

Employee Retention...

It's a combination of dollars and SENSE.

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Whether businesses are in a cutting back, holding, or hiring pattern, there will always be a critical need "to keep the best talent from joining the competition". Articles about employee recruitment and retention discuss traditional incentives such as salary, cash bonuses, and retirement plans. However, once people reach a certain level of material comfort, or when pay is nearly equal, the focus shifts to other "quality of work life" issues.



These strategies include a range of "professional" perks --such as having cutting edge technology, exciting work, challenging overseas assignments, and advanced learning opportunities and tuition assistance. Flexible benefits and work/life balance programs have become increasingly popular, and now often include employee assistance, child and elder care information and referral services, wellness programs, flextime, and personal days. In order to recruit and retain the best, many companies are offering employees an even broader range of "personal" perks--such as more onsite stress management programs along with conveniences such as onsite daycare, massages, laundry, and personal shopping or errand services.

In a competitive world, it's hard to keep up with the Joneses in terms of all these expensive perks. ***While it takes some dollars to remain competitive, more importantly, it takes a lot of SENSE...in how you pay attention and interact with employees.***

Let's analyze how we use the word "SENSE" by focusing on two different contexts of meaning:

- 1) Sense-- as in being able to sense or feel, "being sensitive". This refers to the ability to perceive what is important to another and also to show consideration for each individual.

- 2) Sense as in “common sense” refers to having good judgment—the ability to make wise practical decisions which will assist both individuals and the organization.



Each employee has a unique combination of needs and motivations for work/life issues. These include challenging work, agreeable work hours, financial rewards, tasks, supportive colleagues, learning opportunities, and a good “fit” with the workplace style and culture. **It makes sense to do periodic individual and group needs assessments and match your approaches to which “benefits” and “work motivators” mean the most to your employees.**



When planning ways to improve employee retention, it may be helpful to reflect on three key ideas:

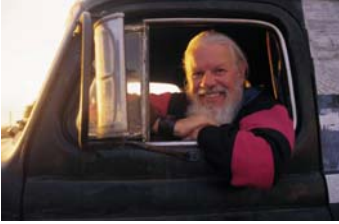


Job satisfaction refers to a person’s general attitude toward his or her job, and major positive “satisfiers” or negative “dissatisfiers”. Pay close attention to each employee’s reaction to issues such as flexible schedule, duties, pay, and benefits. What matters here is **relative perspective** based on his or her prior experience and comparisons with other potential employers.

Job Involvement measures the degree to which a person identifies psychologically with the job, and considers perceived performance level as important to self worth. Pay close attention to each person’s sensitivity, preferences and needs regarding job title, position within the organization, recognition, rewards and interactions with colleagues. Ask about each

employee's desire for learning and varied assignments and what makes a person feel he or she "is important or is growing".

Organizational Commitment is the extent to which an employee identifies with the organization and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership or advancement in the organization.



Pay attention to each employee's sense of corporate identity and pride. Solicit feedback on your image and reputation. Support the highest quality standards and strive to correct any negative perceptions of how you conduct business. Highlight individual and group contributions. Enhance "organizational morale" by creating a strong community image and creating opportunities for public service and recognition.

Of course, if you use good "sense" to help retain your employees, you will also find it makes good "Dollars and Cents" for your organization.

Supervisors—if you are concerned about retention in your work group, consider a contact with REAP to discuss additional strategies to help you improve employee satisfaction and commitment!