



# How Can I Attract and Retain Quality Employees?

Recent industry surveys have identified finding and retaining quality employees as one of the biggest challenges we face (as business owners or managers). Most of us would say that finding quality employees is more difficult than retaining them. However, retention is as much a key to our success as the constant search for a “better” labor force. Once we learn how to retain our best employees, the searching part will almost take care of itself.

Performance Foodservice is committed to helping our customers address difficult challenges such as this one. Here’s how:

- ▶ We will keep you informed of bona fide and validated methods to improve employee / employer relations that have worked for other restaurants.
- ▶ We will provide ideas to help reduce employee turnover and make your establishment the workplace of choice.
- ▶ We have resources available to help with training the associates of our dedicated customers.

**We are committed to helping our customers address challenges such as hiring and retaining quality employees!**



4901 Asher Avenue · Little Rock, AR 72204  
800-568-3141 · [performancefoodservice.com](http://performancefoodservice.com)

# What Motivates Your Employees?

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Ask yourself this question: Would you want to work for you? The question may sound silly, but if you think about it for a few minutes (and be honest with yourself), you may gain great insight about the environment you provide for your employees.

Most business owners and managers believe their “best” employees stay for the pay scale and that more money will always motivate them to perform better. Numerous polls and studies show this is not the case.

A poll, conducted by the Jordan Evans Group, surveyed 15,000 restaurant industry employees from quick service restaurants to fine dining establishments. Each was asked what motivates them to stay at their current job. You may be surprised at their answers: Here they are *in order of importance*:

- ▶ **Challenging/interesting work**
- ▶ **A chance to learn and grow with the company**
- ▶ **Friendly/compatible co-workers and a fun environment**
- ▶ **Fair pay**
- ▶ **A great boss or supervisor**

Fair pay came in fourth!

Yes, people generally want to be compensated fairly. However, most are willing to sacrifice a little pay for an environment they enjoy. Remember the old saying: “if you enjoy your job you will never work a day in your life.”

If more business owners/managers provided a positive environment, their employees would not feel like they are coming to “work.” It is important to remember that for most of us, our employees generally have more contact with the customer than the “boss.” They are the face of your organization.

## How to Provide a Positive Work Environment

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- 1 Recognition for a Job Well Done.** Give a verbal “thank you” or a written “high five.” Be sure to give it in front of that employee’s peers. Everyone enjoys a public pat on the back. It usually results in motivating others to strive for their own recognition. On a larger scale and for jobs well done over longer periods, a plaque or tickets to the current blockbuster or upcoming sporting event is a great motivator.
- 2 Know Your Employees.** It’s simple and doesn’t require much time. Everyone has an innate desire to know they have worth. Taking time to really know your employees shows that you genuinely care about them as a person. Ask questions about their weekend, their family, their hobbies, their career goals. Take a genuine interest and you will be amazed at how they perceive you as a boss/supervisor. You will also see a difference in how they interact and take an interest in your customers!

# How to Provide a Positive Work Environment

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- 3 Back up a Great Hire with Great Training.** Have you ever heard the phrase “setting them up to fail?” As owners/managers, we must provide the tools and training our employees need to succeed. How can we ask an employee to “chop trees” if we don’t give them an axe with which to chop?

Telling is not teaching and preaching is not teaching. We must be competent in the tasks we ask our employees to complete and be willing to demonstrate what we want done. We must also provide reviews and additional training to help our employees sharpen their axe from time to time. Axes get dull after long periods of use.

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- 4 Lead Your People.** *“People cannot be managed. Inventories can be managed, but people must be led.”* - Unknown

Leaders understand the importance of taking others with them as they climb the ladder of success. Just as the farmer diligently tends the crop, the leader cultivates the team.

Leaders are quick to offer praise, personal advice, and words of support. Leaders know the value of a positive note, e-mail, or phone call. Words such as “thank you” and “I appreciate you” flow naturally from a leader’s lips. Leaders make their employees feel vital to the cause. Leaders are not quick to blame, to anger, or to criticize. Successful leaders set people free by supporting them.

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- 5 Treat Your Employees Equally and Consistently.** Most of us have heard employees grumble “so and so receives special treatment.” It is a common complaint and it causes more harm than you might imagine.

Stick to the policies and guidelines you have in place. When preferential treatment is given to friends or relatives of the owner/manager, employees quickly grow resentful. Credibility is lost when consistency is not followed.

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- 6 Fair and Equitable Wages.** Check your pay rates against the competition. Be honest with yourself. Although fair pay is not generally the top priority of most employees, it is a factor.

Is it worth a few pennies an hour to lose your best employees? The Center for Hospitality Research at Cornell University estimated the average cost of turning over just one employee is about \$5000. That’s what it costs to recruit and train a replacement, as well as the loss of productivity while the position is unstaffed.

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- 7 Employee Surveys and Polls.** From time to time, take the “temperature” of your organization and be open to the ideas and suggestions of your employees. Make their reasonable needs and desires a priority and then follow through on them. The rewards you reap will be surprising.

# Tips to Attracting & Hiring Quality Employees

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## **Word of Mouth.**

Let your “top” employees be your best resource. If you create the right environment, your current employees will be more than happy to recommend future employees. An incentive program for referrals is often helpful and usually is less costly than running ads.

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## **Treat Future Candidates as Fairly as Current Employees.**

Even if your organization is not the right fit for a particular candidate, if he/she is treated with respect and courtesy through the interview process, they may refer someone that may have an interest.

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## **Set Specific Dates and Times for Interviews.**

This will set a tone of professionalism and accountability from the start.

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## **Hire for Personality. Train for Skill.**

Most of the tasks required in your organization do not require the skill of a “rocket scientist” or “brain surgeon.” Hire people who exhibit a willingness to learn and have personalities that fit with your culture.

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## **Look for Traits of Discipline.**

Take time to look at the resume or application of the candidate. Look for: correct spelling, correct grammar, and penmanship. Generally you can tell if the candidate is just looking for a pay check or is serious about employment.

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## **Be Clear About Expectations.**

Be thorough about the requirements of the position. Do not mislead the candidate about the job requirements, pay scale, company benefits, or any other information he/she may need to know.

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## **Interview Location and Interruptions.**

Conduct the interview in a location that will limit distractions and interruptions.

