

5 Steps to Retaining Top-Notch Employees



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Finding and retaining good employees is always a hot topic when I am talking with other landscape professionals regarding their businesses. What is it about this issue that really gets us all fired up? I think there are many reasons why this issue is so prevalent in our industry. We have a very physically labor-intensive business for one, and that alone limits our pool of potential employees. In addition to the physical nature of our business there are the longer hours and seasonality issues as well. So, considering these barriers we have in our industry, what are some things we can do to find and retain top-notch employees?

Here are five things that I think are essential:

1. Become a Great Place to Work

This is really the first place to start when trying to get great employees. You are not going to attract top talent by having a poor work environment. Yes, the bigger companies have a bit of an advantage because they can offer things like a nice facility, new trucks and equipment and benefits. But what if you are small? You can still be a great place to work, but you just have to get a little more creative. Let your employees know that they are getting in on the ground floor of a growing business and that they are not just a number. Give them the opportunity to make some decisions to help the company grow and value their input. Being smaller might afford you the opportunity to be more flexible with their schedules; believe me, offering some flex time to your employees is very powerful.

2. Have a Great Reputation

Top-notch employees want to work for companies that do top-notch work. You can be big or small; it doesn't really matter with this trait. Do great work

and you will attract great employees. Have a reputation as an honest and reputable business person and do what you say you will do and you will attract people who are the same.

3. Don't Mess with their Money

Never be late on payroll, never say you will give a raise and then not follow through. Never bounce a paycheck. Don't screw around with paying cash under the table or trying to not pay overtime. You will never find great people if you run your business this way.

4. Job Descriptions Rule

This is so very important and yet there are a lot of companies that don't have job descriptions for their employees. How are your employees supposed to know what is expected of them when they have not been given job descriptions? Who are they supposed to report to? What kind of equipment are they expected to run? Do they need to be able to drive a truck and trailer? Do they have a foreman to report to? Do they have to fill out paperwork and time sheets? Don't set people up for failure, give them a roadmap to success.

5. Give Positive Feedback

Employees want to know if they are doing a good job and giving them recognition for a job well done does wonders for moral and employee retention. If they go above and beyond you can always pick up a gift card to a restaurant and give it to them as a small impact bonus.

There are many other ways to attract and retain great employees and I would urge you to do some additional homework on this subject. Our employees are the lifeblood of our companies and they can make our lives easy or difficult. It's up to us as owners and managers to decide what we want to face every day when we show up for work. Do we want people who are late or don't show up or do we want people that we can depend on to run the company in our absence? Finding and retaining great employees will not only allow you to grow your company and have great service, it will also allow you to take a vacation and not worry whether or not your company will still be there when you get back. It's up to you.