

Private advisory firm blends personal, professional life

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BOULDER — Principals and co-owners Debi Baydush, Drew Simon and Ben Weaver work by a philosophy that happier employees are more productive employees.

Free health care for employees, nutritious snacks to complete the job and an office remodel to include a relaxing outside courtyard are some of the perks employees enjoy at Baydush Simon Weaver LLC.

Simon said he does not want his employees to feel as though they must make choices between a healthy life and a good job; instead, the two should be harmonious.

“We all have family, friends and a life and that does not stop when we walk in the door for work,” he said. “We allow space to handle personal business, sick kids and issues with a spouse, girlfriend or boyfriend.”

Baydush Simon Weaver is the winner of the Boulder County Business Report’s 2006 Health-Care Heroes Business Award.

The privately owned Boulder-based advisory firm focuses on guiding clients through wealth creation, management and preservation. It specializes in tax, trust and estate issues.

The company was founded in 1992 by Baydush and has grown to include two more principals and five employees. It has a nationwide presence including 150 clients, 80 percent of whom are in Boulder and along the Front Range. The company has experienced steady growth since 1992.

“We have been successful because of what we have been doing for our employees,” Weaver said. “It has contributed to our growth and is responsible for why we have been able to exceed our target for growth and profitability each year.”

Baydush is the head of the company’s Quality of Life committee. The committee organizes Friday afternoon socials and spontaneous field trips to relieve stress and tension in the workplace. The events take place on company time and cost employees nothing to participate. Some of its events include laser tag, a culinary school class and bowling.

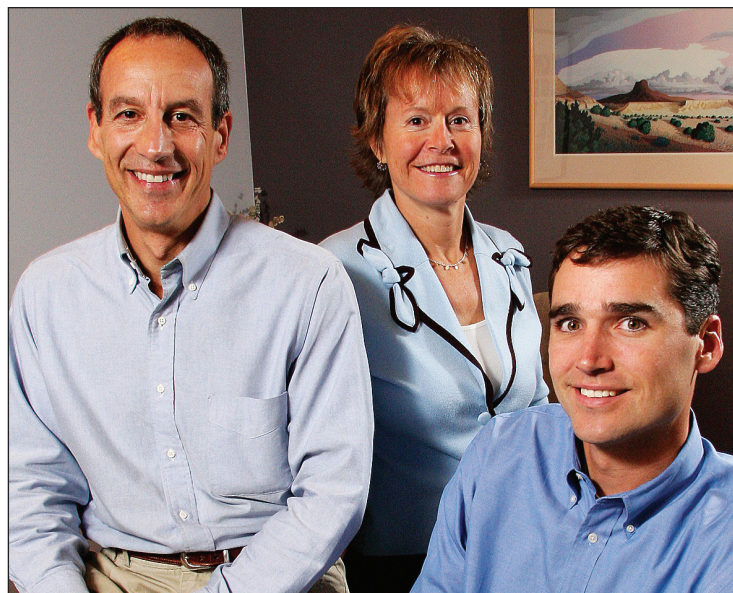
“When you can have fun it makes it fun to come to work and give a little extra at the job,” Baydush said. “I believe in dignity, community, love and support for your fellow human being. These people are not just employees — they are my friends.”

These outings provide another way for employees to relate to each other and help team building. Baydush said she understands that some companies do not have the ability to offer these types of incentives due to financial reasons, but they can let employees know they are valued and respected.

Ashley Humphreys, process manager at Baydush Simon Weaver, said the company acts like a family and cares for its employees all day, every day, not just during working hours.

“When I first interviewed, the company told me it understood that people have a life outside of work and will do its best to accommodate us,” Humphreys said. “We do not have to worry about being fired if we are sick. We are encouraged to stay at home rather than get everybody sick.”

The foundation of the company’s wellness program is comprehensive, company-funded health insurance that is provided to all employees. The company funds each employee’s maximum yearly contribution to their personal health savings account. Using an HSA allows employees to choose alternative health and well-



STEVE PETERSON

The principals and co-owners of Baydush Simon Weaver LLC based in Boulder have implemented several programs to create a healthy workplace for employees. From left, Drew Simon, Debi Baydush and Ben Weaver offer a variety of benefits, like free health care, nutritious snacks and a relaxing outside courtyard.

ness providers, including acupuncture, massage and naturopathic physicians.

The company promotes health quality for employees. It remodeled its office to incorporate a shower and changing room to encourage exercise on the way to work or during work hours. Some employees bike to work from Lafayette. The company also provides fresh fruits and healthy snacks free of charge in its two kitchens when employees are working long or irregular hours. It created a private courtyard with flowers, fruit trees and plants for employees to use to relieve stress during the workday, conduct client or company meetings or simply take a break.

Each employee also receives their birthday off as a paid workday.

Craig Seidler, a portfolio manager for the company, was required to leave work to be with his sister in Aspen when she underwent surgery after fracturing her neck in a biking accident.

“I took off and did not have a chance to talk to the company about the situation,” Seidler said. “I figured I would take vacation or sick days to make up the time lost.”

Seidler did not have to give up a planned vacation to make up work time lost because of his family emergency. Upon learning of his sister’s accident, the company made the time available to Seidler without affecting his pay, sick days, personal days or vacation.

“The company is so compassionate and flexible,” he said. “They truly put employees first.”

Employees are encouraged to work on their own schedule, which allows them to be most productive. This may include exercising before work or coming in early and exercising in the middle of the day.

“We try to allow variety because we are so small and want people to work here for a long time,” Weaver said. “This means understanding each others’ work habits and personal lives. Everybody respects each other and values their opinions.”