



## First Watch Honored for Workplace Culture

April 5, 2022

*Chief People Officer Laura Sorensen accepted the prestigious award at ADP's Meeting of the Minds conference in Anaheim, CA*

BRADENTON, Fla.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Apr. 5, 2022-- [First Watch](#), the leading Daytime Dining concept with more than 435 restaurants nationwide, was recognized for its workplace culture by ADP, a leading global provider of Human Capital Management (HCM) solutions, as a part of ADP's annual Meeting of the Minds Conference. ADP's Culture at Work Award honors an organization that deploys programs that drive sustained employee engagement through a dynamic, best-in-class workplace culture.

"Since our founding in 1983, First Watch has fostered a culture built on our 'You First' mission, which puts people at the forefront of everything we do. So, to be recognized with this incredible award from ADP is truly an honor," said Laura Sorensen, Chief People Officer, First Watch Restaurants. "Although we have continued to grow and evolve throughout the decades, we have remained committed to our people-first approach, which I believe has been a key driver of our success. Over the past few years, we've made it a priority to further our 'You First' ethos with the launch of our Seven Steps Toward Change and Be A Better Human initiatives to help accelerate the development and advancement of under-represented communities within First Watch. While there is still work to be done, we are dedicated to continuing to leverage our internal programs to drive real results and opportunities for team members across our organization and the communities they call home."

First Watch fosters a culture centered upon its belief in putting its employees first, a belief that permeates both its customer service and business decisions. The Daytime Dining concept focuses on people development, engaging its workforce around a strong sense of purpose and team.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, First Watch demonstrated this "You First" mission as it set out to mitigate the stress of both health and financial uncertainty for its employees. Within three days, the company secured free telemedicine for all employees and their family members and paid for ongoing insurance coverage for all furloughed employees. All employees with three or more years of service were offered \$250 in "relief" bonuses upon furlough and \$250 in "return" bonuses. The Company also provided a bonus to all restaurant managers and Home Office employees upon their return from furlough that represented the difference between what they earned in unemployment and their salary to make them financially whole during a period of great instability. And at the height of the labor shortage, restaurant managers were also provided with monthly appreciation bonuses.

Moreover, the You First Fund was established in May 2020 to support employees and their immediate families experiencing significant financial hardship with direct assistance. To date, the fund has granted more than \$800,000 in tax-free grants to cover immediate needs such as rent and mortgage, utilities, food and groceries, childcare and any other hardship created by the pandemic.

Most importantly, First Watch maintained its strong connection with its employees. Through its collaboration with ADP, First Watch was able to honor this commitment during the pandemic by leveraging easy access to employee information, which its leaders used to connect with all furloughed employees on a weekly basis. With this approach, the Company was able to maintain trust and connection, share First Watch updates, such as information on its You First Fund, and most importantly, let each employee know how much they were valued. The Company also continues to leverage the ADP Mobile Solutions app to stay connected to its extensive hourly population on an ongoing basis, regularly posting employee resources and engaging content.

ADP awards recognize a select group of large employers that demonstrate excellence in five categories: workplace culture, employee engagement, HCM innovation, resiliency and diversity, equity and inclusion. Honorees are recognized for their use of HCM technology to deliver strong results and drive positive change.

For more information about First Watch and its career opportunities, visit [careers.firstwatch.com](https://careers.firstwatch.com).

### About First Watch

First Watch is an award-winning Daytime Dining concept serving made-to-order breakfast, brunch and lunch using fresh ingredients. A recipient of hundreds of local "Best Breakfast" and "Best Brunch" accolades, First Watch's chef-driven menu includes elevated executions of classic favorites along with First Watch specialties such as the protein-packed Quinoa Power Bowl®, Farmstand Breakfast Tacos, Avocado Toast, Chickichanga, Morning Meditation (juiced in-house daily), Vodka Kale Tonic and its famous Million Dollar Bacon. In 2022, First Watch was awarded a sought-after MenuMasters honor by Nation's Restaurant News for its seasonal Braised Short Rib Omelet, and it was recognized with ADP's coveted Culture at Work award. In 2021, the concept was recognized as FSR Magazine's Best Menu and as the fastest-growing full-service restaurant chain based on unit growth. There are more than 435 First Watch restaurants in 28 states, and the restaurant concept is majority owned by Advent International, one of the world's largest private-equity firms. For more information, visit [www.firstwatch.com](https://www.firstwatch.com).



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