

Thriving and Family-Friendly

By Stuart Kahan

It's happened again. An accounting firm has been selected as one of the best places to work. Who and where? Wall, Einhorn & Chernitzer, P.C., in Norfolk, Va. The firm has been picked once again by *Inside Business* as one of the Top 25 Best Places to Work in Hampton Roads.

"We are a company that prides itself on being family-friendly, team-oriented, and giving our employees the opportunity to advance themselves in the workplace," says Marty Einhorn, managing shareholder. "Each employee is able to arrange a flexible schedule to encourage a positive work/life balance." He adds that employees are also offered a variety of technical and soft skills training programs.

Alvin Wall, Marty Einhorn, and Jeff Chernitzer got together in 1989. In the first year of operation, they had four employees and net revenue of \$250,000. By 1997, the firm had grown to include the original three shareholders but now

four employees had grown to 22 employees. Net revenue was \$1.5 million. This year, there are nine shareholders, 86 employees, and net revenue exceeding \$9 million. In fact, since 1997, the firm has seen double-digit growth each year.

FLEXIBLE & VARIED WORK ENVIRONMENT

WEC has office space on three floors of a business building. Einhorn points out that partners, senior managers, managers, and select administrative staff work in private offices while supervisors, seniors, staff, and other administrative personnel are in workstations. "Employees are free to decorate their space how they wish. There is a water cooler, refrigerator, microwave, and an area for lunch on each floor plus beverages supplied by the company along with candy. Lunch is provided each Saturday during the busy season."

The firm has also established a

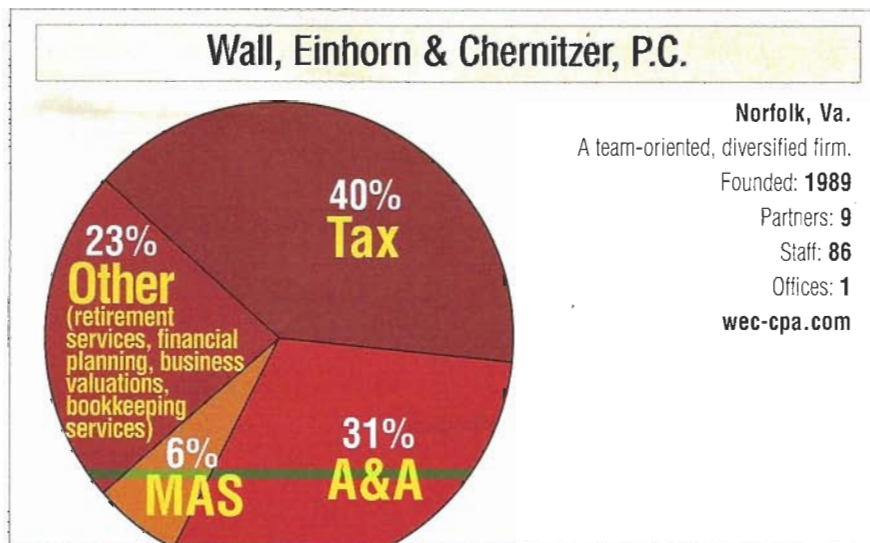
credo known as **We Care**, represented as follows: Work as a Team, Enjoyment, Client Service, Adaptable Work Schedule, Respect, Environment. "These are considered core values," notes Einhorn, "and were first presented at a firm meeting in the fall of 2005. Employees received a small laminated poster that includes the core values to hang in their space."

WEC, says Einhorn, believes fervently in community service. "Each week, two employees volunteer at a school to assist children with their homework. The employees also participate in various charitable events during the year including walks and marathon runs."

Kristin Herkel, assistant marketing administrator, says that the firm invites its employees' family members to barbecues at a local park at various times of the year. "We also have parties to celebrate the March 15 and April 15 tax deadlines and the December holidays. In fact, it doesn't stop there. Each employee's birthday is celebrated in the office with breakfast brought in by the managing shareholder."

What really sets the firm apart from a majority of others, emphasizes Einhorn, are the areas of flexible scheduling, job sharing, and telecommuting. "Our policy is that any employee who has a computer at home is allowed to work from home." To many, this is almost earth shattering but Einhorn stresses it is done within reason. "For example, most employees work from home during the summer months. And although there are no specific childcare options for parents, if someone's child is sick, they are allowed to work from home if they have a computer there. There is also a dependent care reimbursement program that helps out the employees with children."

On the matter of children, Herkel notes that the firm adheres to a maternity/paternity leave, where each new parent is given as much flexibility as possible. "In most instances, the new mother is allowed to ease back into work at her own pace."



PRACTICE PROFILE

PERKS GALORE!

Einhorn is extremely proud of the firm's incentive programs. "We provide each employee with a 401(k) plan that has a six percent match, \$500 employee referral bonus, free parking, life insurance, disability, dental, medical, and dependant care reimbursement plan, an employee assistance program, and free tickets to Norfolk Tides baseball games, the Virginia Symphony, Chrysler Museum, tournaments, and Old Dominion University men's basketball games."

The firm also offers in-house technical training on Microsoft Office products as well as the standard software used by all departments within the firm. "In addition, we offer 'Lunch and Learn' sessions where staff training is provided in various areas," says Herkel. "Plus, we have marketing training presented by an outside consultant once a month for all staff levels."

A PLATEFUL OF SERVICES

WEC represents a myriad of industries including construction companies and contractors throughout the Hampton Roads region in Virginia. Einhorn says that the firm has built a strong resourceful network of experts, particularly in the construction industry.

To that end, he adds that WEC also serves many companies that manufacture or distribute products. "Our client base includes small, local businesses as well as large enterprises with multiple locations operating throughout the U.S. and internationally. We understand the

unique challenges in this industry and help our clients remain competitive by increasing margins, controlling costs, and improving operational efficiency." In fact, he cites a wide variety of professional and business services companies such as medical and dental practices, architects and engineers, independent insurance agencies, advertising and marketing organizations, law practices, technology companies, and staffing firms.

Moreover, although specializing in certain areas, WEC still provides the traditional accounting, auditing, and tax services, and works with these organizations on compliance issues unique to them, including grant adherence, budgeting, unrelated business income, investment accounting, state and local tax issues, internal control review, new IRS rules, and the like.

Einhorn also points out that the firm has extensive experience in the real estate industry. "We represent many real estate developers, property owners, and property managers. Our firm has been involved with all aspects of more than 150 low-income housing tax credit projects during the past 10 years. We have past and ongoing experience with numerous syndicators and developers here in Hampton Roads and in other parts of Virginia."

A BLEND THAT WORKS

Einhorn concludes that this team approach, both in the personal and business lives of the firm's people, means



**Reliable,
responsive,
proactive, which
serves to drive
the firm.**

MARTY EINHORN

that the group blends together for a seamless financial plan to the benefit of both employees and clients.

"We recognize that our clients choose to associate with people who they know and trust and who know and trust each other. That's the essence of our strength. Our people are the foundation of our practice so we treat them with respect and furnish opportunities for advancement. And, this translates to our clients." **PA**