

Does **YC** look this



Believe it or not, this isn't a fancy lodge hotel, but the conference room at Mad River Post—a studio that hires a personal chef for its 16 Manhattan employees.

UR office good?

HEALTH AND DENTAL IS JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG. HERE'S AN INSIDE PEEK AT NEW YORK COMPANIES WHERE THE BENEFITS ARE ABOVE AND BEYOND.
BY KATE TORGOVNICK

If you're the head of a company, common sense dictates that if you want your employees to be happier, you should pay them more. But a recent study by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) shows that benefits are just as important in determining job satisfaction. Ever since the first dot-com era, companies have been coming up with new and creative ways to reward workers. According to SHRM, 14 percent now provide massages for their employees, 4 percent have added concierge services and another 5 percent have gone so far as to offer health insurance for Fido and Mittens. Here are eight New York companies who are getting extra-creative in the perks department. Don't blame us if you want to start looking for a new job tomorrow.

The company: MAD RIVER POST

This post-production studio takes the film shot for movies, music videos and ads, and assembles it into a final product. The 16 employees at Mad River's Crosby Street office enjoy some of the best perks in the city.

The best benefits: The New York office is built around a gorgeous open kitchen, where chef Lisa Schoen (who has appeared on the Food Network and worked with Mario Batali) prepares elaborate daily meals for the company's employees and clients. In this office, meals are a gourmet group event that take place at tables rather than in front of computers. The full-time chefs also bake cookies and leave out cheese and fruit plates throughout the day.

Insider says: "Lisa's shrimp BLTs with house-cured bacon really hit the spot," raves owner Michael Elliot, who designed the space with architectural firm Kostow Greenwood. "It's not a surprise to see a client behind the counter helping the chefs make duck spring rolls," adds executive producer Laura Relovsky.

What else: Because clients spend long hours in the office collaborating with the staff, the office is ultraluxe, with Eames-ish furnishings. There's an old-school tabletop Donkey Kong game in the main room, as well as every new-fangled video game system you can think of. Oh, and employees can request kegs of their favorite beers to be put on tap, too.

The company: GOOGLE

The Internet powerhouse made the move to Manhattan over a year ago, opening a Chelsea office at 76 Ninth Ave. that houses about 500 employees.

The best benefits: Google was number one this year on *Fortune*'s list of the 100 Best Companies to Work For, and the story of its fantastic perks has become city legend since the Chelsea office opened. In fact, it's hard to narrow it down to just one "best" benefit. Perhaps it's the two gourmet cafés where Googlers can enjoy breakfast, lunch and dinner treats like ceviche, soul food or a banana caramel tart—free. Perhaps it's the massage room where employees can go for deep-tissue work during the day—employees get coupons for massages as rewards. Perhaps it's the game room with a pool table, air hockey, foosball and Dance Dance Revolution. Or maybe it's the weekly TGIAF (Thank God It's Almost Friday) events where the whole office gets together to socialize.

Insider says: "There are so many options in the cafés each day that it can be overwhelming to choose. My favorite dish so far was the chestnut ravioli in Bolognese sauce. I took extra home for dinner," says Courtney Tuckman, 30, manager of public affairs.

What else: Google also expands its employee's minds. There is a speaker series that brings in authors and experts like writers Jeffrey Toobin and Elizabeth Gilbert. Employees can also take free language classes on-site. Mercifully, Google New York has nixed the motorized scooters that are so popular on the Mountain View, California, "campus."

The company: BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC (BAM)

Music isn't the only pleasure you'll find at BAM—the Lafayette Avenue arts center that's been around since 1861 now offers theater, dance and opera, in addition to concerts.

The best benefits: BAM is one of the finest venues in the city for art house films. Employees get free movie tickets (for themselves and a guest) for any show. Even better, the staff gets complimentary tickets to the music, dance and theater performances at BAM if they

aren't sold out. There are also BAM Minigles (um, "Bingles"?) three or four times a year, where the whole staff comes together for music and an open bar.

Insider says: "A lot of the people who work here are up-and-coming filmmakers, theater directors, actors and dancers, and they use their jobs at BAM to keep up with what's going on in the scene," says Sandy Sawotka, 48, BAM communications director. "And our staff comps are pretty great seats."

What else: Free yoga classes at lunchtime on Thursdays in an on-site space that resembles a dance studio.

The company: BLOOMBERG

The best benefits: Mayor Mike Bloomberg's megacorporation, which specializes in financial and business news and media, has more than 9,000 employees worldwide—a large percentage of them working in the Bloomberg Tower at 731 Lexington Ave.

The best benefits: The number-one perk is the on-site nurse-practitioner, meaning you don't have to skip work for minor medical appointments.

Insider says: "The nurse-practitioners hook you up," says a Bloomberg employee. "If you have a sore throat, they check you out, prescribe antibiotics if you need them and even order the meds for you. You get a message 20 minutes later saying, 'Your medicine is here.' It's unbelievable."

What else: The office features several Zen "quiet rooms" where employees can relax. Pantries throughout the building are stocked with free drinks—from Vitamin Water to cappuccino—and snacks like energy bars, fruits and bagels.

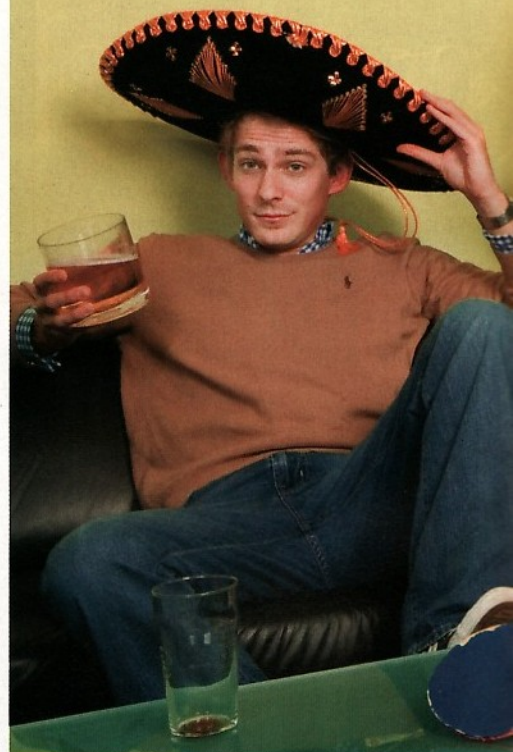
The company: WORKMAN PUBLISHING

The publisher, famous for concept books like *1,000 Places to See Before You Die*, *The Official Preppy Handbook* and *What to Expect When You're Expecting*, employs around 250 people at its 225 Varick St. office.

The best benefits: About a year ago, Workman put out a book called *Take a Nap! Change Your Life*, which extols the nap as a way to up productivity and increase overall health. After it came out,

Just another Thursday at the Connected Ventures office.

From left: Sam Stahl, director of advertising; Sarah Schneider, media planner; Patrick Cassels, intern; Ricky Van Veen, co-founder and editor in chief.



the company decided that it had better live up to its own advice and created a private nap area where employees can roll out a yoga mat and take a snooze. They're encouraged to only take 5 or 10 minutes, but no one actually times it.

Insider says: "I got a recent company-wide e-mail that said, 'So go ahead, sleep on the job. It's good for you,'" an employee says. "I take advantage of it."

What else: Books and calendars galore.

The company: ENGENDERHEALTH

A nonprofit that partners with governments and local health providers in 40 countries to promote sexual and reproductive health, EngenderHealth also does a good job of taking care of its employees at their 440 Ninth Ave. office.

The best benefits: Nonprofits aren't exactly famous for showering employees with perks. But EngenderHealth smartly provides an on-site infant care center for the babies of any employees who wish to use the service, complete with cribs, toys



and books. A full-time caregiver watches the kids and parents can pop in and out as they wish.

Insider says: "I used the infant care center for my daughter from 3 months to 15 months," says Theresa Kim, 37, director of communications. "I'm a lifer, because I love the fact that when I have more kids I'll be able to be with them during the day in that first year, when there's so much attachment. My daughter would walk through the halls in the morning. The whole office had a birthday party for her when she turned 1."

What else: An in-office gym with treadmills, weights and a television, so you can zone out while you exercise.

The company:

BUMBLE AND BUMBLE

The hair-care gods employ 400 people between two locations, on E. 56th St. and W. 13th St.

The best benefits: It's the perk any New Yorker would dream of—all

Bumble and bumble employees get free haircuts and color at all Bumble salons. Even better, they can choose any in-house stylist—even the company's most established (and priciest). The Bumble staff is showered with bags of free products four times a year. And on Thursdays a masseuse sets up shop to give back rubs to employees who've met a goal or had a stressful week. Fashion Week is said to be a particularly busy time for this masseuse.

Insider says: "My most cherished perk is getting my hair colored by the best in the business," says Kristin Kochanski, 28, director of editorial and production. "It keeps me looking and feeling great," which is great for productivity, of course.

What else: The on-site cafés with organic, gourmet food aren't free, but employees get a hefty discount. The café downtown is also open to Bumble customers and to the public—it's become a neighborhood favorite for its gorgeous views overlooking the Hudson.

The company:

CONNECTED VENTURES

The parent company of comedy site CollegeHumor.com and Vimeo.com (which is like a private YouTube) has an office in Union Square and the average employee age is 25. But don't dismiss it as a bubble venture—*Business Week* values it at more than \$20 million.

The best benefits: In many ways Connected's offices feel like a flashback to the dot-com heyday. The break room boasts a ping-pong table, as well as a slew of video games, from Guitar Hero to Wii Tennis and Mario Kart.

Insider says: "We have an after-6 p.m. rule for ping-pong," boasts co-founder Ricky Van Veen, 26. "And when you hear a ping-pong ball, you know it's 6."

What else: Thursday Hangs, a weekly office party with free beer (employees can invite their pals, too). The staff also does a video series called "Hardly Working," which has vaulted some workers to Internet celebrity status (like Amandalyn Ferri, who lip-synced to a Harvey Danger song in a video viewed by over 4 million people).