

HOW TO KEEP YOUR STAFF

Hannah McNamara invites you to uncover a management cost that is often hidden, and reveals how Executive Coaching offers a proven solution

Staff turnover is a stealth cost. Even if it appears in your annual budget at a price between £4000 and £6000 for each replacement, the significant hidden costs in lost productivity, reduced morale and poor performance may not be quantified.

You may be relieved to replace those who 'don't fit and won't fit'. But what about staff who are important cogs in the wheel of your business and who suddenly hand in their notice? Unless you have a policy of immediate departure with financial adjustment in lieu of notice, they each have an opportunity to spread dissent among their colleagues, to glean company information of use to their new employer and even to liberate your stationery and equipment. The individual who was once 'the perfect candidate' can metamorphose into 'a colleague from hell'.

This situation is damaging enough when people at a low level depart with their skills and experience. It can be catastrophic when your best senior people decide to move on. The solution is to avoid the situation arising in the first place. This is an area where executive coaching has a proven track record of success.

Unlike consultancy, which frequently deals with a single issue and makes recommendations for implementation, coaching is a cost effective alternative that

equips you and your management team with skills that can last a lifetime. If consultancy provides a fish to a hungry individual, coaching shows how you can catch their own fish forever.

Research by the International Coach Federation indicates that 68% of employees who have been coached demonstrate increased self awareness, 57% report reduced stress (with commensurate reductions in sickness absence). Goal setting and project completion also improve significantly. Your staff will be less inclined to look elsewhere if they feel that they are truly valued, when they are motivated with an understanding of your organisation's ethos, values and objectives and, when they have the optimum possible responsibility for their own workload.

Although you will clearly have a corporate agenda which can be positively delivered during coaching, the process is invaluable in promoting an understanding and awareness of shorter term issues. These might involve relocation, reorganisation, expansion, take-over or any other change-management situations. Some staff members will also appreciate the opportunity to discuss their personal issues with a coach, an option that you could offer as a free or subsidised component of your staff benefits package.

Executive coaching is undeniably effective when it is delivered to small groups. This approach however, can raise issues of confidentiality and your staff will benefit even more from one-to-one sessions where they can open up completely about

their hopes, limitations and challenges with no fear of adverse comeback. The ideal situation is to introduce the coaching concept within a small group, to outline the agenda and where any questions can be asked and then, to follow this up with totally confidential individual sessions.

Coaching delivers practical and effective solutions that create quantified and qualified results. Indeed, a coach is totally focused on results. When you use a coach you are assured of absolute confidentiality. Your coach will not spend time raking over old coals and past issues. You can only begin a new approach from where you are now and with close attention to where you aim to be by a given future date.

These results have fuelled the phenomenal growth of coaching over the last decade. With coaches in practice in almost every town, there will be one near you. The majority will be delighted to discuss the options with you, free of any commitment, cost or obligation.

Your choice is clear. You can do nothing and hope for the best, which is not the mark of a professional, pro-active PA, or, you can suggest that your boss explores the undeniable benefits of executive coaching as a valuable tool to significantly reduce the impact of the stealth costs of staff replacement. **E**

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