



Creating a Loyal Workforce 4 Secrets Successful Companies Know About Hiring

Are you experiencing high turnover?
Is your productivity what it should be?
Do you suffer from communication breakdowns?

You may not be hiring the right people...

In a world where there is little competitive advantage in price, product and process, companies who are on the cutting edge utilize the other “P”, their People. By focusing on their *People* and using proven methods to earn and keep the loyalty of their employees, these companies have discovered that they are able to stay ahead of their competition, regardless of the business. This blog, the first in a series of “Loyalty Builders”, outlines the methods successful companies like Southwest Airlines use to build loyal employee cultures.

It starts with hiring. **Hire for attitude, train for skill.** What does it really mean? When a job needs to be filled quickly, most people will be tempted to put a “warm body” in the position to eliminate the strain of the extra work on the rest of the team. This more often than not results in a bad hire, making your problem worse.

During my 15 years with Southwest Airlines, we lived by the concept of “hire for attitude, train for skill”. As a result, we had an excellent source of prequalified candidates. Like Southwest Airlines, many successful companies know that the following considerations are important when hiring:

1) What kind of employee are you looking for? Start by looking at your company’s mission statement (if you don’t have one, write one). For example successful customer service companies look for people who have a good sense of humor. They may also look for people who take others’ needs into account before their own. Think about why you would want those traits. For example, if you hire someone who is other-oriented, they may be more apt to put themselves in the customer’s shoes or be better team players. If you hire someone who possesses a good sense of humor, they may be more adept at handling stressful situations or creating a more team-friendly environment. To determine what kind of traits you are looking for in your organization, begin by reviewing your company’s mission statement and values.



2) Where do you find employees that fit your culture?

Target your employment ads to appeal to the type of person you want to attract. Want someone with a good sense of humor? Make your ad humorous. Want someone with a caring attitude? Show that on your ad. Don't overlook one of the most important sourcing channels - your own employees. Who better than they know what traits you need? Also, take some time to think about what people outside your organization think about your company as an employer. What "branding" image exists about your company? Walk into a grocery store or around your community with your company uniform and see if anyone makes a comment. Ask people what they think of your company then be prepared to act on what you hear. With a good employer-branding image, your recruiting process will be well on its way. And, by acting on what you hear, it gives you the opportunity to make some changes if necessary.

3) What questions should you ask in the interview? Your interview process should include the Human Resources department (if you have one), someone from the team the person will work with, and a supervisor or leader from that same team. These employees should have received basic interview training prior to being in the interview. Lessons in Loyalty can give you guidelines. This ensures the correct questions are asked and it also ensures your questions don't get you into legal trouble.

Use behavioral interviewing questions. These are questions that ask for specific examples of what the candidate has done, not what they would do. For example, if you have identified humor as one of the traits you are seeking, try probing with the following: "Tell me about a time you used humor to defuse a difficult customer situation". This makes the candidate think of a real scenario which they have experienced versus inventing a "what if". Want to know if they are good team players? Use "Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond for one of your team members". Once you have concluded the interview, make sure all parties involved in the interview review and discuss the candidate and come to a decision as to whether to offer this person the job or not. **Remember to always treat the applicant as a customer, no matter what.** Many of your applicants probably are customers and you want to keep them as such. Maintain good communication throughout the interview process. Treat them with the same respect, whether they get the job or not. They will remember.

4) Did you make the job offer memorable? Employees never forget the moment they are offered a job they really want. Do you remember where you were when you got the call offering you your current job? Think about what is going through their mind...they can now pay their bills, they can send their family on a vacation, they can start saving money again... You can use that excitement to create a basis for building that loyalty from the beginning. Phone calls are much better than letters because this not only gives the company the opportunity to convey their excitement about hiring the new employee, but it also gives the employee an opportunity to share in the excitement and ask questions. You want them to remember that moment. It makes their first interaction as an "employee" an exciting one.

Hiring... the first step towards the creation of a loyal employee. Strive to keep the new hire excitement in all your employees. With this blog series, you will learn the steps to creating and maintaining that excitement. In my next blog I'll give you tips on how to immerse that new hire in your culture right away.

Loyaltize Your Organization... a unique workshop designed to give participants the blueprint for creating a loyal culture... visit our website www.lessonsinyalty.com for more information.