



How Do I Become an Employer of Choice? (And Does It Really Matter?)

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Steven A. Palazzolo

Practices
Human Resources Services
Labor and Employment

At a time when an ad for a single manufacturing employee can draw thousands of applicants, does it really matter what employees think of your company?

Employers can help relieve some of the burden of rising gas prices on the daily commute with a little help from the Internal Revenue Service.

High unemployment means employers can have their pick of workers, and if one doesn't succeed another 999 are waiting to take the position. So should employers care if their company is one that employees want to work for, or whether workers will leave other companies to come there?

The short answer is yes. No matter how many employees are in the market, there will always be competition for the best and brightest. The real question is whether your organization is acquiring and keeping talent, or simply staffing a workforce.

According to Claire Raines in her book, *Connecting Generations: The Sourcebook*, the new breed of employees are:

". . . the hottest commodity on the job market since Rosie the Riveter. They're sociable, optimistic, talented, well-educated, collaborative, open-minded, influential, and achievement-oriented. They've always felt sought after, needed, indispensable. They are arriving in the workplace with higher expectations than any generation before them — and they're so well connected that, if an employer doesn't match those expectations, they can tell thousands of their cohorts with one click of the mouse. They're the Millennial Generation. Born between 1980 and 2000, they're a generation nearly as large as the Baby Boom, and they're charged with potential. They're variously called the Internet Generation, Echo Boomers, the Boomlet, Nexters, Generation Y, the Nintendo Generation, the Digital Generation, and, in Canada, the Sunshine Generation. But several thousand of them sent suggestions about what they want to be

called to Peter Jennings at abcnews.com, and "Millennials" was the clear winner.

"In this uncertain economy and highly competitive business environment, companies across North America recognize that the differentiator is their people. Those organizations that emerge as winners in the battle for talent will have their fingers on the pulse of this newest generation. They'll design specific techniques for recruiting, managing, motivating, and retaining them."

Claire Raines is not the only person out there who thinks this way. Lots of experts say the very same thing. Here's the point: For these new, bright employees, you can't rely on just pay to get and keep them and, frankly, when you offer them job security they just don't care. You need to offer more. You need to be an **Employer of Choice**.

But the process isn't simple. You need to create a culture that develops and nurtures leaders that these people will follow and that provides for institutional leadership. You need to make sure that you are getting and keeping the right people. And you need to make sure that those people have a sense of personal worth that emanates from their careers. Of course, you also need to have fair compensation and reasonable, meaningful benefits.

How do you know if you have this? Sandy Asch, author of *Excellence at Work — The Six Keys to Inspire Passion in the Workplace*, suggests you ask yourself these questions:

- Do your employees love to work for your company?
- Are employees deeply engaged?
- Is employees' full potential being realized?
- Are employees planning on staying with your company?
- Are communications open, honest, positive and future-focused?
- Are people proactive and see, own and act on problems quickly and efficiently?
- Are truth telling and risk taking encouraged and rewarded?
- Is there a high level of cooperation and collaboration?
- Are people respectful and seek to bring out the best in each other?
- Is there a healthy work-life balance?
- Do employees have energy and passion?
- Do employees trust and respect their managers and feel valued and supported?
- Are your leaders trusted and respected?
- Are employees treated fairly?
- Are employees regularly rewarded and recognized for good

performance?

- Are there opportunities for growth and development?
- Are employees encouraged to contribute and make a difference?
- Are employees proud to work for your organization?
- Would your employees recommend your company to their friends as a good place to work?

If this is something to which your company aspires, there are some steps you can take. First, start by asking the above questions and getting some honest answers. Then, come to our seminar on September 11, 2008. We are going to spend a lot of time helping you understand these issues and answering your questions on how to be an **Employer of Choice**. We have experience working with many **Employers of Choice**, helping them to build the programs and processes that got them there. We think we can help you, too. Come to the seminar and find out.
