First Watch Named One of America's Most Loved Workplaces® for Fifth Consecutive Year

November 5, 2026

Daytime Dining leader recognized as #1 Most Loved restaurant culture

Bradenton, Fla. (November 5, 2026) – First Watch, the leading Daytime Dining restaurant serving breakfast, brunch and lunch, has been named one of America's Most Loved Workplaces® for the fifth consecutive year, ranking #2 overall among companies nationwide and yet again earning the distinction of the #1 Most Loved restaurant culture in America. This recognition is the result of employee surveys and third-party research and is a demonstration of the company's focus on championing its "You First" culture for its more than 18,000 employees.

"To be named a Most Loved Workplace for the fifth year in a row, and recognized as the #1 restaurant culture in America, is incredibly meaningful because it reflects what makes First Watch so special: our people," said Laura Sorensen, Chief People Officer. "Our 'You First' philosophy comes to life every day through the teamwork, care and sense of community in our restaurants. We're proud of the culture our teams have built together and remain deeply committed to creating amazing opportunities for our people."

As First Watch continues to grow into new states and communities, the company remains focused on preserving the award-winning "You First" culture originally modeled by late co-founder Ken Pendery. Employee feedback gathered by Best Practice Institute (BPI) highlighted the work/life balance that sets First Watch apart, as well as benefits designed to support employees both at work and at home, including back-up child and elder care, free access to the Calm app, personal and professional coaching, telemedicine services, high school diploma programs and tuition reimbursement.

Listening is also central to how First Watch keeps its culture strong. Through the company's W.H.Y. (We Hear You) Tour, Sorensen and CEO and President Chris Tomasso connect with servers, cooks, dishwashers and bussers across the country to hear candid feedback about their experiences. Those conversations have helped shape meaningful changes to everything from menu and operating systems to compensation and benefits. Since launching the W.H.Y. Tour in 2021, Sorensen and Tomasso have heard from more than 1,900 employees through more than 190 hours of conversation.

That focus on employees has been part of First Watch for more than 40 years. The company's "You First" philosophy is simple: put employees first so they feel empowered to put customers first. Its daytime-only, "No Nights Ever" model reinforces that promise, giving restaurant teams the opportunity to build careers in hospitality while still having their evenings to spend with family, friends and the people who matter most.

BPI's research uses the proprietary Love of Workplace Index ® to assess employees' emotional connection to their organization. The underlying SPARK model examines collaboration, a positive vision for the future, alignment of values, respect, and achievement. Employee feedback provides evidence of how those qualities are experienced at work."

For more information about First Watch and its career opportunities, visit careers.firstwatch.com.

About First Watch

First Watch is the leading Daytime Dining concept serving made-to-order breakfast, brunch and lunch using the freshest ingredients available. Guided by its "Follow the Sun" culinary philosophy, First Watch's chef-driven menu rotates multiple times per year to feature the highest-quality flavors at their peak, offering elevated executions of classic favorites, fresh juices like the Kale Tonic, and fan favorites such as the Lemon Ricotta Pancakes, Quinoa Power Bowl and signature Million Dollar Bacon. For every kid's meal served, First Watch proudly donates a portion to organizations and causes making a positive impact in our communities – raising millions to date. A recipient of many "Best Breakfast" and "Best Brunch" awards, First Watch was voted #1 Best Breakfast by Newsweek's Readers' Choice Awards 2025, and also named 2025 and 2024's #1 Most Loved Workplace ® in America by the Best Practice Institute – an accolade most recently featured in *The Wall Street Journal* – after appearing on the list in 2022 and 2023, as well. With a commitment to quality, hospitality and community, First Watch is redefining Daytime Dining across more than 680 restaurants in 33 states. For more information, visit www.firstwatch.com.

About Most Loved Workplace®

Most Loved Workplace® is a global workplace certification and recognition program backed by Best Practice Institute research. Its Love of Workplace Index® measures employees' emotional connection to their organization and informs its certification and recognition programs. The research behind the SPARK model is explored in Louis Carter's *In Great Company* (McGraw-Hill, 2019). Learn more at mostlovedworkplace.com.

About Best Practice Institute

Best Practice Institute is a leadership development and benchmark research organization and the research body behind Most Loved Workplace®. BPI studies workplace culture and works with organizations on leadership, talent, and organizational performance.