

Employee Retention

How much money does it cost you to recruit, hire, and train a new employee? How much time does it take?

The cost of retaining your current staff is usually less expensive than hiring new employees. Every good business needs to have a budget and an action plan for employee retention. Right now is a good time to begin thinking about how you can improve your employee satisfaction. Not only will happy employees improve the work environment, but also it will end up saving you money in the long run. A great way to develop good employee retention is with the following seven measures:

1. Define your company
2. Recruit carefully
3. Empower your staff
4. Involve the employees
5. Boost morale
6. Provide incentives
7. Assess the results

DEFINE YOUR COMPANY - First, evaluate your company's mission, vision, values, and goals. It is a good idea to get your employees involved with this. Hold a meeting or distribute surveys for your staff to contribute their opinions. Their input can be priceless and will let them know they are a valued member of the company. If you do not currently hold scheduled structured meetings, it is important to include this in your company's goals.

Thoroughly coach your managers on the company philosophy, management techniques, and a positive attitude. Without their understanding, it can be difficult to maintain a cohesive team of employees.

CAREFUL RECRUITMENT - Second, when recruiting new employees, screen each individual for job competency and ensure their values are aligned with your company's values. A good idea is to include a different staff member during each interview to get their feedback after the interview.

Your employees can be recruiters as well. Offer incentives to employees who recruit qualified friends or family. Another recruitment tool is the internet. A popular web site to post job openings for free on the internet is www.craigslist.com.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER - New and current employees alike must have a clear understanding of expectations and earning potential. Also, provide employees specific information on workplace policies, vacation days, sick days, and so on. If an employee does not know exactly what their job entails, they will likely stray.

It is important to empower your staff. Often, people work together for years and never truly know their coworkers. Ensure everyone on the team knows who everyone else is, and each of their roles in the company. Even if some employees never come in contact with others, it is still important to let them know they are part of the team. Maybe it's time to hold a meeting where everyone says their name, title, and one thing they enjoy doing in their pastime.

Now that your company's mission is defined and everyone knows each other, take time to meet with each employee periodically. This is a critical tool to help them feel welcomed, acknowledged and loyal. You may find an employee's talents, abilities, and skills can be utilized in a better way.

Employees appreciate feedback and performance reviews. Be open for discussion and allow them to feel comfortable providing feedback as well. Whether it is a question, a new idea or a criticism, the employee is showing

that he or she cares about the company's success. Listen to any concerns and devise a resolution to any issues. This way the employee knows their voice has been heard.

STAFF INVOLVEMENT - Provide opportunities for growth. Promote your business and get your staff involved at the same time by sending employees to any relevant seminars, workshops, meetings, leadership training, or job training. It is a great idea to join local community associations such as the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Also, check for local transportation conferences with your State Department of Transportation web site, and other organizations like the Transportation Research Board (www.trb.org) or the Community Transportation Association of America (www.ctaa.org).

BOOSTING MORALE - It's okay to have fun. In fact, laughter may be the best morale booster as it reduces blood pressure, increases our heart rate, and reduces stress hormones. Even driver training and dispatch training can be fun. Maybe include quizzes, and award small but fun prizes.

Create a voluntary committee who meet to organize company events. Some event ideas are:

- Participating in philanthropies
- Trips to sporting events
- Holiday parties
- Contests
- Monthly drawing for perfect attendees
- "Frequent Driver" award for who took the most trips
- Putt-putt golf in the office
- Poker or trivia nights outside of the office
- Sponsor a company team in a softball, bowling, or pool league
- "Volunteer days" for a day off to do volunteer work

Encourage humor and the teamwork spirit. Yes, this takes time and time is money; but, budgeting to ensure employee satisfaction is time well spent. After all, a person who does not enjoy coming to work will likely not come to work.

INCENTIVES - Pass along any discounts to your employees such as auto parts/service, or if you receive a fuel discount for using one service station. Often times, gym memberships and restaurants will offer discounts to your staff as well.

Perhaps when a company goal has been reached, reward your staff with lunch. Remember to always include everyone and to respect their individuality (i.e. salads for vegetarians).

Also, if you do not currently offer a benefits package, you can always start small by just offering life insurance. As the years progress, you can add vision, dental, health, employee assistance programs, short term disability and more.

ASSESSMENT - After trying out a new employee retention method for a while, assess its effectiveness.

Keep in mind, everybody is different. People have different learning styles and are motivated in different ways. Be fair and never ridicule or shame an employee.

When an employee does leave your company, hold an exit interview to obtain valuable information you can use to retain the remaining staff.

Employee retention takes effort, energy, and resources... but the results are worth it to your bottom line.