



Twelve Ways Business Owners Can Ensure Their Best Employees Never Want to Leave

By Ty Freyvogel

Every entrepreneur knows the hectic lifestyle that comes with starting or running a small company. Employees of small businesses are often asked to go way beyond the call of duty and usually do it without receiving huge paychecks. But by not being able to pay hefty salaries doesn't mean there are not other ways to create a happy, loyal staff.

Small business owners may feel they are at a disadvantage compared to CEOs of large corporations due to the lack of deep pockets. Since they work so closely with their employees rather than being separated by layers of bureaucracy, it's easy for the employers to develop a strong rapport.

Think about it. If you know your employees' points of pain and you know what makes them happy, use this

information to meet their special needs or even surprise them with a few perks. This will not only allow you to build a strong relationship with them, but they may be willing to go that extra mile when the duty calls.

Here are 12 ways to keep your employees loyal to your company:

1. Provide them with much deserved time off

There are many ways to give your staff a break without slowing down your business. Give them an unexpected day off or set up a compressed workweek so they get time off when it's appropriate. After a little break, they'll be ready to work and do a great job.

2. Give them bonuses at critical times

Presumably, you work closely with your employees and know a lot about their personal lives. Find ways to help them. If one of your employees has a new baby or a sick spouse or child, a bonus will help ease the financial burden.

3. Be flexible

Your employees are working hard to make your business the best. The least you can do is be flexible when they have to take unexpected time off or need to work a new schedule. If they have children or are taking care of sick relatives, you may want to consider providing childcare or eldercare assistance to reduce their scheduling burdens. Additionally, living in the "age of technology" means location is no longer an issue and allows more flexible hours away from the office.

4. Be sensitive about their strengths and weaknesses

Carefully evaluate where your employees do their best work. Ask them

what jobs they feel the most comfortable doing. If an employee expresses interest in getting trained for a different position, by all means consider the appropriate training. If your employees feel passionate about their jobs, it increases the chances that they'll want to keep working for you.

5. Help them better themselves and improve your business

You can do this by paying for extra training to help them improve their job skills or something that interests them—even if it's something unrelated to their current position.

6. Feed them

A free meal every now and then is one of the easiest (and most appreciated) perks an employer can provide. It's a great way for any employer to say, "thank you." Another great idea is to provide a meal for employees who sometimes stay late. You'll be surprised how far this goes in building employee loyalty.

7. Constantly recognize a job well done

Everyone likes to be told they've done a good job. Typically, people who are interested in working for small businesses are driven more by recognition than by dollars. Never miss an opportunity to give the recognition they deserve. And when a client compliments an employee's work, never steal the credit—be sure to pass the glowing review along to the rightful owner.

8. Make them feel like owners

Whether it comes from having a voice in major decisions, being able to work directly with clients or actually owning stock, a sense of employee ownership will go a long way toward instilling loyalty.

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Nurturing your employees to love your business as much as you do will strengthen your company's foundation. Your business will be that much more likely to survive setbacks and grow to great heights.

9. Make sure they have what they need to do their jobs

Nothing frustrates a high performing employee more than having to struggle to do his or her job without the proper resources. Ask them if there is something you can do to make their jobs easier. Sometimes you'll be able to take care of it right away, other times it may take awhile. But the simple act of showing you care can go a long way.

10. Pamper them

Show your employees that you know working for you and your business can be stressful by providing gift coupons such as a spa treatment (for female employees), tickets to a sporting event or gift certificates to a local restaurant.

11. Help them leave if it isn't the right job for them

Working in a small business isn't for everyone. If one of your employees is struggling or simply isn't happy, talk to them about whether or not your business is the right place for them. If you collectively decide that it isn't, help him or her find a more suitable job. How does helping someone leave build loyalty? Well, the exiting employee will spread the word about what a great boss you are. Your other employees will also see that you are caring and understanding. Not all employers are this gracious.

12. Provide employee attendance incentives

It's likely that your best employees are high performers who come in even when they're feeling a bit under the weather or don't hesitate to come in occasionally on their day off. These are employees who deserve attendance benefits. For example, for every month without an absence, give your employees a bonus of some kind. The reward they received for their perfect attendance will make them happy.

All of the perks in the world won't mean anything if you don't show your employees respect. Implement their ideas and suggestions. There is no more powerful way to say, "I value you." Your employees are your greatest assets. Anything you can do to ensure that they stick with you is worth it. The loyalty these actions build between you, your employees, and your business will be priceless.

Ty Freyvogel is a dynamic public speaker and an entrepreneur who has launched and grown numerous successful small businesses over the course of a 35-year career, including a stint as a builder of inflatable boats. Today, Ty's consulting firm (Freyvogel Communications) serves the telecommunications needs of Fortune 500 and mid-sized businesses. Ty is also the author of It's Not Your Smarts, It's Your Schmooze and Seize the Century! as well as an advice guru on his new website, www.MakingSenseOfYourBusiness.com



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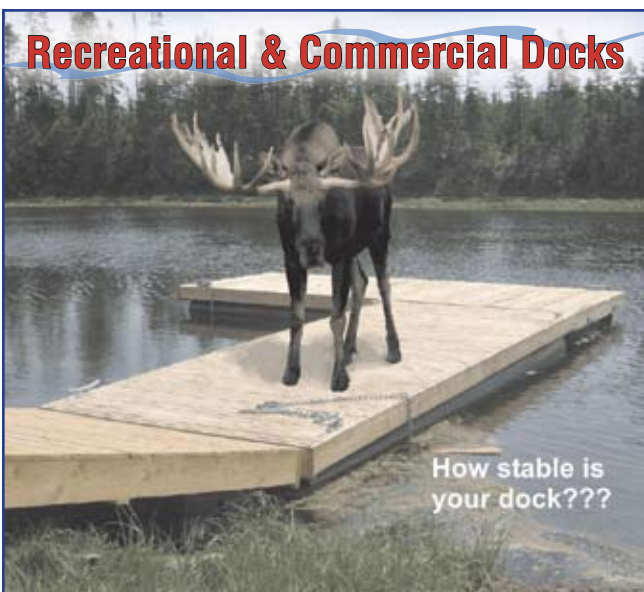
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