

Retain Your Clients By Retaining Your Employees

Suppose you have a client who deals with a specific representative within your organization on a regular basis. Then that client starts to see multiple employees being funneled through that position. Every time the client contacts you, they're dealing with a new person. What does this say to your client about your company? Countless negative things can be inferred from a high turnover rate, which often results in the loss of your clients to another company they perceive as better managed and more reliable.

"Most clients regard a revolving door of employee contacts as annoying at best, and a deal breaker at worst," says Alicia Sinay, senior franchise development manager for MRINetwork.

"Businesses are increasingly relying on relationships, and it's much easier to maintain the relationships you've cultivated with your clients when you don't have to brief a new person on your business goals every six months, or repeat work that has already been completed as a new employee is being brought up to speed."

While losing clients means a loss of income for your company, a high turnover rate has the capacity to be even more far-reaching and damaging in today's candidate-driven marketplace. That's why your strategy to retain clients should include retaining the employees who serve those clients.

If your goal is to foster employees who are satisfied with their position, you should be aware they expect the following:

- Ability to use their talent and skills in the workplace.** Many of your people could contribute far more than they currently do, if their managers take the time to tap into their skills, talent and experience. Whenever possible, allow them to focus their time and energy on projects they enjoy. Show employees you trust them by giving them responsibilities that provide the opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities in other areas. Your business may benefit from applying their knowledge and experience to expanded job duties.
- Frequent opportunities to learn and grow in their careers, knowledge and skill.** Without the opportunity to work on new projects, serve on challenging and significant teams, and attend seminars and classes, they will stagnate - and ultimately leave your company. Career pathing is a great way for employees and managers to map out an upward mobility track, while placing the responsibility on the employee to achieve certain goals in order to receive a promotion, salary increase or both.
- Awards and Recognition.** A simple thank you or a congratulatory award often goes a long way in recognizing a job well done. That said, monetary rewards and bonuses, tied to accomplishments and achievements, can be even more motivating.
- Communication with their managers.** In addition to exit interviews when employees are leaving, routinely ask your employees why they stay. Ask questions such as: Why did you decide to accept a role within the organization? What are your nonnegotiable issues? What would you change or improve? Then use that information to strengthen your employee retention strategies.



Putting these effective retention strategies in place is key to retaining employees and better serving your clients. "Create an environment that stimulates employee satisfaction by incorporating motivation-building practices into your corporate culture," advises Sinay. "Listen to your employees, respect their opinions, and be available to help with everything from ideas and concerns to assisting them with their career advancement."

Employees need to feel valued and appreciated, be given feedback, provided with growth opportunities and work-life balance options, and have trust and confidence in their leaders. In this kind of environment, employees deliver higher-than-expected levels of service to each and every client. They take pride in their company and in their work, resulting in retention both of your workforce and your client base.