

Keeping Good Employees with Incentives Other than Money

One of the greatest challenges facing employers today

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is finding and keeping good employees. In order to avoid the unproductive cycle of replacing one underperformer with another and the futility that comes along with expensive hiring techniques that fail to address the underlying causes of poor performance, firms must adopt a set of reliable strategies that foster employee retention, such as the following:

Trust and Responsibility

People need to know they are responsible and trusted. When an employee becomes insecure, resentful or threatened, he or she will lose the motivation to work hard; whereas, an employee who feels a sense of indispensability will work diligently to substantiate his or her worth, thereby improving the firm's bottom line.

Trusting and believing in an employee allows him or her opportunity and confidence to generate great work; consequently, when an entire team consists of members who trust each other, there are no limits to what can be accomplished.

Don Phin of the Employer Advocators Network, Inc. asserts that one method for creating trust in a firm is to eliminate policies that encourage or reward dishonest behavior. Phin states, "For example, many sick leave policies encourage people to lie about their reasons for being absent. Instead, offer personal days off, whereby employees can take paid leave without having to claim they are sick. Little white lies, such as calling in sick, may not seem like much, but they set a tone that can lead to bigger and more costly lies and they undermine other efforts to instill trust in the organization."

You will be amazed at what people can and will do if you trust them to do it.

Flexibility to Encourage Work/Life Balance

No matter how much you pay your employees, they will never be satisfied with their jobs unless they have flexibility. Prue Warrilow, Director of Families at Work, states, "If people have access to flexible work hours, they're not lying to take off a day when they want to attend their children's recital or sports event at school for only half a day. In one Australian study, new mothers returned to work 11 weeks earlier in companies that offer broad, flexible work practices. (Women are entitled to 52 weeks

of unpaid leave for the birth of a child in Australia.)"

Incorporate flexibility into the firm culture. Accepting needed flexibility in work hours gives employees the chance to be upfront about why they want to take time off, and it provides them with the option of making up the time on another day.

Honest and Sincere Public Praise

Recognition and praise are keys to employee retention. How your employees feel directly impacts their job performance. Recognition and praise reinforce behaviors that contribute to outstanding individual performance.

William James said, "The deepest principle of human nature is the craving to be appreciated." As lawyers, we are very often slammed with client demands, court deadlines, and closing deals. We very often forget to say "Thank You" to our employees and/or associates.

Do not forget to verbalize your appreciation. People feel like they always hear about their mistakes and are rarely thanked for their contributions. Never underestimate the power of saying "thank you."

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Upcoming Calendar

March 4

CREW Monthly Luncheon Program
Developers are from Mars; Customers are from Venus...
Linda Berman, Caruso Affiliated
11:30 a.m.
The Westin Buckhead

March 18

Red Rose Event: Pottery and Networking at Art & Soul Members Only.

March 22

CREW newsletter deadline.
Got News? Contact Julie McIntosh at jmcintosh@brentwood-capital.com

April 1

CREW Monthly Luncheon Program
Details TBA

April 16

CREW'S Compassion in Action Gala Event benefiting homeless women and children in Atlanta
"Let's Get Down Tonight with KC and the Sunshine Band"
Cobb Galleria Centre
6:30 p.m.

Possible Woman Leadership Conference - April 2

Unleashing Leadership Power

CREW Atlanta members are eligible for discounted tickets for the upcoming leadership conference, "Unleashing Leadership Power," to be held in Atlanta on April 2 at the Georgia World Congress Center. The seventh annual event will feature keynote speakers Geraldine Ferraro, Patricia Russell McCloud, Chin-Ning Chu and Laura Liswood.

Details of the event are at www.possiblewoman.com. To access this registration page, simply go to http://www.possiblewoman.com/conferencejan04/strat_part.htm. Scroll to the bottom of the page and key in our customized code (crewatl), which will take you directly to the personalized registration page.

A portion of all proceeds will benefit the Possible Woman Foundation International, for the purpose of awarding academic scholarships to women and girls. Thanks to its sponsors and supporters, the program

will allow for \$10,000 in academic scholarships.

Contact Linda K. Wind at www.possiblewoman.com or 888.663.4767 for additional information.

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Charles Schwab alleged that, "There is nothing else that kills the ambitions of a person as criticism from superiors. I never criticize anyone. I believe in giving a person incentive to work. So I am anxious to praise but loath to find fault. If I like anything, I am hearty in my approbation and lavish in my praise."

The Talmud states that criticizing someone in public is like murdering them, except they remain alive to relive the embarrassment. One must remember, however, that appreciation and praise must be honest and sincere, as inauthentic praise is often transparent and may lead to resentment. In such a situation, you may do more harm than good to the relationship.

Professional Development

Genuine concern for your employees' professional development will help in retaining your good employees. It is your job as an employer to assist in developing your employees' true talents. I encourage my employees to update their resumes every few months with skills they have obtained or accolades they have received. If a former employee goes on to do great things, my firm hopes to someday have the opportunity to work with them again.

Just as you are building and cultivating long-term relationships based on trust and confidence with your clients, you should be planting and cultivating the same seeds of growth with your employees. Who knows what they will accomplish and how that may benefit the firm in the future. I truly believe that what is good for my employees as individuals is good for the firm.