

South Florida Sunshine

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EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Our employees are the working strength of the golf course industry. They are the individuals who have the task of physically accomplishing the work assignments. Their efforts give the owners, managers, golfers, golf pros and golf course superintendents the course conditions they desire.

Employees needs and desires are the motivations that usually compel them to remain or to leave a particular job. I believe that most employees would rather remain at their job rather than search out and find another. It is more often than not, corporate policies, improper management practices or poor supervision that cause an employee to leave his job.

In the majority of cases, if people are treated fairly, they will respond with productivity and longevity of employment. This results not only in a happier employee who has a willingness to work, but who will wish to remain working for the same company for a longer period of time. There will be less employee turnover, and ultimately, less employee retraining. It is difficult to estimate the cost of retraining a worker in the golf course maintenance industry. However, because of the vast variety of jobs that a good maintenance employee must perform, the retraining time is great.

The overall cost is even more amplified because the man doing the retraining is generally a higher paid supervisor. The supervisor has to spend a great deal of time with a new worker, and is robbing time from the daily scheduling and monitoring of other employee activities.

The attention paid to all employees is crucial to the overall operation. Surveys have been conducted that show the main area of job-related workers concern is recognition. People want to know that they are appreciated in their work and how they as an individual are performing. Good performance justifies compliments or merit pay increases and possible promotions. In adequate performance certainly justifies acknowledgment that there was poor performance and may possibly reprimand.

Employees need to know where they stand and that their work is appreciated. A group of employees was asked what their needs were in order of importance. "Appreciation of work" was most important in the opinion of the employees taking the survey, with "feeling in on things" rated second. Wages rated fifth!¹

In the same survey, a group of supervisors rated that they felt to be their employees greatest needs. In the majority of cases, the supervisors chose wages as number one. The actual and perceived statistics were notably different.

This should stress an important fact. We all want to be recognized for our efforts.

Inadequate performance, needs also to be discussed, because we do not wish to suggest that only compliments should be passed out. On the contrary, if we do not criticize as well as compliment, most employees will think that their supervisors are not really paying attention. They may tend to surmise "Well, the boss doesn't care, why should I". Or, they may see a bad employee get away with poor job performance, tardiness, absenteeism or other policy violations without being reprimanded. Then, they may figure if other employees can get away with it then they can as well. A negative work attitude develops and before you realize it, there is a real morale problem and you as a supervisor have lost control and respect of your employees.

Meetings are also a good time to educate your people how their performance affects overall club operation and how it affects a golfer's round. They should be aware of proper cup cutting methods, and how this affects the golfers' playing performance. Also, how a golfer will appreciate a neat and tidy golf course. The list can go on and on from proper tee placement to the raking of a sand bunker.

There are many ways to retain good employees. Involvement, awareness, and a genuine concern on the part of management are the keys to motivation and employee retention. It is important to build a foundation and a nucleus of people who are working toward the same goals: A successful and profitable operation being staffed by a work force that feels they have a vested interest in their future.

¹ Supervisors Handbook on Maintaining Non-Union Status - Alfred T. Demaria ■

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