

One of the most challenging things that managers and supervisors do is to hire new employees, get them trained and up and running as active and producing members of the organization. Attracting and then retaining the best of the best will help leadership focus on succeeding in their strategic goals instead of constantly going through the hiring process. If your organization has any kind of talent-management concerns, read on for help identifying and getting them resolved so you can get back to the business at hand.

### Identify Recruiting Problems

Recruiting is an inexact science—some individual leaders are an excellent judge of character and work style and can easily identify the perfect individual for any given position, while others struggle and generally end up with sub-standard talent. If the human resources department notices that a specific department or team is having a problem attracting or retaining top talent, it makes sense to review their overall process with an eye to finding gaps or missing steps in the process overall.

### Schedule Exit Interviews

One of the best ways to find out exactly what the problems are in a particular group or team is to schedule an exit interview, assuring the individual that it will be kept completely confidential. The more informal the conversation can be, the better it will be received. The difficult part will be listening actively to what is being said and being prepared to internalize and resolve if there are specific concerns that are causing you to lose talent. Consult with peers and colleagues to vet any issues that come up—don't be afraid to use them as a sounding board! Other long-term or trusted employees may also be able to add details and suggest resolutions.

### Separating the Wheat from the Chaff

High-performing employees, who constantly go above and beyond their job description, deliver results on time and on budget, and who require limited amounts of oversight are a supervisor's dream. Unfortunately, they are also not the norm! Calculating an employee's monetary net worth can help you see where to invest your time and energy. Hint: It's not with the poor performers.

- 1) **Calculate an employee's AEW (average employee worth).** This sounds difficult, but it really is just a factor of the annual budget divided by the number of employees.
- 2) **Determine a Weak Performer Differential.** If possible, compare the AEW to the actual revenue or output generated by each employee. This can help you rank employees, as well as give you a scale of difference between the strongest and weakest employees.
- 3) **Determine other costs.** Are deadlines missed, causing additional charges by a vendor? Excessive absenteeism? All of these factors can add cost to a department and should be considered.



**4) Can weak performers change?** If your weakest performers can be trained, coached and have regular evaluations to bring them into line, are they worth the

extra effort required, or is it time to look for another asset? These are the hard questions that supervisors must ask themselves on a regular basis. Take a set period of time, such as 6-12 months, to determine if significant change has been made.

Sometimes, however, you will find that no matter how hard you try, the employee that you had such high hopes for just is not working out. At that time, you have to make a decision about how to deal with your poor performer. The good news is that if someone is not going to make it, you will usually be able to tell within the first 18 months, so you can make a shift relatively quickly before long-term productivity is impacted. Unhappy employees and poor performers can become like a cancer within the organization—impacting others negatively and creating a ripple in the corporate culture that can be difficult to overcome, especially if course-corrections are not handled quickly and decisively.

### Create an Exit Strategy for Poor Performers

While it sounds harsh, this can actually be a benefit for the individual as well as the organization. Some companies call this a “refund” policy, when after six months it’s determined that a particular individual is not working out, there can be an offer of a small severance and a good reference from the organization if the employee agrees to move on, after they have signed off the possibility of a lawsuit. You can also encourage employees to simply “move on” if they have checked out and are no longer productive in their current role.

Attracting and retaining the best employees is incredibly challenging, but as long as you are being an active and strong participant as a supervisor and continue to be engaged, you will be able to get in great employees and make quick changes when needed.