

How to keep good people

COACHING

Engaging staff is the best way to ensure their longevity with the company

Need a helping hand with acquiring and retaining staff?

The challenge of acquisition and retention seems to have reached a point where some companies and managers are saying to themselves "not my fault" and continue to repeat their errors.

So the first question is, are you looking at this issue as an ongoing problem that you cannot solve, or a great opportunity to discover new solutions? You can get a substantial amount of new ideas from outside your own industry. Have a look around and see which companies have had success or relative success and see if you can adapt it.

The ability to explore the opportunity sets the great manager apart from the average or not-so-good manager.

Where a team or teamwork breaks down or becomes dysfunctional, the boss contributes in the majority of cases, figures suggest 70 per cent of cases. Maybe there is a clue there as to why people do not join you or leave all too quickly.

Turn around mentally and take a look at your company. Is there another department that has a comparable challenge ie, acquisition and retention but not with personnel? Take a look at sales and marketing. They have similar problems except the primary difference is, instead of staff or internal acquisition and retention they have external customer acquisition and retention.

Sit down with your sales and marketing colleagues and seriously look at what they do, when they do it, how they do it, why they do it and how often they do it, etc. Here you have a potential opportunity to look at other techniques applied by another department in attracting and keeping customers, some of which will almost certainly be adapted. A marketing plan consists of, but is not restricted to:

- Identifying the right markets to sell to.
- Identifying the right customers to sell to.
- Identifying the right products or services to sell or develop.
- Identifying the right price to sell at to maximise profit.
- Identifying the right distribution channels to market or sell through.
- Identifying the right promotional mix to maximise the dollar marketing spend.

You can adapt the plan to your own recruitment and retention strategy.

If the marketing people are consistently talking to their customers, what level of engagement do you have with your people and how often? Does the training and development of your staff consist of a one- or two-day training programme without any purpose, let alone a plan to ensure the learning is implemented and reinforced? Is it really any wonder people are not engaged?

According to a Gallup

survey conducted just over two years ago, about 70 per cent of employees in Asia were disengaged from their roles and company. Part of that research suggested that 12 per cent were totally disengaged. The reasons people gave for leaving were:

- Lack of clarity of their role
- No sense of purpose in the job they were doing
- Lack of communication from the boss
- Not recognised
- Not appreciated or valued.

There are several areas you simply have to get right if you can confidently say that your people are engaged with you and the company. On top of that get this right and your people will stay and flourish. Not everyone leaves exclusively for money reasons, about 20 per cent of the research suggests. So embrace this opportunity

- Can they see a clear purpose in what they do and how they contribute to the overall objectives of the team, department and company?
- How do your staff define their sense of who they are in the pursuit of the stated purpose? Is the role defined in terms of what is expected of them and understood by all parties?
- What is important to your staff in fulfilling their role? Do their personal values match or are close to the company's values? Do the boss and company demonstrate these values?
- What do they believe of

their potential in the role? Do they have limitations holding them back?

- What skills do they want to develop as you pursue the purpose? Do your staff have access to training and development that will help them grow in the role? Do you really know what training and development they need?
- Is the work environment conducive to great work by encouraging participative collaboration?
- What behaviour patterns are helping or hindering achievement of goals?

Getting on top of these key issues is an absolute must. It should be ongoing in the same way marketing pursues acquiring and retaining customers all the time.

Do each of your people have a personal development plan that is timed and action orientated with regular coaching time for the boss to reinforce the engagement,

and then again with the team? People today want to be valued, stretched, respected, trusted, challenged, recognised and rewarded.

Any boss who is holding his people accountable should be frequently coaching, motivating and growing his people, while always on the lookout for recruiting good people even though you may not be recruiting at that specific time.

It is a whole new land-



Mr Ray Bigger is founder and managing director of Think8, a leading coaching, consulting and training company headquartered in Singapore. He has more than 25 years of sales, marketing, people and team development experience. Mr Bigger is a former English Premier League and Football League referee. Tel: (65) 6875-0104, website: www.think8.net



House key 18x3 cols

MENTORING



Q I have recently joined a major company to head up the sales force. In comparison with previous positions, getting approvals from the boss was never an issue. Now the process is frustrating and I am forever having to go over old ground and decisions take a long time. What might I be doing wrong now that wasn't a problem in the past?
From Edward in Hong Kong

You need to adapt your influencing skills as your new boss is clearly different from your old one. You are trying to get someone to see your perspective and thus permission to move ahead. We focus far too much on what we want and not enough on what the other party needs. Everyone is different and you need to sit down with your boss and establish:

- How he likes to receive the information and in what depth.
- What information he is looking for.
- His key criteria for decisionmaking per project ie ROI, marketshare, guest satisfaction, revenue.
- What is in it for him ie. value and benefits.
- What is in it for the business, again value and benefits.

Listen to the language he uses and watch his body language.

Remember to start with the end in mind, meaning what it is you want to achieve. If you are championing a project or responding to a request from the boss, be clear as to what he needs and clarify any ambiguities. Put forward options and make a strong recommendation for one of them and why. Influencing has to be worked at, as arguing achieves little.

Have a work-related issue or problem? Write to Ray (ray@think8.net).