

5 Tips to Attract, Keep and Motivate Your Employees

by Greg Smith

Attracting and keeping young, skilled employees is important and often difficult for today's businesses. Following the tips below will help increase the satisfaction of your employees with their job, and as a result lower recruiting costs and make your company more productive.

Employers face major challenges when they consider the increasing difficulty of finding skilled people, a younger workforce with different attitudes about work, and a growing population of older workers heading toward retirement.

A recent study shows 85% of HR executives state the single greatest challenge they have in managing the workforce is their organization's inability to recruit and retain good employees and managers.

Picture this scenario -- John is the CEO of a large organization experiencing high turnover. His Human Resources staff was spending more and more time recruiting, hiring, and training replacements. As soon as they got them trained, they would be gone in six months. Customers were upset and complaints were increasing.

John decided to explore the main reasons people were quitting. He identified new strategies and tactics such as creating an emerging leaders program, providing training for managers, and improving their employee recognition program. As a result, they are now attracting better talent and more importantly, have retained their best people. The Human Resource Department is happier because they are not spending all their time conducting training.

Few businesses realize how much employee turnover impacts their bottom line. It takes \$7,000 - \$14,000 to replace a typical employee. Replacing a key manager costs the same as buying a new Honda. In the healthcare arena, it costs up to \$185,000 to replace a critical care nurse. The question then arises, how can a business survive when the cost of turnover and recruitment runs into the millions of dollars each year?

Businesses can improve their ability to attract, retain and improve productivity by applying the following five-step PRIDE process:

- P - Provide a Positive Working Environment
- R - Recognize, Reward and Reinforce the Right Behavior
- I - Involve and Engage
- D - Develop Skills and Potential
- E - Evaluate and Measure

Step 1--Provide a Positive Working Environment

Jim Goodnight is the co-founder and President of SAS in Raleigh-Durham, NC. SAS is the largest software development company in the United States. Their progressive work environment and host of family-friendly benefits keeps their turnover rate far below the national average. Jim said, "My assets leave work for home at 5:00 or later each night. It is my job to bring them back each day." Wise executives realize the responsibility for creating a positive work environment cannot be delegated. It starts at the top.

Have you ever worked for a bad boss? One of the main reasons employees quit is the relationship with their first-line supervisor. The fact is many supervisors and managers are unaware how their actions and decisions affect employee turnover. A critical aspect of an effective retention strategy is manager training. Properly trained managers play a major role in an effective recruitment and retention strategy. Managers need the skills,



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tools, and knowledge to help them understand their employees' retention needs and be able to implement a retention plan designed to increase employee engagement in the organization.

Step 2--Recognize, Reward and Reinforce the Right Behavior

Money and benefits may attract people to the front door, but something else has to keep them from going out the back. People have a basic human need to feel appreciated and proud of their work. Recognition and incentive programs help meet that need.

A successful reward and recognition program does not have to be complicated or expensive to be effective. Graham Weston, co-founder and CEO of Rackspace Managed Hosting, gives the keys to his BMW M3 convertible to his employees for a week. This creative way to reward employees has a bigger impact than cash. He says, "If you gave somebody a \$200 bonus, it wouldn't mean very much. When someone gets to drive my car for a week, they never forget it."

At First American, managers present a Greased Monkey Award to the computer technician who is best in resolving problems with computer programs. The award is a plastic toy monkey in a jar of Vaseline along with a \$50 dinner certificate.

An equipment distributor rewards each employee's work anniversary with a cake and a check for \$200 for each year employed. Twice a year employees' children receive a \$50 savings bond when they bring in their "all A's" report card. In addition, they reward employees with a "Safety Bonus Program." They screen each employee's driving record twice a year, and anyone who has a citation is removed from consideration. Those employees remaining at the end of the year divide \$2,000. On Fridays, all employees rotate jobs for one hour. This builds a stronger team, unity, and improves communication within the company.

Step 3--Involve And Engage

People may show up for work, but are they engaged and productive? People are more committed and engaged when they can contribute their ideas and suggestions. This gives them a sense of ownership.

The Sony Corporation is known for its ability to create and manufacture new and innovative products. In order to foster the exchange of ideas within departments, they sponsor an annual Idea Exposition. During the exposition, scientists and engineers display projects and ideas they are working on. Open only to Sony's employees, this process creates a healthy climate of innovation and engages all those who participate.

TD Industries in Dallas, TX has a unique way of making its employees feel valued and involved. One wall within the company contains the photographs of all employees who have worked there more than five years. Their "equality" program goes beyond the typical slogans, posters, and HR policies. There are no reserved parking spaces or other perks just for executives -- everyone is an equal. This is one reason why TD Industries was listed by Fortune magazine as one of the "Top 100 Best Places to Work."

Step 4--Develop Skills and Potential

For most people, career opportunities are just as important as the money they make. In a study by Linkage, Inc. more than 40 percent of the respondents said they would consider leaving their present employer for another job with the same benefits if that job provided better career development and greater challenges.

Deloitte is listed as one of the "Top 100 Best Places to Work." They discovered several years ago they were losing talented people to other companies. They conducted exit surveys and found 70 percent of those employees who left to take new jobs and careers outside the company, could have found the same jobs and careers within Deloitte. As a result they created Deloitte Career Connections, an intranet-based development and career coaching program for all employees. During the first week of implementation over 2,000 employees took advantage of the program and viewed internal job openings. Not only does the program provide new job

opportunities, but Career Connections offers a host of career development tools such as self-assessments, tools to develop resumes, and articles on various job seeking strategies within the company. Skilled people will not remain in a job if they see no future in their position. To eliminate the feeling of being in a dead-end job, every position should have an individual development plan.

Step 5--Evaluate and Measure

Continuous evaluation and never-ending improvement is the final step of the PRIDE system. The primary purpose of evaluation is to measure progress and determine what satisfies and de-satisfies your workforce. The evaluation process includes the measurement of attitudes, morale, turnover, and the engagement level of the workforce. Here is a checklist of items that should be included in your evaluation and measurement process.

Conduct an employee satisfaction survey at least once a year.

Initiate interviews and surveys concerning the real reasons people come to and leave your organization.

Improve your hiring process to create a better match between the individual's talents and job requirements.

Provide flexible work arrangements for working parents and older workers.

Hold managers responsible for retention in their departments.

Start measuring the cost of turnover.

Focus on the key jobs that have the greatest impact on profitability and productivity.

Examine those departments that have the highest turnover rates.

Design an effective employee orientation program.

Greg Smith's cutting-edge keynotes, consulting and training programs have helped businesses accelerate organizational performance, reduce turnover, increase sales, hire better people and deliver better customer service. As President and Lead Navigator of Chart Your Course International he has implemented professional development programs for thousands of organizations globally. He has authored nine informative books including his latest book *Fired Up! Leading Your Organization to Achieve Exceptional Results*. He lives in Conyers, Georgia. Sign up for his free Navigator Newsletter by visiting <http://www.ChartCourse.com> or call (770) 860-9464.