

The Consultant's Corner

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INSIGHTS  SUCCESS
"Building On Strengths"

Do You Focus on Retaining Staff?

Yesterday's employee perks are today's standard fare. Therefore, it's essential that you offer your best workers more of what they want to keep them happy and on board.

Take this quiz to rate your retention savvy:

1. Another firm wants your top employee. You should:

- a) Remind employees that your firm offers many perks not available elsewhere.
- b) Match or beat the other company's offer.
- c) Create your own retention program that will accommodate your employees' needs—now and later.



2. Sarah has worked long hours and weekends all month—sacrificing her family time—and you want to show her your appreciation. You decide to:

- a) Send her and her family to a local amusement park.
- b) Present her with the "Employee of the Month" award.
- c) Give her a bonus.

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Huh? The True Art of Listening

By Marsha Petri Sue

Great salespeople are great listeners. Period. Case closed. They have developed the ability to hear their customers and clients, understand their needs, and meet those needs with products and services. How great a listener are you? Answer most given: Not good enough.



Here are four key points to help improve your listening skills:

1. Turn off your self-talk. We cannot hear what the other person is saying if we have our own thoughts getting in the way. We talk to ourselves while others are talking to us. The rate of speech in our own heads is about 600 words per minute (WPM). Most people, customers included, only speak about 150 WPM. So slow down and focus on their words.

2. Hear what the other person is saying. Often we allow our filters to interpret what the other person said. A filter is anything that becomes a barrier to hearing what the other person is saying. When thinking ahead for your response—bias, background, culture, education, socioeconomics, and such, act as filters. The salesperson must eliminate filters to hear the message of the customer.

3. Physically let the person know you are listening. Eighty percent of our message is delivered in how we appear to the other person. A positive nod of the head, a verbal "Uh-huh" or "OK" are clues that you are still with them. Open body language is critical. Folding our arms in front of our body is a closed position that signals to others we are mentally turned off to their words. Solution? Keep your hands at your sides (in the listening position).

4. Paraphrase using 'I' language. To make sure you hear what the other person said, repeat key words to verify what they said.

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ONE MINUTE IDEAS

Job Satisfaction in the United States

Job satisfaction has declined across all income brackets in the last nine years. While 55 percent of workers earning more than \$50,000 are satisfied with their jobs, only 14 percent claim they are very satisfied.

The largest decline in overall job satisfaction, from 60.9% to 49.2%, occurred among workers 35-44. This is also the worker group next in line for management and leadership positions.

The second largest decline took place among workers ages 45-54, with the satisfaction level dropping from 57.3% to 47.7%.

Source: The Conference Board, 2005.
Adapted from *Labor Storm Alert*

Web Site Of The Month

Information Please has been providing authoritative answers to all kinds of factual questions since 1938—first as a popular radio quiz show, then starting in 1947 as an annual almanac, and since 1998 on the Internet at www.infoplease.com. Many things have changed since 1938, but not their dedication to providing reliable information, in a way that engages and entertains.

Check it out at:
www.infoplease.com



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3. You need more incentives for employees to stay. Aside from monetary perks, you offer:

- a) Flex-time for work/life balance.
- b) Progressive retirement plans.
- c) Stock option plans.

4. Staff members seem restless, and you want to offer them better perks to stay. However, you're not sure what they really want. Your best bet is to survey employees now. If you wait for upper management's approval, you may lose valuable workers.

a. True.

b. False.

Answers: **1.** c, start a retention program now to continuously monitor what employees need most. **2.** b, thank Sarah for the time she "borrowed" from her family to help your firm. **3.** a, do what you can to help employees balance work and family. **4.** False. *Reason:* If you promise workers anything that top management doesn't support, failing to deliver will surely drive them away.

Source: *Manager's Legal Bulletin*, Alexander Hamilton Institute Inc., 70 Hilltop Road, Ramsey, NJ 07446.

Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration. Accordingly a genius is often merely a talented person who has done all of his or her homework.

– Thomas Edison

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For example, say: "So, if I understand you correctly" ... People don't always say what they mean. Successful salespeople paraphrase the important parts of what they heard.

Secret to improving your listening skills:

Place a tape recorder in the top drawer of your desk and record your side of the next eight telephone conversations. Find a quiet corner and listen to what you said. Identify one element you dislike and focus on changing it. Then put a rubber band on your wrist as a reminder of the habit you want to change and be patient. Most habits take an average of 30 days (of constant practice) to change.

Great listeners become great managers and leaders. How great are you?

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