

After the Hire: Retaining Good Employees

For Preview Only



VIVID EDGE

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Program Overview

THE MESSAGE

Every industry is experiencing a shortage of skilled employees and the high costs of hiring and training new employees. Hiring good employees isn't enough in today's competitive and tight labor market. Managers and organizations have to focus on strategies for keeping their best employees on the job. To remain loyal to an organization, good employees want and need:

- Clear performance expectations and measurements
- Time to give and get feedback
- Rewards and recognition
- Challenges and opportunities for the future

THE VIDEO SYNOPSIS

After The Hire: Retaining Good Employees features a well-meaning and successful manager, Nancy Sullivan, who loses one of her best employees, Nicole Reed. Nancy has the unique opportunity to hear first-hand from her employee just what was missing and what could have been done to keep Nicole on the job. Losing a valued employee, although unfortunate, helps Nancy understand how to keep the rest of her best!

THE AUDIENCE

- New managers and supervisors
- Managers and supervisors
- Top management

HOW THIS VIDEO DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CAN BE USED

After The Hire: Retaining Good Employees is a video-based development program designed to create some thought-provoking discussions about what managers can personally do to help keep good employees within your organization rather than leaving for your competitor. The 24-minute video and this facilitator guide can help you and your participants identify actions, brainstorm ideas and create strategies for retaining your most valuable asset, your good employees.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this video development program, participants should:

- Understand the importance of retaining good employees.
- Communicate clear performance expectations.
- Set measurable performance standards.
- Take time to give employees performance feedback.
- Take time to listen and get feedback from employees.
- Reward and recognize employees' good work.
- Find opportunities and challenges for valued employees.
- Make retaining good employees a top priority.

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Planning Your Video Development Program

1-4 WEEKS AHEAD

- Determine the date and select participants for training session.
- Send an e-mail, memo or letter inviting your participants at least one to two weeks in advance (*Sample memo, page 7*).
- Secure location for training session where a video can be viewed and heard easily, as well as having a relaxed, informal discussion environment. The location should have an adequate writing surface for taking notes and be accessible for participants with disabilities.

1 WEEK AHEAD

- Create an agenda for the video development program. Use one of the sample agendas provided on *page 6* or customize one to fit your time, needs and participants.

1-2 DAYS AHEAD

- Test the VCR and monitor at your selected training session location. Make sure both are properly connected and that you understand how to control volume, tracking and color.
- Make copies of any self-evaluations or worksheets needed for your session.

1 HOUR BEFORE

Do you have...?

- ? The Videotape: *After The Hire: Retaining Good Employees?* Is it re-wound?
- ? The video development program facilitator guide?
- ? Notepads and pencils for participants?
- ? Copies of self-evaluations and worksheets needed for participants?
- ? Optional: Soft drinks, water or coffee?

DURING THE VIEWING OF THE VIDEOTAPE

- Make sure the volume is adjusted so everyone can easily hear.
- Make sure there is enough light available for note taking.

DURING THE DISCUSSIONS

- At several points in this video development program, there will be brainstorming activities and probing questions. Consider assigning someone to take notes to capture the thoughts, ideas and suggestions from your participants. Look for this icon that indicates when taking notes might be appropriate. Retyping, organizing and distributing this information following the session can be a beneficial and tangible outcome of your program. These ideas (*See sample notes on page 30*) will be specifically suited to your organization and can be beneficial to you in the presentation of this program to future participants.



Suggested Agendas

Agenda One (Length – 2 hours, 30 minutes)

The arrival and settling of participants	5 minutes
Program Introduction (Page 8)	10 minutes
Showing the Videotape (Page 10)	25 minutes
Post-Video Self-Evaluation (Page 11)	5 minutes
Post-Video Review (Page 10)	15 minutes
Break	10 minutes
Discussion: Clearly Define Expectations and Measurements (Page 12)	15 minutes
Discussion: Time for Giving Feedback (Page 17)	15 minutes
Discussion: Time for Getting Feedback (Page 22)	15 minutes
Discussion: Reward and Recognition (Page 26)	15 minutes
Discussion: Opportunities for Growth (Page 28)	15 minutes
Wrap Up and departure	5 minutes

Agenda Two (Length – 4 hours)

The arrival and settling of participants	10 minutes
Program Introduction (Page 8)	10 minutes
Showing the Videotape (Page 10)	25 minutes
Post-Video Self Evaluation (Page 11)	5 minutes
Post-Video Review (Page 10)	15 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Discussion: Clearly Define Expectations and Measurements (Page 12)	15 minutes
Exercise: Clearly Define Expectations and Measurements (Page 15)	15 minutes
Discussion: Time for Giving Feedback (Page 17)	15 minutes
Discussion: Mistakes Aren't Failure (Page 19)	15 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Exercise: How Well Are You Giving Feedback? (Page 20)	20 minutes
Discussion: Time for Getting Feedback (Page 22)	15 minutes
Exercise: Time for Getting Feedback (Page 24)	10 minutes
Discussion: Reward and Recognition (Page 26)	15 minutes
Discussion: Opportunities for Growth (Page 28)	15 minutes
Wrap Up and departure	10 minutes

Sample Inter-Office Memo

This is an invitation that can be sent to participants at least one week before holding your video development program. Please feel free to modify it to meet your specific needs.

To: (participant name)

From: (your name)

Re: Retaining Valued Employees

One of the greatest challenges that *(your organization)* faces today and in the future is to retain our excellent employees. We've put a lot of effort into finding and hiring the right employees, and now we must look for every opportunity to keep them.

Have you ever been concerned that an employee would leave or is thinking about leaving?

Have you ever had a valued employee leave?

Have you ever thought that if you had just handled a certain employee a little differently, the outcome might have been different?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you're just like most team leaders, managers, directors, vice presidents and CEOs who have the same justified concerns.

On *(date)*, I will be holding a video development program on strategies to retain our valued employees. This unique training session is an opportunity to:

- Learn why employees might pursue another position outside our organization.
- Learn what actions can be taken to keep them from thinking about leaving in the first place.
- Share experiences, thoughts, ideas and suggestions with your peers about retaining our most valuable assets, our people.

Please mark your calendar so you can attend this important program. Call *(number)* to confirm your participation. Thanks and see you there!

Program Introduction



INTRODUCTION

10 minutes

Before you provide an overview of the subject matter for the video development program, introduce yourself to the group and the participants to each other. Ask each participant to share his or her role and job responsibilities.

Once everyone has been introduced, provide an overview of the video development program objectives.

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Retaining valued employees is one of the major challenges facing organizations today and in the future. With a tight labor market and our competitive environment, retaining our good employees is one of the most important efforts we can make as managers. Not only must we find and hire great employees, we have to work hard to keep them.

So, why do you think good employees leave?

HAVE PARTICIPANTS ANSWER. Add the following comments if not added by the group.

- When they feel trapped in their jobs with little or no growth opportunity.

When they are de-motivated by management.

- When they become frustrated by negative work environments.
- When they are not recognized, respected and rewarded for contributions.

So, why do you think good employees stay?

HAVE PARTICIPANTS ANSWER. Add following comment:

Simply put, high-performing employees will remain loyal to an organization when they feel productive, satisfied and valued.

OVERVIEW SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR THE VIDEO DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The objectives for today's session are to work toward retaining our most valuable asset, our good employees. To do that, we need to:

- Understand the importance of retaining good employees.
- Communicate clear performance expectations.
- Set measurable performance standards.
- Take time to give employees performance feedback.
- Take time to listen and get feedback from employees.
- Reward and recognize employees' good work.
- Find opportunities and challenges for valued employees.
- Make retaining good employees a top priority.

FYI

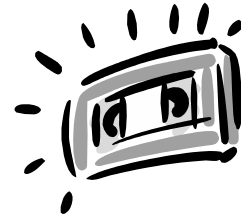
All organizations now say routinely, "People are our greatest asset." Yet few practice what they preach, let alone believe it. Most still believe, though perhaps not consciously, what nineteenth-century employers believed: people need us more than we need them. But, in fact, organizations have to market membership as much as they market products and services – and perhaps more. They have to attract people, hold people, recognize and reward people, motivate people, and serve and satisfy people.

Peter Drucker, from "The New Society of Organizations"

Showing the Videotape



SHOW VIDEO
24 minutes



After the program introduction and overview of session objectives, begin the video, “*After The Hire: Retaining Good Employees.*”



REVIEW VIDEO
15 minutes

After showing the video, *After The Hire: Retaining Good Employees*, ask participants to fill out copies of the post-video self-evaluation on the following page. This evaluation is for personal use only and should provide participants with a good idea of their strengths, as well as identify areas for possible improvement.

You can also gain a general impression from your participants by asking the following questions:

In the beginning, how did Nancy, the manager, handle her employee’s decision to leave?

As an employee yourself, what other critical areas can management pay attention to in order to keep good employees on the job?

How many of you have ever lost a good employee?

Why do you think the employee you lost resigned?

Is there something that you wished you had done differently? If so, what?



Post-Video Self-Evaluation

Circle the number that best describes your skills.

	Agree			Disagree	
I clearly communicate my expectations and performance measurements to my employees.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that I have given my employees more than enough performance feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that my employees think they are getting more than enough performance feedback from me.	1	2	3	4	5
I listen attentively and give feedback about what I have heard.	1	2	3	4	5
I encourage employees to solve problems on their own and support their decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
I view mistakes as a learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5
I reward and recognize the behavior or results that I desire from my employees.	1	2	3	4	5
I offer my employees adequate ways to learn and grow on the job.	1	2	3	4	5
I challenge my employees to stretch their capabilities.	1	2	3	4	5

Use this self-evaluation as a guide to areas of strength and areas for improvement. Unless you circled a 1 for all questions, you have room for improvement. Any questions where you circled 3 or below are priority areas for improvement in your efforts to retain valued employees.

Discussion: Clearly Define Expectations and Measurements



DISCUSSION
15 minutes

Once you have reviewed the video, its content, and allowed participants a chance to react to the video and their personal experiences, discuss how to clearly define performance expectations and measurements.

EXPECTATIONS: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

One of the most common complaints that good employees have about their managers is that managers don't explain what they want very well so that the employee can work toward meeting and exceeding expectations.

To be satisfied with their jobs, employees want and need to have a clear idea of what is expected from them. Performance expectations can be an employee's role in the organization, a specific result to be achieved or goals to accomplish.

So, let's discuss how to define clear performance expectations.

A clearly defined performance expectation should:

- 1. Be specific.*
- 2. Be stated in terms of observable and measurable actions, behaviors and results.*
- 3. Stay away from generalities, attitudes and personalities.*
- 4. Be achievable, but challenging.*



BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

Post the following unclear performance expectation for participants to review.

"I expect you to offer marketing support to other departments."

BRAINSTORMING: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Some clarification questions that come immediately to mind are things like:

- *What does marketing support really mean?*
- *Are there budget considerations?*
- *All departments or specific ones?*
- *Does the employee offer support unconditionally?*
- *How does the employee prioritize support requests?*

Give participants a few moments to come up with four specific and observable behaviors that would constitute offering support in terms of results. Offer them an example of a clear expectation in addition to their own work.

EXAMPLE OF CLEAR PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION

I expect the employee to hold 3-4 focus groups for departments x and z over the next six months. The employee is also expected to participate in department x and z product planning teams and assists with marketing strategies, budget development and marketing proposals to be presented to the NAM management team. Employee will be responsible for managing and implementing marketing strategies accepted by NAM.

Next, turn the discussion to performance measurements.

MEASUREMENTS: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Now, let's talk about performance measurements.

Performance measurements are simply tangible ways in which both you and the employee will know that success has been achieved.

Measurements should be specific, have time deadlines and define a result. Given the example of a clear expectation above, what are some tangible ways to measure success?

Allow a few moments for participants to come up with 4 or 5 measurements. Offer additional sample measurements on the next page.

SAMPLE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

1. 3-4 focus groups completed within three months.
2. Employee attended 90% of all product planning team meetings.
3. Employee implemented all marketing strategies accepted within established deadlines and budgets.
4. Feedback from other team members indicated the employee was a valuable participant.
5. Direct mail pieces have response rates of .05% and above.

CONCLUDE DISCUSSION: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

When you invest the time to clearly define what is expected and when it is expected, good employees will likely be more confident and comfortable because they truly understand their role and how they can succeed.

FYI

Brainstorming guidelines

During the session, either the facilitator or a designated note-taker should write down all ideas resulting from the discussion.

Post and stick to the following guidelines:

- State the problem or action for which you need solutions.
- State that all ideas are acceptable and that evaluating ideas at this time is not required.
- State that everyone is expected to participate.

Exercise: Clearly Define Expectations and Measurements



EXERCISE
15 minutes

Next, ask participants to choose one employee they currently manage and would like to make sure they keep within your organization. Give participants 10 minutes to answer the questions provided on the next page as they relate to a specific employee. Assure participants that the questions and answers will remain private unless they choose to share the information.

CONCLUDE EXERCISE

End this exercise by asking participants to think about (and not necessarily publicly answer) the following questions:

Have each of you communicated your expectations and measurement to your chosen employee as well as you did in this exercise?

Have each of you communicated your expectations and measurements to all of your other employees as well as you did in this exercise?

What are some other ways to measure results that we may not have discussed?



FYI

About setting goals and objectives...

- Goals and objectives will more likely be achieved when they are specific.
- Goals and objectives should be stretching or challenging, but attainable.
- Goals and objectives should be discussed with and accepted by the employee.
- Goals and objectives are most effective when used to evaluate employee performance.
- Goals and objectives that are achieved should be connected to feedback and rewards.

**CLEARLY DEFINE EXPECTATIONS AND
MEASUREMENTS FOR SUCCESS**

What are the three major goals or objectives that I would like
(_____) to achieve in the next six months? Objectives should
be clear, specific and measurable.

1.

2.

3.

How can I measure the success of objective 1?

1.

2.

3.

How can I measure the success of objective 2?

1.

2.

3.

How can I measure the success of objective 3?

1.

2.

3.

Discussion: Time for Giving Feedback



DISCUSSION
15 minutes

Once you've covered clear expectations and measurements, transition to a discussion related to taking the time to give employees performance feedback.

GIVING FEEDBACK: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Employees want to get feedback! About what they are doing well and what they should do to make improvements. Without consistent and specific feedback, employees are unsure about how they are performing and most likely assume you don't really care about their success or value their contributions. Motivation decreases and employees will likely look for other places to get feedback - and it could very well be outside our organization.

Why is feedback so important to all of us?

Because it's part of growing as a person. The purpose of feedback is to help someone succeed, to improve and to grow. Feedback should always be given with the intent to help another grow, not to tear down.

What is the best kind of feedback?

Feedback that is timely and continuous. When a mistake is made, feedback is most valuable immediately after the error has occurred. When a success is achieved, feedback is most valuable at that very moment!

What is feedback really for?

The future. Feedback takes the past and helps to improve the future.

Let me share with you some guidelines for giving effective feedback to your employees.

GUIDELINES FOR GIVING FEEDBACK

- Focus on behavior, results and specific situations rather than on the person or personalities.
- Describe the behavior or situation, not your feelings about it.
- Make observations, not assumptions.
- Focus on helping the employee succeed.

CONCLUDE DISCUSSION: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Your goal in giving feedback is to give as much detailed information as you can to help your employee improve where needed and to encourage and build upon areas of strength.

FYI

Feedback

To help both employees and managers to receive feedback positively, share these tips with both parties to help them receive constructive feedback:

- View feedback as an opportunity to grow as a person rather than criticism.
- Be mentally ready and in the mood to hear and accept feedback.
- Remember that you need to understand feedback, not necessarily agree with it.
Feedback is just another person's perception of you.
- Repeat what you've heard to make sure that you understand the feedback.

Discussion: Mistakes Aren't Failure



DISCUSSION
15 minutes

After discussing the importance of giving feedback, turn the discussion to handling employee mistakes.

MISTAKES: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Good employees are highly motivated individuals who tend to be creative, innovative, take risks and respond to new challenges. Just as you give your good employees permission to succeed, you need to give them room to fail. As a matter of fact, you may even encourage failure, which in turn encourages innovation, creativity and the ability to respond to our ever-changing environments.

When employees do make mistakes, they need your support and your constructive feedback. Here are some guidelines for giving feedback to an employee whom has made a mistake. First and foremost:

- Be respectful.
- Give the employee credit and recognition for trying to make improvements.
- Tell the employee what was done right as well as what went wrong.
- Allow the employee the opportunity to offer suggestions for fixing the mistake.
- Allow the employee to share his or her ideas for how to not repeat the same kind of mistake.
- Let the employee know that you don't expect him or her to make the same mistake again.
- End on a supportive note.

ASK PARTICIPANTS

Can you share an experience where you made a mistake?

How did your manager handle it?

How could it have been handled differently?



Exercise: How Well Are You Giving Feedback?



EXERCISE
20 minutes

The exercise on the following page will provide participants with a chance to evaluate their own performance in regard to giving feedback. Assure participants that they have the option to keep their work private or share with the group. Give participants 10 minutes to finish their work. Allow up to 10 minutes for a post-exercise discussion.

EXERCISE: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Ongoing communication provides an opportunity for performance feedback, questions and clarification. To find out how well you're doing, take 10 minutes to complete the following feedback self-evaluation. You can either keep this information to yourself or share with the rest of us when you're finished.

CONCLUDE EXERCISE

Is there anyone who would like to share the actions that you came up with to give better feedback?



FYI

Diane Tracy offers these principles from **10 Steps to Empowerment: A Common Sense Guide to Managing People**:

1. Tell people what their responsibilities are.
2. Give them the authority equal to their responsibilities.
3. Set standards for excellence.
4. Provide people with training that will enable them to meet those standards.
5. Give them knowledge and information.
6. Provide feedback on performance.
7. Recognize them for their activities.
8. Trust them.
9. Give them permission to fail.
10. Treat them with dignity and respect.

Self-Evaluation: Giving Feedback

I have a one-on-one meeting (15 minutes or more) with my employee:

- Less than once a month
- Once a month
- Twice a month
- Once every two weeks
- Once a week

What do I think is the ideal amount of one-on-one time to adequately give my employee performance feedback?

- Less than once a month
- Once a month
- Twice a month
- Once every two weeks
- Once a week

What do I think my employee believes is the ideal amount of one-on-one time to get performance feedback?

- Less than once a month
- Once a month
- Twice a month
- Once every two weeks
- Once a week

Which additional methods do I currently use to give my employee performance feedback?

- Memos
- E-mail
- Phone conversation
- Voice mail

Based on what you actually do, what you think you should do, and what you believe your employee wants and needs, list three actions you can immediately take to give your employee the time needed to provide performance feedback?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Discussion: Time for Getting Feedback



DISCUSSION

15 minutes

After finishing up with giving feedback, transition the discussion to getting feedback from employees.

GETTING FEEDBACK: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

As you know, every organization wants to keep its good employees. And employees who are productive, satisfied and valued in their jobs will generally stay put! How do you know if your employee is achieving those personal objectives? Again, take time. Time for getting his or her feedback.

Either have the participants complete the self-evaluation exercise that follows on page 24 or continue the discussion with the questions below.

Resume discussion here after participants have filled out the self-evaluation on getting feedback.

GETTING FEEDBACK: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Well, how do you think you've done in terms of getting feedback from your employee? And what are some ways to improve?

Allow up to 10 minutes of discussion. Take notes on any suggestions or ideas that may result.



GUIDELINES FOR GETTING FEEDBACK: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Here are a few guidelines for getting feedback from your employee:

- Carefully listen to the employee.
- Ask questions to clarify and learn more.
- Take the opportunity to learn all you can from the employee.

To carefully listen:

- Decide that listening is important.

- Focus on what is being said, not your reaction to it.
- Give your full attention.
- Take notes.
- Restate the thoughts and feelings you've heard to make sure you really understand.

Another way to get more feedback is to ask the employee plenty of questions. It's best to:

- Use open-ended questions to probe for more information or a better understanding.

Open-ended questions are those questions that can't be answered with a simple yes or no. Instead of saying, "Are you unhappy with your current work assignments?" say, "Can you tell me specifically what you don't like about your work assignments?" And then...

- Ask for as much detailed information as you can.

The additional details can serve as tools for motivating and retaining your employee in the future.

And last, take the opportunity to learn all you can from the employee. You can do that better by...

- Keeping feedback in perspective.

You don't have to agree with the feedback, just understand it. Use the feedback as a guide to what you may want to change or continue in the development of your employees.

- Remember that feedback is about the future.

You may want to consider discussing future actions that can be taken to address employee concerns or requests. And the last guideline for getting feedback is to always thank employees for taking the time and effort to present their concerns or suggestions to you. When you have an employee giving you honest and direct feedback, you have an employee who is working hard to remain loyal to your organization. You also have an employee who deserves recognition for the effort.

Exercise: Time for Getting Feedback



EXERCISE
10 minutes

Have the participants think about one employee in particular and answer the self-evaluation form provided on the following page. After participants have completed the self-evaluation, resume discussion on page 22.

EXERCISE: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Pick one particular employee and answer the getting feedback self-evaluation as well as you can. Again, you can either keep this information private or share with the rest of the group.

FYI

Getting Feedback from employees

You can learn a lot about your employee by asking him or her to give you feedback on the following subjects:

- How the employee feels about his or her future with your organization.
- The working conditions and any suggested improvements.
- What kinds of benefits or rewards the employee would be more motivated by.
- Whether the employee feels that he or she has potential for advancement.
- The attitude of managers toward employees.
- The attitude of employees toward management.
- The employee's positive and negative experiences about getting feedback.
- The effectiveness of communication within the organization.
- Suggestions for how the employee might measure success.
- The employee's perception of how clearly expectations have been communicated.

Self Evaluation: Getting Feedback

What is my employee's long-term goal(s)?

Is the employee on track to achieve that goal?

What are the top three concerns that my employee has about his/her future in our organization?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What, in your opinion, would motivate the employee to leave the organization?

Does the employee believe that upper management is effective?

If not, why?

What was the last suggestion that my employee made to me?

Was it implemented?

Was the employee recognized in any way for the suggestion?

Discussion: Reward and Recognition



DISCUSSION
15 minutes

REWARD AND RECOGNITION: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

How many of you think employees are motivated to leave a job for more money?

Allow for participants to react.

Believe it or not, employees are not generally motivated to leave an organization for more money. It's an outdated response to the problem of retaining good employees. Most of the time, employees find rewards and recognition more motivating than money. As a matter of fact, it has been found that an employee is more likely to leave an organization because he or she did not receive adequate recognition.

There are lots of simple ways to reward and recognize employees. Some guidelines are:

- Make it thoughtful.
- Make it personal.
- Make it timely.
- Match the reward to the result.
- Match the reward to the person.
- Reward and recognize the behaviors that you want repeated.

Here are 10 simple ideas to reward and recognize employees:

1. Say “thank you” in front of co-workers.
2. Send a memo, e-mail or letter of recognition.
3. Take the employee to lunch or breakfast.
4. Recommend the employee for promotion or merit increase.

5. Publicly acknowledge good work in a newsletter or on a bulletin board.
6. Celebrate an achievement with a cake or late afternoon snack.
7. Offer the employee company tickets to a sporting event.
8. Give the employee an afternoon off with pay.
9. Praise the employee to other employees - the word will get back.
10. Allow the employee to work a flexible schedule.



BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

Have the participants brainstorm different ways to reward and recognize employees that would seem to work particularly well within your organization. Come up with at least 10 new ideas.



FYI

Seven Effective Motivators

From the Tikkanen-Bradley Report On-Line

As managers, our time is extremely limited. However, consider the value of your employees to the business and the cost of employee turnover. Try to set aside an hour a week for using the following motivators. Consider it an investment instead of a cost.

1. **Recognize employees** for doing a good job. Do this one-on-one, either verbally or in writing. Praise should be specific, sincere and timely.
2. Take time to **meet with your employees** and listen to their concerns.
3. **Keep your employees informed** about individual, department and company performance. Employee performance reviews are an excellent means of supplying specific individual feedback.
4. **Provide employees with information** about how the company competes in the market, and how individual employees contribute to the overall plan.
5. **Involve employees** in decision-making when the decisions affect them. If you are uncomfortable with this, discuss the issue with employees prior to making the decision, in order to solicit opinions on the issue.
6. Give employees a chance to **develop new skills**. Show employees how they can meet their goals within the context of meeting the company's goals.
7. Take time for **team and morale building meetings** and activities. Celebrate company, department and individual successes. These do not have to be elaborate, even taking the department to lunch is a morale-builder.

Discussion: Opportunities for Growth



DISCUSSION
15 minutes

READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

No different than us, employees want to achieve the greatest possible results during their careers. If an employee can find the opportunity to grow either in responsibility or in place within our organization, they will likely stay put. However, if we can only offer limited opportunities, surely our employees see the same and will be more likely to look for more challenging employment opportunities.

Offer participants the following suggestions for how to offer opportunities for growth:

What about...

- Allowing employees to select and attend training courses in areas that they would personally like to improve regardless of their current position.
- Encouraging education and allowing them to work on an advanced degree through either flexible scheduling or a reimbursement program.
- Once a month, schedule a featured employee to share what they have learned (from classes, seminars, books or training sessions) with the rest of the employees.
- Make career development a formal part of all performance reviews.
- Create a skill or career development plan for each employee. Ask each employee to make a wish list of new skills to learn, possible opportunities and challenges to undertake, and the job that he or she would most like to have next. Then meet with each employee to see how the development plan might be achieved.



BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

Ask participants the questions on the next page to help generate ideas and suggestions for providing challenges and opportunities.

Putting yourself in your employees' shoes, would they say your environment is one that is restrictive or has abundant opportunities?

Is the environment really restrictive or is this just the perception of the employees?

Since perception is reality, what can you do to help employees find the abundant opportunities to grow, either in place or in responsibility?



FINAL SESSION COMMENTS: READ OR STATE IN YOUR OWN WORDS

When an environment is truly restrictive and offers limited opportunity to grow either in place or responsibility, good employees will move to somewhere where they can succeed. The employees who remain in a restrictive environment tend to be those who are not all that interested in excelling and are fairly content with the status quo. Others may feel trapped, unable to leave their jobs for one reason or another. Feeling trapped tends to make employees demotivated and disinterested in their jobs. Either way, trapped or unmotivated employees generally mean we don't have the best or can't keep the best talent working with our organization. It's up to us, as managers, to not only hire the best employees, but to retain them as well.

FYI

A report issued by the **Center for Creative Leadership** named five experiences that promote employee development and growth:

1. Challenging jobs.
2. Interacting with other people - mostly bosses.
3. Hardships.
4. Course work.
5. Off-the-job experiences.

Sample: Ideas and Actions Developed by Participants



7/19

Retaining good employees session

Participants: Frank, Jackie, Sydney, Kevin, Phil and Lucy

Additional strategies and actions identified during the 7/18 session:

Expectations and Measurements

- Do a better job of establishing clear policies along with why policies were established.
- Try not to promote failure as much as experimentation. We want to provide room for innovation, not sloppy work.
- Create guiding principles and give employees opportunity to make more 'on the line' decisions.
- Share more information.
- Have employees involved in clarifying expectations and defining measurements; they may bring another valuable perspective to the process and help us make the intangible tangible.

Time for Giving and Getting Feedback

- Actively promote multi-directional feedback. Meet with each employee and establish a personalized, flexible system of communication.
- Monthly 1 hour updates per employee.
- Get suggestions from employees - Anonymous method?
- Ask the question "What would you do in my shoes?"
- Implement 360-degree feedback program.
- Survey employees on how management could improve and what benefits are most meaningful.

Rewards and Recognition

- Flex time s/b encouraged rather than discouraged.
- Develop a committee to explore in-house day care.
- Upgrade cubicles and artwork for exceeding standards.
- Business casual standard.
- ESOP plan?

Opportunities and Challenges

- Emphasize promoting from within.
- Special project assignments - charity drives, company events, conference planning.

(Continued)

