



RETAIN QUALIFIED STAFF

by Eduardo Nieto

The loss of qualified staff is very disappointing, especially when a publisher has invested much time and sacrifice training an employee who then leaves for a competing organization. A publisher who does not calmly respond to such a situation can easily fall prey to bitterness and resentment. To prevent this, determine what led the employee to choose to leave the organization. If the employee had good reasons for leaving, work to correct the problems. Good administration involves implementing strategies to retain qualified staff within the organization. Some common retention strategies are outlined below.

Provide a good work environment

Every employee needs an assigned space to carry out his or her work. Human beings, by nature, desire a place they can call their own. Employees want to be able to say, "This is my office," "This is my desk," and so on. Sometimes, assigned spaces can be so small that employees elbow one another. This makes for a stressful work environment. Publishing leaders must make sure that their employees have a comfortable place to work. Government regulations and industry standards often indicate the recommended space allotments for specific jobs.

An even more critical aspect of an employee's work environment has to do with the treatment he or she receives. Ephesians 6:5-9 states:

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

A person who leads a ministry should treat his or her companions in the same way that he or she would prefer to be treated.

At times leaders might realize that they are not treating their employees as well as they could. The fault might not be in what is said; it can be in what is expressed through the leader's body language or facial expressions that offend or show contempt for the other person. Be careful of how you treat people. Work to correct attitudes that are offensive to others. Often, it is the way that a qualified employee was treated that caused him or her to leave a particular ministry.

Do not argue with your coworkers. Dialogue. Control your temper. Do not explode. Do not shout out orders. Provide direction in a cordial manner.

Many qualified persons leave to seek better treatment elsewhere.

Share the vision and mission

Every employee, no matter what post he or she might have in the company, should know the vision and the mission of the organization. This is very important. Every employee must not only be able to articulate them, but to understand them.

Knowledge of the organization's vision and mission generates unity of purpose among employees. It helps them to better focus all their efforts in a single direction, that is, toward reaching the objectives drawn up for the organization.

Many institutions summarize their vision and mission with a slogan or motto. The person who leads the ministry is responsible for communicating these to all employees. Work to instill a passion for the vision and mission in those who labor with you.

Share decision-making

Create a sense of ownership and love for the work of the organization. An employee whose views on a specific project are taken into consideration will encourage others to join him or her in reaching the goal. A shared purpose brings unity and stability.



In addition, when an employee participates in decision-making, the resultant sense of ownership in the decision will motivate him or her to bring it to fruition.

While it may be complicated, time-consuming, and cumbersome for a leader to bring people together to present new ideas and projects to them so they can be involved in making the necessary decisions, this is a discipline that every good leader must practice.

Delegate responsibility and commitments to employees whenever possible, whether in small projects or in big ones, so as to promote the development and improvement of the company. When you delegate responsibility, you delegate stability.

Give recognition

First, recognize the position of the employee. In Ephesians 4:11-12, we read:

[God] gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

Clarify the titles and responsibilities of each position, from the manager to the secretary, from the editorial head to the director of sales, and so on.

Second, provide the proper financial compensation. Be aware of the prevailing market wages offered at companies that are similar to yours. Perhaps a ministry does not have the funds to pay the same salaries that might be paid at a prestigious for-profit enterprise, but it is healthy to recognize this fact during salary negotiations so both parties involved understand it and agree.

Maintain high morale

A publisher should not see the employees only through the plate-glass window that separates his or her office from theirs. Publishers should establish close ties to their coworkers and show themselves to be good

friends, mentors, and brothers and sisters in Christ. This produces affection, respect, and harmony. Healthy, close relationships produce stability.

In this regard, consider five suggestions:

1. Share new projects and new ideas. Communicate short- and long-range goals.

2. Spend time with your staff, even if all you do is share a cup of coffee. Ask employees how they feel about their work. What do they like? What do they not like? What would they like to change?

3. Learn about your employees' families, their dreams, their plans.

4. Share about spiritual and biblical matters and spend time in prayer together.

5. Tell employees that they are important to the ministry. Remind them that their presence and participation encourages their team members.

Set an example

The above suggestions, when put into practice, can bring positive results in retaining qualified staff. They are not magic formulas.

Whether or not you have a leadership position, set an example. A living model is the best teacher. A good example is contagious and teaches far more than words. That is why Jesus in John 13:14-17, said:

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. ❖

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