



EMPLOYEE RETENTION Rules!

52 ways to reduce employee turnover

by HAROLD C. LLOYD

illustrated by STEVE HICKNER

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BRIGANTINE MEDIA

The Rules

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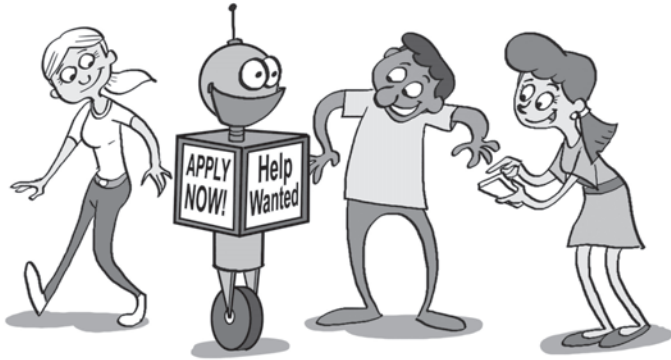
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RULE 1



Always
recruit.
Always!



If you are like most retailers, you are always in need of good employees. But are you always in recruitment mode?

I advocate a 24/7 recruiting effort. Even when your company is at full employment, there are probably a few current employees who aren't performing

as you would like. Recruiting the best employees possible is the ultimate goal. Continue recruiting until that goal is met.

Sure, there are plenty of recruiting websites like Monster, LinkedIn, Snagajob, ZipRecruiter, Indeed, Job.com, and more. But you can't rely on them exclusively to find all the employees you need.

Make sure all your managers have business cards to offer potential employees they might meet in or outside the store. Teach your front-end management where the employment applications are kept and how to administer a brief but insightful preliminary interview and, if applicable, how to direct the candidate to your newly remodeled employment kiosk. Have professionally made signs—not a Sharpie on a shopping bag—that say “Join Our Family!” or “Join the Team!” (*never* “Help Wanted”), and post them strategically in the store. Offer an employee referral bonus to current employees who refer a friend who gets hired. Meet with high school counselors and Chamber of Commerce officials periodically to be at their top of mind when they are trying to help a student or new resident in the community find a job.

Make a positive, professional, and persistent effort to recruit every day.

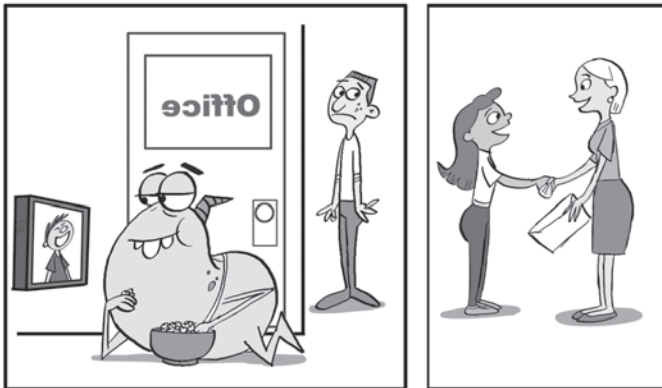
RULE 9

Be there on Day One!

The store manager should be there on Day One to greet the new employee at the front door. Remember, first impressions count.

Start the employee's first day with a warm greeting from the store manager. Have the manager give the new employee a tour of the store, then spend a bit of time in the office. At the end of the newbie's first shift, the manager and the employee should have a closing conversation.

Of course, a store manager has a lot to do every day. But if our employees are our most important



assets, and if we have a real desire to retain employees, commit 72 minutes to a new employee's first day. That's right, 72 minutes. Here's how it breaks down:

- 1 A two-minute greeting at the front door. The store manager should set an alarm to remind him to be near the front of the store when the new employee is scheduled to start. Give the employee a big welcome and a "thanks for being on time" (or some immediate coaching if the employee is late).
- 2 A thirty-minute store tour (see Rule 12) to acquaint the employee with the store and make clear the store's key points of difference from the competition.
- 3 Thirty minutes in the manager's office to review the employee's employment packet containing the employee handbook, the promises and expectation page (see Rule 13) and maybe even a short discussion of the company's mission statement and operating principles.
- 4 In the last ten minutes of the new employee's shift, the department manager should escort the employee to the store manager's office for a short debriefing about the events of the first day (see Rule 14).

Often, the stress of the first day on the job can be overwhelming to a new employee, especially if it is his very first job. Sometimes a new employee decides not to return for the second day.

Many employers think someone who quits within the first few days is at fault. But I think it is more likely that the employee has been scared off. Retail is not easy, and many managers fail to realize how tough the first few days on a new job can be.

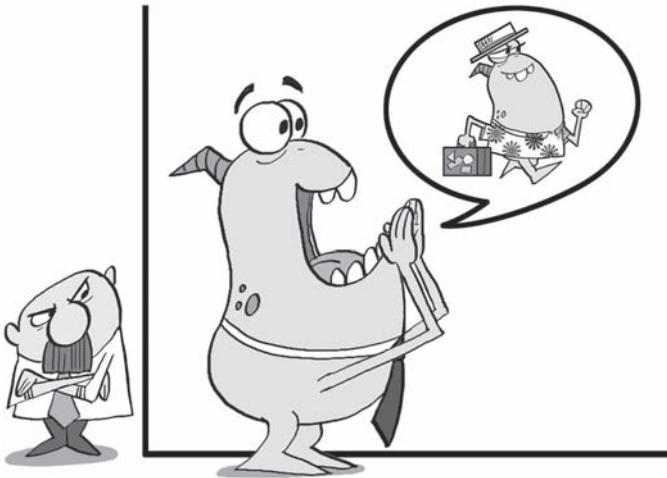
Think of a newbie as an infant or toddler who needs a lot of attention early on. Invest 72 minutes on Day One. Your efforts will pay off later as your new employee gets more comfortable and confident in the job.

RULE 37

Be gracious about vacations.

Every company has vacation policies that allow employees to take time off after working some significant period of time—sometimes after six months, or usually, a whole year. When employees take their vacation time, make sure everyone is wishing them “bon voyage,” not teasing them with these kinds of comments:

“Time off? When do you work?”



“You’re off so much, you’re making it easy for us to get used to doing the job without you.”

“It must be nice . . . I wish I could go on vacation!”

“Another vacation? Already?”

Remember, employees who are able to take vacation time are not no-shows, short-timers, or below-average performers. They are your most loyal and dedicated staff members. They have been with you the longest to earn these vacation benefits. They are people who show up every day, year after year.

And what do they get in return? Teasing, sarcasm, and jokes that call into question their loyalty and work ethic, just for using a company benefit that is offered to everyone—earned time off.

Whenever I hear such remarks, I shut down any further conversation, apologize to the recipient, and verbally discipline the source in private right away. Employees won’t feel appreciated when they are belittled for redeeming an earned company benefit.

Change your culture—celebrate upcoming vacations and thank long-time employees who have earned their time off.