



Collaborations

Volume III, Issue I

Winter 2001

Employee Retention

Many of our clients are finding employee retention to be quite a challenge. Even with the potential changes in the economy, the need for skilled professionals isn't diminishing.

By the time an employee mentions she might be leaving for another job, it could be too late to keep her. So, what are some strategies that are being employed to keep these critical employees?

This isn't an exclusive list, but following are some key points:

- Mentoring
- Professional development
- Career planning
- Performance management
- Coaching & feedback
- Recognition
- Compensation
- The manager

In this issue, you will find a short article on each of these key areas. We hope you will find some tips to help your organization.



Question:

In the last issue you mentioned a definition of leadership and three ways to unify people. Would you elaborate on those?

Collaborations response:

Actually, as you will see below, we will incorporate the three ways of unifying people into our definition of leadership. We also want to give credit to the SYMLOG Consulting Group (www.SYMLOG.com) for this definition.

As you undoubtedly know, there are multiple definitions of leadership. At one time we remember reading a study that said there were 360 definitions of leadership - and that was several years ago! So it seems you could make up any definition you want and call it "Leadership."

While we agree wholeheartedly that we all recognize truly good leadership when we see it and are involved with it, we also believe developing leaders requires measurement and feedback. We would argue that in the training and development business, in order to measure, feedback, and actually develop better leaders, we need to have a definition of leadership to help us be able to measure and feedback. A key reason we favor the

By the time an employee mentions she might be leaving for another job, it could be too late to keep her.

Inside this issue:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Retention | 1 |
| Unifying Your People | 2 |
| Retention (cont'd) | 3 |
| Book Corner | 4 |
| Contacting Us | 4 |

Unifying People

(Continued from page 1)

definition we are sharing with you here is because it provides for measurement and feedback...using SYMLOG.

This definition of leadership is the following:

Leadership is a process of unifying a diverse group of people to work together effectively towards common under varied and often difficult circumstances through the elimination of scapegoating, the judicious use of power and maximization of mediation.



the first of three ways to unify people. We devoted an entire article in the last issue of Collaborations to scapegoating. (If you would like a copy of the last issue send us an e-mail.) Scapegoating is unifying people *against* not toward an attractive purpose.

“...the judicious use of power” The second way to unify people is through the use of power. Power can be used in both positive and negative ways. The judicious use of power implies the use of it when it is appropriate and in appropriate ways. An emergency, a life and death situation, or a critical deadline are good examples when the use of power may be appropriate. However, the vast majority of business decisions are not emergencies, nor life and death, nor critical deadlines if our planning is reasonably good.

An over-reliance on power as our primary operating style brings about compliance. Typically, when people feel they must comply they do not assume much responsibility. What we really want is commitment, not compliance. Ideally we want people to be committed heart and soul, body and mind to the work. That's commitment and the key to commitment is involvement. If people are to be committed, leaders and managers must work on ways to have them involved.

“...and the maximization of mediation” Here is the way to unify people that is most effective over the long haul. It is the process of continually bringing together the varied viewpoints, opinions, priorities, and value positions in the service of unifying the group towards effectively achieving some purpose. This is really what leaders and managers are being paid for, their ability to effectively mediate all of the normal differences among people and competing demands.

There can be many unifying forces. Examples include -- an appeal to the task at hand, a mission statement or a vision statement. In fact this is a key reason why businesses write mission statements. A well balanced mission statement that is highly appealing to the vast majority of our people can be used as a mediating influence. In the midst of all the competing priorities and opinions, one can point to the mission statement as a rallying point, the pursuit of which pulls us together, unifies us. (Unfortunately in most places where we work the mission statement looks good in a frame, but practically no one knows what it says. We'll examine that in more detail in another issue.)

A very simple test of one's leadership effectiveness is to ask at the end of the week, “Has what I have been doing this week contributed to the unifying of the people I am working with in service of business objectives or have I

Let's take that definition apart and consider it piece by piece.

“Leadership is a process” First, leadership is a process, it is not an event. Leadership is an ongoing process in which you are engaged all of the time. You do not get time off for good behavior. The old adage that “actions speak louder than words” clearly applies.

“...of unifying” The objective of leadership is to bring people together. You are being paid the big bucks to unify people. The opposite of unifying is “polarizing.” Polarizing divides people and ideas and often prevents us from achieving great results.

“...a diverse group of people” How diverse? As diverse as you can imagine. When we are able to capitalize on the diversity of our backgrounds, styles, knowledge, and experience as a group, we are incredibly smarter and more capable than any of us is individually.

“...to work together effectively” This definition involves people working together. In other words leadership applies to a group of people accomplishing something together. It is not just a social event. It embodies the idea of teamwork, coordination, collaboration, interdependence, and working together in an effective manner!

“...toward common purposes” Towards common goals, common objectives, towards the fulfillment of a common mission or vision.

“...under varied and often difficult circumstances” The definition acknowledges that not everything goes smoothly and that the environment in which we work may change greatly at times. In fact, at times the circumstances can even be hostile.

“...through the elimination of scapegoating” This is

(Continued from page 1)

mostly contributed to the fractionalizing and polarizing our efforts and our people?”

Mentoring

We discussed how to create a formal mentoring program in our last two issues of Collaborations (send us an e-mail if you want copies of those issues).

Even without a formal program, however, you can find opportunities to match an employee who has potential with someone who is more experienced. When an employee has a mentor, not only can he improve his skills, he also has someone who can help him interpret organizational messages. When people understand what the organization is doing, it is easier for them to determine how they fit in and to understand the impact they make. Feeling part of the larger organization can be an incentive for people to stay.

Professional Development and Career Planning

Most professionals either want to learn and grow or they want to know what their next opportunity might be. It's the job of the manager to help them understand these things.

Professional development can mean many different things. It might mean becoming an expert in a particular area. It could mean building transferable skills that can be used in any job -- communications skills, teamwork skills, presentation skills, etc. It could mean growing the skills required to take on the next level job -- leadership skills, management skills, etc. A good open discussion with your employee can help you understand what professional development means to him. With that understanding, you can work together to create a plan to develop the person appropriately.

Performance Management and Coaching & Feedback

People need and want to know what is expected of them and they need and want feedback on how they are doing against those expectations. Performance management is an excellent vehicle to provide this information.

However, many companies don't have a performance management system or the one they have is not consistently used.

Good performance management connects people to the business goals. It also is a great tool to help you determine who are the top performers and who are the bottom performers. Managers who practice good performance management also pay attention to it other than annually when it's time to do a review and set new

goals. These managers give feedback and coach their employees on a regular basis.

It's easy to overlook the development and feedback needs of top performers. Speak with them regularly so they know they are appreciated and be sure you have an agreed-to plan for development with them.

The Autumn '99 and Winter '00 Collaborations issues spent time on the subject of performance management. Send us an e-mail if you want copies of those issues.

Compensation and Recognition

If you are losing your employee to a larger salary, maybe you haven't helped your employee understand how to look at compensation on a broader basis. Compensation can and should mean much more than just salary. By the time someone has an offer, however, it's difficult to begin talking about all the other benefits your company has to offer. Your job as a manager is 1) to help your employees know what compensation is and 2) to use it appropriately for your employees

Elements of compensation vary widely from company to company. You want to be clear about the policies and practices in your organization so you can use all elements of compensation to your advantage.

Some of the elements of compensation we've heard of include:

- benefits (health, vacation, child care, etc.)
- bonuses
- personalized gifts (example: a putter for a golfer)
- gifts to spouses (flowers, dinner for 2, etc.)
- time off or flex time
- opportunity to work on special projects
- internships
- having a mentor

In terms of recognition, some of the above items can work very well to demonstrate that someone has done a great job. In addition, don't forget the power of saying "thank you" and sending a note. If a person feels you know how they are contributing, they are more likely to stay.

The list of ways to compensate and recognize is probably endless. The point is this. Let your employees know they are appreciated and that they are making an impact on the business. Reward them in appropriate ways.

The Manager

The manager has the position and opportunity to do all the suggestions in this newsletter. Last issue, we highlighted the book "First, Break All the Rules." The authors reminds us that the person's immediate manager is the key to retention. If I'm happy with the relationship I have with my manager, I am much less likely to leave than



Collaborations

PO Box 28085
San Diego, CA 92198

Contacting Us

MARILYN DEMING

Deming Development Group
26062 Kornblum Drive
Escondido, CA 92026
Voice: 760.746.6852
Fax: 760.746.6052
mdeming1@aol.com

DAVE CAREY

P.O. Box 28085
San Diego, CA 92198
Voice: 858.485.1530
Fax: 858.485.1007
dave@davecarey.com
<http://www.davecarey.com>

SUSAN GERKE

Gerke Consulting & Development L.L.C
28782 Jaeger Drive
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677
Voice: 949.831.7088
Fax: 949.831.0502
sgerke@worldnet.att.net



B
O
O
K
C
O
R
N
E
R

Love 'Em or Lose 'Em

by Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans

This book fits right in with our topic of Retention in this issue. Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans have put together an excellent guide to help you retain your best! Their research reinforces what we learned in *First, Break All the Rules*, as they remind us that the person's immediate manager makes the difference in retaining employees.

Kaye and Jordan-Evans have taken the results of their research and extensive experience and put together a very practical book which is filled with easy to implement ideas and suggestions for keeping your best people.



We'd Like to Hear From You

Do you have a question for us or a topic you would like us to write about? We'd love to hear from you. Send an e-mail to sgerke@att.net with your question or ideas. We can't respond to each individually, however, we will respond in *Collaborations* based on topics most requested.