

tomorrow's company *in* Scotland



a future for business which makes equal sense to staff, shareholders and society

in association with Scottish Business in the Community

Developing a high performance organisation

How do you recruit and keep the very best? Ken Dalton, CEO, Faber Maunsell.

16th March 2006 at the Scottish Parliament

Key themes and practical actions

Flexible & rewarding working practices - "the more you give the more you get back in return" from the employee. Recognising the 'value' contribution from engaged employees and the 'costs' of the loss of expertise, experience and the recruitment process is key in understanding why a flexible approach is commercially sensible. Potential areas to look at include allowing people to work from home, job shares, health at work schemes, flexible attitude to requesting time off, employee awards, birthday holidays, and other non-financially based incentives.

Possible actions:

- * Set up a small test group [one or two locations] to see what staff want and their areas of interest. Start from 'where are we now?'
- * Consider gearing incentives to length of service.

Leadership - the actions, example set, and demonstrable belief in the vision and values by senior leadership is key to achieving an engaged workforce. "People leave due to the actions of leaders."

Possible actions:

- * The leader should communicate the vision and values of the company face to face with all employees at least annually, and then be seen to live by them
- * Try offering something that is simple and see it through. Then check with staff how it goes down and, if successful, tackle something more complex.

Good communication - clear aims, objectives, mission and vision communicated externally and internally from the top (not just through tools such as the intranet and newsletters but face-to-face team briefings from senior managers) so that everyone understands where the organisation is going.

Possible actions:

- * Much more emphasis on 'face to face' rather than just intranet or newsletters. People have to 'get a feel' for the senior manager and their commitment - 'do they walk the talk?'

Attracting key talent - senior members of staff need to be involved in the induction process to show that it is a priority to the company. Staff must be empowered to communicate externally the organisation's unique selling points and success stories to differentiate it from its competitors.

Possible actions:

- * Look at ways to raise the profile of the business and consistently communicate 'vision and values'. Measure the impact before and after with clients and staff
- * A leadership figure within the company should meet with new members of staff soon after joining (e.g. within six months), either individually (where possible) or in small groups to tell them his view of the business and to hear from them their impressions of the business and the induction process
- * Involve senior members of staff in the recruitment process making sure that they know that the interview process is as much about selling the company as it is about checking the candidate is right.

Cultivate a good working environment - a no blame culture, i.e. employees are not afraid to make suggestions or make mistakes then ask for help when they do. It is important to train line managers in dealing with people and to have proper structures in place to respond to staff evaluations/forums.

Possible actions:

- * Managers could hold regular (e.g. 1 - 3 monthly) review meetings with each direct report to discuss how specific situations have been handled and how/if they could have been handled differently. Choose examples that include the good, the bad and the ugly. This encourages open debate of the merits of alternative approaches to issues. This can lead to better discussion as an issue is unfolding in the future
- * Set up a briefing to show benefits of a 'no blame' culture with an 'open source' idea.

Consistency - empowering staff with 'who' you are, requires a consistent approach in all activities. Employees can only buy-in to the values of an organisation when those values are clearly and consistently delivered.

Possible actions:

- * Make sure you practice what you preach.

Volunteering - raises morale by breaking down barriers between different levels in the organisation, allows people from different departments to meet and can help find hidden talent by challenging their personal development/leadership skills.

Possible actions:

- * Engage staff through focus groups to find out what areas the staff would like to engage in
- * Make a start. Pick a local cause, easy for all to relate to, and give it a go
- * SBC can provide advice on exactly how to.

Engagement - "captures the discretionary effort". An organisation's success requires the efficient and effective use of the resources available to it and that is only possible, in the long term, when you can truly engage your staff in organisational objectives.

Possible actions:

- * Do all the above and engagement will follow!!