

SERVICES

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE BUILDING SERVICE CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL
MAY 1994 THREE DOLLARS

EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION & TRAINING



1994
*Convention
Wrap-Up Issue*

JANITORIAL EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION PLAN

By being the first company in your area to embrace a Janitorial Employee Motivation Plan, you will obtain marketing and public relations benefits that can last many years.

BY CURTIS MOSBY, JR.

Everyone in the janitorial industry has the same personnel problem. Due to the industry's low pay scale caused by competitive bidding practices, most companies are experiencing high absenteeism and employee turnover, which makes it harder to deliver promised services.

Since janitorial firms in today's market can't appreciably increase the amount of money they can pay, they will have to make it more appealing for workers to earn the kind of money they have.

Therefore, the only answer is to develop a worker motivation program consisting of affordable incentives that can be sold to the worker so he will feel he's getting a good deal and is motivated to do a good job.

Implementation of the worker motivation program is essentially a marketing task because whatever the package of incentives, the worker has to be sold on its value, or it won't work. Companies that can sell their workers on an incentive program that could actually reduce turnover will have a big advantage in marketing their services.

These companies will be able to demonstrate their work force stability and follow-through on existing and new business commitments. They will also be in a position to command better prices because they can guarantee better services from more motivated workers. Plus, they will see increased profitability when they reduce personnel turnover costs.

The following plan, designed specifically to motivate janitorial workers, contains a unique and affordable program of incentives to produce the following benefits:

- Reduce absenteeism and employee turnover
- Produce a more stable work force
- Provide higher quality services
- Better satisfy customers

Low pay is the primary cause of absenteeism and employee turnover because when the pay is low, the worker perceives low risk for absenteeism.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

It is generally assumed the following are causes for poor job performance among janitorial workers:

1. Low pay
2. Lack of motivation
3. Lack of pride in menial work

Low pay is the primary cause of absenteeism and employee turnover because when the pay is low, the worker perceives low risk for

absenteeism. He may say, "I'm only making \$5.00 an hour and I've got to work all week, and then I won't get paid until the week after that. That's not much money! I can get that kind of money any time. I think I'll just stay home today and see if I can get that other job for \$6.50 an hour." That's when he takes off for a day or two and gets fired. Then he moves to another cleaning company because he didn't get that \$6.50 an hour job after realizing that if he doesn't start work soon, he's going to miss a week's pay.

This worker, like many others, may have proven he is willing to do the job — but not every day . . . and not if he sees an opportunity for a better job.

Nothing may ever improve this worker's attendance. But, instead of losing what might be an otherwise good employee and having to pay to acquire and train a replacement, you can still use this worker on the days he chooses to work by placing him and others like him on a "call-in" or "flex-shift" program.

By establishing a pool of on-call workers, you can accommodate those who don't want to show up every day and still protect yourself from absenteeism by always having a standby work force available.

APPROACH

This plan features three separate incentive programs designed to individually and collectively answer the problems caused by low pay, lack of motivation, and lack of pride in the job.

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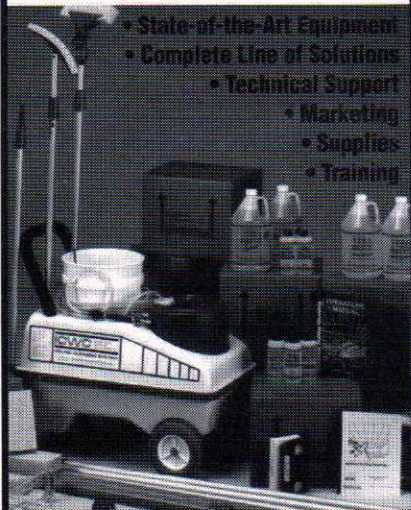
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Incentive Program #1 is a *Flex-Shift Program* designed to keep workers on-call to supplement your regular work force as needed.

Incentive Program #2 is a *Performance Bonus Program* designed to motivate regular and flex-shift workers.

Incentive Program #3 is a *Certification and Recognition Program* designed to increase the worker's pride in the job.

The key to the success of these programs is to tailor them to accommodate and motivate the kinds of workers the janitorial industry has available.

DEVELOPMENT OF MOTIVATION PROGRAM

Incentive Program #1 — Flex-Shift — (which for marketing purposes we may call a "Job Sharing" program) — would be used to establish a pool of trained workers to cover for no-shows. The Flex-Shift Program can be set up so employees can come to work when they want to and stay home when they don't want to work. Each worker can be required to fill out an application, go through a reference check, and then be issued a photo badge with an identification number.

When a worker wants to work, he calls in before a set time each day. If there is an opening, he can schedule to work that shift and other shifts that are available.

By reserving a portion of your daily work assignments for Flex-Shift workers, you give yourself the flexibility of having a rotating pool of workers who hopefully will be calling you, but who will be available for you when you need workers on short notice.

For your client, you will be providing a crew that has been checked out and identified by photo badges. When necessary, a computer printout of each employee in each location can be provided.

Ideally your flex-shift workers would consist of those who want temporary full-time or permanent part-time work. These workers would be expected to be more dependable and more easily motivated by

money bonuses because they would be more likely to view the hourly rate as "extra money" instead of low pay.

To make a Flex-Shift Program more attractive to a potential worker, pay him when he has completed the number of shifts he has signed up for. Temporary workers, with short-term reasons for wanting to earn money, like to be paid when they finish their work. If they have to wait an extra week to get paid, they may feel "Why bother?"

A company in a position to pay upon completion of assigned shifts would have no trouble attracting flex-shift workers. However, for those janitorial firms that have their payroll handled through a payroll service, immediate payment may not be practical. In that case, other ways to keep temps happy and available can be developed.

Incentive Program #2 — "No Complaint," "Superior Service" Employee Bonus Program — would pay bonuses for good attendance, no complaints, and superior service. The payments could be hourly increases, gifts, prizes, trips, etc. Unique bonuses developed for the program would motivate workers.

Attendance and No Complaint bonuses would be earned daily or weekly and paid monthly for satisfactory performance of job duties. By establishing a monthly payment plan and letting bonuses accumulate, the employee is more likely to show up and do a good job during the month to protect his bonus "investment." Superior Service bonuses would be paid in the pay period they were earned as recognition for a good job.

An additional perk that would go over well with janitorial workers is a travel incentive program. All permanent employees would be eligible to be selected for a Job Exchange Travel (JET) Program. Workers chosen for the JET program get to exchange jobs for a week with an employee from a participating janitorial firm in another city. Each month one or more employees can be chosen to participate in the JET

program based on attendance, job performance, appearance, and ability to get along with others. Each participating firm will pay its employee's travel, lodging and a meal allowance for the exchange week. In addition, the worker's salary will be paid for the hours worked by the participating firm in the selected city.

The JET program is a perk that gives your employees a chance to visit other cities without cost to him or loss of income, and your firm does not lose a worker because he has been replaced by an outstanding worker from another firm. The JET program can also be used to increase productivity by fostering competition among your workers to outperform the replacement worker.

To help give employees a sense of self-worth, as well as helping the company to provide the best service possible, employees could also be encouraged to participate in a monthly company-improvement suggestion program. For each suggestion used, a prize of \$25 could be paid. For the month's best suggestion, the prize could be \$50. All suggestions would have to pass the 1-2-3 test:

1. Save money
2. Make money
3. Provide better service

Incentive Program #3 — Certification and Recognition Program — to establish cleaning as a "craft" in the minds of the workers and to have them strive to be considered "Masters of the Craft of Cleaning." Employees would be graded in three or more levels, from Trainee to "Master Cleaner." Additional benefits and recognition would be added at each level attained.

The Certification Program should be one the employee feels can lead to long-term job security.

Once he obtains a higher level, the employee would receive the following benefits:

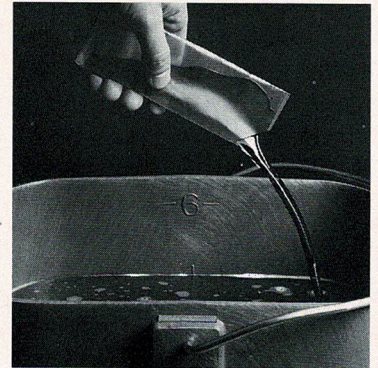
1. Base pay increases along with eligibility for length-of-services raises
2. Certificate of accomplishment
3. Rank patches for his uniform
4. Eligibility for the JET Program
5. Lifetime Performance Rating

When an employee leaves the company and a reference is requested, the new company will be told that he was successful in achieving a rating that proves he is totally qualified for any cleaning task.

Adjusted for minimum wage, the steps and pay scale to Master Cleaner rating could be:

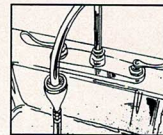
Step 1: Trainees at \$5.00 per hour (two weeks) for workers with no previous cleaning experience.

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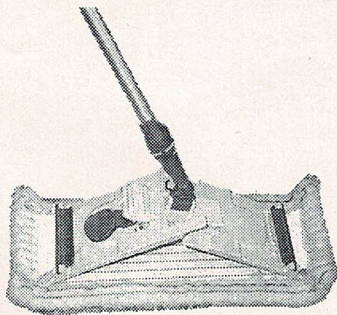
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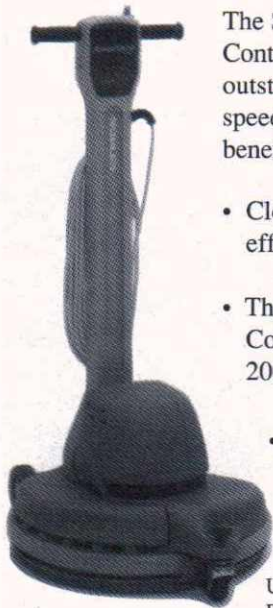
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Step 2: General Cleaners at \$5.50 per hour (three months) for workers with previous cleaning experience or workers who complete the two-week trainee period.

Step 3: Master Cleaners at \$6.00+ per hour (permanent employee status) for workers who complete the three-month general cleaner apprenticeship and pass a simple written/oral exam.

By establishing a pool of on-call workers, you can accommodate those who don't want to show up every day and still protect yourself from absenteeism by always having a standby work force available.

INCENTIVE PROGRAM SUMMARY

The complete Worker Incentive Program would include:

1. A Job-Sharing/Flex-Shift Program to cover absenteeism.
2. A No-Complaint/Superior Service/Performance Bonus Program to motivate workers.
3. A Certification Program to provide qualified workers with pride in their job.

By issuing photo badges to all employees, giving extra perks and bonuses to permanent employees, and by putting those with absenteeism problems on a Call-In or Flex-Shift program, you reward permanent employees and don't lose otherwise capable workers because they don't want to work regular shifts.

Once implemented, the Worker Motivation Program described in this Plan should solve the problems of employee acquisition, motivation, and retention.

Implementation of the Plan requires three steps:

1. Develop policies and procedures for the Worker Motivation Program
2. Sell the program to workers
3. Use the benefits from the Worker Motivation Program to sell janitorial services

CONCLUSION

The first company in each marketing area to develop and implement a program like the one described in this Plan has a decided advantage in capturing a larger market share. Why? Because it can demonstrate a higher quality of service.

Furthermore, companies that adopt a training and certification plan for entry-level janitorial workers will certainly help the industry to attract and retain more qualified workers.

By being the first company in your area to embrace a Janitorial Employee Motivation Plan, you will obtain marketing and public relations benefits that can last many years. ■

The author develops computer software, management systems, and multi-media business presentations for the building service contracting industry. His systems have been used to acquire and manage accounts like Macy's, Sears, K-Mart, etc. Mr. Mosby offers free trials of his Maintenance and Maid Services software and can be reached at 201-923-0070.

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