



The Top 10 Ways to Retain Good Employees

Retaining good employees has always been a challenge, and even more so today in light of low unemployment and high employee expectations. Here are ten things you can and should do.

1. **Share the results of good work, tangibly.**

Monetary and non-monetary rewards need to be tied to results so that, in receiving them, the employee knows that he or she is being rewarded for their specific contribution. Gifts given at the whim of the employer can be regarded as actually demeaning in that they bear little relationship to actual contribution.

2. **Let your employees know they are part of a team.**

Employees have heard the old saw, people are our biggest asset, so much so that they nearly vomit when it is repeated. Letting them know means having direct, regular, and personal contact.

3. **Follow the CFH rule; be candid, frank, and honest.**

Somehow, the higher one gets on the executive ladder, the more the misconception seems to exist that you can get away with not telling the truth to your employees. That simply isn't so. As Abraham Lincoln said: You can fool

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some of the people some of the time, etc. Being less than honest means that you'll get less than the best from your people.

4. Don't spare the bad news.

Some employers have a penchant for spreading the good news and hoarding the bad on the grounds that their employees won't be able to take it. The surprising thing is that, given a chance, most people are more resilient than we think.

5. Little things mean a lot.

Have you ever received a card or note out of the blue, when you were down or having a hard time, from someone who knew and simply took the time to let you know that he or she cared? Taking time to find out what's going on with your employees (yes, after 5:00 PM) and letting them know you care--with a card, a call, or simply a word, can make a huge difference.

6. Recognize that suspicion is normal.

As an employer, you may not want to hear it, but one of the unfortunate effects of downsized America is employers are, in general, not regarded as believable! So, it takes patience, fortitude, and a good deal of practice to get to the point where you are believed by your people. Don't become dismayed, just keep at it, as long as what you do and say is real.

7. Distribute choice perks.

As long as you are in business for a profit, no business can afford to operate as though all people and positions are equal, because they're not! Some people are more talented than others; some have more energy, drive, and concern; and some demand more because they can get it. For those in this

latter category, the true high achievers, you will have to treat them differently or lose them. They don't need your guidance so much as your recognition that they are outstanding.

8. Set your boundaries and make them clear.

Every single person who reports to you should be absolutely clear about two things: (1) what you expect of them, and (2) what they can expect of you. It pays to have a formal written policies statement and manual to discuss personally with everyone who reports to you.

9. Make it clear that, in your organization, continued growth is a condition of continued employment.

Too many organizations, especially in government, tolerate averageness, the hewers of wood and carriers of water. In the long run everyone, including the employee, suffers. From here on out into the twenty-first century, there will be less and less room for those who do just enough to get by.

10. Be genuine and be a model

You would think that this is obvious. Unfortunately, it's not. I've seen so many executives and CEOs who follow the dictum: Do as a say, not as I do. One of the surprising results of chronic reengineering has been that those employees who are truly self-directing have become less willing to tolerate unacceptable conditions. The average performers will hang around, but the outstanding ones will bide their time and leave.