



Creating a Loyal Workforce 4 Secrets Successful Companies Know About **Onboarding**

**Are you experiencing high turnover within 90 days of hire?
Is the productivity and sense of loyalty from your new hires what it should be?
Are your new hires glad they made the decision to work for you?**

You may not be welcoming your new employees effectively...

In last month's blog we discussed the first in a series of building a loyal workforce: Hiring Right. So, now that you've hired them, how do you make sure that your new hire experiences the best *first day*, the best *first month*, and the best *first year*? Read on as I share the top four secrets successful companies use to ensure that employee loyalty is present from day one. When is an employee the most excited to be at your company? The answer should be on day one! In the four secrets below, you will discover how to keep that new hire excitement in your employees and turn it into real long-term loyalty. Let's talk about **Onboarding**.

- 1) **Make them feel part of the "family" before they show up:** You've made the job offer and they've accepted. Now, the loyalty work begins. Make them feel special. Send a congratulatory card to their home from you and the team. Email them with messages about the company, team, and other aspects of their new career. Send a company video to their homes. Send goodie bags of company material. In this way not only do you communicate your excitement to the future employee, now you are involving their families. After all, the families are the ones who have to tolerate their loved one working long hours, traveling, and dividing their focus between home and office. So include them from the start too. And, don't make the mistake of thinking electronic communication is enough...take the time to add that old-fashioned personal touch and you will differentiate yourself from your competitors. At Southwest Airlines we once hired an astronaut. We sent a team of pilots to his home in Houston to welcome him aboard. That pilot never forgot his memorable welcome and Southwest received some great media coverage to boot!
- 2) **Make their first day memorable:** If you're a parent, compare this technique to preparing for a newborn. As you bring the baby home from the hospital you don't start thinking, "I've got to buy a crib, baby clothes, etc.". You have most likely been preparing for months, so by the time you walk into your home your newborn has everything they need. Your new employee should be no different. You've gone to a lot of time and effort to find and hire them, now show them that you're glad they are here. Decorate their cube/office with a welcome sign. Fill a new trash bin with all their needed office supplies and have it sitting on their desk. Take them to lunch. Introduce them to their coworkers. As I mention in my book "Lesson in Loyalty", one of my most memorable "first days" was when I showed up to be a facilitator at the University for People, and the entire department was on hand to cook me a pancake breakfast! I never forgot it. A friend of mine started a new job last

month. She came home excited after her first day because her nameplate was already on her door. No big deal, right? Well to her it was, especially since she had a difficult last name to spell and they got it right. At Southwest Airlines the VP of IT was adamant that each new team member experience a memorable first day. If, later, when the VP asked the new hire about their first day and it was nothing special, the manager of that department had to wear a bunny suit for a full day. It was a great way to ensure the manager didn't forget the importance of that first day. It usually only took one day of wearing the bunny suit to ensure they got it right with the next new hire!

- 3) **New Hire Orientation...it's not just for the big guys:** Large companies like Southwest Airlines typically have weekly orientation sessions where new hires attend a fun-filled daylong session to learn about the company, benefits and meet each other. I work with small companies who don't hire large numbers of employees, therefore don't see the need for a formal New Hire Orientation. Don't make that mistake. If you hire one employee, you need a new hire orientation process. You want that employee to start feeling like an "owner" from the start. This does not mean it needs to take a lot of your time nor cost a lot of money. Put yourself in the new employee's shoes. What would you want and need to know to make sure you feel comfortable, included and a part of the company? Introduction to benefits, values and organizational structure, a history of the company, and a high level introduction to the financial aspects are usually a good place to start. Introduce a "buddy life line". Assign a star employee to guide them through this process. This method honors the star employee while giving the new hire the support they need.
- 4) **Keep the new hire on fire:** After step three, many companies think the welcoming of the new hire is done. Successful organizations, however, know the road to building a long-term loyal team member is just beginning. They have things in place for month one, month six, and up to month twelve. They know that to keep that new hire "on fire" they cannot stop their efforts after week one. I have implemented programs that include selecting random new hires every quarter and either hosting a luncheon for the new hires or inviting them to lunch. The objective of the lunch is to ask the new hire for feedback about the company. "Are we the company you hired on to work for?" "Are there things we could improve? Would you recommend your friend/family member for a job here?" Some companies ensure they have "days in the field", where the new hire gets to experience the jobs their "internal" customers perform. Others put new hires on committees, to ensure they get the newer employees' viewpoints. What successful organizations realize is that to keep that new hire spirit alive, they must touch base with the new hire monthly, at least for the first six months.

So, don't just conduct "exit interviews" to determine why your new hires are leaving. It's way too late by that time. Be proactive and keep your new hire excited. Implement these secrets from organizations whose turnover is among the lowest in their industry and treat your new hires like customers. The loyalty you build in them will be mirrored in great teamwork, great customer service and a much better bottom line.

In our next blog, we will discuss the four secrets "loyalty-centric leaders" know that create loyal teams.

Until next time,
Loyally yours...The Loyalty Lady

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