

Give Them More than Just a Paycheck

Throughout my career I've too often heard managers complain about the labor pool, the lack of work ethic and sense of responsibility among workers, and the constant headaches that came from their human "resources." The overwhelming sense from these managers was, "We pay too much to these people whose only interest is in collecting a paycheck."

Yet at the same time and in the same or similar markets, there were other managers who did just fine in finding and retaining good people who made a real contribution to their organizations. What then made the difference? The answer is quite simple – good leadership!

So instead of just providing your employees with a paycheck consider giving them the following:

- **Respect.** The life of all human beings is important to themselves, yet too many people are treated by their bosses as if they didn't matter. This maltreatment is not necessarily by design; it's the byproduct of busy bosses too focused on themselves or the many problems they face in busy operations. But every employee deserves to be treated with the utmost respect and the common courtesies of human interaction. When consistently and sincerely given, this respect will transform any work team.
- **Responsibility.** Placing responsibility on your work team demonstrates your trust in them. Trust given returns trust. In contrast, when you treat your employees like idiots or children, many will respond by acting like idiots or children.
- **Recognition.** Every day your employees do hundreds of things right. Make sure you recognize that essential contribution to the success of your operation. When sincerely given, a simple thank you or handshake of appreciation has a profound impact on morale, commitment, and contribution.
- **Responsiveness.** Leaders must engage with their employees every day and respond to their issues and concerns. In any group of people working in a complex, fast-paced, and detail-intensive business there will be conflict and turmoil. Without the leader's guiding hand, this turmoil can consume the operation. Leaders must stay engaged, be approachable, and respond to concerns.
- **Example.** Someone once said, "A leader leads by example, whether he intends to or not." The leader's example is paramount in setting the standards of the operation. If the leader doesn't seem to care about his employees, they won't care about him or his initiatives and agenda.
- **Training.** Most people want to do a good job and appreciate when they are properly trained to improve their knowledge, skills, and job performance. Lack of training leads to a chaotic and confusing work environment, the loss of conscientious employees, and a staff dominated by people who "couldn't care less."
- **Removal of Roadblocks.** Leaders should be hyper-sensitive to anything in the workplace that inhibits efficiency. Do whatever is necessary within reason to identify and eliminate anything that makes employees jobs more challenging, time consuming, and frustrating. Not only do you gain speed, efficiency, and improved productivity, but your employees will understand that you are dedicated to improving the operation and you care enough about them to address legitimate concerns.

All of the above steps from leaders will have a dramatic effect on employees and the operation. In contrast, when you give your employees no more than a paycheck, you shortchange them, the organization, and your customers.

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