

HR Department Toolkit



Are You a Successful Manager?

Why Would Anyone Ever Want to Work for You?

Employees in today's working environment don't have to work for you especially those in a retail service field. These "entry level" employees have many alternatives from which to choose. When you combine that with the fact that this portion of the population is and has unique work valued in dwindling in numbers, you have a challenging demand-supply situation. People can move from one service job to another without problem. They don't have to work for an insensitive, indifferent, non-motivating boss. They will gravitate toward a manager who is an excellent leader and motivator. To be sure that your success is not guesswork, use measurement tools that can give you the information you need to know about why anyone would want to work for you.

Within this report is a manager's self-evaluation questionnaire that asks you to muster all the objectivity you can find to measure your own traits as a manager and leader. After that, is an employee survey for you to use to learn what your employees think about being employed by you? Then there is an exit-interview form that will help you learn why you've lost good employees in the past.

Finally, I've included a tool that helps you conduct an inventory of your current employees as though they are company assets -- which they are! This inventory, like others, will tell you how effective you've been in "buying" human-resource talent. You might find that your inventory is filled with non-producing people. If so, you will have good reason to read the next "toolkit" release to learn how you can hire better people in the future.

WHAT DO YOU OFFER TO KEEP GOOD PEOPLE?

Before starting any interview, you have to have a clear idea of why anyone would want to work at your business. When I've asked business owners this question, I often get answers that, in essence, amount to "Gee, I really haven't thought much about it. I guess people work at my store because they need a job."

Yes, people need jobs, but this is not the only important reason they get themselves up in the morning to go to one. There are many other reasons, and often they're different for different people. If you're ever going to be an effective manager of people, you have to try to understand what makes the workingman or woman "tick." *This understanding will probably help you create a working environment that is unique from all the other work options from which people can choose today.* There is a strong truism in business: The employer whose package of positive job environments is superior to his competition will be the one who attracts the best employees and, most important, keeps them. The greatest employee-recruiting vehicle in business is the community word-of-mouth advertising on how terrific it is to work for you and your salon company.

I'm sure you would agree that service to your customers is a key. Therefore, service to your employees should be your own first priority because customer-pleasing salons are first employee-pleasing salons.

Just as you look for required and desired qualities in selecting employees, potential employees look for requirements and desires that you should fulfill. Here are some of them:

A sense of belonging: People need to feel that they're part of some thing that is relevant. Most people, unless they're happy with the life of a recluse, have a powerful need to identify with the organization for which they work. As an owner or manager, you need to make them feel like an important part of your organization. When employees feel that they are not accepted or feel they are treated as a stranger, they will look somewhere else until they find that acceptance, that sense or need for belonging. This is why some employees belong to so many social circles or activities outside work; for example, bowling leagues, softball teams, lodges, and the like.

Simply stated, most human beings avoid rejection and seek the approval and community of others.

Do you offer the opportunity to new people to be accepted by other employees in the first few minutes of starting the job? As the boss, it is your responsibility to work hard to create a "fit" of the new employee with everyone else.

The need for advancement: In a recent survey of college students, the opportunity to advance in a job or career was listed as the Number One job requirement. Do you offer a career path opportunity?

Okay, so you say to yourself, "Many of my employees are kids! They don't know what they want to do!" Maybe that's true. They may not know exactly what field or endeavor they will be in at retirement age, but it's certain that few of them will want to work at entry-level jobs the rest of their lives. You need a defined plan that they can easily see offers a clear sign of potential progress. An easily seen, understood and attainable career path is important so your employees won't feel stagnant in their positions and look for work elsewhere. Here is an example of such an advancement path, which you may revise to suit your particular circumstances. (Wages and salaries will, of course, depend on local conditions and competitive differences. But don't be cheap. You will not get well-valued merchandise to offer consumers without paying the price nor will you attract good entry-level people with minimum wage.)

Here are some suggested positions for a retail store:

Customer Service Representative (CSR) Trainee: This is the entry-level position. For the first 30 days, the employee works as a "trainee" (any longer may be demeaning to most entry-level people).

CSR I: After successfully completing the training period, the employee is promoted to a CSR1. This should be handled as a promotion, with a raise in pay, as well as clearly outlined job tasks and duties for the full-fledged CSR position also, with any promotion or pay increase there needs to be a formal performance review. In addition, let all employees know that this person has been promoted. Recognition is the single most powerful motivator.

CSR II: After three months of satisfactory performance and reviews, the employee could be promoted to a CSR II. In this position, the employee should have some more important tasks added to their job description and the pay is higher (perhaps 15 to 20 percent) than as a CSR I, and incentives should be more appealing. Of course, if the employee is truly superior, the three-month period could be considerably shorter. Just be certain the promotions are earned.

(Later in this book we will discuss in greater detail how promotions should be handled.)

Manager in Training (MIT): After the employee has satisfactorily demonstrated responsible work, has had a series of excellent performance reviews, promotion to this level may be in order. There is no timetable for this promotion, since some people advance quicker than others. Increase the base pay again, and add incentives or overrides on the employee's actions and those of employees working with the manager trainee. Management is only a possibility. It may not be a direction for many employees. What is needed, in addition, is the real desire of the employee to want the responsibilities and duties of management.

Assistant Store Manager: With continued demonstration of responsibility and ability, promotion of the Manager-In-Training to this position is possible. Again, an increase in salary or incentives requires an additional performance review. (Performance reviews are covered in a separate chapter in this book.)

Store Manager. (Because of their size or volume some stores may utilize the title of General Manager – “GM”) Many of the comments above apply to the ultimate store position of store manager. This decision, however, requires considerably more examination than that given for the promotion of an employee to assistant manager. An assistant manager not mature in management skills can still survive, as they can professionally “lean” on the top position of store manager to give direction and guidance. Later in this book you'll find a “leadership checklist” which is a tool you can use to help determine if the employee is ready for a store senior management position.

The need for recognition: We all want our self-esteem enhanced. We all feel doubts about our own value from time to time to capitalize on this need. Recognize your people. Catch them doing something right! You can offer recognition in several ways. One of the best and simplest ways is immediate oral feedback when someone has done something right. It is impossible to do this too much. When was the last time somebody gave you too many compliments? Can you imagine vehemently telling someone “Please, please; no more compliments. I don't want to hear one more time how wonderful I am!”

Another way is to put their achievement in writing and post it for all employees to see. An example of this (if done properly) is an employee-of-the-month award.

Recognition can come in many shapes and opportunities. The important thing to remember is a very simple truth: The employer who consistently helps employees feel better about themselves will never have a shortage of good employees! “Help me to love myself better and I will follow you anywhere!” Do you offer this as an employer?

One of my retail clients on the West Coast began using daily recognition. His employee morale improved greatly. Because of this, the talk on the street about him as a boss is much more positive. Now, many of his employees' friends want to work at his store. Too bad for them: Turnover at his store has “mysteriously” and drastically dropped.

Monetary compensation: Yes, you can find entry-level people at minimum wage. But remember, you get what you pay for. Also remember what I said in the beginning of this book: You should be selecting excellent employees. You won't get them at minimum wage and if you do, it's highly unlikely they will stay long. There are simply too many other jobs available for

them to have to accept minimum wage. There are parts of this country where entry-level people are being bused in to their places of employment because their numbers have decreased so much. Disney World in Florida is an example. There are more entry-level positions there than are excellent people to fill them and Disney does not pay minimum wage. They know that responsible, “natural warmth” workers do not work for minimum wages.

There is no set correct wage level for all businesses to pay. You need to survey the market to know what the other service-market outlets are paying. Then offer compensation (base and incentives) that is competitive with all others. You will be amazed at how selective you can now be, at who you're interviewing and hiring and with the resultant customer service level increases. You should get what you pay for if you truly pay for it.