



## Cognex Corporation – Wall Street Journal Feature Story

### Overview

Cognex Corporation (Nasdaq: CGNX) is the market leader in machine vision sensors. Although the company receives ample trade media coverage, it struggles to attract the attention of the business press due to its industrial products and its average stock performance. The company's CEO has created a distinct "work hard, play hard" corporate culture that has spurred innovation and encouraged ethical business practices. The CEO is the evangelist for the culture and believes it contributes to the company's leadership position. Chereskin Communications worked with Cognex to obtain a feature story about its unique corporate culture in the leading business publication, the Wall Street Journal, to enhance its reputation with customers, stockholders and investors.

### Objectives and Strategies

The overall **objective** was to obtain a feature article that positively promoted the company culture in a leading business publication. The Wall Street Journal was singled out as the ultimate goal. Secondary targets included BusinessWeek, Forbes, Fortune, and Fast Company. The **target audiences** were C-level business leaders, investors, analysts, and potential employees.

The **strategies** for the feature article included:

- Promote the Cognex "work hard, play hard" culture and how it contributes to employee retention and market innovation
- Provide examples of creative events and community activities that resulted in improved employee morale
- Showcase CEO Dr. Robert Shillman as an ethical leader that leads by example
- Demonstrate how Cognex creatively compensates employees through rewards such as free trips and memorable experiences

### Planning and Execution

Based on the objectives, Valerie Chereskin implemented the following actions:

- Performed interviews with Cognex to thoroughly understand the culture and its impact on employees
- Identified the most relevant creative compensation techniques and memorable activities employed by Cognex with employees, such as perseverance awards and company play days
- Researched writers at targeted media that covered related areas to corporate culture
- Crafted email and phone pitches for each specific media
- Performed media outreach to pitch stories
- Coordinated full day meeting and tour with Dr. Shillman at Cognex for Wall Street Journal reporter

### Results

- Joann Lublin of the Wall Street Journal selected Cognex CEO as the single CEO she would profile for her yearly Executive Compensation feature based on his unique approach to culture and employee compensation.
- The lengthy article was 2,200 words and included a sketch of Dr. Shillman and photos of three annual report covers.
- The content of the article included extensive coverage of the Cognex culture, how it is used to retain employees and how it is implemented.
- Dr. Shillman was portrayed as an ethical and dynamic CEO with a unique and refreshing position on philanthropy and executive pay.
- The article was widely seen and used to promote the company culture in recruiting and with investors. It was posted on the company intranet site and used in investor and recruiting packages.