

GOOD DRIVER SHORTAGE OR GOOD LEADER SHORTAGE?

Keeping good employees in the face of CSA

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Guest Writers

During the Arizona Trucking Association(ATA) Leadership Conference's CEO panel discussion about CSA and a pending driver shortage, Harry McDonald, CEO of Carlile Transportation said, "We don't believe there is a shortage of good drivers, just a shortage of good management." Harry explained his comment to us later, "I was speaking in general terms. We feel overall that drivers drive how they are managed. If a driver is driving for a company that expects him to get there no matter what, he will. If he is expected to drive safely and by the rules first and foremost, he will."

Here are some things you can do to attract and keep good employees while meeting the CSA challenge:

1. Communicate Values and Expectations Consistently and Continuously

Have you identified and communicated your top five company values to each employee? Is safety one of your values? Are you using these when hiring and evaluating employees and setting goals? Have you ranked the values in priority order and written a short definition for each? Have you rated to what degree the values are being lived? If not, an employee faced with the dilemma of arriving on time or safely, may make the wrong choice. Of course we want both but sometimes we have to choose.

Rick Duncan, CEO, **Duncan & Son Lines**, an ATA board member and one of

our clients, has incorporated his company values into employee performance reviews. Employees are rated to what degree they are living each value and action steps are identified to improve.

Rick shares a story that shows all this hard work will pay off. Rick communicated the new company values and definitions to employees by including them in employee pay envelopes. A driver, who was on the verge of quitting, saw the values and asked to meet with Rick. The driver told Rick that if the company was serious about these, he would continue working for Duncan. Rick assured him there was a high commitment to living these values; the driver decided to stay.

2. Hold Yourself and Your Employees Accountable; Develop Scorecards

It surprised us to hear that the seven CSA behaviors are not new. The difference is they will be enforced consistently and there will be a scorecard. We believe that having a scorecard for each employee is the key to success. It keeps everyone focused on the right things and they know daily if they are winning or losing. The CSA scorecard will be public which makes it tough, but public accountability sometimes helps us achieve more.

3. Identify Why Employees Are Not Performing; Help Them Change

Employees do not perform to our expectations for these reasons:

- They don't know what we want them to do. This is a communication problem. Sometimes we think we have

clearly communicated expectations but communication has not taken place until the employee has gotten the message.

- They don't know how to do what we want. This is a people development (training) issue. Training has not taken place until the employee can successfully perform the task. Sending someone through a 'fire hose' training process where they get lots of information at once without specifics on the job application or follow through is not people development.
- They don't know why what we are asking is important or the consequences are not great enough for not doing it. This is a communication and/or accountability problem. Help employees understand how what you are asking them to do relates to the values and/or their personal priorities.
- They are not willing to do what we want. This is a motivation problem. Develop a motivation plan for each employee. If you have effectively done all four steps and the employee is not performing, it may be time to invite the employee to be successful in another environment.

Use the challenge of CSA and the possible shortage of people to get good leadership practices in place. Be the employer of choice for the good people and they will promote you.

Linda and Tery Tennant own Attainment, Inc., a performance improvement and leadership development organization. They are franchisees of Leadership Management International and active members and sponsors of the Arizona Trucking Association.