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B2B: Unhappy Employees

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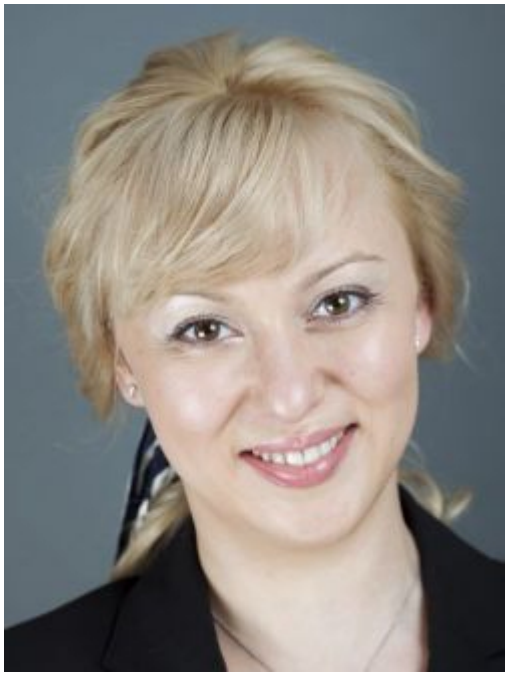

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Increasingly, employees are taking more control over how, when and where to work. Survey after survey shows that people are not staying with their employers because of job satisfaction, but rather because alternative opportunities are lacking. Like workplace stress, it may affect everything in the workplace, including engagement, productivity and even recruitment and retention.

Recent surveys report eighty-six percent of the employees plan to actively look for a new position in 2013; another 8% said they may do so and are already networking. Only 5% intend to stay in their current position, according to the survey. The new findings are remarkably similar to those of the past two years.

Amongst the main factors employers indicated more options to learn and grow — meaning continued and varied career development opportunities that help them contribute in ways that are meaningful to both employer and individuals.

Of course simply because people say they intend to leave does not necessarily mean they will. Nevertheless, when a survey reflects such a high level of dissatisfaction, it should serve as a wake-up call for employers.

The most effective tool available to management is to encourage employees to take ownership of their own development. Employees may feel stuck, but this should not mean they cannot grow. Workers need continuing development opportunities to do their job well and to broaden their own capabilities. They should see that their employer is willing to invest in learning and training. In that way, they may progress in their present company and ultimately move into a new job when positions become available. Step one is for the immediate supervisor to initiate a discussion about career development.

Maintaining and Retaining

Employers should focus on retention, by giving employees what they seek. Provide those individuals an opportunity to be as fully engaged as possible.

In order to do this, we recommend having heart-to-heart discussions with employees where career opportunities and development opportunities within the organization are discussed. Give employees stretch assignments. Employers may want to add to their mentoring programs and formal training programs as well.

People want to progress. Therefore, organizations must provide employees with opportunities to strengthen their skills and further their career development.

The effort, in turn, will result in greater employee engagement. When you have engagement, you have talent retention.

HR Advantages

Although retention may be viewed as the ultimate objective, particularly in light of rampant job dissatisfaction, there are other benefits to furthering employee engagement.

It gives HR an opportunity to strengthen employees' commitment to the organization and those core values the company says it has in place.

As part of the overall focus on greater engagement and job satisfaction, let your employees know what is expected of them at work. For people who are assessing their careers, a lack of ambiguity about their current circumstances can influence decision-making.

The process of sharing expectations with employees has another benefit. What that does is give the organization a clearer view of how they can meet the customer's needs.

And make no mistake: Letting employees know that management is paying attention makes an impact.

During series of experiments the results we found showed that if the lights were turned up in a manufacturing facility, production went up. But if the lights were turned down, production also increased. The conclusion is that employees knew people were paying attention to them and performed better.

Recognition Counts

No matter who you are, if people are paying attention, it sends a message that you recognize and respect them.

In fact, while people want to be liked and admired, they prefer being disliked to being ignored. Ignoring people is the total disrespect; it is the ultimate: neither paid attention to or disliked.

Having said that, I advise employers to say often these six words: 'I really appreciate what you do.' It is the greatest retention tool in the world."

However, the statement has to be delivered in a way that is sincere and consistent.

At the same time, those words should be supported by actions. Management should do things that will provide employees with an ability to meet the demands of their lifestyles.
For instance, allowing a person living 50 miles from the facility to work from home one day each week. Think of what it can mean to him.

Retention is going to be the number one issue for human resources for a long time. If you are going to do something, now is the time to do it. The worst time to do it is when you need employees.

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