

## **How to Keep Them Once You Get Them: *A Fail-Safe Strategy for Productivity and Retention Across the Generations***

Attracting and retaining good performers is of critical importance to the success of every organization, large or small, for profit or not-for-profit. To hire and train a skilled, professional worker can cost an organization anywhere from \$35,000.00 to \$100,000.00, or more, depending on the person's job level, hiring package, and training/assimilation program. Attracting and keeping the most productive workers is a matter that goes directly to the bottom line.

So, once you get them, how do you keep them – not just keep them on the payroll, but keep them humming – productive and happily contributing? That's the million dollar question; or perhaps more than a million dollars, depending on your *involuntary* turn-over rate.

What's happening in your organization? Is the culture one that causes people to want to come, want to stay, and want to give their best? Does the way people are treated by managers, senior leaders, and their colleagues lead them to feel like a valued member of your company's community? Is there a sense of community and belonging; alignment around a common sense of purpose? Or, do diverse individuals show up, put their heads down, perform the rudimentary aspects of their job and go home, starting over in the same uninspired way the next day?

Perhaps you are among the fortunate few who work in an inspired organization where there is a spirit, an energy, a sense of purpose that sparks enthusiasm, commitment, openness, accountability, alignment; all leading to the quality of business relationships needed to produce high-quality results, time and again.

Building a productive culture of partnership and collaboration requires an unwavering commitment by people at all levels, and a willingness to do the daily work required to create it.

Fostering a culture of collaboration and partnership across generational differences is a challenge. At face value, and even when you get beneath the superficial conflicts which can emerge when people from ages of 70 to 17 come together in the workplace, the differences are at best entertaining, often confounding and frustrating, and at worst paralyzing. Each generational group seems driven by its own set of values and beliefs. Their behavior is different; as is the content of conversations. Sometimes, it's almost as if the four generations speak different languages. What drives and motivates one group seems to be of

no particular interest to the others. The differences seem irreconcilable – unless you have the knowledge and tools to bridge the gaps and build a culture of collaboration and partnership, a culture that manifests a distinct spirit of purpose.

One simple strategy for building a culture of collaboration and improving retention, across generations, is to help employees have a line of sight, from where they sit, to the big picture. You can take an important step toward achieving this each time you connect individual and departmental goals and activities to the company's strategy and goals. This simple act gives employees a clearer understanding of how their day-to-day work is aligned with the purpose of the organization. It enables them to see more clearly how what they do fits into the big picture. This kind of information and awareness adds to every employee's sense of significance and contribution, whatever their role. People who know what they do makes a difference tend to be happier, more dedicated employees.

Now that you have them, keep them and call out their best. Tap into your organization's *spirit of purpose*, releasing energy and creativity, expanding the potential for successful cross-generational engagement.