

Keep Your Talent From Jumping Ship

By Jonathan Sweet



When it comes to managing employee turnover and keeping workers happy, employers have had it pretty good the last few years. The state of the economy has made it difficult for unhappy employees to find other opportunities. Many companies have taken advantage of this to see just how much work they can squeeze out of the few employees left.

As the Editor in Chief of *Professional Remodeler* magazine, I've witnessed first hand that it's been no different in the remodeling industry. When we did reader studies during the boom years, finding and keeping good employees was always at the top of the list of subjects remodelers were concerned about. Last year, it ranked dead last out of 17 categories.

True, many companies no longer have many (or any) employees, but this attitude of "they should be happy to get a paycheck" is also much too prevalent.

You may be thinking the same thing — but that can be a huge mistake. Irwin Keller, chief economist at Marketwatch.com, says "2012 is the year of the payoff." That is, as the job market slowly recovers, unmotivated employees will quit or at the very least not keep up the incredible productivity they have over the last few years. Even if there aren't jobs in the industry, many can go somewhere else for that new opportunity.

Employee Appreciation Day

Here are a few facts to chew on:

- For the first time since the recession started, the number of people voluntarily quitting has

surpassed the number fired or discharged, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

- In a CareerBuilder study, 34 percent of companies reported that voluntary turnover increased in 2011 and 43 percent said they are worried top talent will jump ship in 2012.
- In a recent survey by Right Management, 84 percent of employees said they planned to look for a new job, up from 60 percent just a year earlier.

Think about the culture you've created. Is your company a place people want to come to every day? Do you have toxic employees or managers?

Can you start to restore some of the benefits that have been cut over the last few years? Can you finally unfreeze salaries? Can you look for other ways to recognize employees' hard work?

It's not always about money — it's also about feeling appreciated. While a livable wage is a given requirement, problems with management, a lack of opportunity for advancement and overwork and burnout are top reasons cited when people leave.

Most employees aren't going to accept "we're all in this together" for much longer. Make 2012 the year you keep your best employees, not lose them. **LGR**



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