

How Do You Motivate Your Employees?

One of the biggest problems facing just about every retailer today is attracting good employees. It seems as if it is easier to get good customers than it is to get good employees. The strength of your business is dependent on the people that you hire. Too many retailers are focused on attracting people to the business as opposed to **working** to improve the employees that they already have.

So why do good employees stay?

#5. Interesting work or put another way, they love the type of merchandise that you are selling. For example, people who work in a jewelry store love jewelry. People who work in apparel stores generally love apparel. Retailing is made up of people who love a type of product and work at that type of store.

#4. A feeling of appreciation. What have you done to show appreciation for the work that your employees do? Here are some ways:

- Do you thank your employees for a good job?
- Have you ever written a message on their pay envelope saying "great job this week"?
- Do you have regular meetings where you acknowledge in public the good work of an employee?
- Or have you ever had a meeting where you save the last 10 minutes to do the exercise where each employee must compliment another employee for something that they did well. This little exercise has amazing results. The one rule is that once an employee receives a compliment, that person cannot receive any more. By doing it this way, you will increase the number of people getting compliments. This will help make employees aware of positive behavior among other employees.
- Do you ever post performances?

#3. The Fun Factor. Your store is a fun place to be and work. You could have a joke of the day in the back room. Or it might just be a light-hearted attitude that's contagious from management down to the newest employee. People will even work at a place for less money because it is a fun place to be. This is becoming more and more powerful all of the time because of quality of life issues.

#2. The employer cares. These employers look at their employees as more than just "warm bodies". They will spend the time to talk to employees and better understand what truly motivates them. They will do things such as sending out birthday cards, giving flowers for various holidays, or showing real concern during difficult times such as deaths of family members or crisis situations with children. It's all about an attitude of treating them as people not just employees.

#1. Convenience. As strange as this may seem, people will generally stay at jobs that are close to home. (And especially now with the cost of gasoline!)

So why do good employees leave?

- **Feeling of embarrassment.** No one likes to be embarrassed and if this occurs in your store too often, you will lose employees. Be aware of public criticism since this is a major reason why employees leave.

- **Feeling of not being appreciated.** Just as appreciation is one of the reasons why people stay, the opposite holds true when employees feel unappreciated.

One of my favorite quotes is the "The behavior that is rewarded is the behavior that is repeated". Most of us do what we do because someone said that we are good at that. Fear motivation just doesn't work anymore. The dictator died! Instead of looking for things to criticize employees about, start to look for things that you can compliment people about. People will never forget compliments that they receive from their supervisor, manager, or business owner. These are the things that employees take home and share with their families. The bottom line is to treat your employees as true assets of the business and understand that money is not the #1 motivator. If you do the 5 things well and offer competitive wages, you will have highly motivated employees.