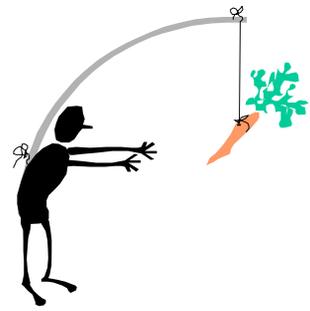


How To Retain Your Best People

(“The Management Bible”)



Quotable Quote

There are companies that some recruiters don't touch. They know it's time consuming to try to pull people out of these organisations because the company has a handle on how to keep their talent. However, other companies are referred to as 'builders'. Their training and development efforts only serve to get the employees ready to move on. These are the organisations that are vulnerable to a recruiter's cold call.

1 – Identify and focus on your real achievers.

Have you determined which people are the most valuable to your organisation? Who can you count on daily to follow through on projects and deliver results? Make a list, but consider these timely tips:

- *Don't confuse activity with performance.* Those constantly on the phone, at the keyboard, calling meetings, or dashing about aren't necessarily producing – they may not be your thinkers, problem-solvers, or decision-makers.
- *Consider performance, not noise.* The quiet ones are not necessarily day dreamers – they may be too busy getting things done to talk too much.
- *Remember, doers come in all shapes and sizes.* Don't fall for stereotypes – the wiry or muscular type may not necessarily be action-oriented.

According to the US organisation development company Linkage Inc., 'the top one-third of your employees should receive ninety per cent of your retention attention – managers don't have the time or resources to lavish attention on everyone'.

The secret is to spend time with these key people so that you know what are their 'satisfiers' – the things that make them happy. In this way, if they ever contemplate leaving, you'll know what buttons to push to retain them.

2 – Know why top quality people leave.

Your best workers change jobs for a reason – and it's rarely only for more money, more perks, or better benefits. Often they leave because their 'satisfiers' are not being met in the current job. Consider the following:

- *I'm not appreciated.* 'I make a valuable contribution and I get no thanks. My talent will be appreciated elsewhere.'
- *I'm bored.* 'I want to be challenged, stretched, and tested so I can show off my talents, experience, and skills.'
- *I have no career prospects here.* 'I'm a cut above the rest but I can see no opportunity for advancement. I want a career, not just a job'.
- *I'm just a small cog in the overall machine.* 'I seek a sense of purpose, of contributing to something bigger than myself, and a sense of belonging.'
- *I want to get better.* 'Here I have limited opportunities for growth and the development of new and valued skills.'
- *I want to work with winners.* 'Here standards are low and sloppiness is tolerated'.
- *I want to work for an insightful manager.* 'As a prized worker, I respond positively to good supervision.'

Research Says

A recent study by Robert Half International Inc. examined why people leave their jobs for supposedly greener pastures. The results of the study verified that compensation is not a predominant reason for change in employment. Instead, people shift their loyalties to a new employer because of other, non-monetary factors. People are hungry for opportunities to grow in their jobs. They crave advancement both in position and stature, and in responsibility and opportunity. If they can't find avenues for growth in one environment, they'll seek them in another.





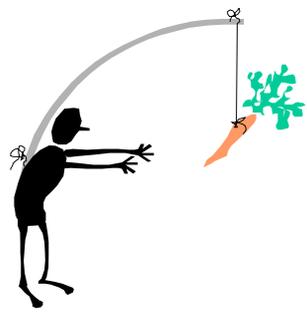
Here's An Idea

In *Keeping Good People* (McGraw Hill, NY), Roger Hermann offers over 125 proven strategies that have been successfully implemented to hold talented staff. They include:

- **Environmental strategies** that provide flexibility in working hours, offer freedom of choice in break times, dress and vacations, provide for child-care services, maintain comfortable atmospheric conditions, guarantee workplace safety, and in general make life on the job more pleasant for everybody.
- **Relationship strategies** that can help resolve conflicts, facilitate more open communication, provide people with freedom and flexibility, reduce stress, and help build self-esteem.
- **Task-focused strategies** that offer employees exciting challenges, encourage initiative, inspire creativity and innovation, and empower individuals to work as a team.
- **Compensation strategies** that link performance to rewards, encourage employee involvement with the company, and utilise a flexible system of benefits to accommodate the changing needs of today's workers.
- **People-growing strategies** that provide incentives for both personal and professional growth. These include in-house training, outside seminars, company-supported education, and the assignment of special projects that teach valuable new skills.

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3 – Develop a retention plan for each top employee.

Once you identify your best people and recognise that they have different needs or satisfiers, you must develop a strategy to show that you are intensely interested in them and their future with your organisation. You need to consider what you are willing to do to retain each key person; and begin to prepare individual retention plans that will help tie each key employee to the organisation.

Talk to these people in turn, asking them what they want from the organisation in the short and long term – 'What will it take to keep you motivated and part of our organisational family?' From this employee-focused conversation comes a vulnerability report which leads to a retention plan. Reach agreement with each key employee on how to approach their needs through a concrete strategy for the future.

4 – Work proactively to retain your best employees.

Personnel management advisor Robert Ramsey suggests that, 'as a frontline manager, your goal should be to do everything you can to hang on to good workers for as long as you can.' To encourage your prized employees to stick around, he recommends the following strategies:

- **Set challenging goals and reasonable deadlines.** Outstanding workers thrive on pressure.

- **Raise the bar.** Hold high expectations and don't be surprised if your workers live up to them.
- **Promote from within.** It's a powerful morale-booster.
- **Give full credit for achievement and effort.** Recognition is a reward in itself for workers who take pride in what they do. Be quick with praise.
- **Delegate authority.** Encourage key staff to take on added responsibilities.
- **Pay attention.** Listen. Act on employee suggestions.
- **Let workers participate in making decisions** that directly affect them.
- **Be committed to excellence.** Don't accept second-rate workmanship.
- **Preach, teach and practise teamwork.** Celebrate each other's success.
- **Be open, honest, and up-front.** Keep key employees informed – what's going on and coming up....both good and bad.
- **Encourage risk-taking and innovation.** Allow failure once in a while.
- **Set your workers up for success.** Be their advocate. Fight to get whatever they need to do their best work. You won't always win, but you'll engender a lot of worker loyalty in the process.
- **Encourage experienced workers to become mentors** for newcomers.
- **Shred the policy manual if possible.** Keep workplace rules few and simple. Key workers need challenge, opportunity and a vote of confidence, not more rules and regulations.
- **Promote life-long learning.** Make continuous growth your catchcry.
- **Cultivate organisational culture.** Build workplace values of hard work, fair play, honesty, and mutual respect.
- **Have fun at work.** If no one ever laughs while you're in charge, you might soon be joining your best employees in looking for another job!

