

TOP 20 EMPLOYERS IN THE WATERLOO REGION AREA



WATERLOO AREA'S
TOP EMPLOYERS
2018

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TOP 20 EMPLOYERS IN THE WATERLOO REGION AREA

Sleeman lands on list of area's top employee-friendly companies

Paul Boreham

For the Mercury Tribune

Cheers! It turns out a bottle of Sleeman's beer is about as much fun to make as it is to drink with friends on a night on the town.

Sleeman Breweries, with its unmistakable silos rising up along Highway 6 as it enters Guelph from the south, has been named a top employer in a competition organized by editors of Canada's Top 100 Employers.

Sleeman won as part of the regional edition, Waterloo Area's Top Employers, and is one of two Guelph companies on this year's list, the other one being OCAS Application Services Inc.

"We were really thrilled because there was a ton of work that went into the application," said Dave Klaassen, vice president of operations and human resources at Sleeman.

Companies were graded in eight categories, including: physical work-space, work environment and atmosphere, health and financial benefits, vacation time, employee communications, performance management, training and skills development and community involvement.

Sleeman's winning points are



PHOTO SUPPLIED

John Sleeman, chairman and founder of Sleeman Breweries, second from right, stands with employees, from left, Chris Williams, Zeeshan Haider, Brady Howard and Brittany Steep. The Guelph brewery, located at 551 Clair Rd. W., was chosen as one of Waterloo Area's Top Employers, a competition organized by the nationwide Canada's Top 100 Employers.

offering employees subsidies of up to \$4,000 per year for continuing education, summer student and co-op placements, profit sharing, generous year-end bonuses, and providing retirement transition.

The Canada's Top 100 Employers project began in 2000 as a way to

highlight forward-thinking companies that go above and beyond for employees. Offshoots sprouted in the years that followed, including the Waterloo area in 2008.

This is the first year Sleeman entered.

"We were sitting in one of our HR

meetings one day and we got into this casual conversation about some of the people that we've hired recently," said Klaassen. "They're coming back to us after two or three months and saying, 'In the interview when I asked you what it was like here, you said it was great. You know what? It really is. You should tell more people about this.'"

And so they are.

"People are really happy," said Klaassen, adding, "Beer is a fun, social product to work with."

Indeed, Sleeman has a colourful and storied past — and they don't mind flaunting it. The family's beer-brewing activities began with rollicking pirates in the 1700s, so the story goes.

John Sleeman, the fifth generation of Sleeman brewers in Guelph, is responsible for the current incarnation. After a 50-year brewing ban was imposed on the family in 1933 for bootlegging during Prohibition, selling to the likes of Al Capone and his gang, the taps began flowing once again on Clair Road in 1988.

John Sleeman sold the company to Sapporo Breweries in 2006 for \$400 million but still acts as chairman.

Eye patches, scarves and swords have been laid aside, but employees

come to work each morning doing more than just punching a time clock, said Klaassen.

"We really tap into our employees' ability to make the process better (he didn't pardon the pun). So that's a job expectation. Come in and do your job, and 'Hey, we want your ideas, by the way, on how we can do this better,' because we're competing against some pretty big global beer giants," — giants like Molson and Labatt.

Since the sale to Sapporo, Sleeman has moved into third place in Canadian beer sales. The company makes 25 different brands of beer and Sleeman operates three breweries across the country, employing 991 full-time and more than 100 part-time workers.

Being recognized as one of the area's top employers is like having a large flag waving proudly above the brewery in Guelph — a feather in Sleeman's cap.

The real prize, Klaassen said, is that his team went through the process of identifying why Sleeman is a great place to work.

"Now we can communicate that to (people) who want to join the company (as well as to) our existing employees," he said. "That's the real win."



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WATERLOO AREA'S
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Crawford Named a Top Employer in the Waterloo Region

For the 10th year in a row, Crawford & Company (Canada) Inc. has been selected as a top employer in the Waterloo region. We are dedicated to cultivating a corporate culture that promotes employee innovation through collaboration, with a focus on quality and customer service, positioning us as a leading independent provider of claims management solutions.

Our “One Crawford” cultural approach is further supported by our employees, who play a vital role in our company’s success. We are proud of our employees and their commitment to quality, customer service teamwork and dedication to supporting the communities in which they live and work through the Crawford Cares program.

As a top employer, we are dedicated to attracting and fostering the development of the best and the brightest within the insurance industry. If you have a passion for customer service, a commitment to exceptional quality and the ability to work in a dynamic team environment, consider joining the Crawford and Company (Canada) Inc. team and grow your career with us.



www.crawfordandcompany.com

Allianz Global Assistance

Travel insurance and assistance services
4237 King St. E., Kitchener

- 810 employees in Canada
- Helps employees save for the future and offers financial benefits, including signing bonuses for some employees, year-end bonuses for all and referral bonuses of up to \$750 for employees who recruit candidates from their personal network.
- Offers tuition subsidies for job-related courses (to \$1,000 a year), subsidies for professional accreditation, and in-house and online training programs.
- Supports local and national charitable organizations, focusing on initiatives that support children, and provides employees with a paid day off to volunteer in the community.

The Centre for International Governance Innovation

Think tank on international governance
67 Erb St. W., Waterloo

- 82 employees
- Offers on-site meditation and yoga classes, and encourages employees to lead active, balanced lives with a health club subsidy of \$300 annually; it also hosted a health and wellness fair, featuring more than 20 vendors, blood pressure and glucose testing, and free massages.
- Supports employees who are new mothers and fathers, including adoptive parents, with maternity and parental leave top-up payments, to 75 per cent of salary for up to 10 weeks.
- Offers starting vacation allowance of three weeks, paid time off during the winter holidays and up to three paid personal days off, which can be scheduled at the employees’ discretion.

Crawford & Company (Canada) Inc.

Insurance adjusting and risk management services
539 Riverbend Dr., Kitchener

- 920 employees
- Offers financial incentives, including a share purchase plan, available to all employees, signing bonuses for some, profit-sharing and year-end bonuses for all and referral bonuses to encourage employees to refer candidates from their network (up to \$1,000 per referral).
- Offers academic scholarships to children of employees (to \$2,500 per child) as well as tuition subsidies for employees for job-related courses.
- Supports local and national charitable organizations and encourages employees to give back to local communities by providing paid time off to volunteer and matching employee donations.

D2L Corp.

E-learning software
151 Charles St. W., Kitchener, Suite 400

- 606 employees
- Head office employees enjoy a unique workspace, featuring an outdoor patio with hammocks and accessible WiFi, daily lunch deliveries and snacks, and an employee lounge with foosball, a Star Wars pinball machine, guitars and ukuleles, and an assortment of vintage computer games.
- Recognizes exceptional performance through a number of incentives, including the Bravo recognition program, the Inventor’s Incentive Bonus program for filed and successful patents (also includes an annual banquet for all inventors with the president and CEO and executives) and the President’s Club trip for sales employees who meet or exceed their annual quota.
- Provides maternity leave top-up payments for new mothers (to 85 per cent of salary for eight weeks) and offers the option to extend their leave into an unpaid leave of absence.

Economical Insurance

Property and casualty insurance
111 Westmount Rd., S., Waterloo

- 2,419 employees
- Supports national charities, focusing on safety and security, youth and education, health and wellness, and arts and culture initiatives; it also encourages employees to give back to the community, matching employee donations as well as providing financial donations to charities where employees volunteer their time (\$500 for 40 volunteer hours).
- Provides financial incentives, including signing bonuses for some employees, profit-sharing for all employees and referral bonuses for employees who recruit candidates from their personal network (up to \$2,500).
- Offers flexible health benefits, allowing employees to allocate flex dollars however they choose, as well as transfer unused credits to savings, additional vacation days, or health and personal wellness accounts.

Equitable Life Insurance Co.

Insurance and financial services
1 Westmount Rd. N., Waterloo

- 582 employees
- Recognizes exceptional performance through initiatives including the President’s Award for top employees (who are invited to join senior leaders for a performance at the Stratford Festival) and the Equitable Life Award for both managerial and non-managerial staff (up to \$5,000 in gift cards).
- Offers a defined contribution pension plan and health benefits that extend to retirees (with no age limit).
- Provides employees with a health spending account of up to \$1,500, allowing employees to top up existing levels of coverage depending on their needs.

TOP 20 EMPLOYERS IN THE WATERLOO REGION AREA

eSentire Inc.

Provider of cybersecurity services
278 Pinebush Rd., Cambridge, Suite 101

- 245 employees
- Helps employees save for the future, and offers signing and year-end bonuses for some employees and referral bonuses for employees who recruit candidates from their personal networks (to \$5,000).
- Offers tuition subsidies for job-related courses and reaches out to the next generation of talent through co-op opportunities and paid internships.
- Offers a busy social calendar with a number of company subsidized events, including a summer picnic, tour of a craft brewery, snow tubing event, holiday celebrations and themed Star Wars Day.

Farm Mutual Re

Provides farm, personal and commercial insurance products to insurance members
350 Pinebush Rd., Cambridge

- 72 employees
- Offers on-site amenities, including a quiet room for meditation and religious observance, employee lounge with television and board games, and free membership to a shared use fitness facility, featuring state-of-the-art equipment as well as instructor-led classes (from kick-boxing to yoga).
- Offers academic scholarships to children of employees (to \$1,000 per child) and tuition subsidies for current employees.
- Helps employees save for the future, and provides retirement planning assistance and phased-in work options to help those nearing retirement transition.

Gore Mutual Insurance Co.

Property and casualty insurance
252 Dundas St. N., Cambridge

- 350 employees
- Offers tuition subsidies for courses taken at outside institutions, subsidies for professional accreditation and financial bonuses for some course completion.
- Helps employees save for the future, and supports employee efforts to plan for the longer term with retirement planning assistance and phased-in work options.
- Offers maternity leave top-up payments to employees who are new mothers (to 100 per cent of salary for up to six weeks) and supports employees who want to start a family with a subsidy for IVF (if needed).



Intelligent Mechatronic Systems Inc.

Automotive telematics
435 King St. N., Waterloo

- 118 employees
- Offers a variety of work perks, from 20-minute chair massages to free yoga classes to free breakfasts served weekly; employees can rest in an on-site nap room and quiet room, or unwind in the employee lounge, featuring video games, ping pong and foosball.
- Helps employees save for retirement, and offers retirement planning assistance and phased-in work options to help those nearing retirement transition.
- Offers referral bonuses as an incentive for employees to recruit candidates from their personal networks, to \$2,000 per successful hire.

Novocol Pharmaceutical of Canada, Inc.

Manufacturer of dental anesthetics
25 Wolseley Court., Cambridge

- 337 employees
- Provides opportunities for students and new grads to gain meaningful career experience through summer employment, paid internships and co-op placements, and offers academic scholarships to children of employees interested in post-secondary studies.
- Along with maternity leave top-up payments, supports employees who want to start a family with a subsidy for IVF (to \$5,000).
- Offers flexible work hours and up to eight paid personal days off each year, which can be scheduled at the employees' discretion.

OCAS Application Services Inc.

Provides administrative systems and application processing services to Ontario's colleges
60 Corporate Court., Guelph

- 65 employees
- Along with more than four weeks of starting vacation allowance, offers paid time off during the winter holidays and summer months.
- Offers generous maternity and parental leave top-up payments to employees who are new mothers and fathers, including adoptive parents (to 93 per cent of salary for a full year).
- Offers tuition subsidies for job-related courses (to \$2,500 per year), subsidies for professional accreditation and a number of in-house and online training options.



OCAS

*For the third consecutive year,
OCAS is proud to be recognized as a
Top Employer in the Waterloo area.*



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We genuinely thank our extraordinary team members for making this award a reality.

Built on a solid reputation of quality, integrity, and service, Reid's Heritage Group of Companies is one of Ontario's leading home builders.

Our Vision is to Build and Enhance Quality of Life

This starts with our team members. We are a growing, family-owned company, with some of the brightest minds in the region, offering a creative and rewarding work environment.

Build and Enhance Your Career at Reid's Heritage Group of Companies

To learn more about our team, and your next career opportunity, connect with us online.





REID'S HERITAGE GROUP OF COMPANIES



OpenText Corp.

Enterprise information management software
275 Frank Tompka Dr., Waterloo

- 1,626 employees
- Employees have the opportunity become owners of the publicly-traded company through a share purchase plan.
- Supports employees who are new mothers with maternity leave top-up payments (provided on a sliding scale depending on length of service) and offers the option to extend leave into an unpaid leave of absence.
- Offers a busy social calendar with company organized events, including summer barbecues, an Oktoberfest celebration, Halloween dress-up contest, evening Christmas party for employees and their partners as well as a separate party for children of employees, and full-day winter ski trip.

Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan

Insurance services for Ontario education employees
125 Northfield Dr. W., Waterloo

- 475 employees
- Encourages employees to adopt healthy habits, offering on-site fitness consultations, wellness programs and challenges, on-site yoga, cardio and bootcamp classes, a wellness spending account and healthy snacks provided monthly by the organization's wellness consultant.
- Offers tuition subsidies to employees for courses taken at outside institutions and academic scholarships for children of employees (to \$1,500 per child).
- Provides maternity leave top-up payments for new mothers as well as parental top-up for adoptive parents (to 90 per cent of salary for 17 weeks) and offers the option to extend leave into an unpaid leave of absence.

Reid's Heritage Group of Companies

House construction
6783 Wellington Rd. 34, Cambridge

- 212 employees
- Supports employees who are new mothers with maternity leave top-up payments, to 80 per cent of salary for up to 17 weeks.
- Offers flexible work hours, and helps employees balance work and their personal commitments with up to 10 paid personal days, which can be scheduled at employees' discretion.
- Offers referral bonuses as an incentive for employees to help recruit candidates from their personal networks, to \$1,500 per successful hire.

Sleeman Breweries Ltd.

551 Clair Rd. W., Guelph

- 991 employees
- Canada's third largest national brewery
- Invests in ongoing employee development with tuition subsidies (to \$4,000 per year) and offers opportunities for the next generation to gain meaningful experience through summer employment and co-op placements.
- Helps employees save for the future, and provides retirement planning assistance and phased-in work options to help those nearing retirement.
- Lets everyone share in the company's success with year-end bonuses and profit-sharing (varying by employee group).

TOP 20 EMPLOYERS IN THE WATERLOO REGION AREA

TextNow Inc.

Develops social media apps for Android and iOS mobile devices
375 Hagey Blvd., Waterloo, Suite 310

- 73 employees
- offers a share purchase plan, available to all employees, and generous referral bonuses of up to \$2,500 for employees who recruit candidates from their personal networks.
- Offers opportunities for students and new grads to gain career-level experience through co-op placements, paid internships and summer employment.
- Provides introductory maternity and parental leave top-up for employees who are new mothers or fathers, including adoptive parents.

Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada Inc.

Auto manufacturing
1055 Fountain St. N., Cambridge

- 8,620 employees
- Offers 3.8 weeks of paid vacation after the first year on the job, increasing to four weeks after two years of employment and up to 6.4 weeks for long-serving employees.
- Helps employees prepare for life after work with retirement planning assistance and contributions to a defined contribution pension plan; employees can take advantage of discounts for the lease or purchase of new vehicles (to \$1,000), a perk that extends to family members (to \$800).
- Offers on-site amenities such as free membership to a fitness facility (with full gym), employee lounge with games room, quiet room for meditation and religious observance, outdoor walking trails, baseball diamond, basketball court, tennis courts, soccer field, children's playground and community garden.

University of Waterloo

University with more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students
200 University Ave. W., Waterloo

- 5,254 employees
- Encourages ongoing employee development through its Organizational and Human Development Office, which offers a wide range of training programs on topics including business communications, leadership development, information systems and technology, and a seven-part inclusivity program.
- Encourages employees to prepare for the future with contributions to a defined benefit pension plan, retirement planning assistance and health benefits that extend to retirees (with no age limit); a retiree association helps retirees stay connected and represents retiree concerns related to pension and benefit matters, HR issues and university policy changes.
- Offers three weeks of vacation allowance to new employees, increasing to four weeks after four years of employment.

Waterloo North Hydro Inc.

Electrical power distributor
526 Country Squire Rd., Waterloo

- 121 employees
- Contributes to a defined benefit pension plan and helps employees plan for the future with retirement planning assistance.
- Encourages employees to lead active, healthy lives and offers subsidies for gym membership, up to \$300 per year.
- Offers opportunities for the next generation to gain career-level experience through co-op placements, summer employment and in-house apprenticeships; about 20 per cent of the organization's current employees are former co-op students.



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PETER LEE, WATERLOO REGION RECORD

Employees of eSentire, from left, Eldon Sprickerhoff, Matthew Smith, Kellen Bailey, Kathryn Hodge and Andy Fawcett enjoy the challenge of working in the field of cybersecurity.

Top employers work hard to attract the best employees

Dave Pink
For the Waterloo Region Record

In an atmosphere of day-to-day technical innovation and lofty customer expectations, the area's most highly rated employers say they understand the need to recruit and retain the very best personnel they can find — and that means providing the best possible working environments.

Among the businesses named to this year's Mediacorp Canada list of the top 20 employers in the Waterloo Region area, there's an understanding that if people are asked to perform at a consistently high level and rise to the never-ending challenges of a global marketplace they must feel appreciated. And that means more than just a good paycheque.

"We're looking for multifaceted people, people willing to work in an atmosphere of chaos and uncertainty," says Eldon Sprickerhoff, co-founder of eSentire, a cybersecurity firm in Cambridge that, for reasons that are apparent if you pay attention to the news about hacks, is experiencing phenomenal growth.

"The people we need to work here are those who can get fired up and want to solve different problems," he says.

At Kitchener-based Allianz Global Assistance, employees not only sell travel insurance, they deal with the problems their clients encounter — 24 hours a day, seven days a week in any part of the world. The company employs the kind of people who can bring calm reassurance to people in a troubling and confused situation.

"We have to be on the pulse of the problem.

We have to ensure that the best care is done," says Phil Hibbert, the firm's president and CEO. "Our asset is our people.

"We deal with real-life expectations. We're faced with getting them back to Canada, and getting them back safely.

"There's a lot of job fulfilment in that."

At Intelligent Mechatronic Systems (IMS) in Waterloo, the emphasis is on innovation, and the creation of a comfortable working atmosphere that allows for collaboration and the exchange of ideas.

"We're talking about creative ideas. These ideas foster in different ways," says Dale Scott, a technical lead who has been with the company for 13 years.

IMS develops telematic systems that can read data from automobiles and analyze the driver's habits — technology that will change the way insurance companies set their rates.

"We have an innovation department, but that's not the only place where innovation happens," Scott says.

The atmosphere at IMS "allows different people to share ideas and bring them out," he says. "We get to know people, and this allows us to be more productive. It's a very open culture, and a very supportive management. It's this diversity of culture that allows for different viewpoints, and this is where ideas come from.

"What comes from this is a lot of respect for other people and for their ideas."

Typically, companies on the local list offer flexible working hours along with generous maternity arrangements, retirement benefits and retirement counselling, and almost all of them encourage regular staff gatherings such

TOP 20 EMPLOYERS IN THE WATERLOO REGION AREA

as barbecues and group outings to special events. Most encourage staff involvement in the community and support for charitable causes. Some offer cafeteria meals prepared by visiting chefs, and gourmet coffee.

Common to almost all of the companies on the list is the belief among employees that they are listened to and that their ideas and abilities are respected.

"You're valued here," says Andy Fawcett, a security operations centre analyst at eSentire. "They recognize what you can do, and that's all you can ask."

Matt Smith, a solutions engineer with five years of service at eSentire, adds that "I've had the opportunity to take on new roles, and my ideas have been listened to."

"If there's a problem, we fix it."

"There is a sense of empowerment here, a sense that this is something you can take responsibility for," says Kellen Bailey, who started working at eSentire two years ago. "Everyone here wants to try to improve things, that they can take the bull by the horns and go."

The company employs more than 300 people and is adding staff as qualified people become available.

The need for computer security has never been more evident, says Sprickerhoff. "Everybody is online. Everybody knows someone who has been hit by ransomware or had their bank accounts hit."

"The job has changed since our beginning," he says. "The attacks are different, and their tactics change every six to eight months. It's never been so in-your-face as it has been this last year."

"I think of our people here as one part air traffic controller and one part bouncer."

As Kathryn Hodge, eSentire's senior director of human resources, points out, "this business is not for the light of heart."

"The people here are OK with unpredictability. The culture here is really, truly a team-oriented culture. It's an energetic, can-do culture and the people are ready to do leaps and bounds."

Because eSentire employees are expected to deal with the unexpected, the company provides a concierge service, to provide staff with everything from lunch at their desks or buying special occasion gifts for their loved ones at home.

At IMS, the emphasis is on the creation of a comfortable and friendly working environment, says Sharon Wehrle, the company's director of human resources. There's an on-site games room and "rejuvenation room," and space where employees can freely mix and mingle.

The company employs 140 people — half of them women — most of them with a thorough understanding of cutting-edge technology.

"There is a whole culture change with this generation. People are just looking for that relaxed atmosphere, so that they can be as comfortable here as they are in their own homes," says Wehrle.

"We work to be an employer of choice, to attract and retain employees."

Managers have regular lunchtime gatherings with employees, and employees are offered a referral bonus of \$2,000 to \$4,000 if they can entice skilled developers and testers to join the company.

The culture here is really, truly a team-oriented culture. It's an energetic, can-do culture and the people are ready to do leaps and bounds.

Kathryn Hodge,
eSentire
senior director of human resources

"We need top talent in these areas in order to be creative and innovative," says Wehrle. "We're always looking for top talent."

At Allianz, Hibbert also understands the necessity of meeting the expectations of a younger generation.

"We have a high number of millennials working here. The challenge is that these people need to be constantly stimulated," he says.

Hibbert is originally from New Zealand. He worked several years for Allianz in Australia, then did one year in Singapore before taking charge of the Canadian operation in Kitchener just over 16 months ago.

Worldwide, Allianz employs about 1,000 people. "That's a significant amount of people, but what's wonderful is the diversity of our people."

"This is truly an international company."

Hibbert says the company is growing rapidly, with business up by about 20 per cent just over the past year. He's forecasting even greater growth as Allianz continues to attract and represent some of the largest insurance companies in the world.

"We touch on a lot of big brands, and we're attracting more of them because of our growth."

However, what matters to Frank Flores, who works in the company's TD insurance sales department, is the caring attitude Allianz shows its employees.

"Coming here was the best decision I ever made," he says. "From the day I was interviewed I knew this was the right culture."

"One of the strengths of this organization is that it's not strictly regimented, and that is so much better than any experience I ever had before," he says. "For anyone who had never had my previous experiences, it would be hard for them to imagine how good this really is."

"I know that I'm in a good spot."

Flores was born in Guatemala and is fluent in Spanish, and considering the worldwide nature of the business, "that's come in handy."

He says that his wife had a difficult time during her last pregnancy, and the company stood by the couple throughout some stressful times. "It was not a good time, but I felt secure here."

"I couldn't believe the level of support I got. Everybody chipped in and helped us out. That kindness is something I will remember forever."

"When you know that your job is secure and you can take the time you need, what more can any employees ask of a company?"



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Thank you to the editors of Canada's Top 100 Employers for recognizing our exceptional workplace and to our amazing staff for making it so.

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