



Employee Retention

Finding good people is a significant challenge facing organizations. In a highly competitive environment, keeping good people can be just as difficult. The balance of power in the workplace has shifted dramatically in favor of employees. The recruitment and retention strategy most organizations choose is incentives.

While an important and necessary step, it's a short-term solution without long-term impact. Many organizations have reached a plateau where incentives are not making a significant difference. The struggle is, after you have taken appropriate steps to make sure incentive plans are competitive, what is the next step?

Consider why you originally chose to go to work for your present company. Surely there were other companies interested in you. They probably offered similar opportunities, compensation, working conditions, etc. Next consider why you stay at your company. In today's competitive environment, I am sure you have been contacted more than once by executive search firms offering more than your current compensation package. So why do you stay?

We believe that people join and stay with companies where they feel valued and are able to contribute value. It's a two-way street giving and getting value. Look around at the companies in your industry that are rated highly in "good" places to work and you will see some common characteristics. People are proud of who they work for. They readily accept challenges and gain a sense of accomplishment. They treat the company as their own. In short, throughout the organization, individual and corporate success are aligned with each other. How do these companies achieve that?

Everyone is a decision-maker. In every conversation people are engaged in decision-making. Should I listen? Does what is being said make sense? Do I agree? Should I become involved? How much effort should I put into the activity? Am I committed? Is the company interested in my best interest? Do they care about my welfare? The best companies to work for understand this and make a conscious effort to treat every employee with respect as they would any other decision-maker.

They listen better. They know that people do not respond to facts in the same way. They know that decisions are based on both fact and feelings. They also know that the bigger the decision the more that feelings plays the determining role in the decision. Noble Prize research confirms this. So they listen by reading emotions first, logic second. Why? Because logic is relative to our willingness or emotional state at any moment in time. For example, we do not reason in the same manner when we are fearful or skeptical as when we are open-minded or interested. This unique listening skill helps them hear better and their understanding is much deeper.

They connect better. Because they are able to read emotions as well as logic they are able to empathize and make a business connection. The hallmark skill of top performers in any organization is their ability to connect to the viewpoint of others. They are able to connect to willingness levels in order to engage. It is well-defined and measurable skill.

They influence better. Once they are connected, they are able to influence other points of view in a way that helps other people see different perspectives. They lead themselves to higher, more motivated points and view and people find them easy to follow. They get commitments, not just agreements. They get far more cooperation and tangible action from others. Their people co-own the organizational goals and objectives.

This is the benchmark skill of all successful people in obtaining a "following" or "customers" in business. This skill set succeeds regardless of job title or function (from boardroom to shop floor to customer premises) and with all of types of products, services, or industries. This is the elusive "missing link" some people refer to as the "art" of conducting business.

The good news is this skill set can be imparted throughout the ranks in any organization. Simply telling people about the skills is not enough. A skill has to be coached while doing real work in order to acquire the "feel". It is the "feel" of doing it well that is the skill itself. This type of training is similar to the method used to coach a golf swing, ride a bike, drive a car, play a sport or a musical instrument. And this coaching methodology is adaptable to business situations in a manner that is both efficient and cost effective. As a result, you can cultivate these skills across your entire organization.

The most successful companies value their employees and they prove it everyday. In these organizations throughout all levels people use these skills. They realize that people are their most critical asset. They know that actual results will never reach expectations without the commitment of their people. These organizations succeed because they attract and retain good people.

So, what kind of results could your company achieve if the above skills were used throughout the organization? Is it worth your time and effort? Think about what could be accomplished, and then decide.