

ATTRACT, RETAIN AND MANAGE YOUR WORKFORCE

Develop Enthusiastic Employees Without Breaking the Bank

Employees are your biggest asset. In an increasingly competitive economy, the future of your business depends on your ability to make your employees feel invested in their work, to make the office a place they want to be rather than a place they can't wait to leave. Fail at this task and chances are you'll lose your employees to the competition. It is more important now than ever to build an effective system to retain your talent.

Developing enthusiastic, effective employees doesn't have to mean breaking the bank. But it does mean making the effort to create a culture that encourages each individual to maximize his or her performance. This environment is built the four Cs—connection, contribution, credibility and commitment.

Connection. Build relationships with your workforce. Employees want to work in a collaborative environment designed to utilize their skills. Developing strong relationships with your employees will create a more cohesive workplace.

- Make it a part of the weekly ritual to walk around the office and talk with your employees. This routine will foster an open relationship between you and your staff.
- Learn your employees' individual strengths and needs and design roles and tasks that will put each one in a position to succeed.
- Provide clear directions and goals for each project.
- Create a supportive and accountable workplace. Encourage your employees to learn from their mistakes, free from punishment, by holding regular debriefings to analyze performance on a project.

Contribution. Create a system that motivates all employees to contribute. If employees feel their thoughts are important, they will take a greater interest in projects and be more invested in their workplace.

- Make sure all voices—not just the loudest ones—are heard. The workplace is not a schoolyard; there should be no bullies. In meetings, go around the room and ask everyone to offer their ideas.
- Teamwork is key. Group structures can be an effective way to harness individual talents in service of a greater goal.
- Incentives are a great way to motivate employees.

Credibility. Earning a person's trust takes time, but it's critical in building a foundation for the relationship.

- Follow through on your promises. If you say you will set up an incentive program, you must do it.
- Be honest. Whether business is booming or struggling, tell employees what's what. They'll respect you more for it and feel like they're part of a team instead of hired hands.

Commitment. Lead by example. You, the employer, must be diligent about building a supportive workplace. Make it a priority. Show your employees that you value their contributions and recognize their achievements. Good managers remember to recognize and motivate employees. Great managers do it every day.

The results are indisputable. Motivated employees have better morale, are more committed to their company's success and, consequently, are more likely to remain loyal to their employer. So follow the four C's and drive the bottom line in the right direction. Your employees are your greatest asset. **IA**

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Small Price, Big Impact

A "wall of fame" is a low cost, but effective tool. Display positive feedback from clients on a prominent office bulletin board. That way all employees—not just the high-potential ones—feel there is way for their good work to be recognized. Set up a pay and reward system, where employees know that outstanding work—based on regular performance evaluations—will lead to a tangible reward, such as a bonus, a gift certificate or an extra day off.

—J.B.