

# **The Bottom Line for Employee Retention**

Want the bottom line when it comes to employee retention? The quality of the supervision an employee receives is critical to employee retention. People leave managers and supervisors more often than they leave companies or jobs.

It is not enough that the manager is well liked or a nice person. Sure, a nice, likeable manager earns you some points with your employees. A draconian, nasty, or controlling manager takes points away from your organization. So will below market benefits and compensation. But, a manager or supervisor, who is a pro at employee retention, knows that the quality of the supervision is the key factor in employee retention.

## **Effective Managers Create Employee Retention**

Managers who retain staff start by communicating clear expectations to the employee.

They share their picture of what constitutes success for the employee in both the expected deliverables from and the performance of their job.

These managers provide frequent feedback and make the employee feel valued. When an employee completes an exchange with a manager who retains staff, he or she feels empowered, enabled, and confident in their ability to get the job done.

Employee complaints about managers and supervisors centre on these areas. Employees leave managers who fail to:

- provide clarity about expectations,
- provide clarity about career development and earning potential,
- give regular feedback about performance,
- hold scheduled meetings, and
- provide a framework within which the employee perceives he can succeed.

## **How to Help Managers With Employee Retention**

Almost every manager can increase her ability to retain employees by developing her management skills. Teaching a manager about how to value people can be more challenging. Particularly if the manager doesn't already value people and their contributions in her mind and heart, it will be a leap for her to change her values.

These ideas will help your organization develop managers who believe in and act in ways that support employee retention.

- Integrate core values about people and a mission and vision that enable people to align themselves with the company direction. Communicate the importance of these, and clear expectations about the behaviours expected from managers to accomplish these, to every manager.
  - Negotiate a performance development plan with each manager that stresses the expected managerial areas of development,
  - Provide training in core management skills to every manager. Core management skills include how to:
    - integrate performance management including goal setting,
    - give and receive feedback,
    - recognize and value employees,
    - coach employee performance,
    - handle employee complaints and problems,
    - provide a motivating work environment, and
    - hold career development discussions with employees.
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- Hold regular meetings to provide management development coaching and feedback. You can assist managers to improve their management style and skills. A regular meeting helps you debrief events as they occur, while memories of the exchanges are fresh in the manager's mind.
  - Schedule and hold learning organization events such as book clubs, product training, project debriefs, and discussion and planning meetings.
  - Provide funding for conferences and educational development opportunities for managers to continue learning.
  - As part of a fully integrated performance management system, provide 360 degree feedback so managers know how their management style is perceived.

### **What if a Manager Fails at Employee Retention?**

If a manager fails at employee retention, the chances are good that the manager has been unable or unwilling to develop their ability to manage and value people across the board. Managers who exhibit a pattern in which their key employees leave your organization cannot retain their management role.

If you have fairly and ethically provided the manager the learning opportunities suggested here, you can, in good conscience, remove the individual from the managerial role. My experience has been that most managers consider this such a loss of prestige and "face" that they voluntarily leave the organization.

If they choose to stay, however, they must commit to being effective, contributing employees. If the manager cannot make this leap, you will need to let the manager go before their negativity impacts the rest of your workplace.

Given the management development opportunities listed here, most managers will be able to become managers who retain their best employees. Your investment in your managers can fuel your organization's ongoing success. After all, it is the quality of the people you employ and retain that is the heart of your business success.