

KEEPING KEY NURSERY PERSONNEL HAPPY AND PRODUCTIVE

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Good, happy, properly-trained and motivated people in the right positions are the key to company growth and success. Measuring and reporting work results is important both to the company and to individuals working singly and in teams. Considerate personnel management practices should allow employers and employees to have excellent satisfying careers in the best business in America.

Following is an outline of what we consider the key elements in a management program that will give these results.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURE

- I. Selection process:** Choosing the proper person to fill a clearly defined need.
 - A. Have an effective selection process in place with many steps to be carried out with diligence, patience, and thoroughness.
 - B. Develop a job description.
 - C. Review r 'ésumé and match requirements with qualifications.
 - D. Conduct a structured interview with individual superiors and group peers, demonstrate skills needed, have an informal social.
 - 1) Ask how the applicant would solve problems.
 - 2) Ask for self-evaluation.
 - a) Good qualifications.
 - b) Need improvement.
 - 3) Use open-ended questions that cannot be answered yes or no.
 - E. Rank candidates; hire best to fill job.
- II. Orientation**
 - A. First day.
 - 1) Introduce to peers and reports required.
 - 2) Go through company handbook.
 - 3) Show company video tape if you have one.
 - 4) Talk about company history and culture.
 - 5) Tell employee what is expected of him.
 - a) Give him another copy and review his job description.

- b) Inform employee on important points of job.
- B. Follow-up periodically.
 - 1) Have "I want to help you" attitude.
 - 2) Display open-door policy.
 - 3) Pat on back; boost morale.
 - 4) Be friendly: inquire as to family, school, and housing, particularly if employee was relocated from another area.

III. Evaluation and feedback

- A. Give all employees evaluations both formally and informally.
- B. Praise them for excellent performance.
Pats on back and "attaboys" will improve morale and productivity.
- C. For "areas needing improvement" begin on a positive note, then:
 - 1) Discuss the area of needed improvement.
 - 2) Suggest a way to correct or improve.
 - 3) Set time-frames for achieving improvement.
 - 4) End on positive note.
 - 5) Do not ignore "areas needing improvement" in evaluations.

IV. Competitive pay and benefits.

- A. Ability to attract better people is increased with competitive pay and benefits.
 - 1) Paying below market salaries will keep your employees on edge and keep them receptive to any offer at any time.
 - 2) Beware of hiring an employee for far less than they received from their prior job. They won't be satisfied, and you may be hiring a lemon.
 - 3) Offer incentives.
 - a) Bonus, equity positions, a key results plan, other . . .
 - b) Base on quantifiable things such as profits, cost reductions, low unit costs, less accidents, marketing, unit sales, or production plans.
 - c) Give plans in writing.
 - d) Make sure they are fair and designed to motivate employees to high sustained performance.
 - 4) Provide a competitive health care plan.
 - 5) Provide any other benefits that your competitive situation demands or that you can justify.

Check through your Chamber of Commerce' Existing Industry Committee to compare area businesses' benefit plans. They vary

widely by area, industry, and position of employee. Example: Benefits may include paid holidays and vacations, insurance, relocation expenses, autos for personal use, appreciation dinners, awards night, special recognition, pay during jury duty, and military reserve duty.

V. Promote team concept.

- A. Many major companies are surviving because they have adopted a team management approach.
 - 1) Sense of belonging is just about as important as dollars to employees.
 - 2) Encourage team members to participate in problem solving; their ideas are excellent; many heads are better than one or two.
 - 3) Make employees feel their thoughts as well as their work are greatly appreciated.
 - 4) Integrated Quality Management (IQM) can be the basis of a company mission statement. Employees working together, and with management, are essential to the success of such a program.
- B. Promote team concept continuously and strive for continuous improvement at every level of operations.

VI. Training

- A. Convince your employees of your sincere desire to see them grow on job.
- B. Plan training for employees both on job site and away that will broaden them. Give them the opportunity to
 - 1) Attend IPPS meetings.
 - 2) Attend seminars sponsored by groups such as:
 - a) American Nursery Association
 - b) Cooperative Extension Service
 - c) Other University personnel or units
- C. Training increases effectiveness, gives job satisfaction, and improves morale.