

Employee-Retention Strategies

Employees commit to companies if they know there's a possibility of a future promotion

By Jim Peduto



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During an economic downturn, unemployment rates rise and the working population cling to their jobs — right? Not necessarily, especially if we're talking about your best cleaning workers. These are the people who are producing, pushing the hardest, and making your business look good. Your competitors know who they are. In fact, they might be trying to hire them.

By using some strong retention strategies, you can help ensure that your top performing workers will want to stick around through any economy. As a bonus, many of these strategies won't cost you anything.

- **Communicate expectations:** Are your employees' goals aligned with your business goals? Are these goals and expectations consistent? Changing expectations only keeps employees on edge, creates stress, and makes them feel unsuccessful. Make sure employees know what is expected of them in a clear way so they can easily recognize whether or not they are accomplishing the work effectively.
- **Provide the tools to do the job right:** No one likes to report to a job that doesn't include working tools and equipment. Make it possible for workers to do what they do best every day.
- **Praise employees:** It takes one to two seconds to say "well done" or "good

job today," but it could make an employee's entire day. Your workers should receive some kind of praise at least once a week.

- **Show you care about your workers:** All of your employees are individuals and have lives outside of this job. Ask how they are doing. Offer reasonable flexibility and support when needed.
- **Encourage employee development:** Workers are happiest when they feel challenged and are given opportunities to develop new skills. You can encourage employee development by offering a mentoring program and extra training programs for new skills.
- **Value opinions:** Offer a forum for discussions in employee meetings. Provide e-mail addresses or other contact information for company leaders and encourage workers to contact them with ideas or questions. Distribute employee surveys, post the results, and follow up with discussions about employee feedback.
- **Offer opportunities to learn and grow:** Employees commit to companies if they know there's the possibility of a promotion or positive job change for them in the future. Adopt a policy to promote from within and create career maps for employees so they know what it will take to get where they want to be.

Retaining your key employees is critical to the long-term health and success of your business. Keeping your best workers on hand ensures customer satisfaction, business growth and a deeply imbedded organizational culture. Satisfied workers who are committed to your business have a more positive attitude, work harder, and want to be a part of the business success. 