

MANAGERS WITH 50-99 EMPLOYEES

★★★ 2015 ★★★  
**BEST PLACES TO WORK**  
IN MONEY MANAGEMENT

## First Place

# Baird Asset Management

*Working hard for clients but playing hard, too, once in a while keeps everything cool*



At their Halloween party this year, employees of Baird Asset Management used toilet paper to transform their colleagues into mummies.

The activity was created by members of the Milwaukee money manager's fun committee, which meets on a regular basis to come up with ways for employees to express themselves outside of their daily work routine.

"Work-life balance is important," said Mary Ellen Stanek, managing director and director of asset management. Ms. Stanek said while Baird employees work hard to do what's best for clients of the employee-owned firm, they also like to play hard.

She said employees work together in a flat organizational structure in which everyone's opinion is valued. If you walked into a team meeting, you would not be able to tell who was leading the team, Ms. Stanek said.

"We keep it elegantly simple," she said. "Everyone is valued and everyone matters."

That team work extends to the fun activities. "We plan fun events to bring everyone together" and to get to know each other outside of their work roles, said Sharon deGuzman, fun committee member as well as a managing director and senior portfolio manager at the firm.

The Halloween party, for example, taught employees who is most effective in the delicate process of mummy wrapping. The trick is to wrap so gently that the toilet paper does not come undone from the rest of the roll, she said.

Ms. deGuzman said employees at the Halloween party were also split into teams to see who could make the best mummy. "The competitive juices start flowing," she said.

Ms. Stanek said other fun committee events include minigolf tournaments, in which employees build their own holes using portable windmills, PVC pipes for ramps and even a miniature swimming pool.



**I WANT MY MUMMY:** Some employees got all wrapped up in the fun that went with a recent Halloween event.

"We celebrate everything," said Ms. Stanek, noting that any event can be the reason for a party.

When asked what the best things are about working at Baird Asset Management, one said: "My co-workers care about my personal life."

"We celebrate birthdays, work milestone anniversaries, marriages and pregnancies. I have a good work-life balance."

Another said he enjoys "working with some of the nicest and most genuine people I have ever met, who truly care about clients."

One other employee summed up life at Baird: "Good leadership, fun job, great team."

— RANDY DIAMOND