



KATHLEEN RICH-NEW

What are Local Companies Doing To Keep Employees Happy?

It may surprise you to learn that, according to the Gallup Organization, money is not a tool that keeps employees happily working for you, assuming of course you are paying competitively. Robert Suttles, VP of Human Resources of Health First says, "Think of your best and your weakest employees. What difference would you see, long-term, if you doubled their pay?" His point is that you may see a short-term burst of productivity, but all the research and personal experience indicates a long-term change is not created by more money.

Health First is focused on building a culture that grows employee engagement, performance and satisfaction. They have used Gallup's Q12 Survey over the last seven years to attract and retain talented employees and to improve operating results. The Q12 principles help managers focus on the things that directly affect employee engagement. Managers are trained to consider the employee's best strengths in the workplace and then partner with them to determine the best way to leverage those strengths effectively. Suttles said, "The managers who 'buy in' and implement the Q12 principles effectively see significant results."

For example, when the HR department lost one Benefits Analyst in a working group of four, the manager worked with her team to redesign their jobs to match the strengths of the three remaining

employees. One liked the computer and database work and another enjoyed interfacing directly with employees. Their jobs were redesigned and they recruited for an employee whose interests matched the open job. Productivity and morale is reported to be exceptional.

Suttles said they have seen measurable results building slowly over several years. He said, "The environment has shifted dramatically; productivity is up, turnover is down, injuries have been cut by more than half reducing our Workers Compensation costs, and our average margin has increased over the five years we have been committed to the Q12 principles." The increase in results has come from focusing on the effective implementation of the Q12 principles and on beginning to find ways to leverage their employees' unique strengths and talents.

Jeff Shuman, VP of Human Resources and Corporate Relations, said Harris Corporation's cultural emphasis is on collaboration, teamwork and inclusion. Employees connect on many levels with each other and they know how they fit into the company.

Also using the Q12 principals for the last three years, Shuman said, "It is amazing that a dozen questions can provide reliable information to identify the employees that are engaged or not engaged (which may change day-to-day), and those who are totally disengaged." Gallup says disengaged employees are actively unhappy.

Focused on increasing the level of employee engagement, Harris helps employees answer the question, "Why is this job important and how does it relate overall?"

One customer they brought in to talk with employees was a National Guardsman who was in New Orleans for Hurricane Katrina. The soldier said they were in 4 inches of water and in less than a minute, it was over 8 feet.

They were able to save the lives of those around them, but their equipment was all underwater. They returned and dove

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into the murky waters and were able to pull their Harris radios out of the Humvees. After replacing the batteries, the radios worked perfectly and became the lifeline of their communications. When employees understand the importance of their work, they become more engaged and committed to doing quality work. Remember there is no such thing as happy customers with unhappy employees.

Gallup's Q12 Index

The Gallup Organization's research shows a correlation between the responses to these 12 questions and business outcomes that include revenue, profitability, customer loyalty, and employee retention.

- > Do you know what is expected of you at work?
- > Do you have the materials and equipment to do your work right?
- > At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?
- > In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?
- > Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?
- > Is there someone at work who encourages your development?
- > At work, do your opinions seem to count?
- > Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?
- > Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?
- > Do you have a best friend at work?
- > In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?
- > In the last year have you had opportunities to learn and grow?

Kathleen Rich-New is a coach, speaker and human resources consultant. As a coach she works with women in corporate American and business owners. As a consultant she specializes in helping companies attract and retain top-performing employees. She is the Chair of Brevard's Best Place to Work Survey and an adjunct professor at Webster University's Graduate School of Business. Kathleen is co-author of "Looking for the Good Stuff... a guide to enjoying and appreciating life". Contact her at 321.452.7308 or KRN@clarityworks.biz. Learn more at www.ClarityWorks.biz.

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