



CHRISTINE CAMBIVAN

#2 Best Company to Work For Vapotherm

From left: Charlie Malenfant, warehouse associate; Meghan Kate, quality manager; Joe Army, president and CEO; Josh Lent, senior manufacturing engineer; Aileen Orchard, technical service manager; Neeraj Pardhy, senior quality engineer; Doreene Migliori, service technician

When Joseph Army took the helm of Vapotherm, he knew he needed to create a culture that engaged employees to help it grow. So he asked his new team to help develop guiding principles for the company.

Those guiding principles include being a team; making and keeping commitments; having clear, direct and respectful communication with everyone; and keeping patients and customers as the focus. To drive home that last principle, Army had pictures of patients that have been helped by Vapotherm's products mounted on the walls of the company.

Those guiding principles came into play when Army made the tough decision to move the company from Maryland to NH where there was a greater concentration of talent in the medical device industry. That meant people losing their jobs. "How you help employees leave a company says as much about you as a company as how you bring them in," Army says. He gave employees one year's notice that the Maryland operations would be closing. During that time the company helped employees with writing resumes and conducting job searches.

22 Industrial Driver, Exeter
vtherm.com

President and CEO: Joseph Army

Years in Business in NH: 2

Full-Time Employees: 121

Years on List: 1

Company Description: Develops noninvasive technologies for respiratory support of patients with chronic or acute breathing disorders.

Transparency and communication are vital to success, Army says. "You need the communication volume tuned up to 11. You have to trust them they will use that information to grow the business faster." Every new hire is required to attend a daylong critical communications course. That emphasis on guiding principles has created a culture that is attracting the talent Vapotherm needs to grow. The Guiding Principle Award, nominated by coworkers, is presented monthly, and winners receive a \$25 gift card. Each principle comes with its own award and prizes, such as a trip for two for the recipient of the Impact Player award presented to an employee who exemplifies all six Guiding Principles. "Creating a rewards system around guiding principles makes it real," Army says.

Vapotherm allows employees to make their own schedules and work from home when necessary. The Breathe Easier Fund provides employees with financial support of up to \$500 in times of need. The company has fun with chili cook-offs, a Pi Day pie contest, smoothies on Wednesdays and occasional "beer o'clock" gatherings. "If you have a great culture, team and product, you will run the tables," Army says. "I can't compete [with Boston] on dollars. I can compete on culture and mission. Culture builds great companies." ■