

# MAKE YOUR SHOP MORE THAN A PLACE FOR WORKERS TO COLLECT A PAYCHECK.

It's no secret that high turnover rates cost your business, in more ways than one: lowered productivity, higher training costs, recruiting costs...the list goes on and on. But before you break out in a cold sweat, try these simple tips and tricks to keep employees happy, satisfied, and working for you longer.

## Be a home away from home

It's tough to get workers excited about waking up every morning to go into work. You can fix that by investing a little in your staff's comfort and morale. Small things go a long way in making work feel less like work. And employees who feel well taken care of will pay you back with enthusiasm to come in every morning and a stronger work ethic.

### GIVE THEM A BREAK

That means an immaculate waiting area with comfortable chairs, some women's magazines, and perhaps a few kid-friendly items. Keep things clean, uncluttered, kid-safe, and smelling as fresh as possible.

### DIAL UP THE COMFORT

Brighten things up by adding lighting and organizing the room to feel more 'zen'. Make it a space they're comfortable in.

### KEEP IT CLEAN

Whether you clean things yourself, or set up a rotating schedule, make sure the place stays tidy and pleasant.



## Cultivate communication

Your employees depend on your business being successful too. So embrace sharing—how the business is going, what the goals are, etc. Make communication a regular part of the business. Your staff will feel more like a team than a bunch of individual 'worker bees'.



### ENCOURAGE SPEAKING UP

Promote an environment where employees can openly contribute ideas and be part of growing the shop.

### GET THEIR INPUT

Routinely ask for their ideas and recognize and reward the ones that work best.

### BREAK OUT IN GROUPS

Foster teamwork and a spirit of collaboration. Assign teams of 3-4 to tackle issues and make improvements together.

## Recognize and reward good behavior

Everyone has a need to feel recognized and appreciated. That gold star in kindergarten has evolved, but still feels just as good. And rewards don't have to be about cash. Simply acknowledging their hard work goes a long way in keeping staff constantly motivated.

### HOST A MEAL

Give away a free dinner quarterly to employees and spouses.

### GIVE FREEBIES FOR GOOD WORK

Watch ears perk up the second you shout 'free food.' Simple things like treats, cookouts, or group outings demonstrate your appreciation. If you want to step it up—hand out iTunes cards monthly to the top performers.

### BE SPECIFIC

Recognize and reward accomplishments publicly. Let employees know what specific actions earned rewards and who contributed most.



## Balance work and life

Most Americans already spend more time at work than they do with family or friends. And as motivated as your employees are, sometimes they need to step away from the shop and focus on home in order to be more productive at work. So stretch out those firm rules and get a little flexible in order to support a healthy work/life balance.



### SPONSOR A FAMILY EVENT

Once or twice a year host a family-oriented activity, like a fishing trip, picnic, or a baseball game. Take time to meet your staff's families so they know you respect their home life.

### CONSIDER FLEX TIME

a scheduling system that lets employees start and end at varying times, rather than the classic 9-5. This allows employees to work a schedule that fits their lives better.

### LET PARENTS BE PARENTS

Kids get sick, get in trouble or have the inevitable snow day. A parent needs to be there. Be understanding and allow staff to run out for family emergencies.

## Advance their skills

One way to differentiate your shop from being 'just a job' is to offer constructive feedback and opportunities for staff to grow. Adding the occasional class or review keeps workers from becoming stagnant. Be a helpful resource in advancing their careers and soon your shop will become much more than their day job.

### BE THEIR TEACHER

Organize meetings every month or two where you teach a course on a new skillset. Invite industry reps to come in and showcase new products and solutions.

### PROMOTE FROM WITHIN:

When it comes time to hire a new manager or higher-level position, try to promote from your pool of employees. This instantly makes your shop an opportunity for career growth.

### TAKE TIME TO REVIEW

Conduct performance reviews consistently. These reviews create plans for improvement, recognition for accomplishments, and provide rationale for wage decisions.



## Check in so they don't check out

We've all heard of the exit interview to figure out why someone's leaving, but rather than checking in after they've checked out, be proactive. Find out what's keeping your employees here or what might push them away. Allowing employees to give you their constructive feedback gives them a sense of ownership in the place they call work.



### ASK WHAT THEY LIKE

Start your questions on a positive note and ask what's going well. That way you can keep on doing what works.

### DON'T FEAR THE BAD

While good feedback can give you that 'I did good' glow, negative feedback is often more helpful. Find out what isn't working by asking questions like: What's important to you, working here? Or what would you change/improve?

### TAKE THEIR SUGGESTIONS TO HEART

Pick 2 or 3 items to work on and follow up with employees on how they feel the changes are going. Get them involved in making improvements so they feel some ownership.

## Pave the way to being more than a payday

The unfortunate truth is, many employees see work as a necessary evil. 'It's just a job.' Transform your shop from a place to pick up a paycheck, to a place to grow a career. Create a positive environment, offer helpful knowledge, give feedback, and for the exceptional employee—offer a promotion. Give employees a future with your business and they'll reward you with loyalty and better work.