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Balancing work - and play - at Jimerson & Cobb

By Kevin Hogencamp Thu, Oct 29, 2015 @ 3:28 pm | updated Thu, Oct 29, 2015 @ 3:30 pm

BACK PHOTO: 1 OF 2

NEXT



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 From left, Hans Wahl, Jessica Campbell, Stephanie Stubbs, Jennifer Farber and Henry Farber represented Jimerson & Cobb in a recent 5K race.

The competition is fierce at the Jacksonville law firm Jimerson & Cobb.

But that's just during playtime.

Miniature golf, painting contests and pumpkin bowling — yep, these lawyers have made a game of rolling orange gourds down a hallway — are among the activities that an employee-driven committee organizes at Jimerson & Cobb.

Sound fun? There's also this: In September, the firm's staff put rivalries aside and enjoyed

National Ice Cream Day and National Bourbon Heritage Day socials.

The Jimerson & Cobb employees also team up regularly for activities like corporate footraces and lending their time and money to community charities.

Stephanie Stubbs, the firm's controller and marketing director, said shareholders Charles Jimerson and Christopher Cobb have managed to fashion a workplace that successfully balances work and fun.

"The shareholders put employees first," she said, "because if your employees are not successful and happy, then your clients are not necessarily going to be successful and happy."

Indeed, Jimerson & Cobb ranks No. 6 in Northeast Florida and No. 35 overall on Florida Trend magazine's 2015 Best Companies to Work For list among small companies (15 to 49 employees) statewide. The "Best Companies" participants undergo an evaluation of their workplace policies, practices, philosophy, systems and demographics; employees also are surveyed on job satisfaction.

Formed in June 2009, Jimerson & Cobb is an 18-employee firm whose specialties include business litigation, construction and banking law, creditor's rights and accounts-receivable collection, and representing community associations. The company also was named to the inaugural Gator100 list recognizing the 100 fastest-growing businesses owned or led by University of Florida alumni; UF is Jimerson's alma mater.

While it's not all fun and games at the downtown law firm, Cobb said the primary key to keeping employees happy is allowing them to perform their jobs autonomously.

"At the same time, we provide mentorship and supervision that gives them the confidence

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that they are not performing their job alone, but rather as part of a team," he said.

Stubbs agreed, saying that the firm's collegial culture is accompanied by an expectation for employees to flourish in their assigned roles. It helps that the shareholders give attorneys and other staffers a stake in the company's success by providing profit-sharing opportunities, merit-based bonuses and ensuring that employees are adequately trained for their assigned tasks, she said.

"We are driven to do the best we can, we are pushed to excel, and we are given the tools we need to succeed," she said.

Jimerson said the "Best Companies" award "exemplifies the firm's overall commitment to creating a workplace comprised of satisfied employees.

"Each respective employee's personal and professional success is directly aligned with the goals of the firm," he said. "When those objectives have an opportunity to meet challenging legal problems, we have found that our clients often are able to achieve their goals, too."

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