Best benefits:** Great office in former vaudeville theater; employee-partner track with equity opportunity; 100-percent paid health and dental insurance and monthly contributions to HSA; free parking in Federal Hill; cash bonuses for engineers annually up to 15 percent of salary.

It would be easy to miss Key Tech's office, which is slipped into an alley near Federal Hill's Cross Street Market. The office is a converted vaudeville theater with a soaring ceiling and a stage that now houses a pool table. Dogs are welcome, the rooftop deck is always open, and the attire is come-as-you-are.

Most noteworthy, there are virtually no doors, not even on the executive offices. "The partners and executives are right here with us on the shop floor," says engineer Josh Mull. "I've been very happy with my relationship with our founding partners and their interest in teaching us what they know and working side by side with us."

Each quarter, there's a major office outing such as a crab feast, sailing excursion, or white-water rafting trip, events often open to partners and children. As befits a technology company, schedules are very flexible and telework is a viable option. The company was founded in 1998 and has grown (with no layoffs). Key Tech is the place for engineers ready to break free of corporate cubicle land.



Case Study

HAIR STYLIST

Salary: \$80,000 (including tips)

The stylist we interviewed has worked at one of the more high-end salons in town for the past eight years. He claims about \$55,000 on his W-2 every year and the rest of his income comes from tips. When he started, he says, he was making about half of his current salary and the key has been building a reputation and clientele.

"Getting clients and getting them to return to you is essential for working your way up, in terms of income," he says. Of course, the type of salon one works at also determines pay. Our stylist has worked at four salons in his career and his pay steadily rose as he worked at more high-end businesses. The mean annual salary for hairdressers in Maryland is \$29,200, not including tips.

MERCY MEDICAL CENTER

Baltimore

Employees: 3,836 **What they do:** A hospital affiliated with the Sisters of Mercy. **Why we like them:** Does community mentoring to encourage young people into health-care careers and helps those on staff with professional development to grow their careers. **Best benefits:** Continuing education related to licensing or certification is 100-percent paid; pre-tax, subsidized parking (with security); up to 50 percent reimbursement for adoption; home-buying help for moderate-income employees.

There's a lot to love about Mercy: a brand new building, organic produce from One Straw Farm on the menu in the cafeteria, and a 401k with employer match, for example. But to really

understand what makes Mercy special, you need to talk to Millicent Powell-Jones. She started as a patient-services representative 15 years ago and has worked her way up to administrative assistant for the OR. She's so enamored of Mercy's approach to patient care, she's now at CCBC (with tuition assistance from Mercy) preparing for nursing school.

"My husband works here, I've been a patient here, this has been our world," says Powell-Jones. Mercy helped Powell-Jones buy her first home and gave her time off to settle in her first foster child.

Encouragement for personal and professional development extends across all staff levels: There are classes in basic reading and writing for housekeeping staff to improve their baseline professional skills, for example. The hospital fosters young talent with two programs: a six-week, paid summer internship for Baltimore high-school seniors and a partnership with six city high schools aimed at getting kids into the field of nursing.

Staff at Mercy has fun, too, with frequent potlucks, baby showers, wedding showers, holiday parties, community outreach events, and Easter egg hunts. It's family oriented and small enough that people know each other.

"Everyone here knows my name," says Powell-Jones. "Even the CEO says hello to me, by name, when he sees me."

MILLENNIAL MEDIA

Baltimore

Employees: 210 **What they do:** Leader in mobile advertising and data. **Why we like them:** A non-traditional company upping the bar for the mobile advertising industry. **Best benefits:** Stock options; year-end bonus program; 100-percent paid maternity leave plus \$500 bonus for the birth/adoption of a child.

Millennial Media lives up to its name, hiring plenty of young go-getters who want to make a splash in the still-burgeoning mobile-advertising industry. As such, there are lots of employees starting families. Astoundingly, Millennial Media provides fully paid maternity leave and even throws in some cash and a baby gift to support new families.

Dani Cushion, 34, had just joined the company when she got pregnant with her second daughter. And no one gave her any flak for taking leave.

"We have a lot of young folks here and young families and there's a lot of respect and support for family here," she says.



Moodlerooms

Location: Baltimore **Employees:** 90 **What they do:** Provides education software to help clients globally teach and learn online. **Why we like them:** They're a software company passionate about the future of education. **Best benefits:** Stock options; free parking in Federal Hill near the stadiums; two to four weeks vacation, plus five sick days; casual working environment; health-club reimbursement.

Moodle what? That was our reaction, too. We didn't know much about this little gem of a tech company, but we learned quickly. Which is what Moodlerooms is all about: education. Moodle is an abbreviation for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment, a free, open-source e-learning software platform. As more schools look to affordably build their online presence, Moodlerooms is there to help them maximize their use of free software with paid-for, custom solutions.

The company is fresh out of its incubation in the Emerging Technology Center and still has that new company smell. The office showcases standard start-up décor reminiscent of a college dorm room and some of the major benefits are still evolving. The 401k with up to 1 percent match, for example, is a bit paltry, but what we like is the growth potential here. CEO Lou Pugliese was a founder of the now-ubiquitous online education company Blackboard, and Moodlerooms managed to score venture-capital funding during the recession. The company has grown 300 percent in less than two years.

Sitting in his office with a life-sized cut-out of the Dos Equis man behind his desk, Pugliese says he never wants to lose an employee to a competitor, so he rewards employees with perks like flextime, telework, a casual environment (it's not uncommon for a football to be tossed in the office during work hours or an employee to pad around in slippers), and lots of social stress-relievers like Friday afternoon happy hours.

This is a work-hard-play-hard place where employees feel like stakeholders in the company. If you have an idea or complaint, staffers can use a standard, confidential e-mail form to send feedback to the executive team. If you want to move up, opportunities abound. "Every manager meeting here starts with questions like, 'What else do you want to do here and how can I help you get there?'" says Matt Montemurro, an inside sales associate. "I've worked at three other companies and that's never happened before."

Millennial Media, located in the open, pleasant work spaces of the Can Company in Canton, is ranked as one of the 75 fastest-growing private companies in the country and gained market share in mobile display ads in 2011, along with Google, largely at Apple Inc.'s expense, according to an analysis by consultant IDC. In January, the company filed paperwork for an IPO.

Cushion was so infected by the contagious enthusiasm of the place, she jettisoned a great job with Sirius XM in Washington, D.C., to be a part of the mobile movement.

"I saw this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity here," she explains. "Mobile advertising is still taking off, so this is that unique place in time when you can be on the cusp of something great."

M&T BANK

Statewide

Employees: 15,694 (2,203 Maryland) **What they do:** Top 20 national bank. **Why we like them:** As they grow, they're keeping a supportive structure for employees and doing community service in their hometowns. **Best benefits:** Employer matches 100 percent of the first 3 percent of employee contribution to 401k and 50 percent on the next 3 percent (after one year of employment); two stock options plans.

Most folks think "football" when they think M&T. While bank employees do get the occasional discount to Ravens-themed events, the teamwork here is focused on employees.

"If I think about the number of manage-

ment structures I've worked under, M&T is the best place for me to not only to work, but to have a partner in my career," says Joe Durham, head of business banking in Maryland. Durham, an employee for 16 years, points by example to his participation in the bank's Senior Leadership Development program, a one-year, executive-leadership course taught by professors from the University of Michigan. He's now mentoring others in the bank on what he learned.

Detra Mackey, a manager at the bank's Seton Hill branch in Baltimore, completed the management development program in 2009. She was matched with a mentor to learn about different opportunities within the bank. "The company is very big on allowing you to pursue whatever you want to do," she says.

M&T seems to understand that for it to



Case Study
**ADVERTISING
 EXECUTIVE**

Salary: \$56,000

Our anonymous account exec has worked at his boutique agency for 10 years. He says the generous vacation policies, the opportunity to earn commission for bringing in new clients (though he has yet to earn any), and especially the many perks make up for the relatively meager salary (the mean income for ad execs in Maryland is \$49,670). "We get free tickets to everything we want," he says, rattling off a series of concerts, sporting events, and performances he's gained access to as a result of his job. He has rejected offers of slightly more money from larger firms to retain the benefits of working for a boutique. "If I need time off for any reason, it's no problem," he says. "That's worth a lot."

ceed, its community must succeed, too. "We support employees getting involved in service," says Durham. "If you're passionate about something in the community, the bank is always there to support you with flexible work hours so you can volunteer, or support you financially with charitable contributions."

For those interested in a career in banking, M&T can claim stability many banks can't in this volatile economic climate: At press time, the company had posted its 141st consecutive profitable quarter.

**NATIONAL FINANCIAL
 LEGACY GROUP**

East Valley

Employees: 45 What they do: Financial and estate planning. **Why we like them:** They're a

Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital

Location: Baltimore **Employees:** 509 **What they do:** A comprehensive, sub-acute-care facility serving children with special medical and rehabilitative needs. **Why we like them:** The mission is to care for children, many on medical assistance. **Best benefits:** 403b retirement plan with employer contribution; cash balance pension plan; tuition assistance up to \$3,000 per year; free flu shots.

Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital is a small, nonprofit children's hospital located off a quiet, verdant street in one of the city's nicest neighborhoods. From this enclave, the hospital provides rehabilitation and medical care for patients from neonatal to young adult. Many children are from financially disadvantaged families. This is a home away from home for patients. In addition to getting well, children learn to eat, dress themselves, or use a wheelchair. Depending on their length of stay, they can even go to school here.

"People work here because they believe in the cause," explains Dr. Richard Katz, medical director, *pictured below*. "In an acute-care hospital, children come and go quickly. Here, staff get to know them and their families."

"I like that this is a small hospital so you aren't running all over the place," says Diana Silk, a nurse, "and I like that here, we work as a team and support each other."

Absolutely everyone is invested in the well-being of these tiny patients. Darryl Kane is a security guard who started part-time and understands the mission. "I'm really a kid who never grew up," he says. "I like seeing how they treat kids. I can see how they come in and it's rewarding to see how they leave. They come in and aren't even moving and then they walk out of here."

For a small, nonprofit hospital, Mt. Washington Pediatric offers very good benefits. Some of that is thanks to its unique co-ownership by University of Maryland and The Johns Hopkins Hospital. For employees, that means access to affordable health insurance and access to things like education.

"We have enormous competition for staff, so we have to be competitive with our salaries and benefits," says president and CEO Sheldon Stein, acknowledging the crowded marketplace for health-care workers in Baltimore. "We provide an atmosphere for people to work where they can really make a difference in the life of a child and a family."

The hospital will work with your schedule if you have kids of your own, and they've got attractive vacation and sick-leave policies. But if you ask anyone here why they love their job, they'll sound like Fran German, a respiratory therapist: "It's the fulfillment of knowing you've done something to better the life of a child, to help them reach their fullest potential."



growing company that is maintaining a family feel. **Best benefits:** Office closes early every Friday (3:30 p.m.); periodic bonuses; phenomenal 401k plan.

National Financial Legacy Group may be just 45 employees now, but president Peter Lovley hopes to add 15 to 20 new people in the coming year. Lovley says he's looking to hire self-starters who recognize a good opportunity when they see one, but adds, "We're not here to see how much money we can make. I find the more you share, the better off you are."

"The number-one thing about working at NFLG is that they expect you to have a life outside of work," says Jennifer Lee, 28, a contracting and licensing specialist. For example, when Lee's boyfriend deployed to Afghanistan with his Air Force unit last fall, the company was extremely supportive and she took off several days in preparation for his departure.

To emphasize a family feel, there are monthly, office-wide potluck lunches, and, in the summer, employees grill on the deck overlooking the office's leafy location in Hunt Valley. As a Penn Mutual agency, employees also get access to a generous 401k plan: The company will match 100 percent of the first 3 percent in pre-tax contributions by the employee, and 50 percent of the next 3 percent.

NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY (NSA)

Location: Fort Meade

Employees: 17,000-plus in Baltimore **What they do:** Listening in on the bad guys and keeping the bad guys from listening in on us. **Why we like them:** They've streamlined their hiring program to make it easier for people to get over the federal government's hiring hurdles. **Best benefits:** Thrift Savings Plan (the Fed's 401k) with match; some performance-based bonuses; targeted programs for wounded warriors and people with disabilities; top-notch, in-house training through National Cryptologic School; alternative work schedule options including telework; endless on-campus resources including several gyms and a medical center.

There's a lot to like about a federal government job, but what's notable about NSA is that they've bypassed the dreaded *USAJobs.gov* hiring site. Acknowledging the need to streamline, potential hires can apply directly through NSA's website.



Classified

PERSONAL TRAINER

Salary: \$55,000

"What I make is on the high end," says our anonymous trainer, who works about 50 hours a week at a large downtown gym, and teaches spinning classes and holds running and triathlon clinics in addition to working with individual clients. "The more large classes you teach, the more specialized things you can do, the more you can earn." Most people starting in the position make \$30,000 to 40,000, she says, and earning additional certifications can help you earn raises. She has a certification in CPR, one from the National Strength Professionals Association, and another as a spinning teacher. "The best thing about this job is being able to help people improve themselves," she says. "The best reward is watching changes take place in people over time."

"We're trying to bust the hiring myth with conditional job offers and by getting people through the clearance process in 60 days," says associate director of HR Kathy Hutson.

"I went to the NSA home page, saw and applied for a position, and, within one week of the interview, had a conditional offer," says Matthew Cosgrove, an industrial hygienist. NSA is now helping to pay for his master's degree in his field.

There's opportunity at NSA for mathematicians, linguists, computer scientists, engineers—they'll hire 1,600 folks in 2012. Of course, working at NSA is obviously a tad different than the average corporate gig. For one, your life will be an open book when you go through the hiring process, and chatting about your day outside the office is forbidden, as are cell phones in the office. On the upside, you get to contribute to the protection of the United States, a mission employees at NSA take very seriously.

"One thing I tell my friends and family is that I'm immensely proud to work for our nation's security," says Jennifer Muller, who works in the counter-terrorism division.

NSA's campus is its own city. There are several large cafeterias with chains like Starbucks and Quiznos; there's a dry cleaner, drug store, gift store, massage therapist, barber, credit union, and Ticketmaster. The medical center sees about 100 patients a day, mostly for minor injuries or travel medication, and there's a nursing-mothers program.

There are benefits in a classified environment, too, Muller adds. "It helps with work-life balance because you can't take work home with you!"

NILES, BARTON & WILMER, LLP

Baltimore

Employees: 62 **What they do:** 174-year-old general services law firm. **Why we like them:** Prioritize work-life balance with a particular emphasis on developing women leaders and not penalizing them for being mothers. **Best benefits:** 401k with a profit-sharing contribution (given regardless of whether the employee contributes); option for one to three months paid maternity leave (through short-term disability, which is paid by the firm), depending on how long an employee has been working; freedom to work part-time or from home.

When Kimberly Neal, 31, interviewed with Niles, Barton & Wilmer, she committed what some might consider career suicide when courting a law firm.

"I asked very hard questions about family-related things, like the maternity leave, which is usually a big no-no," she says. "It's very interesting because almost everyone here has children and thinks it's important to spend time with family in addition to providing stellar service to your clients."

Neal, who is an associate, is expecting her first child. Through her pregnancy, she's found that the promise of work-life balance made during her interviews has been more than lip service.

Attorneys get some unique perks, too, like the option to choose their computer. Neal opted to exchange her desktop for a laptop so she could work from doctors' offices or from home when necessary. Not only the top dogs get treated well, though, as evidenced by the low turnover in support staff.

To foster career growth, the firm pays for all continuing legal education and for attorneys to join networking groups. The office, located in The Gallery across the street from Harborplace, was

Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI)

Location: Baltimore **Employees:** 520 **What they do:** Under contract to NASA to operate the science program for the Hubble Space Telescope. STScI will be the science operations center for the new James Webb Space Telescope, too. **Why we like them:** In addition to doing fascinating stuff related to space, they've pushed hard to recruit women and under-represented minorities into careers in science. **Best benefits:** STScI contributes 10 percent of employee salaries to retirement plans, regardless of employee participation; free, covered parking; discounted gym; over \$5,000 per year for tuition reimbursement; extremely flexible scheduling, including up to three days a week of telework permitted; gourmet cafeteria.

As if helping NASA uncover distant galaxies wasn't enough, the former deputy director is a shuttle astronaut, and employee Adam Riess just won a Nobel Prize. STScI is a place where it's cool to be smart.

Staff at STScI speak of life outside their bucolic enclave (on the Homewood campus of The Johns Hopkins University, but not affiliated) as "the real world." That's not because they're in the business of outer space, but because their benefits are out of this world. New parents Pey-Lian Lim and Brandon Lawton, *pictured*, for example, both took generous paid leaves when their son was born. "We didn't need to choose between our finances and being with our baby," says Lawton.

Other staff echo the same sentiments. One employee, Lee Peters, a senior generalist in human resources whose son spent nine weeks in a NICU, was out of the office for 12-plus weeks without any recrimination. When the nearly \$500,000 bill came in, his out-of-pocket expense was minimal, thanks to STScI's stellar benefits. "Most people would have had to sell their house to pay for that," he says.

Although STScI does some extremely serious work, it's the opposite of stuffy. As one employee quipped on the eve of the Institute's epic Halloween Extravaganza, "This is a place where people dress up in Star Trek costumes that they own." Office doors are covered with family photographs and odd-ball humor. The dress code is über-casual and emphasizes personal expression.

Employees at STScI are passionate about what they do and would probably come to work even if STScI stopped paying them. Of course, as an entity at the mercy of federal budgets, that is a possibility. "Being a prime government contractor for NASA puts constraints on what we can do," says Peters. "They're very transparent about what's happening with the government contract and very proactive about working with legislators."

renovated in 2006 and the firm throws in \$50 a month per staffer to help offset parking or public transportation costs.

PLANIT

Baltimore

Employees: 40 **What they do:** Full-service creative agency offering public relations, advertising, branding, and design. **Why we like them:** Small agency working with major clients means lots of room for creative types to spread their wings. **Best benefits:** Company-paid short and long-term disability and life insurance; 401k with 50-percent employer match up to 6 percent; employer pays half the cost of downtown parking or monthly MTA passes; high-deductible health plan, but employer covers the deductible.

From its trendy office overlooking Baltimore's Inner Harbor, Planit had the perfect view to see its work in action when the Baltimore Grand Prix whizzed past its front door. The company was the official PR agency for Marc Bunting's Team Baltimore Racing. This is just one of Planit's many high-profile clients, a list that includes Under Armour, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Fila, and Voga Italia wines.

Account executive Heather Hurley, 26, joined the company out of college and has worked on high-profile clients for over three years. "The culture here is what attracted me and also what has kept me here," she says.

Did we mention that agency work can be a grind? Yes, we did. Hurley says the omnipresence of the company's founders helps keep spirits high. A fridge stocked with energy drinks, beer, and wine doesn't hurt, nor does the on-site pool table, games, and guitars. Hurley describes her co-workers as both "fun" and "brilliant."

"Every year we still get raises and bonuses, we still have Christmas parties and fun happy hours," says Hurley. "Things like that keep people's spirits up."

REZNICK GROUP

Baltimore and Bethesda

Employees: 1,200 nationally, 180 in Baltimore. **What they do:** Accounting, tax, and business advisory firm. **Why we like them:** Strong commitment to community service. **Best benefits:** Very generous (20-30 days) paid time off, plus paid holidays; 50-percent employer 401k match to each employee dollar (up to 5 percent of salary); tuition reimbursement; five days parental leave for birth, adoption, or foster placement; many flexible work options. CONTINUED ON PAGE 158



Sales Worker, \$21,570 • Security Guard, \$24,970 • Surgeon, \$196,870 • Teacher, \$46,210 • Trucker, \$36,161 • Veterinarian, \$80,120

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 121

Here's the thing about working in accounting: From January 2 to April 15, you don't have a life. However, if you must be a slave to tax season, it helps if your employer offers a few we-know-this-blows-but-we're-behind-you perks. Reznick Group does this in the form of on-site chair massages, ice-cream socials, occasional candy bags and lunches for all employees, and an end-of-tax-season bash. At other times of the year, the firm lightens the mood with happy hours and other events organized by the in-house social committee. But what really keeps people chugging through the dark days of tax filing is Reznick's vacation terms.

"The leave policy here is extremely generous," says Anneke Gibson, CPA, a senior associate, who currently rakes in 25 days of paid time off and a windfall of nine paid holidays. "The nice thing is that not only is the time allowed, the firm actually lets you take it."

But what really caught our eye is the company's interest in community service and the employee's enjoyment of those programs. "We have a community outreach day once a year, which is unique," says Karin Lundquist, 31, an audit manager. "The entire office closes for the day and we are matched with a nonprofit to do

hands-on work followed by a regroup and cookout with the whole firm."

SAFENET INC.

Release

Employees: 1,564 **What they do:** One of the largest information security companies in the world.

Why we like them: They're a big company with a small-company feel. **Best benefits:** 401k with several matching contribution levels; quarterly and annual profit sharing; up to \$10,000 referral bonus; tuition reimbursement; newly renovated, free gym on-site; 20-30 paid days off depending on tenure; flexible schedules and work-from-home options.

SafeNet Inc. is a giant in the fast-paced, ever-changing world of data protection, so one might not expect to find a whole lot of hand-holding. Yet when Vickie White, 37, got pregnant, she found nothing but support. After the birth of her first child, SafeNet let her ramp up slowly to her full-time schedule. When she realized that her position, which required lots of travel and late-night conference calls with international customers, was too demanding, she worked with a supervisor to find a position more suited to family life. She now works a 20-hour week.

And she actually enjoys going to the headquarters located on the scenic Bush River in Harford County. Employees can work from the patio if they wish or wherever they're comfortable, like the cafeteria, where you can also play a game of air hockey or Ping-Pong.

Tom McNulty also got an educational helping hand after he joined SafeNet in 2007. "I always wanted to go back to get my MBA," says the senior financial analyst. "My first year here, I enrolled at Loyola. I don't know how else I could have done it if they hadn't helped pay for it."

As big companies have seen their bottom lines shrink in recent years, many have cut back on office parties. Luckily, protection of online data seems an ironclad need in even an economically queasy economy.

UNDER ARMOUR INC.

Release

Employees: 5,000 globally **What they do:** Develop, market, and distribute the Under Armour brand of performance apparel, footwear, and accessories. **Why we like them:** The millennial generation has been disproportionately beat up in the recession; UA is a young company helping those young people build their careers. **Best benefits:**

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Under Armour Inc. (UA) brings the power of a linebacker to Baltimore's corporate scene. The company is rapidly building a campus empire in Locust Point, complete with its own community garden, gyms, cafe, and free parking. As is befitting a large, profitable company, they're sharing the wealth with generous reimbursement for tuition, maternity leave, and paid time off, to name a few benefits. And of course, you never know what super-star athlete you might bump into in the hall on any given day.

Alexandra Kennedy, 24, got her start at UA through the company's summer "Rookie" program, a three-month, full-time internship that gives young people a crash course in all things UA. Since its start in 2007, 70 rookies have gone on to be hired, like Kennedy, who's worked at UA just under three years.

"The culture at Under Armour is amazing," she says. "You can feel the excitement and hard work every day and they're hiring all the time. I don't feel there's a ceiling for me to hit here."

Sam Hollenbach, 28, adds that, "it's a young culture here and a lot of responsibility is given to younger people."

Hollenbach, a former University of Maryland athlete, never expected his mechanical engineering skills would fit in at UA, but he now works in a lab with a 15-person "innovation team" doing product research and development. UA brought together his love of engineering and his passion for sports. "I have so much freedom to explore new technology here," he states. "If UCLA is doing something innovative, I can hop on a plane and check it out." **B**

SHOPPING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 60

WINE TO BUY .925 The Silver Store, 1634 Thames St., 410-327-0036. Anthropologie, two locations including Towson Town Center, 825 Dulaney Valley Rd., 410-828-5521. Babe., 1716 Aliceanna St., 410-244-5114. B&O American Brasserie, 2 N. Charles St., 443-692-6172. Charm City Cupcakes, two locations including 326 N. Charles St., 410-244-8790. Chronicle Books, chroniclebooks.com. Curiosity, 1033 S. Charles St., 410-727-6262. Handbags in the City, 840 Aliceanna St., 410-528-1443. In Watermelon Sugar, 3555 Chestnut Ave., 410-662-9090. JLP Fine Art & Custom Framing Galleries, two locations including Green Spring Station 2360 W. Joppa Rd., 410-337-8490. Sassanova, 815 Aliceanna St., 410-244-1114. South Moon Under, several locations including 801 Aliceanna St., 410-685-7820. Sur la Table, 2505 Riva Rd., Ste. 145, Annapolis, 410-571-0880. The Pleasure of Your Company, Green Spring Station, 2360 W. Joppa Rd., 410-821-6369. The Store Ltd., 24 Village Sq., The Village of Cross Keys, 410-323-2350. Young Alexander, youngalexander.etsy.com.

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