

# The Secret to Retaining Good Staff

By Laurie Guest

During my years as a professional speaker and trainer, I found that successful businesses had some very basic things in common. One factor that seemed similar, no matter what industry they were in, was their ability to retain good staff.

Often I am asked if there is secret to finding and retaining good staff. Yes there is and here are just a few common sense ideas that are often overlooked by employers.

## **1. Appreciate good work.**

The best seller *The One Minute Manager*, reminds us to “catch people doing something right.” How true that is. When is that last time you gave a sincere thank you to the staff for arriving early to open, staying late to close or making your day go smoothly? A quick thanks yelled over your shoulder as you’re halfway out the door doesn’t count. Take the time for sincere gratitude.

## **2. Acknowledge productivity**

The best way to acknowledge hard work is to offer a reward of their choosing. The key to this idea is to find out from each staff member what his or her idea of a “reward” would be. Donuts for breakfast may not always be the extra special treat you hope. Maybe one person would like a small cash bonus while a working mother might appreciate time off to catch her child’s soccer game on a Saturday afternoon. Increased customer volume is a direct benefit to the owner. The staff on the other hand may only see it as more work. Balance it out with an individualized reward system that increases morale.

## **3. Provide continuing education on a regular basis.**

Make it a top priority to send your staff to educational programs in your industry. Encourage your team to become a member of any state or local organizations that are pertinent to your product or service. If there isn’t such a thing then create “on-site” teaching moments. Employees that feel they are growing in their position will stay longer. You wouldn’t think of denying your children a chance to go to school, yet many staff people are denied “work schooling” that could make a big difference to their careers.

## **4. Empowerment makes a difference.**

Most often when I lecture, a resource table is provided so attendees can pick up all types of professional development tapes, articles and reference materials. Included in the selection is a copy of an article I wrote for a trade journal several years ago entitled, “Empower Your Staff.” I can’t tell you how many times people have stopped me in the hall afterwards to share with me their frustrations on not being “allowed” to do more in their place of business. The entire article is available for

downloading on this website. So if you need help in this area, be sure to take a peak at that article.

### **5. Build opportunities for growth.**

Plan annual retreats and develop long-term action plans. Focus on personal growth for each team member along with business goals. Not sure how to accomplish this task? Give me a call and I'll show you the way.

In summary, if you want to know how to find and keep good people, think of it like a good marriage. Find staff people who have similar interests and values and then treat them like treasured family members. Open communication, mutual respect, time for fun and plans for a future together, will build a long-term professional relationship.

Employees, what should you do if your boss doesn't read or follow any of these suggestions? Believe it or not, you can cover each of these tips yourself. Appreciate good work of your coworkers with praise or maybe an occasional low-cost reward. Invest in your own self-development even if you must pay your own way. Find opportunities to make decisions for the business that help the bottom line and make plans for personal growth.

For more information on Laurie's programs and services, visit [www.careercafe.biz](http://www.careercafe.biz) or call her toll free at 866-977-7325 and request a brochure.

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