



Employer Answers IN THE WORKPLACE

Will Your Employees Stay After the Recession?

Michelle Toney
Human Resource Consultant
Cascade Employers Association

As part of SEDCOR's alliance with Cascade Employers Association, this feature appears periodically in the Enterprise. Cascade provides employment knowledge and support in the areas of human resource management, employment law compliance, training, pay information, safety and employee benefits.

One of the most interesting future trends to watch unfold over the coming months will be how employees respond to the ending of the recession and to the beginning of new economic growth. When this happens, one thing that we can all count on is that turnover and hiring trends will have shifted to a whole new paradigm.

As the choices slowly become available to move on to greener pastures, just how many of the already employed will try to move on? A recent Adecco study showed that 54% of Americans plan to look for another job once the economy rebounds, and the number increases to an astounding 71% for workers who fall in the 18-29 age bracket. It is apparent that the stress and increased workload often accompanying a downturn in the economy may have taken a toll on employees' outlook of their current employer.

With only approximately 18% of laid off workers returning to their former employers, the importance of preserving your veteran employees may become a key piece of returning to a stable and growing season in your company. If keeping your current workforce in place is important to you, there are some questions that can be useful in determining what priorities should be in place to ensure this happens.

- What are your employees going to be looking for if they search for a new position?
- Is there something you can accomplish today towards having those strengths in place so that your organization is attractive to quality employees?
- Are the priorities that were in place as a business before the downturn still relevant?

- Have you provided clear direction to employees that the organization is heading towards updated priorities and goals?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses that became obvious in your business through these last difficult months?
- What are the tools that can be used to bridge to the next phase of the economic recovery?

Communication between employees and employers play a huge part in clarifying where an employee fits into a new set of goals. There are basic steps to consider in preparing for the next phase.

- Utilize training classes and updated job descriptions that reflect the employee's responsibilities that have changed during these past tumultuous months. Bringing job descriptions current tells your employees that you are acknowledging where your organization is right now, and shows that you are planning for the future.
- Conversely, employees can tell an employer what they feel is important for their continued employment with a properly designed employee opinion survey. (Just a note - don't overlook this option just because you think employees will only complain about their salaries and workload; surveys now use a more comprehensive approach that may give you key indicators of their other priorities.)
- When you recruit and interview prospective employees they may be looking for new or different qualities in an employer. A supportive and communicative work environment, health care benefits, and flexible schedules that accommodate for semi-retirement or shorter commute times may very well be some of the core issues that top talent is going to be looking for in the next employer to which they move.

These steps may be a culture shift for your workplace, but they could help retain and attract the very people that are necessary for your business to successfully position itself for what lies ahead. As an added bonus, employers who offer the right qualities and attractions have the luxury of being able to be more deliberate about whom they choose to hire since there are more people seeking employment.

All of these questions, and the solutions to them, begin to shift our thinking into the next phase of our economy's recovery. While the times clearly remain difficult for many employers, and tough decisions are still being made, it will be the employer who has the foresight to communicate business goals, provide an attractive workplace, and clearly lead out of the recession that will win the loyalty of their best employees.

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4068 Hudson Avenue NE, Salem, OR 97301
www.cascadeemployers.com