

## **Do you have motivated and loyal employees?**

This week we will look at how you motivate and create loyalty in your employees.

One of the most fatal assumptions an entrepreneur can make is that money is the sole motivator of employee performance and loyalty. That notion, especially in the Okanagan, is simply dead wrong!

I recently reviewed a confidential survey that performed primary employee research to identify the critical employee satisfaction and retention issues facing companies located the Okanagan. I have obtained permission to share the highlights.

The survey highlighted that employee turnover in the Okanagan is extremely low. In fact, compared to the province as a whole, the Okanagan has the lowest employee turnover in the province. Even if employees do leave a company, over 82% relocate within the Okanagan.

Let's face it, individuals that relocate to the Okanagan are seeking a better life than they had elsewhere. Relocation, including my own, is primarily lifestyle driven.

So why should companies care about employee satisfaction and retention?

The sad fact is this – over 73% of employees surveyed felt that their employer could care less if they left.

### **WOW!**

Employees are feeling overworked, underappreciated and are enduring rather than enjoying their work. Perhaps they are willing to sacrifice their work environment for the lifestyle advantages.

In my experience ignoring human resource issues are is the #1 weakness of businesses in the Okanagan. For the most part, businesses are paying lip-service to their most critical asset – their people! Most business plans I have seen completely neglect the key human resource strategies of recruitment, retention, compensation and performance management.

The survey highlighted a fact that all employers in the Okanagan should take very seriously.

What was the #1 thing that, if they had this, would increase their level of job satisfaction significantly?  
What was the one thing that exceeded every other factor by almost 23%?

More money right?

No it wasn't money.

To be simply told that they are appreciated – by their bosses and their peers. To be praised for a job well done instead of criticized for what they haven't done.

What was second?

To have more time off to be able to actually enjoy the lifestyle that the Okanagan provides! Employees want to work hard but also want to be able to spend more time with family, friends, etc. enjoying our incredible lifestyle!

I was shocked at this next one.

Did you know that over 75 percent of those surveyed said they have never received a performance award? If employers are looking for new ways to keep employees motivated, it could be as simple as rewarding them for a job well done.

Over 65 percent of those surveyed said their level of job satisfaction, motivation and loyalty to their employers would increase if offered an ongoing incentive program allowing a choice of rewards.

In my experience, personalized performance incentives can increase satisfaction and loyalty most effectively if a company offers rewards over a long term, rather than as a one-time pat on the back.

Remember that what one team member views as a reward may not appeal to another.

Here is what Okanagan employees said what would most motivate them to improve performance if offered a non-cash reward. The top seven motivators included:

1. Additional time off, including extended maternity/parental leave, the ability to bank overtime into vacation time and the ability to manage their workweek with flex-time;
2. Tickets to recreational, sporting and family events, such as ski-passes, outdoor adventure tours, mountain bike tours, golf/skiing/tennis lessons, swimming/skiing/soccer, etc. camps or lessons for children, winter carnivals, etc.;
3. Tickets to a favorite entertainment event – concerts, theatre, hockey, professional skating, Harlem Globetrotters, etc.;
4. A weekend get away trip, including babysitting, etc.;
5. Gift certificates for stores and restaurants of choice;
6. Tuition for courses of their own choice – regardless if they are job related; and,
7. Independent legal or financial planning/retirement advice, including tax preparation services.

One of the best ways I know of to uncover employee satisfaction, loyalty and retention issues is to have someone independent of the company interview your employees one-on-one. As long as the individual findings are kept completely confidential, employees feel at ease to share their deepest concerns. This may be the best investment you have ever made!

May you act of the findings of this survey and build a happier, more satisfied, more motivated and more loyal team!

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