

APCO Institute, Inc.
351 N. Williamson Blvd.
Daytona Beach, FL 32114-1112

386-322-2500
386-322-9766 fax
www.apcoinstitute.org



TRAINING THE WORLD'S **FIRST** FIRST RESPONDERS™

Employee Retention

This month we are focusing on employee relations issues, especially related to employee retention. Numerous studies have been conducted about this topic as all employers, government as well as private, deal with an increasing worker shortage because Baby Boomers are retiring. Another reason to maintain happy workers is because customers are demanding better and faster service. “Customers” for PSAPs include citizens who call for help, field units and coworkers. Unhappy employees have little chance to produce satisfied customers, so the more contented your employees are, the higher customer satisfaction will be.

Public safety communications centers routinely have stringent budgets and look for ways to motivate employees in other than financial ways. How can we keep personnel when financial rewards are not always possible? The answer surprises nearly everyone, especially managers.

For example, what do you think employees want from their jobs? Good wages or maybe job security? That's what managers have thought for at least the past 55 years. But it is not what employees have continued to say! The following table shows what employees really want: appreciation and involvement.

What Do Employees Want From Their Jobs?

FACTORS	MANAGERS	EMPLOYEES
Full Appreciation for Work Done	8	1
<i>Good Wages</i>	1	5
Good Working Conditions	4	9
Interesting Work	5	6
<i>Job Security</i>	2	4
Promotion/Growth Opportunities	3	7
Personal Loyalty to Workers	6	8
Feeling "In" on Things	10	2
Sympathetic Help on Personal Problems	9	3
Tactful Disciplining	7	10

Sources: Foreman Facts, Labor Relations Institute of NY (1946); Lawrence Lindahl, Personnel Magazine (1949)

Repeated with similar results: Ken Kovach (1980); Valerie Wilson, Achievers International (1988)
 Bob Nelson, Blanchard Training & Development (1991)
 Sheryl & Don Grimme, GHR Training Solutions (1997-2001)

Notice the clear discrepancy between manager opinion and employee fact.

So are employees saying that competitive wages are unimportant? No; money is a factor, but not sufficient condition alone to attract, retain and motivate good employees. Think about a time you felt eager and satisfied with your job or project, or when you couldn't wait to get to work. Otherwise if nothing comes to mind, remember a time when you felt perturbed or discouraged about your job, when you literally had to force yourself out of bed to go to work.

What were you doing? What was special or not special about it? Was it the pay or maybe the fringe benefits? Possibly, for the first few days, or was it the motivating work, the stretching of your abilities, being an important part of a grand venture, the rapport with coworkers, the recognition from supervisors?

Indeed it is the quality of the work itself and of our relationships with our coworkers that draw us to the best employers and keep us there, performing at greatest efficiency.

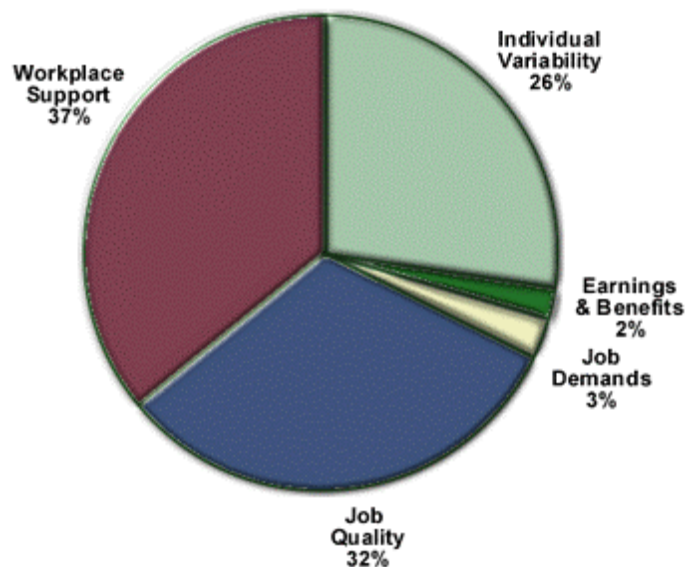
Now the discrepancy between manager opinion and employee fact is good news for two reasons:

- Increased wages are precisely what many employers cannot provide during lean times, while appreciation and involvement can be provided any time.

- Most managers don't "get it". If you do, your organization can emerge as a preferred employer. You can win the battle for attracting and retaining talented employees regardless of the budget.

The secrets to attract and retain talented employees are very simple: pay them fairly and treat them well.

Recently, the Families and Work Institute published the *National Study of the Changing Workforce* – the most comprehensive research ever conducted in this area. They found that, while *Earnings & Benefits* have only a **2%** impact on job satisfaction, *Job Quality* and *Workplace Support* have a combined **70%** impact. That's a **35 times** greater bang for the buck! Although, in the case of *Job Quality* and *Workplace Support*, it is an intangible, symbolic "buck".



Tips for Retaining Employees

Treat each and every employee with respect. Show them that you care about them as persons, not just as workers. Praise accomplishments and attempts:

- Both large and small
- At least 4 times more than you criticize
- Publicly and in private
- Verbally and in writing
- Promptly (as soon as observed)
- Sincerely

Clearly communicate the agency mission, goals, responsibilities and expectations. NEVER criticize in public, redirect in private.

Recognize performance appropriately and consistently: Also, do not tolerate sustained poor performance; coach and train or remove.

Involve employees in plans and decisions, especially those that affect them. Ask for their ideas and opinions. Encourage initiative and resourcefulness.

Actively listen to employees concerns, both work-related and personal.

Share information promptly, openly and clearly. Tell the truth - with compassion.

Celebrate successes and milestones reached, whether organizational or personal. Create an organizational culture that is open, trusting and fun.

By Helen Straughn, APCO Institute Online Instructional Designer

Resources

Information in this article is based on the Employee Relations Headquarters website <http://www.employee-retention-hq.com/#secrets>. Grimme's Top 10 Tips: To Attract, Retain & Motivate Employees. [Sheryl & Don Grimme acknowledge Bob Nelson, author of "1,001 Ways to Reward Employees", <http://www.nelson-motivation.com> for his initial formulation of a similar "Top 10 Ways to Motivate Today's Employees"]. Used with permission.

Quiz

CDE Article – Employee Retention

Name: _____ Date: _____

Agency: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

1. Happy employees generate higher customer satisfaction.
 - a. True
 - b. False

2. Managers who were surveyed thought employees wanted good wages as their highest priority.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. Employees who were surveyed ranked good wages as their highest priority.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. Money is a sufficient reason alone to retain good employees.
 - a. True
 - b. False

5. Our relationships with our coworkers draw us to the best employers.
 - a. True
 - b. False

6. The secrets to attract and retain talented employees are fair pay and good treatment.
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. According to the *National Study of the Changing Workforce*, job quality and workplace support have a combined 90% impact on employee retention.
 - a. True
 - b. False

8. Employee accomplishments should be praised verbally and in writing.
 - a. True
 - b. False

9. It is acceptable to tolerate sustained poor performance.
 - a. True
 - b. False

10. Employers should celebrate employee successes and milestones.
 - a. True
 - b. False