

Some of you are building your employee compensation plans now.

You want your plans to do three things: attract good employees, motivate them and retain them.

You want to get the most for your money. Production. Quality. Profit. Maybe you're looking at offering financial incentives or commissions to motivate them even more.

Be careful. You may discover that the incentives that you offer key employees can do more harm than good.

That's what Scott Brickman of The Brickman Group told about 300 fellow landscape professionals at last November's ALCA Conference in Cincinnati. The Brickman Group is one of the largest and most successful landscape companies in the United States.

Scott Brickman said his company has changed its philosophy concerning compensation. It's decided to move away from using incentives and commissions to motivate key employees. He said the decision didn't come without a lot of top-level soul searching.

"What we realized, what became apparent to us was that our incentive plans where we paid bonuses to branches that met certain hurdles, took away from sharing and teamwork between branches within the organization," he said.

That's not to say that Brickman employees saw their compensation chopped. They received the equivalent of their salaries plus the bonuses, said Brickman.

"It was a fairly hard leap for us to make. It was an expensive leap," he admitted to his colleagues.

Rather than emphasizing monetary incentives and commissions, the company focused on building job descriptions with each category

[LANDSCAPE/GROUNDS]

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Respect, responsibility are better motivators



Ron Hall

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tied to an appropriate "range" of salaries.

A successful landscape company functions like a great basketball team or a famous orchestra. All players add their talents toward a single goal, Brickman said. It's not like a bowling team where you add up all scores and the highest score wins.

The things that really make a difference with employees, he added, are things like security, trust, respect, "and really giving employees responsibility." **LM**

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Brickman: financial incentives often aren't such hot motivators