

Too Busy to Train? Think Again

By Linda Hanson, Certified Management Consultant (CMC)

Employees in many industries are now expected to produce more in less time. This unrealistic expectation could relate to why studies support that employees are currently less satisfied with their jobs than employees were a decade ago.

Many baby boomers will be replaced by younger workers as they leave the current work force. Some younger workers have different attitudes and expectations about the role of work in their lives than their older counterparts. This presents a new challenge for many employers and could be impacting employer's ability to get managers and field crews to reach their full potential.

The answer to the problem for many agencies is to provide more training to their employees. Studies support that if your field personnel get below eight hours of training per year, it will not lead to any changes in productivity. Many organizations offer more training for employers (management) than employees. It is equally important to train those doing the work, not just those making the decisions. Quality, service and productivity also happens out in the field and not just in the office.

Most public agencies don't have formal training programs in place, and making time to train employees can be challenging. However, leaving people to learn by doing is much more costly. Managers should set a goal to conduct training that will help employees excel. A good training goal should be to provide 40 hours of training per year per employee. The total cost of this training probably won't be more than two percent of overall payroll cost but the return will be much higher in productivity and safety.

First, hold a meeting with management to select and prioritize training topics. Make it a habit to cover the same topics annually while adding new ones. There are always new employees and refresher classes reinforce correct performance.

Second, schedule training time each week, such as 30 minutes every Tuesday morning. Third, make the training interactive. Use the common method of training:

1. tell them what you are going to tell them,
2. tell them,
3. show them,
4. let them do it, and
5. tell them again.

Coach participants through exercises until they get it right and recognize those who do a good job. Share training duties among employees based on experience and skill. Give everyone a chance to instruct.

There are times when you should use outside people to teach on new and technical tasks. Bringing in a specialist to train or sending employees offsite to workshops can be worth the investment. Ensure the information they were provided is reinforced after they get back on the job so they can implement their new skills and to show management support of their training.



Employees do not want to struggle with tasks or take longer to master new skills. Employees want to make a meaningful contribution to their job, and they want to be recognized for their efforts. Training can accomplish this. Training also fosters team morale and more enthusiasm for work.

Address safety concerns and save money by training employees. Use training to build productivity, quality of work, motivation and company loyalty. Too busy to train? Think again.

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Reference:

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