





small company	
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<h2>Jacob &amp; Sundstrom Inc.</h2>	
<p><b>Industry:</b> Information security and systems operation and support  <b>Location:</b> Baltimore  <b>Year founded:</b> 1981  <b>President:</b> William C. Jacob Jr.  <b>No. of local employees:</b> 50</p>	
<p><b>Best Perks and Practices:</b>                  A choice of one health plan that is 100 percent company-funded for the employee and family members or an upgraded plan that costs the employee a small fee each month; reimbursement for work-related training; 12 paid holidays in addition to vacation.</p>	
	<p><b>From the Top:</b>                  “We focus on our employees so they can focus on the clients.” — Jacob</p>

**B**ill Riley can't understand why more employers don't get it.

“It's all very common-sense stuff,” he said. “If you convince a person that you genuinely care about them, they're going to work for you.”

But while that approach may be basic, Riley, a program manager at Jacob & Sundstrom Inc. in Baltimore, said he believes it's rare. He said that throughout his 27-year information technology career, his current employer is the first place he has found where he senses true concern from top executives.

“If you show someone that you care about their goals then they're going to do what they can for the client because that's how you show your appreciation and loyalty,” Riley said.

Many of the company's employees stressed loyalty to the two men whose names are on the door — William C. Jacob Jr. and R. Kerry Sundstrom, a.k.a “Bill and Kerry.”

Part of that loyalty comes from the executives' commitment to benefits such as health care, said Gina Fischer, human resources manager.

And part of that comes from gratitude for other gestures such as the one Janice Y. Slocumb still thinks about 10 years after it happened.

Shortly after she started at Jacob & Sundstrom, she was assigned a big project while her grandmother was ill.

When the project was done, Slocumb said, one of the executives handed her a plane ticket to go see her grandmother.

As the company, which deals with many federal contracts, continues to grow, it becomes increasingly important to make sure mid-level managers share a common leadership philosophy, Jacob said.



**Sundstrom**

“We can't have one of them decide that they'll try the approach of, ‘The beatings will continue until morale improves,’” he said. “That style wouldn't work here.”

A few years ago the company, which now has 82 employees throughout the mid-Atlantic, grew to where it needed to add space to the offices it already had on the 22nd floor of the World Trade Center downtown. The new space has a stunning Inner Harbor view.

“Kerry and Bill have two desks in one office,” Riley said. “You would have thought they would have said, ‘Let's just build ourselves a couple of private offices with the oceanfront view.’”

But to move into the expanded space would have cost money. The team working on a new contract instead got to look at the water.

“One of the reasons they're able to provide the benefits that they do for us is that they'll do financially sensible things like that,” said Riley, who wasn't the only employee to mention that office-space decision.

Jacob and Sundstrom both shrugged their shoulders when they heard that staying put made such an impression. They said they weren't calculating its effect on morale but were glad to hear it may have been a boost.

“I guess that was just a nice extra perk,” Jacob said.

—R.L.