

3 Training Blunders That Will Scare Off Top Talent

Way too many C-level execs won't admit it, but top talent has one big need that only HR is setup to meet.

That's training.

Millennials (the most churn happy generation around right now) rank training and development as *their top benefit they value from an employer*.¹

It's above cash bonuses, greater vacation time and flexible work hours.

89% think it's important to be constantly learning at their job.²

But it's not just millennials. Every top performer I've met counts constant development as one of their most critical factors for a job.

The problem is, **the wrong kind of training can scare them off.**

#1 - Force-Feeding Training Rather Than Finding Out What Skills They Need & Want To Learn

This is extremely basic, and hopefully your firm doesn't struggle with this, but I bring it up since it can have such a dramatic impact on employee morale.

This single problem could be quietly causing turnover in your organization without anyone realizing it.

While no one would suggest completely ditching "top down" training, it can't be the only kind of training you do.

The good news is, just asking can be encouraging.

Easy Action Steps:

1. Run a quick survey with detailed questions. "What would you like to learn?" is a mediocre question. Try to get them thinking about their job and the skills they use

e.g. "What five skills are most important for you to do your job well?"

¹ <http://www.mindtickle.com/blog/infographic-millennials-misunderstood-generation/>

² Ibid.

and follow-up with what they need and want to learn about (not always the same).

e.g. “Which of those skills do you feel you need training on the most?” and “Which of those skills do you want training on the most?”

- a. Pro tip: you can even use a free tool like a Google Form so IT doesn't have to get involved.
2. Once you have the results, brainstorm a few ideas that could meet the most popular skills. Then have a quick call or face-to-face with a few pilot learners to bounce the topic ideas off of. (Have a thick skin here. It's much better to get unpleasant feedback at this stage in the game than after you've implemented a whole new training module.)
3. For rapid deployment, see if there are any cost effective, useful training programs or conferences available. You don't have to create 100% of the content internally!

#2 -- The Multi-Billion Dollar Problem In Engaging Millennials In Meaningful Training

Millennials often get a bad rap. But one thing seems to be emerging... if you don't have an engaging training program they'll speak with their feet and leave your organization.

There are two major questions to ask yourself to see if you're making this blunder.

A) Can Learners Engage On Any Device?

These learners were born into the smartphone age. Yes, maybe that's made their attention spans a bit shorter than they should be.

But there's no changing that.

So the best alternative is to use a LMS with mobile, tablet and desktop capabilities.

Pro Tip: single-slice learning or microlearning also works quite well with the shorter attention spans. Focus videos or training segments around one single concept.

#3 -- Not Being Well Known In Your Industry For Their Skill Set

Almost every software developer dreams of landing a spot at Google. The prestige among their peers alone is a big deal.

The problem is we obviously can't all be Google.

The good news is, you don't have to. You're not normally going to be competing against Google or Amazon.

With just a little extra work you can grab an edge over your competitors who will most likely be warring over the same talent.

Odds are good you already have some excellent training but no one outside your company knows it.

Here are some ways to make that happen:

- Ask what your key profit driving skills are (for Google this would be full stack development, Wal Mart supply chain management, Cisco research and development, etc).
- Assess where an employee *leaving* your company would rank among their peers in this category. I like to think of this as the water cooler conversation -- when someone says “yeah, I did sales at Xerox” other salespeople mentally rank them as a top performer. Where would you fall?
- Commit to being at least 10% better than your competitors in one of the skills and map out what it would take to get there.
- Publish internal training/achievement rewards externally (a simple press release will do).

Wrapping Up

Hopefully these three blunders will be on your radar from now on (if they weren't already).

I can't stress enough that in the talent war going on if you let one of these little slip-ups through the cracks it could cost your organization big time.

Here's to more excellent training!

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Whiteboard Geeks

P.S. Where do you think you are in relation to your competitors? Are you winning this training battle?

In the next couple days be on the lookout. I'll be sending out a special note that may be able to help...