

NEWS RELEASE

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The LSI Architects team at their Norwich office and staff at work. Images credits: left - Mike Harrington; middle - LSI Architects; right - LSI Architects LLP. Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988: Reproduction is permitted providing authorship is credited.

LSI ARCHITECTS NAMED AGAIN AMONGST BEST EMPLOYERS IN UK CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Following last year's success of being named as one of the top 50 employers in the UK construction industry, award-winning LSI Architects has this week been named again as a leading, national employer. The results of a survey conducted by construction magazine, Building, the Norwich and London-based practice now ranks in the Top 5 companies under the four categories 'Architects'; 'Social responsibility'; 'Smarter working' and 'Small firms'.

This year's Good Employers Guide, which was published last week, has expanded its full listing from the Top 50 to the Top 75 UK firms. The Guide, which aims to showcase the very best firms in the construction sector, was open to all construction companies in the UK with over 30 'non-administrative' staff.

Karl Thurston at LSI Architects, said: "I have worked with LSI for 14 years and the practice maintains a friendly, family atmosphere, offering active support and encouragement both professionally and personally. I am pleased to see this recognised by being listed in the Top 5 in four of the categories. The practice is increasingly becoming recognised as a leader, particularly in new build schemes in

education, healthcare, workplace, housing and masterplanning. Some of our top recent projects include Norwich Union's Surrey House and Atrium; Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Cley Marshes Visitor Centre and Notre Dame High School's Classroom of The Future."

David Andrews, Principal Member of LSI Architects, commented: "We want to ensure that all our staff are respected, rewarded and recognised for the contribution they make to the success of the practice and we are naturally delighted to be named again amongst the best employers in the UK construction industry. The practice has active corporate responsibility and environmental policies. Its structure encourages delegation of responsibility and provides training opportunities for all our staff."

This latest recognition for the practice follows a number of recent awards including the Big Tick Award 2008 Award for Responsible Business Practice & Impact on Society; An Eastern Daily Press (EDP) Business Award 2008 under the category 'Design & Development' for Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Cley Marshes Visitor Centre and most recently an Emirates Glass Leaf Award, a global design prize, for 'Best Sustainable Development', also for Cley Marshes Visitor Centre.

As a member of BITC, the LSI team has a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility work and is heavily involved in community activities. Through BITC, LSI Architects participates in a national network of like-minded organisations, with a role in Regional Leadership Team activities.

The team is also involved in an education and business partnership, providing external tuition and assessment to students on an interior design course at Easton College, Norfolk. The practice gives regular work placements to students from local schools, sponsors local events such as the Norfolk & Norwich Festival, participates in public-orientated initiatives such as Architecture Week and Open Studio and provides advice and assistance to organisations such as the Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

Other initiatives the practice is involved in include 'Architects in Schools' which gives younger architects an opportunity to develop their skills, 'Open Christmas' whereby food and clothes are donated annually by staff to a local charity, and encouraging

Staff Community Roles which involve participation on committees, boards, charities and talks.

For further information on LSI Architects, visit www.LSIarchitects.co.uk.

To view a digital version of Building's Good Employers Guide, visit www.building.co.uk/GEG.

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Notes to the Editor

1. For further media information, images or an interview, please contact Carri Crook, Carisma Communications, on 01842 815910 or mobile 07704 920350 or email carri@carismacommunications.co.uk.
2. LSI Architects is amongst the most highly regarded design practices in Norfolk and the Eastern Region. It is known generally within the Industry for professionalism and design quality and sustainable design, and by its clients for quality of service and cost effective solution. LSI Architects' main clients are corporate and public bodies with major sectors being: the workplace, retail, education, health and master planning. LSI Architects is a practice of over 50 personnel, operating throughout the UK from its bases in London and Norwich. LSI Architects is an ISO 9001 and 14001 accredited practice.
3. All images are subject to the Copyright and Patents Act 1988. Reproduction is permitted providing authorship accredited to 'Mike Harrington Photography'.
4. **How information was gathered from employees?** Each participating employer was asked to submit a list of all their employees and their corporate e-mail addresses omitting those in support based roles*. These lists were used to establish a representative sample of employees to survey. The Employee Survey was issued individually to each selected staff member via e-mail using an electronic hyperlink. The responses of all staff within each corporate group formed the basis for scoring the Company that they represent.

What questions were asked? The Employee Survey was devised to elicit opinion of staff members to 40 statements – 30 positive and 10 negative – and to enable scores to be awarded on a comparable basis. These statements focus on both general areas of employment and also those specific to the construction industry. A specific slant towards a more exciting employment environment was added to the more usual style of survey in order to differentiate the more forward looking firms with more prestigious and challenging projects for their employees to work on. These statements were created to understand general strength of feeling within 6 categories, each with 5 positive and 1 or 2 negative statements. The online survey itself did not list categories or state which statements are aligned with which category. The order in which statements were made was also randomised to prevent any one preceding response consistently influencing that of the following one. The survey used a 5-point response scale – Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree – to grade strength of feeling within each of the 6 categories; these being:

Social Responsibility - how seriously the company takes its responsibilities towards the safety of its staff and the betterment of the construction industry and wider community.

Smarter Working – how the company encourages a realistic balance between the work and personal lives of its employees.

Feel Good Factor – the level of fun and enjoyment staff members get from working within their own companies.

Leadership – how well employees believe their company is being led and how well looked after they are by their managers.

Inspiration – are employees inspired by the type of projects the company is involved in and are they getting a 'buzz' from working on them?

Ability to contribute – how well employees feel they are able to participate in decisions that affect them and do they feel the Company listens to them.

How was the feedback used to establish which companies were 'good' employers? What were the judging criteria? Scoring for each company used responses to the survey statements from all responding staff in each company surveyed. In other words, if 500 staff members of Company A were issued with the survey and 450 replied, then the score for Company A would be collated from the responses of all these 450 employees.

Answers to statements are calculated by aggregating scores weighted as follows:

Strongly Agree worth 2;
Agree =1;
Neither agree nor disagree = 0;
Disagree = -1 and
Strongly disagree = -2.

The average of all employee scores, within each company, provide a total score enabling companies to be ranked on an equal basis.

The Company Score is the sum of all six-category scores and companies are ranked by this score.

The top 75 ranking companies were selected and individual category scores checked. Should any company, in this list, fail to have reached a benchmark minimum score in any one or more categories, it was eliminated from the list and the next ranking company added to the bottom of the list until there remained 75 eligible firms. All 75 were checked against demographic details supplied by the companies themselves to confirm that they conform to a set of established norms i.e. – provide training, employ at least a minimum number of women technical or professional staff etc.

These 75 are to be known as the Good Employers for 2008 and are included in the Guide in alphabetic order.

*Support based roles were defined as those who are employed in the following activities: secretarial, PA support to fee-earners, marketing & PR, finance & accounting, IT support, human resources, receptionist duties, facilities management or property maintenance where this is related to their own offices.