

How to Retain and Nurture Your Good Seeds

Presented to
TAGLaw & TIAG International Conference
October 27, 2010

Copyright © 2010 by TAGLaw, LLC, TIAG, LLC, and Melinda Guillemette. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This course material may not be reproduced in any form without permission. Publications are distributed and programs presented for general informational purposes only and with the understanding that TAGLaw LLC and TIAG LLC do not render any legal, accounting or other professional services. The contributing authors to this publication have exerted their best professional skills to assure the accuracy of its contents. All original sources of authority presented by this publication, or orally, should be independently researched in dealing with any client's or your own specific legal, financial or business matters.

Melinda Motivates

TAGLaw TIAG

The Situation

- Tough economy?
 - Layoffs, increased workload, lack of opportunity in-house spawn discontent
- Improving economy?
 - Increases workforce movement
 - One survey by Right Management shows 60% of polled workers are planning to leave their jobs as soon as the market is strong enough

Melinda Motivates

TAGLaw TIAG

The Situation

- Adecco Group, worldwide staffing firm: "We're preparing for a massive reshuffling of talent at all job levels in all industries."
- Result: plenty of people looking for work, but far fewer who want to be partners, are a perfect cultural fit, and are productive
- Young professionals have different goals from previous generations...at least so far.

Melinda Motivates

TAGLaw TIAG

Reality

- Good people will sometimes leave your firm no matter what you do.
- The days of staying in one place for an entire career are gone.
- Accepting this gives you a little breathing room.
 - But you have to train people and treat them well, anyway

 Melinda Motivates



What Hasn't Changed

People leave firms not just for money or more interesting work. They also leave because they think the firm doesn't care about them.

And you *can* control *that*.

 Melinda Motivates



Blossoms from Seeds

- Growing anything from seed requires discipline, diligence, and care. Retaining great team members is the same.
- Beautiful gardens are usually envisioned beforehand. Think strategically about what kinds of employees you want. Recruit for those characteristics.

 Melinda Motivates



Blossoms from Seeds

- Know what weeds look like and be able to pull them.
 - Just as weeds can take over a garden, so can toxic behaviors overrun a firm.



Retention and Culture

- What behaviors do you value as a firm?
 - Technical excellence?
 - Rainmaking ability?
 - Collegiality?
 - Client service skill?



Retention and Culture

- What do you reward?
 - Productivity?
 - Rainmaking?
 - Fitting in?
- What do you penalize?
 - Lack of productivity?
 - Failure to abide by institutional rules (billing, time recording, work hours, etc.)?
 - Being a jerk?



You Are Your Firm's Culture

- Your conduct
- Your communication
- Your leadership
- Your P.A.C.T. with your team
 - P.A.C.T. makes you responsible for the only person you can control, which is you.
 - P.A.C.T. offers specific behaviors you can employ to improve morale



P.A.C.T. = Purpose

- Important work done well
- We make a difference with our work
- We know where we're going and why
- Need reasons that go beyond profit



Purpose and Retention

- Communicate the firm's vision of the future (mission, goals, strategy, etc.).
- Make sure everyone understands their role in reaching firm goals.
- Use your intranet, email, and team meetings to reinforce the goals and to let people know how close the firm is to achieving them.



Purpose and Retention

- Be sure team members are part of the reward system when goals are reached.
- When you reach a goal, communicate it to everyone in the firm and celebrate it.
- Revamp your annual employee evaluation program
 - More feedback, sooner
 - Project by project is optimal
- Keep partner disagreements within the partnership.



Purpose and Retention

- Millennial retention tip:
 - Tell them why their specific role in each project or task is important.
 - Tell them specifically what is required for them to move to the next level.



P.A.C.T. = **A**cceptance of Self and Others

- Always striving to be better yourself, and helping others improve
- Being comfortable in your own skin
- Laughing AT yourself, WITH others
- Forgiving your gaffes and those of others



Acceptance and Retention

- Lighten up. Give yourself a break. Relax and breathe. Smile and laugh more.
- Drop "should" and "shouldn't" from your internal and external conversations. Be active. Criticism is passive. Solutions are active.
- Decide how you want to conduct yourself in every interaction. Don't be a victim of somebody else's misbehavior.
 - Controlling yourself allows you to control some of the drama in your workplace.
 - Sets you as the example for personal conduct.

 Melinda Motivates



Acceptance and Retention

- Be aware of your emotional wake.
- Practice civility in every interaction.
- Remember how things were for you when you were young and inexperienced.
- Encourage the expression of others' ideas and questions
 - Choose your responses carefully.

 Melinda Motivates



Acceptance and Retention

- Pay attention every moment you're in contact with another person. Don't go on automatic pilot.
- Millennial retention tip
 - Millennials will not "sink or swim" successfully.
 - Be clear about your expectations and their tasks.
 - Remember who you are: it's ok to be the boss.
 - Remember who they are: your firm's future.

 Melinda Motivates



P.A.C.T. = Connection

- Awareness that you and your firm exist ONLY within the context of relationships
 - With partners
 - Employees
 - Clients
 - Vendors
- Foxhole sharing in tough times
- Celebrating achievements together



Connection and Retention

- Invest the time.
- Do what you say you will do.
- When you ask "how are you?", stop and listen to the answer.
- Make eye contact. When you're talking to one person, don't let your eyes wander around the room.



Connection and Retention

- Leave your door open as much as you possibly can during the workday.
- Spend time on informal, impromptu connection.
- Ask valued employees: what do I need to do to keep you here?



Connection and Retention

- Millennial retention tip
 - Assume some will leave you no matter what.
 - Tell them they are valuable. Be specific as to why.
 - Relate to them through the work.
 - Swarm them with respectful supervision.

 Melinda Motivates



P.A.C.T. = Thankfulness

- Gratitude for our own lives
- Gratitude for the people around us,
even those who challenge us

 Melinda Motivates



Thankfulness and Retention

- Be aware how terrific your own life is.
- Regularly, seek out at least one person who has helped you and thank him or her. Be specific and personal.
- Write a thank you note and leave it on a person's desk. Be specific as to what they did well.
- Write thank you emails. Again, be specific.
- Thank the team as a whole at every opportunity.

 Melinda Motivates



Thankfulness and Retention

- Millennial retention tip
 - Be aware that this generation has a good ear for insincerity and little respect for hierarchy, so don't try to fake gratitude.
 - Be very specific in your thanks to members of this generation.
 - Share your passion for your organization openly with this group; include them in your plans for the firm's future.
 - Give them a voice in the firm's future early in the planning stages.

 Melinda Motivates



Your Energy is Retention's Compost

- When it comes to retention, your energy is like water to seeds.
- Energy is nearly always positive or negative in the workplace; rarely is it neutral.
 - When it comes to energy, you get back what you put in.
 - What you put in is *always* your choice.
- Keep your own energy high and your behavior at optimal.

 Melinda Motivates



Contact

Melinda Guillemette
Melinda Motivates
505.263.9460
melinda@melindamotivates.com
www.melindamotivates.com

P.O. Box 1529, Corrales, NM 87048

 Melinda Motivates


