

Tips for Keeping EMPLOYEES

MOTIVATED

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A 2008 article from the Wall Street Journal, "Get Rid of the Performance Review!" by Samuel A. Culbert - (October 20, 2008 edition). The sub-headline was, "It destroys morale, kills teamwork and hurts the bottom line. And that's just for starters" That jives what we hear CEOs say about reviews. Many avoid them. Many dread them. Perhaps it's because they don't get the real benefit of the ongoing communication with employees.

Management Growth Institute (MGI), the Profit Enhancement Group (PEG) company, continues to recommend the importance of reviewing employees, but Culbert has some important points about one-sided reviews directed by the boss. He points out the negative

aspects of this kind of review and promotes instead two-sided previews where the employee has input in the process. Previews, as Culbert describes them, take less time, promote more two-way communication, and focus on the future. While this is similar to a review where the employee provides his perspective on his performance and goals for the future, using the word preview puts more emphasis on the future. It gives the boss the opportunity to describe goals and the employee more chance to negotiate the scope of tasks.

With employees being an asset worthy of the Balance Sheet, finding ways to keep employees motivated and contributing to the bottom line challenges every CEO. (If you would like a copy of the Culbert article, send an email to kbalbertin@managementgrowth.com, if you are unable to find it on the WSJ site - online.wsj.com.)

Predicted labor force changes such as the decrease in people age 35 - 44 have already challenged some PEG members. These changes compel companies to pay more attention to retaining their best employees. Another technique for staying in close communication with employees is the Stay Interview. Also short but more frequent than the yearly review process, it helps employers understand what motivates employees and may give hints of what plans employees have for the

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future. (Check local information on labor force trends to anticipate the changes that affect your business.)

By conducting a Stay Interview you let that valued employee know you recognize her importance. The questions you ask and responses and comments from the employee give you ideas for how to use the employee in the future. Many CEOs have stories of losing a key employee at just the wrong time. The consequences of lost business or lost procedures or lost information or lost time on a key proposal add to the normal costs of employee turnover.

Both the previews and the Stay Interview can be short and informal. More informal contact with employees helps you to redirect them when they go off course and avoid unpleasant surprises that will impact your business.

Finally, recognition of their work motivates employees to work to their capacity. A simple comment after a project, a handwritten note, an email, a mention at a company function costs little in dollars and gains much in output. It also has the effect of letting employees know they can recognize others for their work, especially your managers.

About the Author: Kathi Barry Albertini is the second generation CEO of Management Growth Institute, Inc. and leads the PEGs in the records and information services management industry.