

Cost-Effective Practices for Employee Retention

By Stephanie Friese

Retaining good employees is one of the greatest challenges facing employers today. To avoid the unproductive cycle of replacing one underperformer with another, and the futility of expensive hiring techniques that fail to address the underlying causes of poor performance, firms must adopt reliable, cost-efficient strategies that foster employee retention. Some practical suggestions follow:

Trust and Responsibility: When employees become insecure, resentful, or threatened, they lose the motivation to work hard; employees who feel indispensable are confident and work diligently to substantiate your trust. When an entire team consists of members who trust each other, a firm's accomplishments are limitless.

Flexibility to Encourage Work/Life Balance: Incorporate flexibility into your firm culture. No matter how much you pay your employees, they will never be satisfied with their jobs until they have flexibility. Allowing flexibility in work hours gives employees the chance to be up-front about why they want to take time off, and it provides them the option to make up the time another day.

Sincere Public Praise: Recognition and praise reinforce behaviors that contribute to outstanding individual performance. How your employees feel directly impacts their job performance. As lawyers, we are flooded with client demands, court deadlines, and closing deals, and often forget to verbalize our appreciation. Never underestimate the power of saying "thank you."

Professional Development: As an employer, it is your job to assist in developing your employees' talents. I encourage my employees to update their résumés every few months adding their new skills or recent accolades. If a former employee goes on to do great things, my firm hopes to someday work with them again. Just as you are cultivating long-term relationships based on trust and confidence with your clients, you should be doing the same 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 is good for the firm.

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