



LEA Global Announces Recipients of 2014 Edge Awards

LEA Global, an international professional association of accounting firms, recently announced the winners of its prestigious Edge Awards for 2014 at its global conference in Montreal.

Each award area illustrates LEA's core belief that continuing success is grounded in being accomplished in all areas of practice development and firm management. Each of LEA's highly competitive awards is inspired by the cutting-edge innovations and best practices that differentiate LEA members from their competitors. Firms across the country and around the globe use LEA's winning programs as models for their own programs.

This year's award winners are:

2014 Innovative Firm — [EKS&H LLLP, Denver](#)

EKS&H has a track record of dominating its marketplace and nurturing a team-centric culture of professional integrity, continuous improvement, creativity, professional growth and extraordinary client service. Long recognized in the accounting profession for its outstanding leadership, commitment to its people, community service and growth and profitability, this firm is honored regularly as an outstanding workplace.

2014 Innovative Firm Leader — *David Katri of [Clark Nuber P.S., Seattle](#)*

In his 14 years leading the firm, Katri has created a one-firm mindset throughout the organization, helped triple its growth, created a nationally recognized workplace culture of excellence that stays on the forefront of technology and that has nurtured a small independent firm into one that is broadly recognized as one of the most respected and profitable in the business.

2014 Innovative Firm Initiative — [Adams, Brown, Beran & Ball, CHTD., Kansas](#)

Adams, Brown, Beran & Ball successfully tackled seasonal tax return issues that plague many accounting firms. It figured out a way to match the appropriate level of complexity with team members' skills sets while ensuring productivity and even workloads through many offices. This firm created a remarkably effective system for grading the complexity of each tax return and leveraged technology to assign the returns to a pool that staff can draw from, regardless of their location. The result was a process that significantly increased efficiency for the firm, increased job satisfaction for staff members and considerably increased profitability. This process bolstered realization and earnings per hour while reducing average time to complete a return. The system was designed by a task force, allowing stakeholders to have a voice in the process, which can be easily adapted and replicated by other firms.

2014 On the Edge Innovation — [Dezan Shira & Associates, Asia](#)

This award historically has gone to an individual, but for the first time, it was awarded to an organization. The scope and accomplishments of Dezan Shira & Associates are so innovative and nontraditional, and the opportunities it provides its clients and other LEA firms are so unique, that the judges decided it merited special recognition for its outstanding innovation. This unique organization truly can provide a spread of local, Asian and global expertise — from advising on country operational comparisons, to advising on strategic use of bilateral and multilateral tax and free trade agreements, to treasury and payroll management structures. At a local level, this specialized foreign direct investment practice provides a range of financial, tax, audit, investment and accounting-related services to multinationals investing in the countries it operates in. It has grown into a nimble and versatile full-service consultancy, with operational offices and alliances across Asia.

2014 Legends — *Robert M. Glaser of [Freed Maxick CPAs, P.C.](#)* in New York and *Jack Robert Cotton of [SVA Certified Public Accountants, S.C.](#)* in Wisconsin and Illinois

These two leaders have made outstanding contributions to their firms, their clients, their communities, LEA and the profession over long and notable careers. They have substantial track records of innovation within their firms and serve as role models of leadership to others by empowering their people, creating innovative strategies of profitability and growth, and engineering and sharing best practices throughout their firms and with their peers.

2014 Emerging Markets — *[PKF Texas, Houston](#)*

This firm recognized the often-overlooked opportunity among women entrepreneurs and executives and is acting on it. It implemented a firm wide strategy to appeal to women-owned businesses and the billions of dollars in revenue their enterprises represent. It is also applying these strategies to developing its own internal women's leadership programs. Integral to this initiative is its three-pronged approach: championing women in business, demonstrating its unparalleled qualification to serve women business owners and promoting an array of services for women-owned businesses.

2014 Outstanding Marketing Initiative

- *[Brown Schultz Sheridan & Fritz of Pennsylvania](#)* for heroic efforts in overcoming obstacles to update its digital marketing efforts by using old-fashioned research and collaboration with its IT department — and achieving excellent results, including a new client, four new prospects and 177 new contacts.
- *[Prosperity Advisers Group of Australia](#)* for exhibiting extraordinary efforts to capitalize on opportunities in the health care and Asia-Pacific markets. To launch its entry into the health care market, it strategically targeted new physicians and signed 90 new clients at an orientation program for them. Its efforts to capitalize on its market as an Asian investment entry point and to facilitate efforts by wealthy Chinese families to diversify their assets into Western countries has, to date, generated more than \$170,000 in new client fees.
- *[Vandelanotte of Belgium](#)* for solving the lack of cross-promoting the services it offers. Its solution? An innovative and charming cocktail-inspired branding campaign featuring interdepartmental competitions, cocktail shaker sets as promotional items to clients and prospects, and a renowned bartender as the face of the firm on its website, mailers, billboards, bumper stickers and other advertising collaterals.

2014 Cultural Innovation — *[Lutz & Company, PC, Nebraska](#)*

When this firm sought ways to unite its rapidly expanding staff and service lines, it created nine teams across all service lines and staff levels and had them compete in challenges that focused on the firm's core values and brand. Through these team-based activities, team members visited more than 30 clients and 30 prospects, raised more than \$18,000 in scholarship money and bonded with each other through pranks, social events and group celebrations.

2014 HR Innovation — *[Clark Nuber P.S., Seattle](#)*

This firm realized that the lack of a tight and organized on-boarding program for experienced hires presented the potential for lost opportunities and increased turnover. It re-engineered its on-boarding system for experienced hires to ensure that, from their very first day, they receive a warm welcome, are excited to start work, understand their roles and performance expectations are familiar with the firm's values and goals and begin their new jobs with excitement. The expansive new system includes an emailed offer package that includes new hire agreements and benefits information before they begin work; a mentor program; day one welcome materials such as nameplates, business cards and information about upcoming projects awaiting them on their first day on the job; and a systemized orientation program that includes conversations with HR, the partner in charge of their service group, the manager of learning and development and the CEO. The intensive new process is generating rave reviews from new hires and reducing the administrative burden on HR staff, and based on current data, has the potential to reduce turnover by nearly two-thirds.

2014 Internal Technology Innovation — [Gesdocument y Gestión, S.A.](#) of Spain

This firm created a complex technological solution that resulted in simple and reliable application by the end-user, creating a technological innovation that can be accessed anywhere and that uses a variety of cloud-based best practices.

2014 Outstanding Young Professionals Program — [Elliott Davis, LLC](#), South Carolina

This firm has set a new bar with its introduction of a variety of engaging programs for young professionals. These programs have generated wide-scale recognition and accolades within and beyond the accounting profession. They include a re-engineered recruiting process for both entry-level and experienced professionals, an updated internship program, a remarkable on-boarding program, an internal training curriculum that includes a wide variety of courses and training events, and an emphasis on providing insight into firm management, leadership, business development and community service.

2014 Outstanding Community Service

[Philip Stein & Associates of Israel](#) for seeking a deeper commitment and additional opportunities to serve its community. It implemented a "1-1-1" model, whereby it commits 1 percent of firm revenue, 1 percent of employee time and 1 percent of firm services to its community. The beneficiaries of its efforts, chosen with staff input, include a food rescue network, a food bank, infants and seniors with no families, and assistance to refugees and immigrants. In addition, the firm invites clients to join its efforts by matching every dollar they donate to its designated charitable organizations.

[Henry & Horne, LLP of Arizona](#) for creating a committee to streamline community service efforts and increase firm wide visibility by participating in monthly public service events. While participating in community philanthropic events on an ongoing basis, the firm also hosted its own public service event by closing all of its offices for a day so all staff could work on beautifying a client's campus. Information about the firm's community service activities is included on its website, proposals and social media. Beneficiaries included organizations that address hunger, animal care, cancer care and underprivileged children.

2014 Client Recognition: Recognition for Sustainability — Immersense and Char Davies, clients of [Fuller Landau LLP Montreal](#), Canada

This visionary artist has incorporated an entire landscape — more than 1,000 acres in Quebec — into an astonishing combination of art, sustainable farming, conservation forestry, large-scale landscaping, laser scanning and software development. Using 3-D laser scanning, she is illustrating the intricacies, complexities and magic of a forest over time. She is a contemporary artist who uses technologies associated with virtual reality, and while she never intended to create a marketable product, 100 percent of the proceeds from the commercial 3-D software that may result from her work will be donated to her foundation, which has a goal of preserving and maintaining a unique environmental ecosystem.

[About LEA Global](#)

Founded in 1999, LEA Global is the second-largest international association in the world, creating a high-quality alliance of more than 200 firms focused on accounting, financial and business advisory services. LEA Global firms operate from more than 586 offices in more than 100 countries, giving clients of LEA Global firms access to the knowledge, skills and experience of more than 2,056 partners and 23,090 staff members.

LEA Global firms' combined annual revenue totals more than \$2.9 billion. LEA Global firms stand out as leaders in their markets. In the United States 14 member firms rank in the Top 100 U.S. firms, more than any other association or network.

LEA Global firms' unique alliance enables them to maintain their independence, while working together to provide the ultimate in client service and providing valuable access to understanding the cultural and commercial norms across the globe.