

Creating a Culture of Appreciation

“If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way.” – *Martin Luther King Jr.*

Today there are an unprecedented number of job openings without enough applicants to fill them, over 10 million according to the Department of Labor October 2021 statistics. Many experts feel that employee retention and morale are not just the result of how happy each staff member is individually, but that there is a direct relationship to how healthy your company and its culture is overall.

A growing number of employers are making the connection that staff wellbeing and equipping personnel with the resources they need to learn, and grow are pivotal in retaining and motivating staff. Failure to address the issues of collectors who may have become indifferent to their work and feeling disconnected from the company's culture, can result in reduced productivity and increased turnover.

How can you help collectors maintain a positive mindset? Create a work environment and culture where staff can work to the best of their abilities.

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A collection agent's job is to help the consumer, even when the person on the other end of the phone doesn't think so. However, the main purpose of their work can be lost in the daily grind. Each year, billions of dollars are put back into businesses and the economy by collection departments, and it's essential for the department's staff to understand the importance of their work. A culture of appreciation combined with a positive work environment will increase performance for both in-house and distance employees.

1. Communicate is key, not only on goals and strategies but that the work being done is meaningful.
2. Create or re-craft the company recognition program to align with its core values.
3. Powerful motivation is a result when recognition is tied to the achievement of a goal.
4. Consider instituting a peer-to-peer recognition program.
5. Incorporate light-hearted, fun activities to increase creativity and focus.
6. Care about the collector's future: set them up for success through training and development within their roles, making sure that opportunities for professional advancement are visible.

Define Your Culture

Not only do employees want to have meaning in their work, but they also want to feel like their company stands for something.

1. Seventy-five percent of Millennials say that they would take a pay cut to work for a socially responsible company, according to a report from Cone Communications.

2. Two-thirds claim they wouldn't work for a company at all unless it had "strong corporate social responsibility practices."
3. Collectors are most likely to be productive when they feel their personal goals align with company objectives.
4. Taking time to increase individual team members confidence in their work performance is a powerful morale booster.
5. Communicate that it's ok to fail by sharing experiences, with a focus on recognizing the growth and learning opportunities from the failure.
6. Technology plays a crucial role in defining company culture, from instant access to information or the automation of tedious tasks.
7. Streamlining workflows and providing easy access to information should be at the top of the list when considering the type of technology to implement in the workplace.

The bottom line is that every employee wants to know how they make a difference, how they contribute to the goals of the organization. Recognize that many employees are reprioritizing what is important to them. Whatever strategy the department or company builds, each collector will individually translate to how your goals impact their job and their role. Keep staff engaged by giving them reasons to be excited about the tasks they perform.

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