

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Quarterly

Perspective

Key leadership qualities to increase staff retention

Staff, employees, associates, team members, workers, labor, management, supervisors, bosses: They go by many names today. The public, and consultants of every type, believe in keeping people happy – and at my company, it is the hot topic on how to succeed in business. This can be such a big problem because turnover costs money and it upsets people's lives.

The reality is it always has been the key to success in life. How you individually, or corporately, treat people has a fundamental impact on success. Poor skills in this area can be overlooked or ignored in the short- or medium-term, but in the long-term, true success only is achieved when you can focus on the skills, issues and techniques that make the workplace great.

Many magazines, newspapers and consulting firms come out with annual best places to work lists, which include information on why these companies are viewed as the best. You will find benefits like vacation time, health insurance, great corporate culture, inclusion, education allowances, mentoring, core values, parental leave, free food, great cafeterias, fun and family friendly.

However, when you take away all the noise of these peripheral benefits, the true motivation of work for each individual gets easier to decipher. While potential employees will look at the “perks” an organizations offers, ultimately, they are interviewing the company to see if they will be fulfilled by that position.

Yes, everyone needs one or more of the plethora of available benefits, but what they really want has nothing to do with the benefits. It has to do with the character of the organization and the influence that working there will provide.



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In the job world, this starts with financial remuneration as the expected top priority of prospective employees. You will find that most surveys will show this typically is several items down the wish list if the paid is in line with the industry.

Working conditions become another important must have; however, most people disagree on what a nice place is or how it is described. So, what you offer to one may not be what another wants. This also is true of the latest buzzwords, work environment or values. Like working conditions, work environment, the cultural values and focus on sustainability, profit or this or that can be a differentiator, but again what that means to Person A and Person Z are different.

So, what do people really want?

The answer is simple: To be appreciated, challenged and respected.

These are the core principles; all else is mere detail. The ability to provide these three things is the greatest challenge of any organization. While all the benefits mentioned above are important, the bottom line is all the benefits without these core principles in place will not keep the best talent.

It takes true leadership in an organization focused on these issues to make it happen. Great leadership must be embedded in the organization from the very top. Leadership with vision, understanding and compassion. There are many other qualifications for the leadership, but like benefits, they vary based

on needs, so let us leave those for another time. Let us look at some of those priorities.

■ **Fair treatment.** If we believe in this, it creates an attitude corporately that permeates to every individual. While fair may be fair, some situations can make this difficult to play out. It rules out playing favorites with individuals and balancing the issues about a specific situation with the overall principles of the company. Most people will accept something that is less than they want or expected if they believe they have been treated fairly.

■ **Meaningful work.** The No. 1 thing for most people in life, work or play is to believe what they are doing is meaningful. Even the simplest task or mundane work can become meaningful if the value and benefit of the work is understood. People want to have purpose. This simple act of showing the value of individual jobs and tasks to the ultimate product or success of the company, its customers and society help satisfy people's basic need to be appreciated.

■ **Tangible results.** One of the biggest frustrations is when it seems like all you do ends up in the garbage can. Especially in large bureaucratic organizations, but not exclusively, when process or procedure get in the way of results, it damages the challenge most people enjoy on the path to success. To spend time working through unnecessary issues, frustrations and hostility in the workplace only gives way to turnover. The great search for an environment that removes roadblocks and sets up the success of what can be seen soon begins.

Meaningful work or expectations of tangible results differs for every person, which is why we have many types of organizations. Organizations can focus on different

methods, programs and ways of thought, but they must lead to tangible results. When success is seen on a project or activity, the need to be challenged has been met with success, not frustration and failure, even if the end result was not what was anticipated. The company culture must accept the perceived failure as part of the roadway to success.

The bottom line is that employee satisfaction, the foundation of employee retention, goes far beyond the simple measures of compensation and benefits. Employees want to be somewhere that makes them feel appreciated, challenged and respected. Their experience at work must make them feel they are doing something worthwhile, which in turn is what makes them feel worthwhile.

The typical solutions of paying more, better benefits, working from home (ask someone about that today) and all the other perks are really the baseline for attracting talent today. These simply get them in the door as the minimum requirements. The long-term solution is leadership and an organization that values people and gives them challenges, respect and appreciation.

Prior to COVID-19 implications and the unemployment rate of less than 3% nationwide, many of these choices have leveled the values of specific benefits. But what we will find as we move through the next wave of employment changes is that while many potential employees will take what they can in a tight market, those with the highest skills look to ensure they are working not where the “fun” benefits and amenities are, but where they are appreciated, challenged and respected by true leaders.

This will always be case for those who want job satisfaction and staying power. ▲