

The Back Office – Top 10 Tips for Staff Retention

by Barbara Patrick at The Back Office, Reading, Berkshire – June 2010
<http://TheBackOffice.co.uk>

We read a lot in the press about job cuts and redundancy, but very little about staff retention.

Recruitment can be an expensive and time-consuming process, followed by a training period, and possibly a period where you have to employ temporary staff. All of this can be a drain on employers' time and resources.

Good staff are hard to come by, so how do you retain them?

Here are my Top 10 Tips for Staff Retention:

1. Recruit sensibly and fairly. Be realistic about the role and the skills/experience required. Unrealistic promises and expectations will just lead to disappointment and a high staff turnover.
2. Communicate with your staff. Ask for their views and suggestions and listen to what they say - much of which may be valid.
3. Where feasible, offer training and career progression.
4. Try to offer a variety of work to create job enrichment and satisfaction. Take a good look at the job descriptions and see how you can improve them so that each employee can learn new skills, enjoy a variety of tasks and remain interested. Routine has its place, but variety is the spice of life. This will also help you during absences when staff will be able to cover for each other.
5. Be appreciative. Yes, you are paying your staff for their services, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't appreciate what they do. So long as they perform to your satisfaction - or above expected levels - then they are making your life easier and making a valid contribution to your business, so be sure to let them know that you appreciate their efforts. "Thank You" goes a long way.
6. Operate a comprehensive Performance Appraisal process, where performance is acknowledged and/or criticised in a constructive manner, and where staff can offer honest feedback. This should include plans for improvement if necessary.
7. NEVER criticise or humiliate a member of staff in front of others. Not only could it land you in an Employment Tribunal, it's simply unfair. If there are performance or behaviour issues, address them in private, and in line with company Disciplinary Policy if appropriate.
8. Put in place a Grievance Procedure and use this constructively to address problems - however minor. Try to nip minor grievances in the bud, informally, before they escalate.
9. Always conduct exit interviews. Staff may be reluctant to tell you about their grievances while they are still employed, but they will very likely open up once they have formally resigned.
10. If high staff turnover is predominantly from one department or one particular function, then it is particularly important to establish the cause. It could be that the problem actually lies with a line manager or other member of staff, in which case you need to deal with this - even if **YOU** are the line manager concerned!

IN SUMMARY:

If the existing conditions, management or job content is causing a high staff turnover, be prepared to change your practices. As an employer and manager, it's vital that you are open to change.

Never underestimate the importance of happy staff. It has a knock-on effect on morale, performance, attendance and output. If your staff are happy, everyone wins!

There are, of course, more ways in which you can retain staff, but these 10 should start you in the right direction.

Please contact [The Back Office](http://TheBackOffice.co.uk) for further information or to discuss any concerns you may have over Human Resources issues within your organisation.

Good luck!

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