

For Permanent & Positive Change

The Exchange

FEATURED TOPIC: KEEPING EMPLOYEES HAPPY

An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure

Both large and small companies have some things in common. One of these is the importance of keeping good employees happy. The cost of finding and training new employees is staggering. There is also the intangible cost of low morale each time someone leaves the work family. Even if the person was not well liked, there is a pain of separation.

What can be done to keep good employees? Keep them happy. How can you keep them happy? Try some of these suggestions:

- » Walk around. Get out of your office and walk around with the purpose of measuring the mood of the department. Do you see energetic or lethargic behavior? Do you hear positive or negative excitement? You don't even need to stop and talk. Just observe to get your thumb on the pulse of the organization. Sometimes, hanging out in the break room or the designated smoking area will give you tremendous amounts of information.
- » Talk to someone who knows. Who is this all-knowing, wise person? It is most likely the person that most people talk to. In most organizations, administrative assistants are well versed on the mood status. Don't ask them to reveal confidences. It is not so necessary for you to know who said what, rather to see the big picture. What are the complaints and concerns?
- » Take time to talk to entry-level people regularly. They may feel they are at the bottom of the food chain and being heard can do a lot to lift their spirits. Many times you do not need to solve all the problems, you just need to be willing to listen to them.

What Our Clients Are Saying

"Communication skills learned from this course have helped me cope with yet another change within our leadership group. I have a more positive attitude and will be more focused on becoming a better team. Your section on Reducing Defensiveness must have been written with me in your mind. It will be very helpful in my progress. Friendships last a life time; I consider your staff as friends."

John Babb, Gastonia NC

- » Ask for suggestions. While suggestion boxes may be stuffed with anonymous gripes, it is one way to "hear" what is going on. An even better method is to hold small focus groups. The governor of Georgia created a "Sonny-do List" by asking his constituents to tell him what they wanted from him as a governor. While some suggestions may not be possible or preferable, it certainly opened up the line of communication.
- » Praise the right person when that person does something right. Extroverts tend to prefer public praise, while introverts covet private words of encouragement. Specifically tell what the person did and how it helped. This two-step process will have people feeling valued.
- » Keep people informed of changes as you go through the change process. Without information, rumors run wild. Perhaps you cannot tell them everything, and you may not know it all, yet earnestly tell them what you can.
- » Keep regular open-door hours. Most managers tell people they can come to them at any time. The problem is that the manager is always busy. Post a couple of hours a week that you will remain open for spontaneous conversations. Keep this block of time as seriously as you would an appointment with your boss. Build this schedule and they will come.

Communication is the key to knowing what employees want. When they get what they want, or even if their wants are known and they understand the reasons those wants are not met, employees are happier. Happy people work harder. ❖

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Looking Forward

Our next issue will focus on Gender Differences.

Looking Back

You might also be interested in our December 2006 edition: [Confirm Understanding](#) or read other [previous issues of The Exchange](#).

"The Great Place to Work Institute has argued that a great place to work is a place where employees 'trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do and enjoy the people they work with.'"

Dr. Carroll, a noted business ethics expert at the University of Georgia

For Permanent & Positive Change

Calm Before the Storm

We've all heard of corporate "horror" stories about the "calm before the storm," when word gets out that an unpleasant change is coming to a company or department.

Hopefully you've never had to deal with the "calm before the storm." But what does storm and calm have to do with this month's theme of keeping employees happy?

As this expression is commonly used today, it refers to a quiet moment before a crisis. It originates back to 1550 Greece. Moments before a large storm or hurricane, there would be a moment of silence, low wind blowing, and a deceptive peace. Then suddenly the weather would change to often-disastrous conditions. Whenever a moment of anticipated chaos was evident, the moment before (when things were congenial) would be considered the calm before the storm.

Today with satellite information, we seldom need to rely upon "the calm" to notify us of danger, except in business. To keep employees happy, continually talk with them and ask them what will make or keep them happy to prevent the storm. Even if the storm is inevitable, the open communication will prepare them for what is to come.

Weather storms and people storms are more manageable when you have the proper preparation. ❖

TLC Research: What Employees Want

Business.Gov reveals the six essentials of what people want in Mallary Tytel's article including:

- » Room for decision making
- » Opportunity to learn
- » Variety
- » Respect
- » Meaningfulness
- » A future

Read the entire article at: <http://www.businessweek.com/smallbiz/tips/archives/2006/11/>

The Charlotte Business Journal reports that there are three parts to employee commitment including:

- » Do what you do best
- » Find work-life balance
- » Make a connection to company commitment

Read the entire article at: <http://www.bizjournals.com/charlotte/stories/2000/10/02/smallb4.html>

Another article comes from Employee Performance Strategies that includes 5 tips to boost employee moral:

- » Face organizational & market realities head on.
- » Encourage and engage everyone in open dialogue.
- » Encourage debate
- » Involve everyone in the process
- » Leaders must lead through their actions.

(Unfortunately, this article is no longer available on the web.)

TLC hopes you will want to read more about these fine articles to help you keep your employees happy. When you accomplish that, everyone wins. ❖

Ask The Experts

Dear TLC,

I have recently received a promotion (thanks to some of your communication coaching)! Now I am seen (from those who used to be my peers) as the savior of the department who will get them all the things they want that the previous manager would never agree to. Some are reasonable such as flexible hours, a casual day, and access to Internet privileges. More vacation time and more money are beyond my doing. How can I keep my job, their respect, and everyone happy?

New Leader

Dear New,

It is not your job as their manager to be your employees' friend. The job of any leader is to accomplish the goal with the personnel they have. Earn their trust and respect by first identifying what is within your control. Be clear to your team about your limitations. Confirm from your management the conditions of your parameters. Even if more money and extra time are unattainable right now, find out what it will take to get there and share that with your team. They will respect you more for providing clear expectations instead of empty, but pretty, promises.

Helpful Hints

- ✓ Listen about what employees complain/verbalize to determine rewards.
- ✓ Offer incentive benefits, even if small
- ✓ Have a process for venting frustrations to ensure concerns are addressed

"The resentment that criticism engenders can demoralize employees, family members and friends, and still not correct the situation that has been condemned."

Dale Carnegie

"If your thinking is sloppy, your business will be sloppy. If you are disorganized, your business will be disorganized. If you are greedy, your employees will be greedy, giving you less and less of themselves and always asking for more."

Michael Gerber

For Permanent & Positive Change

Learn the 3 KEEPS of Keeping Employees Happy

Vincent Ivan Phipps

Keeping employees happy is only the second challenge. The first is just KEEPING employees.

According to TTI (Target Training International), 85% of employees leaving a job are due to poor communication. Here are 3 KEEPS you want to ensure you are doing if you want to keep employees and keep them happy!

KEEP Communicating.

Fifty-four percent of the workforce will continue doing a good job without asking for recognition. This does not mean these employees don't want or deserve the rewards, it means they want their employers to see the work they are doing and to be compensated for their worth.

Avoid assuming that, just because they have yet to vent dissatisfaction, they are contented. Ask questions about what they'd like that they have yet to acquire. Continue letting them know that they are encouraged to set goals and that they will be rewarded for meeting or exceeding those goals.

KEEP Stretching.

Ask employees to tell you what they want. Set realistic goals that are reachable on a short, mid, and long-term basis. If the goals are too easy, when achieved, there is not a sense of accomplishment. If the goals are too hard and never obtained, interest and momentum will drop. Have the goals in writing and establish the rewards associated with achieving them. Instead of doing this only once a year during their review, do this on a regular basis. Have quarterly open door meetings about how well the company is aligning with the needs of the staff.

KEEP Offering.

To keep them happy, keep up with what's current. Remain aware of industry standards about salary, benefit options, commissions, etc. Employees are smarter than ever. With advanced web searches and access to professional content that is industry specific, employees know what is a "good thing" based on what's offered.

More money is great! This can make most employees happier, but don't assume that everyone just wants money. Some people want more responsibility to make decisions. Some want to determine their work schedules. It could be as simple as an employee wanting to come in an hour earlier and leave an hour

sooner. Each situation will be different because each employee will be different.

Remember, the more you give them reasons to stay, the fewer reasons they'll have to stray. ❖

Happy Birthday

TLC wishes a Happy Birthday to clients celebrating in January!

- » Donna A. Suter
- » Algia Mays
- » Mary McRae
- » Todd Wiedman
- » Joyce King-Lavinder
- » Wayne Lockhart
- » Greg Johnson
- » Rick Hatfield
- » Rick Perry
- » Anne McAfee
- » Kathy A. Cline-Doten
- » Rosanne Gambill
- » Sharon Petry

Special Announcement:

Season Tickets Program Revamped!

Thanks to everyone who participated in our Season Tickets survey. The feedback we received was phenomenal. We've taken your opinions and altered the way the program will work starting in February 2007.

Whoever said your opinions didn't matter? Not at TLC! We listened to you and have made the program better.

- » Beginning in February the programs will be offered twice a month. Once in the morning and once in the afternoon for 3.5 hours each time.
- » The location has also changed. We will be conducting the series at our offices on Germantown Road.
- » And very importantly, we've lowered the price. Each three and a half-hour seminar is only \$69.95 per person including a workbook and other materials. We will offer a 10% discount to customers purchasing a series of 12 at a time.

We are very excited about the upcoming programs. Here is a list of what we are offering:

Make Meetings Work: Learn How to Meet Less and Accomplish More! February 13, 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. and February 22, 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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Remember To

- ✓ Ask your employees to list what they'd like that they have yet to acquire.
- ✓ Give verbal and tangible appreciation when an employee exceeds expectations.
- ✓ Praise employees on a frequent basis.

"The company was quite hierarchical. I often think it was like a pyramid with Robert (husband Robert Holmes à Court) at the top and lots of us paying homage to him. I try to turn the pyramid upside down so that I'm at the bottom and bubbling away and encouraging people and energizing them so that they are all empowered so that they can do what they need to do, now that's the dream.."

Janet Holmes à Court

"The people who are doing the work are the moving force behind the Macintosh. My job is to create a space for them, to clear out the rest of the organization and keep it at bay."

Steve Jobs

For Permanent & Positive Change

Chief Executive's Opinion: "Being Happy Makes Cents"

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that by 2010 there will be 10,033 more jobs than people to fill them. The underlying trends indicate that over the next 10-15 years, there will be a significant shortage of management talent. Over this time period, the need for management talent is expected to grow by 30-35% and the supply of top talent is expected to decline by 10-20%. Franklin Covey reports that the turnover cost for professionals is 75-125% of annual salary, while the same cost for middle managers is 125-200%. It just makes 'cents' to keep your key people happy, doesn't it?

Will Rogers once was quoted in 1930 as saying, "People learn more from observation than conversation." While this advice is 76 years old, it remains true today. It reminds me of another saying, "What you do is screaming so loud that I cannot hear what you are saying."

If we desire to lead people, we must walk the talk. As a leader, you have probably communicated the importance of a positive attitude and creating a good working environment. Perhaps there has even been discussion about the culture and vision. That is what they hear. What do they see?

Sometimes people tell me that it must be nice being the top dog in a small company because I can do what I want. While I do enjoy the freedom, I am acutely aware of the responsibility. If we encounter a problem, as disappointed as I may be, I know that I need to demonstrate that I can bounce back quickly and remain positive. I strive to work harder, balance my work and personal life, and be joyful because those are behaviors I want others to follow.

Do I fail? Of course I do. Just as someone on a diet who has a piece of chocolate cake or the entire cake needs to get over it and get back on the healthy program, as leaders we need to do the same. If we want our people to be happy, we need to notify our faces and be happy ourselves.

Employees are a lot like puppy dogs and small children in that they observe more than they listen. If you do differently than you say, they will emulate what you do. Thus, observation becomes more powerful than conversation.

Years ago I had a client who was a plant manager. He wanted to set the cheerful tone in the office by being upbeat and friendly, yet he reported that it wasn't working. No one would talk to him as he entered each morning; rather they suddenly bent

down over their desks, becoming taskmasters. I decided I needed to see this for myself. I told him that when he arrived the next morning, I would be in the reception room and he was to ignore me and keep his normal routine. His walk was so fast and his head so straight that it was no wonder his staff quickly got busy when he entered. After some coaching, he was able to relax his approach, engage people into conversation, and set the tone he desired for the office.

When I was national president of NAWBO, whenever I attended an event, no matter what time it was or how tired I might be, I knew I was being watched by members and that I had a responsibility as to what they would observe. If I furrowed a brow as someone was talking, they may misinterpret that gesture as disapproval instead of my attempt to recall their name.

Bottom line: If you want your employees to be happy, look in the mirror. Your reflection will reveal the tone that your team will see. Find reasons to smile. It takes fewer muscles to smile than it does to frown; it is contagious, and has an almost instant return. Get happy. See happy. Make cents. Live your dreams! ❖

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Season Tickets Program Revamped!

Get Your Team Together, Before They Fall Apart: *Apply Essential Team Components to Solidify Team Dynamics!* March 13, 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. and March 22, 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

What Every Supervisor Needs to Know to Succeed: *Learn the 3 Steps Up to Supervision!* April 10, 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. and April 19, 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Make Memorable Impressions: *Make the Most Out of Meeting People and Establishing New Relationships!* May 8, 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. and May 17, 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Uncover the Interviewing Masquerade: *Learn the Techniques to Reveal the True Applicant!* June 12, 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. and June 21, 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Listen Before You Lead: *Learn Your Listening Style and How to Improve!* July 10, 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. and July 19, 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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"I always took my role as a leader, and certainly chairman and CEO of a major company very seriously as to our employees and trying to create opportunities for them and create opportunities where they could even, as I said many times, could realize their God-given potential and maybe realize more potential than even they realize they had."

Kenneth Lay

"The buck stops with me, but I can tick off dozens of very good senior executives that are responsible for hundreds or thousands of people who work for me."

Rupert Murdoch

"When employees and employers, even coworkers, have a commitment to one another, everyone benefits. I have people who have been in business with me for decades. I reward their loyalty to the organization and to me. I know that they'll always be dedicated to what we're trying to accomplish."

Donald Trump

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Season Tickets Program Revamped!

Negotiations Minus the Fear Equals Success: Learn the Equation for Partnering for Positive Agreements! August 14, 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. and August 23, 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Connect with People: Success Goes to Those Who Adapt! September 11, 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. and September 20, 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Phone Etiquette Skills for: Local, Mobile and Global! Get the Most Out of Every Phone Conversation by Maximizing Telephone Efficiency! October 9, 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. and October 18, 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Live Your Goals: Learn What It Takes to Get the Things You Want! November 13, 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. and November 22, 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

S.O.S., Success Over Stress: Master Your Stress and Find Daily Joy! December 11, 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. and December 20, 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

For more information about our Season Tickets series please go to our website at talklisten.com or call us at 423-622-8255.

“Research indicates that workers have three prime needs: Interesting work, recognition for doing a good job, and being let in on things that are going on in the company.”

Zig Ziglar

“Enthusiastic employees far out-produce and outperform the average workforce: they step up to do the hard, even ‘impossible’ jobs. They’ll rally each others’ spirits in even the toughest times. Most people are enthusiastic when they’re hired -- hopeful, ready to work hard, eager to contribute. What happens? Management, that’s what. Sirota and his co-authors tell you what managers do wrong, and what they need to do instead. It’s about giving workers what they want most, summarized in the Three-Factor Theory: to be treated fairly; to feel proud of their work and organizations; and to experience camaraderie.”

From review of The Enthusiastic Employee,
By David Sirota, Louis A. Mischkind, and Michael

TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by e-mail tlc@talklisten.com or phone 1-888-232-2873. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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