



Attract Employees

Current Environment

Today it is clearly an employees' market. Companies are competing rigorously for fewer human resources. This trend doesn't look to get better any

time soon with the volume of baby-boomers retiring in a few years. Increasing compensation and providing hiring bonuses are getting to be more common place, but is money the best answer?

Several studies have shown that beyond filling our basic needs, money is not the top motivator for many people. These same studies show that many managers believe it is. Part of this has to do with management's perception of employees, but part may be fueled by employees themselves. A recent Saratoga Institute study showed that even though employees often cite "more money" as the reason for leaving, something besides money was the "trigger" for starting a job search.

Two Quick Stories

Recently, one of our clients shared a delightful story. This business owner had set out to improve leadership and company culture. In the process, the company's management team defined company values and included this information in employee pay envelopes. An employee who intended to leave the company read about the values. He sought an audience with the company president to discuss the values and as a result, decided to stay. He told the president, "I want to work for a company that is striving for these kinds of values!"

Compare that story to another shared with us by a perspective client who was describing his goals and challenges. He told of an employee in a leadership position who had excellent technical knowledge but lacked people skills. The business owner said that several good employees have left because of this manager's actions and attitudes. The company owner also knows this manager's lack of people skills is well known in their industry. This sort of reputation certainly hurts the hunt for good employees to grow the business.

Losing and finding new people isn't easy or cheap! It would be interesting to calculate the net worth of this manager in terms of how much revenue he has created compared to the lost people resources.

What Can You Do?

So many things go back to leadership basics, and attracting and keeping good employees is no exception. Leadership sets the culture. Many times, small business owners feel they cannot afford to compete monetarily with bigger companies. This may be true, but small companies also cannot afford to lose employees or fail to attract them because of poor culture. It is becoming clearer all the time, that people truly are an organization's most valuable asset. Therefore, leaders must pay close attention to how attractive their culture is.

Culture, which is defined by leadership, is one way a small business can compete with larger companies. The Saratoga Institute study identified seven items leaders should pay at-



tention to in order to improve employee retention. These seven leadership practices sound simple, but take constant proactive effort to maintain.

1. Make sure the job & workplace is as expected
2. Match the job & the person
3. Provide proper coaching & feed back
4. Have clear growth & advancement opportunities
5. Make people feel valued & recognized
6. Be sensitive to employee stress
7. Be trustworthy & fair

The Rewards of a Good Culture

People love to talk about their work. If they work at a company that walks the talk of truly valuing its people, they will more likely take ownership. Happy employees will tell others what a good place it is to work. They will be on the lookout for people who are a good fit and who will enhance

the organization. With a good culture, your employees can become your best recruiters!

To compete properly and grow, you need the best people. If your organization doesn't have an attractive culture in place, it's not too late to start changing. This kind of change isn't easy, and it takes strong leadership commitment. If you are a smaller company, you have the advantage in being more flexible to change.

Start now to take an honest assessment of how employees perceive your culture (you may be surprised at their views). Determine where you need to go, where the gaps are, and create a thorough plan to properly address them. Consider using an outside facilitator who can greatly enhance the process of awareness, planning and implementation. Your most valuable asset will thank you profusely for your valiant efforts. ■■■

Linda Tennant is President of Attainment, Inc., a franchise of 40-year-old Leadership Management Inc. (LMI). Using a proven Behavior Change Process, Attainment helps leaders improve in the areas of leadership, productivity, communication, teambuilding, coaching and sales. Listen weekly to 'Attainment with Attitude' on the John Adam Show, KXAM1310, Tuesday at 7:40pm.