

Dispatch from Silicon Valley's talent war: Mexican weddings and water walls

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Sure you've heard about [sleep pods](#), [communal bicycles](#) and [giant tributes to snack food](#) ^[3] at Silicon Valley tech companies like [Google](#) ^[4] and Apple.

What about getting married at your local tech company?

Over the last three years, Santa Cruz-based headset designer and manufacturer [Plantronics](#) ^[5] has been bolstering its 560-person Surf City campus to compete for highly sought after engineers and product designers.

In addition to an aesthetic overhaul by Facebook campus designer [Gensler](#) ^[6], Plantronics is ramping up a regimen of fitness classes ahead of the completion of a new gym, setting up an intern 401(k) plan and starting a delivery system for locally-sourced groceries ordered by employees.

That's just the tip of the iceberg: a job at Plantronics' larger operation in Tijuana, Mexico could cut down on wedding planning.

Four weeks into her new role as senior vice president of the company, Silicon Valley veteran [Susan Lovegren](#) ^[7] - formerly of [Hewlett-Packard](#) ^[8], [Agilent Technologies Inc.](#) ^[9] and [Juniper Networks, Inc.](#) ^[10] —told me that part of Plantronics' corporate culture is providing benefits tailored to social dynamics in each country where the company has an operation.

In Tijuana, Mexico, where Plantronics employs about 2,300 people in manufacturing, R&D, finance and other operational roles, that means several different things.

A total 188 employee programs at Plantronics' Mexico office includes everything from negotiating deals with the company's local food providers to supply discounted groceries to marrying employees.

"There's a lot of bureaucracy around getting married (in Mexico)," Lovegren said.

On Valentine's Day each year, the company now converts the employee cafe in Tijuana to a reception area. This year, 37 couples were married, with six guests per couple. The company helps navigate the bureaucracy of obtaining a marriage license and applying for housing as a married couple.

Lovegren said employee benefits are part of the company's "smarter working" philosophy in the Valley.

"It's really about creating a holistic environment in which people can come together to do their best work," Lovegren said, adding that the smarter working model is broken down into to three categories: technology, culture and environment.

Stay tuned to the print edition of the Business Journal for more on Plantronics' bid to lure Silicon Valley tech talent over the hill to Santa Cruz.

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Links:

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[3] <http://www.bizjournals.com/sanjose/print-edition/2013/04/26/beyond-the-freebies-a-thirst-for-good.html>

[4] http://www.bizjournals.com/profiles/company/us/ca/mountain_view/google_inc/15435

[5] http://www.bizjournals.com/profiles/company/us/ca/santa_cruz/plantronics_inc/19582

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