

AWARENESS IS POWER®

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SUCCESS THROUGH INSIGHT!

Common Sense Retention

There are many facets in regards to the all-important issue of employee retention, but perhaps none makes as much sense as the one that we'll explore in this article.

The reason? Because it benefits you in ways that go beyond simply retaining your best employees. (And that, all by itself, would be enough.)

There is a crucial mistake that many companies make when they're delegating tasks to their employees, and even when they're considering which ones to promote and how to promote them. That mistake is tied to a golden rule of corporate productivity, which is this:

Make sure that everybody in the organization does what they do best.

Simple, right? Well, you'd be surprised at how easily "simple" becomes "complicated."

An example from *The Office*

Let's use an example from the hit television show *The Office* to illustrate this point.

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The Top 10 Qualities Of An Excellent Manager

An excellent manager taps into talents and resources in order to support and bring out the best in others. An outstanding manager evokes possibility in others.

1. Creativity – Creativity is what separates competence from excellence. Creativity is the spark that propels projects forward and that captures peoples' attention. Creativity is the

ingredient that pulls the different pieces together into a cohesive whole, adding zest and appeal in the process.

2. Structure – The context and structure we work within always have a set of parameters, limitations and guidelines. A stellar manager knows how to work within the structure and not let the structure impinge upon the process or the project. Know the structure intimately, so as to guide others to effectively work within the given parameters. Do this to expand beyond the boundaries.

3. Intuition – Intuition is the capacity of knowing without the use of rational processes; it's the cornerstone of emotional intelligence. People with keen insight are often able to sense what others are feeling and thinking; consequently, they're able to respond perfectly to another through their 'deeper understanding'. The stronger one's intuition, the stronger manager one will be.

4. Knowledge – A thorough knowledge base is essential. The knowledge base must be so ingrained and integrated into their being that they become 'transparent', focusing on the employee and what she/he needs to learn, versus focusing on the knowledge base. *Continued on page three – Manager*

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The show is a “mockumentary” about a paper company by the name of Dunder-Mifflin, located in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

The manager at this particular branch is Michael Scott. Prior to becoming manager, Michael was a salesman at the Scranton branch. In fact, he was the top salesman at the branch, which is the main reason he was promoted to manager.



That, in a nutshell, was a mistake. Anybody who has seen the show can attest to that. What the Dunder-Mifflin brass did is something that’s actually quite common in the corporate world: they put Michael in a position that does not play to his strengths. What he does best is sell, **not** manage. Their attempt to “reward” Michael with a promotion clearly backfired. However, Michael occasionally turns his attention away from managing to sales, and when he does, he enjoys success.

Michael Scott should have been promoted to a *sales* manager position, if he was promoted at all. That would have been best for him and also best for the company, especially his co-workers. Many times within a company, a key employee is moved from what they do best to something else they don’t do nearly as well, and this is often the result of a promotion. It even happens when a candidate is first hired.

Because the candidate has an expanded skill set (and there are more than one openings available), the company might be tempted to bring them in for a position that’s outside their range of expertise, a position that’s perhaps more managerial in nature. Unless this is truly an exemplary individual, the strategy is almost certain to backfire. Below are the two main reasons why it will:

- **As a general rule, what people do best they enjoy the most.** If the employee is not able to pursue their passion, they will eventually become disenchanted.
- **The company is hurt on two different levels.** First, the employee isn’t doing what they do best, so the company loses productivity.

Continued on next column –

Second, the employee is becoming disenchanted, which means they’ll lose their drive and motivation, further causing productivity to suffer.

The Silver Lining

Despite all the doom and gloom portrayed to this point, there is a silver lining. By ensuring that everybody within the organization is doing what they do best and playing to their strengths, you can raise your retention rate drastically. When a person is doing what they do best—what they truly love to do and have a passion for—there’s practically no way to tear them away from it. Even money won’t do the trick, unless they can be convinced that the new situation will be identical in every way to their current one.

And this is a classic “two-for-one” bargain, because it also means that these employees will be infinitely more productive, as well. So not only will your retention rate increase, the company will make more profit and continue to grow for the foreseeable future, since your best candidates are locked in, happily doing what they love to do. That truly is the best of both worlds.



This type of “common sense retention” falls under the category of “can’t see the forest for the trees” syndrome, and some of you might be saying to yourself, “*Of course that’s the best way to retain employees!*” However, the hustle and bustle of the corporate world has a way of clouding even the best of intentions, to the point of distraction. So review every member of your team, and make sure that you can identify the **one thing** that they do better than anything else. Once you’ve done that, then make certain that their role within the company fully embraces that one thing.

Because as funny as Michael Scott might be—intentionally or not—his situation is better left to television and not the real world.

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Here is a simple but powerful rule – always give people more than what they expect to get.

– Nelson Boswell

Continued from page one – *Manager*

The excellent manager lives from a knowledge base, without having to draw attention to it.

5. Commitment – A manager is committed to the success of the project and of all team members. She/he holds the vision for the collective team and moves the team closer to the end result. It's the manager's commitment that pulls the team forward during trying times.

6. Being Human – Employees value leaders who are human and who don't hide behind their authority. The best leaders are those who aren't afraid to be themselves. Managers who respect and connect with others on a human level inspire great loyalty.

7. Versatility – Flexibility and versatility are valuable qualities in a manager. Beneath the flexibility and versatility is an ability to be both non-reactive and not attached to how things have to be. Versatility implies an openness – this openness allows the leader to quickly 'change on a dime' when necessary. Flexibility and versatility are the pathways to speedy responsiveness.



8. Lightness – A stellar manager doesn't just produce outstanding results; she/he has fun in the process! Lightness doesn't impede results but rather, helps to move the team forward. Lightness complements the seriousness of the task at hand as well as the resolve of the team, therefore contributing to strong team results and retention.

9. Discipline/Focus – Discipline is the ability to choose and live from what one pays attention to. Discipline as self-mastery can be exhilarating! Role model the ability to live from your intention consistently and you'll role model an important leadership quality.

10. Big Picture, Small Actions – Excellent managers see the big picture concurrent with managing the details. Small actions lead to the big picture; the excellent manager is skillful at doing both: think big while also paying attention to the details.

Originally submitted by Jan Gordon, LCSW, Executive, Career & Personal Coach, who can be reached at jan@qualitycoaching.com. Copyright 2003-2008 CoachVille, LLC

Web Site Of The Month!

Workplace violence has emerged as an important safety and health issue in today's workplace. Its most extreme form, homicide, is the third-leading cause of fatal occupational injury in the United States. This U.S. Department of Labor site provides a collection of links to brochures and reports about workplace violence, covering facts and statistics, prevention, OSHA compliance, training, and other topics.

Check it out at:

<http://www.osha-slc.gov/SLTC/workplaceviolence/index.html#Recognition>

U.S. Department of Labor



ONE MINUTE IDEAS

Not All Jobs Are Alike

Why Behavioral Interviewing Must Be Job Related

One of the most important aspects of behavioral interviewing is keeping the questions job related. However, "job related" doesn't mean that the question relates to just ANY job. **For the behavioral interviewing technique to be effective, the questions must relate to specific areas required by the job for superior performance.**

Not all jobs are alike. In a customer service position, communicating with others and customer orientation may be the most crucial areas to success. Meanwhile, an executive level position may require competitiveness and a sense of urgency. A thorough job benchmark and an unbiased assessment of the job will quickly reveal the key performance objectives that are required for superior performance.

By connecting the questions you ask to those specific performance objectives, you can get to the root of an applicant's behavior in areas that directly affect success on the job.

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