

Keeping Good Employees

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In this current job market it is vital to maintain high employee retention. A low supply of employees available to fill public works positions means that most departments can't afford to lose employees. The longer an employee works for a company, the more valuable he or she becomes. To retain good employees use a good benefits package, training, and efficient management. This article will explore ways that public works departments can retain employees.

Benefits

Benefit packages make a position more desirable, especially when hiring and retaining personnel. Benefits that might influence the length of time an employee stays with a company include:

- **Time off** can include paid vacations, sick time, and unpaid leave. Many people find free time more valuable than money, particularly with the younger generation and people with families.
- **Flexible schedules.** Irregular work schedules and 30 hours weeks are becoming more popular.
- **Health insurance.** A good health insurance program is always a bonus, often a necessity.
- **Retirement plans.** Retirement or saving plans can help with employee retention.

Ask current employees about their benefits. They may have suggestions on how benefit packages can be improved.

Training

Training programs attract and retain employees, among other advantages.

- The company gains a more skilled worker, making the worker feel more valuable and productive.
- More skills can mean more money to the employee.
- Training can qualify a worker for a better position.
- A job that boasts training can bring motivated individuals to the company, who are willing to expand their field of expertise.

- Safety training demonstrates that the company cares about the workers.
- Management training reinforces the relationship between workers and supervisors.

Management

Effective management is another important factor to retain employees. A high turnover of workers is often a sign that the management needs improvement. Assess management's leadership. A good leader can delegate authority, allowing the employee to make decisions.

Often, it is the management's responsibility to give the workers incentive. Giving awards or setting realistic, yet challenging, goals can provide incentive. The idea is to make the workers feel like part of a team and valuable to the company. It is the responsibility of the management to show appreciation and recognition for a job well done.

The management also has a duty to resolve conflicts. By solving problems fairly, management makes the best decisions for the company and the workers. Here are some steps for solving problems

- Determine the facts.
- Identify problems.
- Develop solutions.
- Implement the best solution.
- Follow up (or follow through).

Communication

Communication is the single best way to assess the effectiveness of the retention program and company policies. Listen to the workers' complaints and complements. Ask employees who've been around awhile why they stay. Interview departing employees, to learn why they're leaving. If anyone should know how to keep workers, it's the workers themselves.

There are many ways to retain employees. Examine the company's benefit packages, training, and management to see what improvements can be made. Communicate with workers

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- **NPDES II.**
 - *Road Business, Fall 2000*
 - EPA Fact Sheets and other information at www.epa.gov/owm/sw/phase2/
- **GASB 34.**
 - *Road Business, Summer 2000.*
 - www.gasb.org
 - www.gfoa.org
- **MUTCD Millennium Edition.**
 - Electronic copies are available at <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/>.
 - Hard copies are planned for the spring.
- **Retroreflective Street Name Signs .**
 - *Road Business, Spring 1999*
 - MUTCD Millennium Edition, Chapter 2D
- **Center and Edge Line Marking..**
 - *Road Business, Spring 2000*
 - MUTCD Millennium Edition, Part 3
- **Retroreflectivity minimums.**
 - Researchers have published and presented papers in transportation engineering professional journals and meetings.
 - The first information for a general audience will probably be the proposed rule-making.
- **Wetlands permits.**
 - RSA-A:3 can be found at <http://sudoc.nhsl.lib.nh.us/rsa/>
 - NHDES Fact Sheets are at <http://www.des.state.nh.us/wet.htm>

UNH T² Center Assistance

Publications. The UNH T² Center has past *Road Business* articles and hard copies of many website documents. They will obtain other information as it is published. Information requests can be by phone, fax, or email to UNH T² Center.

Newsletter. Future *Road Business* articles will cover new regulations as published. Articles will cover local practices and suggestions for compliance with rules.

Workshops. In 2001 the UNH T² Center plans workshops covering these regulations. In addition to describing them, instructors will describe management and technical solutions to reduce impacts.

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to find out exactly what makes them stay at a job. Keeping workers satisfied benefits both the worker and the municipality.

Sources:

- "Attracting & Retaining Employees: Here are Some New Ideas to Try." *Solutions for Business*. 1999. Advancement L.L.C. 06 Jun. 2000 <http://www.advapara.com/newslet/aprilmay/employ.html>
- Hendrix, Larry D. "Retention- Keeping Good Employees Productive and on the Job." *Tourism Educational Materials*. 19 Jun. 2000. Michigan State University Extension. 06 Jun. 2000 <http://www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33129605.html>
- Kennedy, Marilyn Moats. "It Looks like a Benefit, but for Whom?" *Milepost* Mar. 1999, 10-12.

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ferent divisions and the city's homepage. Information is easy to locate, including contact information.

The Somersworth Public Works Department also has an effective website. Visually, it is interesting to look at, boasting construction-related graphics and even animation. A small amount of animation can be pleasing if it loads quickly. The overall effect is practical and not overwhelming. Links are clearly defined, the background and text colors contrast well, and the Department's homepage fits on one screen. The page loaded quickly.

An effective website conveys vital information without overwhelming the visitor. Care should be taken when choosing fonts and backgrounds. A simple website is often more professional than an extravagant one.

Claremont's website:

www.claremontnh.com/dpw_index.htm

Somersworth's website: www.nh.ultranet.com/~sdpw/mission.htm

Useful design tips:

<http://www.geocities.com/featuredsites/tips.html>

Sources:

- "Website Design Tips". *The Best of Athens*. Aug. 28, 2000. <http://www.geocities.com/featuredsites/tips.html>.

