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‹ BEST PLACES TO WORK

Career & Workplace

Best Places to Work 2022: Flexibility in everything helps Xantrion tame turnover

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Anne Bisagno, cp-founder of Xantrion Inc.

TODD JOHNSON | SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS TIMES

By Diana K. Murphy – Special Projects Editor, San Francisco Business Times
May 5, 2022 **Updated** May 6, 2022 2:23pm PDT

Xantrion meets its employees where they are. Literally.

The Oakland-based provider of cybersecurity and IT services to midsized businesses has always maintained flexible working arrangements for its employees. Its “human-first approach,” according to its co-founder and President Anne Bisagno, has made it a sort of unicorn among the noise generated around the Great Resignation, and much of that is due to flexibility, mentorship and assistance for professional development. She said they only lost 10% of its workforce during the pandemic.

We sat down for a Q&A with Bisagno:

What programs or policy changes has Xantrion implemented to improve employee work life balance?The two biggest things that we do – and have been doing even before Covid – is flexible work schedules. If people want to start work at five, they can. If people don’t want to start until 10, they can. It’s incumbent upon manager and employees to create work shifts that work for their team.

RECOMMENDED

And we’ve also always been flexible about working from home. We probably had

25% of the company remote before Covid and now it’s more like 35% and growing. Even the people who aren’t 100% remote have moved to a hybrid work policy.

How does a flexible environment impact clients? We’re a technology company, and we’ve always had the technology to allow people to be wherever they want to and still collaborate and do their work efficiently. And then that experience helped us to move our clients who weren’t already on cloud-based, resilient systems during Covid because we already åknew that it works.

What other benefits does Xantrion offer? One of the benefits our people like most is our training program. We offer everybody five paid training days a year and a training budget, and that ranges from $1,200 to $5,000 a year.

How do you foster a sense of culture in such a flexible working environment? We are trying to make sure that our hybrid work policy doesn’t unduly impact our newer employees through a shadowing program. With our more senior employees, it’ll be mentoring/shadowing. But the point is, we really want new people — and those people tend to be the most junior in their career — to build relationships outside of the relationship they have with their managers, to feel more connected to the company and to give them opportunities to build skills. We’re just having to do it in a more formal way than in the past.

They used to just lean over their cubicles but that doesn’t exist anymore. So we’re saying, “hey, we’re gonna assign you to one or two people. And these are the kinds of things we want you to cover with them when you have your monthly shadowing time.”

What we’re really going for is connection. What we found over the last two years is we’re a company whose secret sauce is our culture and we were a super close-knit organization.

What’s one tip you would share with other companies on navigating the challenges of the Great Resignation? We’re trying to build connections.For local people, we will have at least once per month company events. We are very deliberate about outlining or describing what our culture is and then sharing it out to new people. Stories. We’ve always been a huge company that believes in publicly recognizing people who go above and beyond for service organizations.

It has become more important than ever. We’re using personal stories at our company meetings to help new people understand, here’s what we’re about. Here’s what we value. Here’s who we are.

It sounds as if you’ve done a lot of work to boost employee retention. We’ve been super lucky. Our turnover is low. Through Covid, we’ve lost less than 10% of our workforce.

The two founders are still involved. I’m one of them. And we care about the people who work here, and worked our tails off to keep almost everybody during the pandemic. Wedidn’t lay people off.

It’s a human-first approach.

Xantrion

- **Score:** *93.33*
- **Top local executive:** *Anne Bisagno, co-founder and president*
- **Headquarters:** *Oakland*
- **Bay Area employees:** *85*
- **What it does:** *Provides cybersecurity and IT support specifically tailored to mid-sized businesses*
- **What employees say:** *“ The executive team works hard and they have proven they care about the employees. Simple things like emails about the 401k plan*

but also the benefits of it. Conversations about health and wellness. Presentations about why the company does what it does.”

- **Tip for keeping culture through challenging times:** *Shadowing sessions for employees in the early stages of their careers to get mentored by higher ups in other departments.*

THE LIST

Best Places to Work Small 2022

Score

Rank	Prior Rank	Business name
1	1	CAPE Analytics
2	2	Solvvy
3	3	Persona Identities

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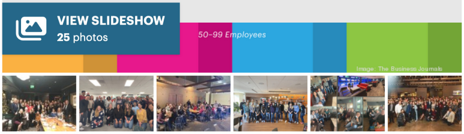
Bay Area Best Places to Work 2022



Check out the 24 companies with between 50-99 employees that are 2022 Best Places to Work honorees.

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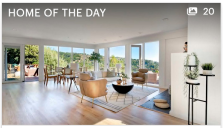

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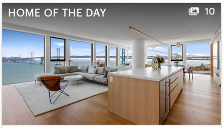

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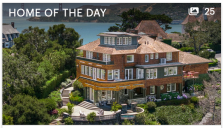

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