

Ford CEO Mark Fields to keynote Top Workplaces breakfast

By John Gallagher and Alisa Priddle Detroit Free Press Business Writers Filed Under Business Michigan Business Oct. 09

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Mark Fields / Jarrad Henderson

Mark Fields

- Age: 53
- Joined Ford in 1989 and has held numerous positions around the world.
- Became Ford CEO on July 1
- Born in Brooklyn, grew up in Paramus, N.J. With wife Jane and sons Max and Zach, Fields divides time between Michigan and another home in Florida

Top Workplaces breakfast

The 2014 Detroit Free Press Top Workplaces awards breakfast will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 12, at Shriners Silver Garden Event Center in Southfield at 24350 Southfield Road. The event runs from 7:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m. Tickets are \$45 for individuals and \$320 for tables of 8. To purchase tickets, go to www.on.freep.com/topworkplacestickets. For more information call 313-223-4038, or email cyosin@dnps.com

Mark Fields, who recently took the reins at Ford Motor Co. as [CEO](#)

, will deliver the keynote address on Nov. 12 at the annual Top Workplaces breakfast sponsored by the Detroit Free Press.

The event honors 100 employers whose workers expressed satisfaction with their workplace, whether because of pay and benefits, advancement opportunities, flexibility of schedules and other advantages. This year's top winners:

MSU Federal Credit Union in the large-employer category, Home Instead Senior Care of Birmingham among mid-sized [business](#)

, and Billhighway, a payment processing firm, in the small-business category.

Fields' keynote address will be one of the first major public appearances by Fields since he took over July 1 from the retiring Alan Mulally.

"All of us at Ford understand that an engaged and motivated workforce strengthens a business — allowing us to attract and retain the best people," said Felicia Fields (no relation to Mark Fields), group vice president of Human Resources and Corporate Services. "Our participation in the Top Workplaces breakfast reinforces Ford's understanding that people are any company's competitive strength."

Fields takes over a more cohesive workplace crafted by predecessor Mulally, who joined Ford in 2006 and inserted folksy charm, laser-like focus, data-driven decision-making and a [global](#)

vision. Mulally took a fractious corporate culture and melded it into a team strong enough to weather the 2009 financial crisis and emerge with enviable profit margins.

Fields, 53, is a 25-year veteran of Ford who worked his way up the ranks, culminating in being named CEO. The Brooklyn native commands Ford's 180,000 employees and 65 plants around the world.

He has had a series of global successes. He ran Ford operations in Argentina and Ford of Europe, as well as managing affiliate Mazda in Japan and overseeing the Premier Automotive Group — Ford's former luxury brands Aston Martin, Jaguar, Land Rover and Volvo.

Fields is also credited with restructuring operations in North America prior to his promotion in December 2012 to the newly created job of chief operating officer. He's seen as the scrappy New Jersey boy and Harvard graduate who wasn't afraid to dust it up. But he was also a quick study in the ways of predecessor Mulally, known for team-building and accountability.

The Top Workplaces breakfast honors team-building and more, recognizing a wide range of the region's best places to work.

The list of winners includes such big names as Kelly Services, the workplace solutions company, making the list for the second year in a row in the large-employer category; SmithGroupJJR, the Detroit-based architecture firm in the mid-sized category, and Hungry Howie's Pizza, in the small-employer category.

"There is currently a war for talent in America and having the Top Workplaces designation is a great way to set companies apart from their competitors," said Denise LaRue of Workplace Dynamics, which surveys company employees anonymously about how much they like their work and bosses. "It's a prestigious award based solely on employee feedback."

Winners are chosen through a complex judging process conducted by the survey firm Workplace Dynamics, which organizes companies by size. In Michigan, the company invited 1,298 companies to participate and surveyed 207 of them. Some 60,021 Michigan employees received surveys, and 41,437 responded. The surveyed companies employ 105,546 people in Michigan. Workplace Dynamics partners with media companies around the country for similar events.

What makes for a top workplace? Kelly Services offers a variety of benefits to employees, including health and wellness plans, a 401(k), skill enhancement training, and employee discounts. At Quicken Loans, employees (known as team members) receive bonuses for referring new employees and paid time off to volunteer, along with up to five weeks' paid vacation.

Flexibility counts for a lot. At Warner Norcross & Judd, a law firm named a winner in the mid-sized employer category, employees enjoy a variety of alternative work arrangements including flexible start times, job sharing, partner-track reduced hour schedules, the ability to make up time and telecommuting.

And sometimes it's the little things that add up to a winner. At George W. Auch, a construction management firm, the company pays for employees' professional dues and for credentialing training and exams, and gives a child's construction-themed book and stuffed toy to employees with young children.

There are also a collection of multiyear winners, showing that achieving top-workplace status is no fluke. Among those: Michigan First [Credit Union](#)

, Domino's Pizza and Quicken Loans.

According to the survey results, smaller firms tend to create more employee satisfaction than midsized firms, and mid-sized firms tend to generate more satisfaction than bigger firms.

Top workplaces winners

Large category

- MSU Federal Credit Union
- Edward Jones
- Quicken Loans
- Plante Moran
- Gentex

Mid-sized category

- Home Instead Senior Care — Birmingham
- TNG Worldwide
- Team Rehabilitation
- Microsoft (Detroit)
- University of Michigan Athletics Dept.

Small category

- Billhighway
- Financial Services of America
- Custom Home Health
- Detroit Business Consulting
- imageOne

Top Workplaces: [The complete list of Top Workplaces, by size](#)

■ **15 best places to work in Michigan:** [The 2013 Free Press Top Workplaces winners](#)

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