

GROWERTALKS

Features

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Mastering Training & Development

Ben Molenda

As we enter a demanding time of year, training and development of your team may not be near the forefront of your to-do list, but I can guarantee it's top of mind for nearly all of your team members.

If you're one of the company leaders who respond to surveys of our industry's most impactful challenges (thank you for participating) and you answer that the top -ranked challenge is "labor," it may be helpful to better understand your employees' motivation and passion to alleviate your labor challenge.



Disclaimer: I get it! No one works like they used to. You devoted countless hours of blood, sweat and tears to get where you are. The fact is that technology and equipment efficiency have made certain things easier for upcoming generations. The more you can align and develop a person with their areas of passion, the harder they'll work for you simply because they enjoy their work.

Stress leads to impatience

Spring in our industry is tough. It's stressful for owners who always have the bottom line in mind when making decisions. It's stressful for company leaders who have KPIs to meet. It's stressful for mid-level managers and individual contributors who work increased hours to meet company leadership and customer expectations. It's normal to experience frustration during this time of year. Fatigue and familiarity set in, resulting in impatience related to SOPs, interpersonal interaction, and individual rewards and advancement.

While some wait until the fall for varying reasons, we receive the highest rate of candidate outreach (professionals looking for an opportunity outside of their current company) right after spring. This is no coincidence, as the stress from the season leads to career anxiety, which leads to professionals looking outside of company channels for less stressful answers. Many wonder if the grass may be greener at other organizations, which tends to happen almost immediately when they can come up for air after business slows down. In fact, this leads me to plan my vacation around it—nearly the opposite of our industry's norm.

Scenarios motivating professionals to look outside their organization could be poor company management or an inappropriate work environment. However, the most common reasons candidates look elsewhere are inadequate investment in their professional development and continued learning, limited progression of responsibility and job

titles, and lack of total rewards improvement. In a recent Udemy study, nearly 50% of all employed people looking for their next job are doing so outside of their current company because of fewer opportunities to learn new skills in their current organization.

Strategy to prevent your employees from doing this

While progressing through these intense spring weeks, start thinking through an organizational chart. If you already have one, maybe dust it off and look for areas of improvement. For each position on the chart, write a few simple bullet points of what experience you would expect of someone to be successful in the position. For example:

General Manager:

- Six Sigma Green Belt
- Experience managing 20 crop varieties in 30 acres of greenhouse
- Ability to manage and motivate a rather moody head grower

Even if you go about business as usual, the completion of this org chart will keep you somewhat mindful as you collaborate with professionals in your company who are in these roles. Once through the heart of the season, meet with your team members individually and listen to their career aspirations and where they want more knowledge. As your team members share what they're looking for in terms of professional advancement, you'll have these immediate examples (bullet points) of what's needed to achieve their advancement goals in specific positions.

Going through this process will pay dividends when you can dedicate this time to your organizational development by streamlining your ability to identify which professional development and training strategies (internal employee training with limited cost and impact on immediate productivity OR external organization training, which may be higher in cost and impact immediate productivity) are most in line with the goals for your team. Doing so will provide you with a way to transparently show your team possible succession plans, including identification of successors and the realization of how and where a successor needs to be trained.

ROI of training & development

It's easier and less costly for your organization to recruit entry-level talent rather than upper-level, skilled and experienced professionals. Training and developing your people are critical investments for any organization's culture and budget health. However, it cannot replace the need to recruit. Sometimes the time it takes to get an employee to the required level of skill is far too long or there's a need to bring new ideas and innovation to your organization. In that situation, external recruitment is more than likely required. This should be the exception and not the rule, as recruitment doesn't drive engagement. Parties, prizes and recognition are popular components for driving engagement in many organizations, but they're short-lived. Only training and development provide a long-term and lasting rise in employee engagement, and the attainment of desired production results will follow.

In-season may not seem like the time to address training and development; however, it's important to be conscious of the benefit it gives your company as you manage teams and individuals this time of year. You observe professionals' true colors and passion when their workload is at its highest. According to 15Five, 71% of workers express more trust in their leaders, 72% feel more comfortable bringing up issues and 73% are more motivated to go beyond their role if they're frequently engaged by company leaders and managers. Take time this spring to develop closer relationships and understand what each of your most valued team members wants in their continued career progression. This helps ensure they don't look outside of your organization for the advancement they desire.

In Kristy McCann Flynn's article "The Reason Behind the Great Resignation That No One is Talking About," she emphasizes, "Antiquated approaches and overpriced software solutions aren't the magic bullets employers believe them to be. Companies may have gotten by with these in the past, but in today's competitive hiring environment,

they don't cut it. As a result, employees are jumping ship."

Instead, ask your people what they're looking for and what would make them more productive and successful, and ditch the "one-size-fits-all" approach for more personalized training and development. McCann Flynn believes, "Organizations can either offer learning and development that actually works or watch employees go elsewhere."

Even if you can't immediately provide or promise everything your employees are asking for or have the budget to invest in expensive training software, taking the time to understand their motivations will increase your employees' trust and engagement, leading to higher performance and retention for you. **GT**

Ben Molenda is with Best Human Capital & Advisory Group.