

Reduce Costs by Hiring Smarter

by Kathleen Gage



Most companies are concerned with finding strategies to reduce costs and increase revenues while keeping quality and productivity high. One of the best ways to achieve this goal is through hiring and retention of outstanding employees.

Far too often managers rush through the hiring process. They are being reactive rather than proactive when filling positions. This can occur due to poor planning or having underdeveloped skills in the art of hiring. With some preplanning, proper training in the hiring process and implementation of sound employment strategies, you are in a better position to lower the cost of doing business by considerable amounts.

There are many occasions where it is very difficult to find qualified candidates. Many hiring managers say they are at their wits end when it comes to finding people who are willing to work (and work for a reasonable wage), have good work ethics, can do the job at hand and a desire to be a contributing member of the team.

Next time you are looking for potential candidates, try using more than the traditional employee search. Tap into your network of professional connections. Some of your best candidates may be working for your competitors. Recently, I visited a local Chinese restaurant. It was an extremely busy lunch hour and the servers were definitely earning their wages and tips. Immediately I realized our server was very skilled at her job. Not only was she able to handle all her tables and guests with ease, she did so with what appeared to be extreme pleasure.

"Are you happy working here?" I dared to ask. The question seemed to surprise her. "As a matter of fact I am," she replied with no hesitation. "The reason I ask is you are very good at what you do. I've been noticing how you handle yourself and I am quite impressed. I have a client who looks for the very best servers for their restaurant. If you are interested, I would be happy to give you their name and number."

Without missing a beat, she smiled, thanked me and made it clear that she is extremely happy where she is. Not only does she make excellent tips, she feels

respected and appreciated by her boss. She went on to tell me that she has been with the same restaurant for over four years. That in itself is a rarity in today's market.

This woman's boss hit on one of the most significant factors in retention of good employees - treating them with respect, dignity and appreciation. Although this may seem like common sense, it often doesn't happen. I consult with various organizations regarding employee retention. Frequently I meet privately with a cross section of the staff to find out their view of the company. During these confidential meetings I inevitably find the areas that are most lacking for the employee to be fully satisfied are communication and appreciation. A common comment by those I interview is "Finally, someone is listening to me."

Once the area of discontent has been identified I can design programs for the company in which to address the problems. Amazingly, the problem is often on the way to being solved just by the fact the organization has brought me in. They have become aware that something is not working within their company and have reached out for help.

A company's problems can be lessened by using professional coaching and providing training to their management. Nine times out of ten the people who need the most training are the ones who think they need it the least. Often they are a huge obstacle to the success of a company. It is astonishing how many managers and supervisors are hired into their positions without having had any training in interpersonal, management and supervisory skills, and how to communicate effectively.

Another key to appreciation and respect of your employees is to think through your compensation package. Your local Department of Workforce Services office has Employment Counselors available who can provide excellent information on competitive benefits in today's market.

In order to stay competitive, you must keep your entire team on the leading edge. By doing so you will be in business for years to come with a happy, dedicated and productive team. And that can equal greater profits.

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