



NIK BLASKOVICH PHOTO

Anant Yardi stands with other employees in front of an original Apple One computer at Yardi's corporate headquarters in Goleta.

A corporate culture centered on innovation

By Tony Biasotti

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It took leaving Yardi Systems for Laura Atallah to really appreciate the company.

Atallah, a marketing campaign specialist with Yardi, worked for the Goleta-based property management software company for seven years before leaving for another employer. Last fall, two years after she'd left, she came back to Yardi.

"Being away made me think about it differently," Atallah said. "I missed the camaraderie. It's like a family. This company started small, and it still feels like a family company."

Yardi is a long way from small these days. Gordon Morrell, the company's executive vice president, said Yardi had around 25 employees when he started there, in 1990. Today, it is approaching 6,000 employees worldwide, about 750 of them in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Yardi is one of the global leaders in property management software, and it's been recognized as a world-class workplace, too; last year, the company founder and CEO, Anant Yardi, was named to a list of the nation's top 50 corporate leaders by Glassdoor, the employer review website, based on ratings by Yardi employees.

"There's a great company culture here that really values the employee on a personal level," Atallah said.

Last year, the company made a

Yardi Systems

Rank: No. 12

Founded: 1984

Industry: Property management software

Headquarters: Goleta

Regional employees: 700+

Worldwide employees: 6,000



decision meant to help the employees in its Goleta headquarters who had been commuting from Ventura County. Yardi opened an office in Oxnard, in The Collection, a largely retail district in RiverPark, a major new residential development.

The satellite office opened with about 40 employees and is now up to 90 — all people who had been driving an hour or more to work, now with commutes of 20 minutes or less. Some of the employees even live in RiverPark, so they can walk to the office, Morrell said.

"They're thrilled," he said. "From all the feedback we get, they're very happy

to not have to make that drive."

Yardi's salary and benefits are competitive, including a profit sharing program that puts 5 percent to 8 percent of employees' annual pay into their 401(k) accounts, Morrell said. Yardi pays 100 percent of its employees' health insurance premiums, and 85 percent of their families' premiums. The company offers parental leave for primary caregivers of up to four months, with three months at full pay; state law provides for partial pay for parental leave at most employers, but there is no mandate for any period at full pay.

Philanthropy is also a big part of Yardi's culture. The company supported 85 nonprofits in the Santa Barbara area last year, and many more all over the world, Morrell said.

A few weeks ago, a group from Yardi visited the Goleta warehouse of Direct Relief and packed backpacks for the nonprofit organization's disaster relief kits. Yardi employees also help out at Habitat For Humanity building sites and volunteer at Girls Inc. and other local nonprofits.

Fun is another element of Yardi culture. For the past three years, the company has taken over a half dozen tasting rooms and other venues in Santa Barbara's Funk Zone for its holiday party. Morrell said the event draws as many as 700 guests.

"Our party has definitely taken on a panache in town," Morrell said.

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Gordon Morrell
Executive VP, Yardi Systems

Morrell describes Yardi's culture as "casual, but focused," with a focus on taking care of both customers and employees. It hasn't changed much since he joined the company, 28 years ago, but most everything else about the business has.

"When I started, it was a DOS-based software product," he said. "In the mid-90s, we came out with a Windows-based product, and then eventually internet-based, and now everything is in the cloud and driven by apps. ... People might look at us and say, they've been around so long, how can they continue to innovate? But that's the culture here."