

# It's the MANAGERS, Not the MONEY!



BY GARRETT J. SULLIVAN



If you're the president or owner of a construction company, I've got good news and bad news for you. The good news is that economists expect a 15 percent growth in construction this year, which could create one of

the biggest construction booms in Hawaii's history. The bad news is that there will be an unprecedented demand for talented workers—and they'll be evaluating you as a leader when deciding whether to join or remain with your organization.

Case in point: I recently spoke with a seasoned, well-educated project manager whose skill set and work ethic make him a highly sought-after employee. To my surprise, he explained that he had left the large, prestigious general contractor for whom he had worked for many years in order to join a much smaller company. The reason was not higher pay; in fact, he took a slight pay cut. The reason was his manager—described as a good person who simply couldn't lead. I later thought about the tremendous training cost to his previous company and the huge windfall this new, smaller company was able to acquire.

How can you retain and motivate your employees? Start by ensuring that your team knows the answers to these six questions:

### 1. Do I know what is expected of me?

This basic step cannot be underestimated. Job descriptions must be clear on the specific roles and outcomes the company expects. Organizational charts, which describe the functions and relationships of employees, allow everyone to work as a team.

### 2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work?

Labor studies reveal that up to 24 percent of each day at the jobsite is wasted because employees are waiting on materials and instructions. I recommend having daily job huddles each morning to review the day's work and to project the material and equipment needs of the following days/weeks.

### 3. At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?

No one likes to be micromanaged. If you're a micromanager, nothing will chase away the younger generation faster. In fact, the man I mentioned at the beginning of this article is from Generation X and is motivated by managers who allow their team to fail occasionally in order to grow.

### 4. In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing a good job?

Performance evaluations are far too few. Don't forget to take time out on a weekly basis to recognize some or all of a job well done.

### 5. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?

Are you a "just the facts" kind of a supervisor? Many Baby Boomers were "raised" by managers that kept a fine line between work and personal life. While it may sound "airy fairy," consider ending your staff meetings by asking each person to briefly (in one minute or less) share an important facet of their life, whether personal or professional. Ask them to thank someone in the room for something they have done for them in the past week. You will be astonished by the results. This is truly magical.

### 6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?

Don't try to win favor by vague promises of promotions. Instead, develop an employee Personal and Professional Development Program to retain your key talent. You need to review it often and be sure to stick to your promises.

By answering these very basic questions for the people who work for you, you'll set clear and consistent expectations while treating each person as an individual. When your team feels as though they are in the right roles that challenge their growth, they will grow your company.

Don't let me find myself talking with one of your ex-employees at the next contractor function. Instead, make it a goal to attract and retain Hawaii's best workforce. **BI**

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