



## The Culture Wins

“A culture and management style as straight forward and likable as strawberry jam” has won J. M. Smucker the coveted Fortune magazine’s No.1 position in “The 100 Best Companies To Work For” annual competition.

In its January 12, 2004 edition, Fortune describes that winning culture in an article by writer Julia Boorstin.

Here is a summary of the key attributes of that culture:

1. Core Values, Not Fads: The 107-year-old, family-controlled business is run by two brothers who tend to quote the New Testament and Ben Franklin. It’s a throwback to simpler time. “If Norman Rockwell were to design a corporation, this would be it,” writes Boorstin.
2. No Razzle-Dazzle Perks for Employees: No pet insurance, no subsidized feng-shui consulting.
3. Role-Model Leadership: “Smucker’s gimmick-free management starts with the CEOs, Tim and Richard Smucker, who took the reins in 2001. Tim and Richard are popular with their 2930 employees- they are affectionately known as the “boys” – which isn’t too surprising given that the company’s stock has had a total return of 100% over the past five years. They engineered Smucker’s purchase of Jif and Crisco from Procter & Gamble in 2002, doubling the company’s revenues to \$1.3 billion in 2003.
4. Code of Conduct: The boys have made sure Smucker adheres to an extremely simple code of conduct set forth by their father and CEO No. 3, Paul Smucker:
  - Listen with your full attention
  - Look for the good in others (and play well with them)
  - Have a sense of humor
  - Say thank you for a job well done.

5. Employee Recognition; Smucker managers takes the last command of the Code of Conduct, in particular, very seriously. They create a lot of opportunities and activities to thank employees; from celebratory barbecues to lunches, gift certificates, commemorative Christmas plates, and holiday turkeys, to screenings of films in which Smucker’s has a tie-in, like The Cat in the Hat. Tonie Williams, director of marketing for peanut butter, says she’s been thanked more in her two years at Smucker than she was in her nine years at Nestle, Kraft, and P&G combined.

The biggest challenge the “boys” have to deal with? “To make sure the company’s culture stays the way it is,” they say.

How does your organization compare to this best company to work for in America? To learn more about the benefits of a human asset focused corporate and organizational culture AIE recommends taking the [Cultural Compass Evaluation](#).