

FIRST WATCH®

First Watch Named a Top 100 Most Loved Workplace® by Newsweek

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Leader in Daytime Dining ranked as one of four restaurant companies recognized for team member happiness and satisfaction at work

BRADENTON, Fla., Oct. 12, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [First Watch](#), the leading Daytime Dining concept with more than 445 restaurants nationwide, has been named a top 100 Most Loved Workplace® by Newsweek and the Best Practice Institute (BPI). Ranked as one of four restaurant companies on Newsweek's second annual list, First Watch was recognized by its more than 10,000 team members for exceptional employee satisfaction and happiness at work. This news follows First Watch's [previously announced](#) recognition by ADP for its Culture at Work Award earlier this year, reflecting the concept's compounding efforts to create a quality of life and thriving culture for its teams that is unparalleled in the restaurant industry.

"I am continuously in awe of our team members, who have put their full hearts into building our 'You First' culture over the past four decades, a culture all about putting people at the forefront of everything we do and celebrating one of our core beliefs – to Just Be Kind," said Laura Sorensen, Chief People Officer at First Watch Restaurants. "Being nominated as a Newsweek's Most Loved Workplace alone is an honor, but to be named within the Top 100 just further reflects the incredible grit and grace our teams bring to the table every day. This award is for them as much as it is because of them. As we grow and invite others to join us, we'll continue to celebrate these moments shoulder-to-shoulder with our teams and bring out the best in our culture to better serve them, our customers and our communities."

The results were determined after surveying more than 1.4 million employees from businesses with workforces varying in size from 50 to more than 10,000. Newsweek's Top 100 list recognizes companies that put respect, caring and appreciation for their employees at the center of their business model and, in doing so, have earned the loyalty and respect of the people who work for them.

First Watch fosters a culture centered upon putting its employees first, a belief that permeates both its customer service and business decisions. The Daytime Dining concept focuses on people development and engages its workforce around a strong sense of purpose and teamwork. As a part of its 'You First' culture, First Watch operates on one-shift a day utilizing a "No Night Shifts Ever" approach which allows its teams to enjoy evenings with their family or friends, an improved quality of life and free time to explore career possibilities through its High School Diploma Program or Everyone Gets Graduate Support (EGGS) tuition reimbursement program.

In recent years, First Watch has made a number of updates to its culture and team member programs, including the launch of its Be A Better Human initiative. At its core is a "7 Steps Toward Change" platform which includes a R.I.S.E. (Race Inclusion & Support Exchange) Advisory Council and "Rising 20" mentorship program, both comprised of in-restaurant and Home Office employees who work directly with leadership on advancing diversity and inclusion and accelerating the development and advancement of underrepresented communities within the company.

As another reflection of its 'You First' culture, First Watch senior leaders have continued their W.H.Y. – We Hear You – Tours to listen and communicate directly with front-line employees. During each six-week virtual tour, key executives host conversations with servers, cooks, dishwashers and bussers from every geographic operating region across the company. As a result, tangible and meaningful enhancements are made to the menu, operating systems and employee compensation and benefit offerings that lead to a better quality of life for its teams. So far, two tours have been conducted since its inception in 2021.

This commitment extends to its You First Fund, which was established in May 2020 to support employees and their immediate families experiencing significant financial hardship in times of crisis with direct assistance. In the wake of the destruction caused by Hurricane Ian, First Watch has contributed \$100,000 to the fund to assist employees in Florida who have been affected by the storm. 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.

"Culture is something that's created and reinforced daily, which is why we strive to ensure each of our restaurants and our Home Office are places that nurture potential, recognize kindness and foster opportunities that let people know they matter, because they do," said Sorensen. "Our people are our purpose, and celebrating how they show up for their teams and customers with the goal of making someone's day that much brighter is what this award and First Watch is all about."

Most Loved Workplaces® certify companies where employees are the happiest and most satisfied at work. First Watch became certified as a Most Loved Workplace based on its scores on the Love of Workplace Index™, which surveyed employees on various elements around employee satisfaction and sentiment, including the level of respect, support and sense of belonging they feel inside the company. More than 540 team members from the concept's in-restaurant leadership and its Bradenton-based Home Office took part in providing feedback on culture, career-building and collaboration.

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

First Watch Team



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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®, Farm Stand 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, First Watch 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 445 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.

About Newsweek

Newsweek is the modern global digital news organization built around the iconic, over 85-year-old American magazine. Newsweek reaches 100 million people each month with its thought-provoking news, opinion, images, graphics, and video delivered across a dozen print and digital platforms. Headquartered in New York City, Newsweek also publishes international editions in EMEA and Asia.

About Best Practice Institute

Best Practice Institute is an award-winning leadership and organization development center, benchmark research company, think tank, and solutions provider. BPI is the certifying body for Most Loved Workplace® and conducted the original research to create the model and criteria for becoming a Most Loved Workplace®. BPI’s research proves that Most Loved Workplaces® produce 3-4 times better customer service, employee performance, and retention than companies not loved by their employees.

For more information on how to apply to become a certified Most Loved Workplace in 2023, go to: <http://www.mostlovedworkplace.com>

Media Contact:

FirstWatch@icrinc.com

A photo accompanying this announcement is available at <https://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/535d16d0-a03a-4dfe-803b-08c502d8f776>