The First Step to Retaining Top Talent: Don't Annoy Your Employees

Article By:

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One of the biggest business risks of the coming years and decades will be hiring and — more importantly — <u>retaining top talent</u>. Legions of Baby Boomers are heading out to pasture every day, taking an untold wealth of knowledge with them, so those companies that can get the best of the best from the younger generations will be poised to leapfrog the laggards in their industries.

While most consultants tell organizations to focus on the perks, policies, benefits and workplace atmosphere that will attract the brightest, what about the negative side? What are the aspects of a company's workplace that deter employees from sticking around?

When it comes to the big issues, my guess is that pay, <u>horrible bosses</u>, uninspiring environments and too much work must rank high on most people's lists. The people I know anyway.

What about the little things though?

The Institute of Leadership and Management in London took a scientific approach to find out, polling nearly 2,200 managers to determine <u>the most-common annoyances of office workers</u>.

Jargon, poor time management and employees coming to work sick (so-called <u>"presenteeism"</u>) rate highly. And as expected, workers being tardy to work and meetings came in as the number-one irritant of managers.

Guilty as charge on that one, I'm afraid. Sorry co-workers.

Another thing many people hate is a hate I share, however: Trying to use email for everything.

Now, look, I hate talking on the phone, too. It's the worst. If you're trying to call me to ask me what time I can meet you for coffee, that's annoying. And please don't leave me a voicemail unless your house is on fire. Text or send and email, please. I have things to do, and your accent is not as charming as you think, Ms. South Carolina.

But if you need to discuss the start of a new project, particularly if it's not some old-hat procedure that we're both familiar with, then, yeah, pick up the phone. Better yet: If we work in the same office,

would you please just walk over to my desk for a chat? It's really not that far. And it's just so much more useful. Not everything can be done by email.

That said, this is what makes managing a workforce so difficult.

Some people care deeply about certain issues while others don't even notice them. Then those not-noticing people have annoyances that don't rank with person C. And so forth and so on forever.

All this illustrates the incredible difficulty of managing the modern employee.

It's hard to make everyone happy.

But there is great risk in not even trying. You can't please all of the people all of the time, they say, but as the race for talent becomes increasingly competitive, companies should be attempting to keep as many of them as happy as possible.

If you don't, your competitor will.

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