

Retaining Your Employees



Some of the most pressing human resource management issues in organizations today center on the need to effectively obtain and retain high performing employees which will accordingly increase productivity and profitability.

Employee retention is synonymous to employee motivation. A motivated employee will be satisfied and therefore more productive and more likely to stay within the organization. Therefore, a key issue to address when looking to retain employees is how to motivate them.

Employee Motivation Factors

Employee motivation can be divided into three main factors:

1- Leadership factors

Employee behavior is often a reflection of the guidance they receive from their superiors. If managers are unmotivated, employees will be unmotivated. Therefore, managers must establish a motivational atmosphere by setting a positive example through the utilization of good leadership practices through:

A- Making others feel important. This is achieved through recognizing and acknowledging the contribution that employees make to the operation; and, express appreciation for the worth they add. Employees that feel they are a valued are likely to remain with the property for extended periods of time.

B- Treating employees fairly. Managers that establish a high regard for the integrity of employees will set the stage for creating an atmosphere of congeniality and mutual respect. Employees that perceive that they are dealt with fairly are less likely to seek other employment opportunities.

C- Being visible on the front lines. Managers that get out of their offices and move from behind the scenes make themselves accessible where the action is. Managers that go so far as to get involved in or participate with employees in the performance of their jobs communicate a strong humanization message.

2- Coaching and development factors

Employee behavior is also molded by the measures taken by managers in cultivating and expanding the employees' skills, knowledge and abilities. Employees who are given the opportunity to learn and to expand their capacities to contribute in new ways are more motivated than employees who are not given those opportunities.

The tools that can be utilized to help a property's team members progress to the next stage of their growth can be quite simple. Some of those that should be considered involve the following:

A- Providing regular feedback. Recognizing and reinforcing positive behaviors stimulates the employee to engage in the same type of behavior in subsequent instances. Pointing out behaviors that need improvement, and coaching employees by offering suggestions on how to modify behavior to reach acceptable levels prompts them to begin adjusting their approach. Employees

who feel that they work in an environment where managers are aware of and care about what they do are more likely to stay with the organization.

B- Developing aptitudes for performing other jobs. Managers who provide employees with training opportunities create a foundation for their progression within the property's hierarchy. Employees who become eligible for promotion and advancement, as a result of having acquired the necessary qualifications through training, have a greater likelihood of staying with the organization because of their anticipation of new positions eventually becoming available to them.

C- Delegation. Giving employees the responsibility for developing important projects, and then providing guidance on how to complete them successfully, demonstrates management's confidence in the employee to perform beyond the norm. Those employees that sense a greater worth to the organization subsequently develop an affinity and a greater degree of loyalty that makes them less likely to leave.

3- Employee Diversity Factors

It is widely recognized that employees are all different in their perceptions and behavior because of their cultural origins, educational backgrounds, experiences and exposure and life cycle stages, as well as a number of other variables. Therefore, in order to get the best results, employees must be managed as individuals and not as a group.

Acknowledging that employees cannot all be managed in the same way, it means that employees cannot all be motivated in the same way. Some of the steps a manager can take to create an individual specific focus that allows employees to become motivated include the following:

A- Appeal to personal interests. This is accomplished by actively listening to what is important to employees. When employees feel that management is willing to help them get to where they want to be in terms of their own vision for the future, they are more likely to stay with that organization.

B- Offer personalized rewards. Different employees have different value attachments associated with recognition and incentives. Managers must identify which type of structure is most attractive to each employee, providing them with remuneration, compensation and the types of rewards, both financial and intrinsic, that they prefer.

Giving employees the opportunity to set their own work or shift schedules, allowing them to select cross training interests, seeking their input for improving products and services or systems and procedures, and permitting them to participate in setting succession and advancement plans can also impact individual motivation levels.

Employee Retention Tips:

A- Create a motivating work environment:

- A strategic issue in motivating and retaining employees is to take measures that contribute to recruiting, selecting and placing the right type of people into the available jobs. If the characteristics and qualities of the individual are not aligned with the requirements of the job, the task of motivation and retention is considerably more challenging.

- Offer an attractive, competitive, benefits package with components such as life insurance, disability insurance and flexible hours.

- Provide opportunities for people to share their knowledge via training sessions, presentations, mentoring others and team assignments.
- Involve employees in decisions that affect their jobs and the overall direction of the company whenever possible. Ask for your employees' opinions and actually use some of their ideas. This includes asking what types of perks or benefits they'd appreciate or what they need in order to work more effectively. In addition, give them the chance to evaluate supervisors, provide input on decisions that affect their jobs and discuss the overall direction of the company. Try for annual one-on-one meetings in a neutral location or use materials such as questionnaires. For more sensitive issues, consider confidential climate surveys.
- Recognize excellent performance, and especially, link pay to performance.
- Base the upside of bonus potential on the success of both the employee and the company. As an example, you can pay ten percent of corporate profits to employees.
- Staff adequately so overtime is minimized for those who don't want it and people don't wear themselves out.

B- Appeal to the personal side of employees:

- People want to enjoy their work. Make work fun. Engage and employ the special talents of each individual.
- Celebrate each anniversary of an employee's first day with you with a meal, gift or some other token of appreciation. Do the same with birthdays and other dates of importance to the employee. Make them feel that you also care about their personal lives.
- Enable employees to balance work and life. Offer flexible work schedules to help employees achieve a better work/life balance. For example, allow them to vary their arrival and departure times or the length of their work days/weeks with flextime. You could also offer compressed workweeks, for example, 40 hours in four days or allow workers to telecommute for at least part of their work time.
- Provide employees with services that will make their lives easier, fun or just help them save a little time. Examples include in-house child care, an in-house gym facility or health care services.

Sincerity in Applying Recognition Programs

Employee recognition and appreciation are critical elements of motivating and retaining employees, but the manner in which they are delivered plays an enormous part in how individuals perceive those efforts. Very often senior executives are baffled by why employees don't seem to appreciate what has been done for them regarding recognition programs. It is likely that many of these appreciation programs are perceived by employees as merely an HR department initiative, not as values embedded in the corporate culture and demonstrated in a sincere manner by individual managers on a daily basis. Most employees possess the ability to see through window dressing, and to recognize a lack of consistency between what people say and what they do. Don't insult the intelligence of your workforce by mistakenly assuming that they will believe in initiatives that lack integrity simply because a great deal of work was involved in developing them.