

Retention and Job Satisfaction

Compensation, Opportunity, Recognition, Environment

© Deborah S. Hildebrand, August 28, 2007

Here's how supervisors can improve employee retention through the use of CORE -- compensation, opportunity, recognition, environment -- elements of job satisfaction.

When Judy gave her notice, no one blinked an eye. Not that she wasn't valued -- she was -- but turnover was commonplace at her organization. On her last day a senior manager, disappointed that Judy was leaving, expressed his sadness to see her go and indicated he wished there was something they could have done to make her stay.

Funny thing, no one had ever found out why Judy was leaving or what they could do to keep her. No one had taken the time to inquire about her wants, needs or goals. No one had asked. Not even her direct supervisor.

Too often employee retention is viewed as a process or function of the human resources department. Somehow there is an expectation that the recruiting staff should not only identify and hire employees, but that they should also ensure their retention through some sort of strategy or program. The reality is that employee retention is everyone's responsibility.

According to experts, while most managers believe employees leave due to money issues, in actuality it is an employee's relationship with their supervisor that has the greatest impact on whether they stay or go, because a supervisor has control over the CORE elements that create job satisfaction -- compensation, opportunity, recognition and environment. And that is why it is important to hold supervisors accountable for retaining a thriving workforce.

This means that not only do organizations need a performance management system that recognizes and rewards supervisors for meeting objectives that reduce employee turnover, supervisors need to understand what steps they can take to meet their responsibility in employee retention and job satisfaction.

To assist supervisors in embracing their accountability for employee retention, here are some suggestions as they relate to the CORE elements of job satisfaction:

Compensation

- Routinely monitor internal pay equity among staff members and recommend adjustments when needed.
- Reward for performance not for seniority.
- Establish an incentive-based compensation plan where at least some portion of earnings is determined by successful completion of objectives in order to encourage achievement

Opportunity

- Routinely discuss career plans with each staff member then provide development opportunities based on their skills, interests and goals

- Work with each employee to help them identify reasonable and reachable performance objectives
- Ask for ideas and input on how and where to make improvements in programs, systems, services, processes, and procedures
- Involve those who implement decisions into the decision-making process

Recognition

- Encourage mutual recognition among co-workers
- Praise employees even for small steps
- Recognize individual as well as team accomplishments
- Individualize recognition by asking each employee how to best demonstrate appreciation for them

Environment

- Encourage cooperation through teamwork.
- Lead by example – only hold others to high standards after meeting them yourself.
- Create trust by practicing open communication.
- Build a flexible work environment that welcomes new ideas, risk taking, and doesn't carve all decisions in stone.
- Routinely provide **feedback** and solicit it from others

The only way to truly understand employees is to ask them what they want and to find out what can be done to help them reach their goals. By asking, becoming involved, and being accountable, supervisors can go a long way in improving employee job satisfaction as well as retention.

The copyright of the article **Retention and Job Satisfaction** in [Job Satisfaction](#) is owned by [Deborah S. Hildebrand](#). Permission to republish **Retention and Job Satisfaction** has been granted by the author in writing.