

Five Factors of Employee Satisfaction

Contributed by the AIA Knowledge Resources Staff

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SUMMARY

The Gallup Organization has identified five factors of employee satisfaction. Employers who actively work to develop productive, satisfying work environments may help maintain high levels of staff retention.

A BOTTOM-LINE ISSUE

Losing good employees is costly for all employers, including architecture firms. Hiring expenses, training costs, and loss of productivity all contribute to the losses when an employee leaves. What can a firm do to attract and keep valuable employees? Theories on this subject abound, including one based on significant research by the Gallup Organization.

QUESTIONS CAN REVEAL EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

More than 25 years ago, Gallup began studying the work experiences of many types of workers to learn what makes employees productive and satisfied. It developed survey questionnaires, based on information gleaned from focus groups, and administered the questionnaires to employees of a wide variety of companies of all sizes. Gallup analyzed the resulting data and correlated it to the quality of employee work and the economic productivity of the company or department.

FIVE FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

The research revealed five factors that determine an employee's attitude toward a company:

- The atmosphere of the workplace
- The employee's supervisor
- The employee's coworkers
- The management team
- The employee's attachment to the work of the company

Of these five, the one factor—across the board—found to have the greatest effect on employee retention was the employee's immediate supervisor.

Using the survey data as a foundation for further research, Gallup studied employees of productive companies or productive departments of large organizations. From the survey data and this additional research, Gallup distilled a list of 12 questions that can determine whether a company is doing what is necessary to retain employees.

ACQUIRE THE KNOWLEDGE

The Gallup questions are available in the reference resource cited below. In summary, however, productive employees seek the following in their workplaces:

- A supervisor who demonstrates interest in the employee by recognizing accomplishments, respecting and soliciting opinions, encouraging professional development, and regularly evaluating work efforts
- Coworkers who are committed to the mission of the organization and strive to do good work
- Company goals and work that support the employee's values
- Personal relationships with other employees

The questions were designed to elicit whether employees find these attributes in their work environment. Through further study, Gallup refined the questions to verify their validity as indicators of employee satisfaction and to ascertain any correlations between employee satisfaction, retention rate, and company productivity, profit, or customer satisfaction.

APPLY THE KNOWLEDGE

You can use the Gallup research and questions as explained in the publications listed below to help your firm improve its employee retention rate. Step outside the box and improve your firm's track record in developing productive, satisfying relationships with your employees.

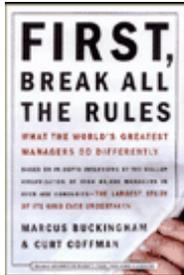
RESOURCES

More Best Practices

The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic:

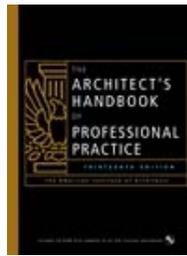
- 07.05.02 Develop a Talent Retention Plan
- 07.05.03 Three Methods of Knowledge Transfer
- 07.05.04 Types of Training Programs

For More Information on This Topic



See *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently* by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman. This book includes the 12 Gallup questions as well as many specific examples culled from Gallup research.

See also “Recruiting and Hiring,” by Laurie Dreyer-Hadley and Kathleen C. Maurel, Assoc. AIA, *The Architect’s Handbook of Professional Practice*, 13th edition, Chapter 9, page 229.



See also the 14th edition of the *Handbook*, which can be ordered from the AIA Bookstore by calling 800-242-3837 (option 4) or by email at bookstore@aia.org.



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Keywords

- Practice
- Personnel management
- Employee termination
- Turnover
- Employee retention



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