

MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU:

***EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES TO KEEP YOUR
ORGANIZATION FROM THE DARK SIDE***



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WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The challenges faced in today's workplaces, and the diversity of today's workforces, can make it more difficult to keep your best and brightest employees. Financial constraints in the non-profit world can also present a challenge in terms of employee retention.

According to *The Enthusiastic Employee*, a business text published by the Wharton School, employees have three basic goals at work: 1) to be treated fairly (equity in compensation and benefits) and respectfully; 2) to have a sense of achievement from the work; and 3) camaraderie. Employers who want to attract and retain employees should focus their efforts in these three areas.

The question is often not how to motivate employees, but rather, "How do you keep management from destroying motivation?" Think about how excited most new employees are to start a new job. However, if this job is in an organization with a lack of quality leadership, commitment to staff, insufficient training, poor equipment, bureaucracy, inability to get decisions made, conflict, and/or an environment in which employees are treated like second-class citizens, the morale of even the most enthusiastic employees can be quickly destroyed.

The true cost of turnover =

the cost to terminate
+ the cost per hire
+ the cost of the vacancy
+ the learning curve loss
**50-200% of the departing
employee's salary**

To calculate a minimum cost for turnover for your organization in the past year, take the 50% figure from above and multiply it by the number of employees who left. More than likely, your actual turnover costs were higher than the minimum . . .

NOTES:

WHAT DO EMPLOYEES LIKE AND WANT?

- 401(k), pension and retirement plans
- Advancement opportunities
- Bonus
- Camaraderie
- Caring
- Communication: open and accessible
- Competence
- Confidence in manager
- Cost of living increase
- Credibility
- Discounts on company products
- Equal treatment
- Flexible work schedules
- Fun
- Generous salary
- Health, dental and vision insurance
- Integrity
- Justice
- Life insurance
- Long-term and short-term disability insurance
- Ownership and ability to contribute
- Paid time off
- Parking or public transportation passes
- Performance evaluation
- Picnic, party, social events
- Pride
- Profit sharing contribution
- Recognition and awards
- Respect
- Support
- Team
- Technology
- Training
- Trust
- Understanding of role in association
- Value to association
- Vision

WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND?

NOTES:

THINK INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE BOX!

Determine what is most valuable to employees, while keeping in mind your association's budget, employee policies and legal limitations. Here are some tips that have worked in our organizations:

- ❑ Determine what recognition your employees prefer. Some employees are mortified at the idea of being recognized in a large group and being made to "be on stage." Other employees may love the limelight. Survey or talk with employees to ensure that your recognition and appreciation programs offer ways to meet everyone's needs.
- ❑ To get more bang for your buck, consider making a contribution to an employee's 401(k) or health savings account instead of a cash bonus. The contribution will be made pre-tax so that the employee gets the full value of the money put in and it does not get eaten up in taxes.
- ❑ Offer additional paid time off instead of a monetary bonus. An employee who has exhausted all paid vacation and sick time due to an extended illness or other personal emergency might feel valued and thrilled at receiving additional paid time off to help during the crisis.
- ❑ Offer ongoing professional development. For example, an IT employee will most likely appreciate having up-to-date equipment and the ability to stay abreast of new technologies to continue to hone his/her skills.
- ❑ Use of discipline may be a very effective retention tool. "Employees don't leave companies, they leave bad managers." Use performance evaluations and discipline consistently to effectively solve bad situations that might otherwise cause an employee to leave.
- ❑ Don't just consider the cost of the "benefit" being provided. Consider the cost of turnover, not just in dollars but in lost time, absenteeism, increased healthcare costs, and lowered morale. Turnover affects the entire organization!
- ❑ Set a goal to be an employer of choice; seek information about competitions and awards in your area and work to get your organization and your employees noticed
- ❑ Offer a family-friendly workplace; get a grip on work/life balance
- ❑ Allow teleworking and schedule flexibility. Membership and other service organizations are slow to do this because of a perception that the level of service might suffer. Put together a workteam to look at this issue in your organization
- ❑ Hold special events and activities just to recognize and appreciate the staff (e.g., Staff Appreciation Day or Week; We Survived the Convention Party)

SOME OTHER IDEAS . . .

Two excellent books by Bob Nelson, *1001 Ways to Reward Employees* and *1001 Ways to Energize Employees*, offer many great, practical, “doable,” and inexpensive ways to motivate staff. Here are some of our favorites:

Call an employee into your office just to thank him/her; don’t discuss any other issue.

Post prominent and brightly colored thank-you notes on the employee’s office door.

Volunteer to do another person’s least desirable work task for a day.

Carry your business cards around and catch people doing something right. Immediately write “Thanks”, “Good job”, “Keep it up” and what they did in two or three words. Put the person’s name on the card and sign it.

Take a coffee or lunch break with every employee on occasion.

Cover the person’s desk with balloons, candy and/or other inexpensive treats.

Let the employee chose a desirable item from an office supply catalog, and purchase it for him/her.

Purchase a subscription to an applicable trade journal for the employee.

Use e-mail to regularly acknowledge employee efforts.

Give the employee a copy of the latest best-selling management or business book. Even better, inscribe it with a personal message of thanks.

Arrange for the employee to personally meet with a member of senior management.

Give the employee better office surroundings. Even an inexpensive plant works wonders.

Communicate frequently and openly with employees. Hold regular staff meetings and plan to provide important information, recognize accomplishments, and share a joke or two.

Use special notes, memos and letters to acknowledge employee efforts in writing.

Provide an extra break for the employee, or give him/her a two-hour lunch and pay for dessert.

Arrange to have the employee's work done while he/she is on leave from the office.

Pop in at the first meeting of a special project team and express your appreciation for their involvement.

Send a letter to every team member at the conclusion of a project thanking them for their contribution.

Have theme days such as: Wear something red to work; Share a funny story; Guess employees from their baby pictures; Fiesta food and music; etc.

Have coworkers take a flower or piece of candy to an employee every half hour to congratulate him/her for a significant accomplishment or important event.

Give an outstanding employee a desktop "toy" or a pad of Post-it notes with a saying that befits the employee.

Use a rotating plaque or certificate to recognize important contributions.

Don't forget to say "please" and "thank-you", even if you are the boss.

NOTES:

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Other Bar Executives (Use NABE-ADFIN listserve)

Keep Employees, Inc. - <http://www.keepemployees.com/solutions-articles.htm>

National Association for Employee Recognition - <http://www.recognition.org/>

Retention of Employees: Tips & Tools:

<http://humanresources.about.com/od/retention/>

Salary surveys:

www.salary.com

www.bls.gov/ncs

www.rileyguide.com

Society for Human Resource Management at www.shrm.org

The Workforce Stability Institute - <http://www.employee.org/articles.html>

OTHER BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS

50 Best Small and Medium Places to Work; Society for Human Resource Management's HR Magazine, July 2005

Six Truths About Employee Turnover; American Management Association - http://www.amanet.org/books/catalog/0814405975_s.htm

The 7 Hidden Reasons Employees Leave: How to Recognize The Subtle Signs And Act Before It's Too Late; Leigh Branham

Do You See What I See: A Diversity Tale for Retaining People of Color; Janice Fenn and Chandra Irvin

Keeping The People Who Keep You In Business: 24 Ways To Hang On To Your Most Valuable Talent; F. Leigh Branham

Love'Em or Lose'Em: Getting Good People To Stay (3rd Edition); Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans

Keeping Good People: Strategies For Solving The #1 Problem Facing Business Today; Roger E. Herman

Keeping Your Valuable Employees: Retention Strategies For Your Organization's Most Important Resource; Suzanne Dibble

Managing Employee Retention: A Strategic Accountability Approach (Improving Human Performance Series); Jack J. Phillips and Adele O. Connell

The Enthusiastic Employee: How Companies Profit by Giving Workers What They Want; David Sirota, Louis Mischkind and Michael Meltzer

Retaining Top Employees; J. Leslie McKeown

Topgrading: How Leading Companies Win By Hiring Coaching and Keeping The Best People; Bradford D. Smart

Managing With Carrots: Using Recognition To Attract and Retain The Best People; Adrian Robert Gostick and Chester Elton

Creating Commitment -- How To Attract And Retain Talented Employees By Building Relationships That Last; Michael O'Malley

Finding And Keeping Great Employees; Jim Harris and Joan Brannick

Fish ... A Remarkable Way To Boost Morale And Improve Results; Stephen C. Lundin, Harry Paul, and John Christensen