**Retailer Newsletter**

**March 1, 2022**

**Tom’s Business “TIPS”**

***“To Improve Profits”***

**RE: Why Employee Evaluations Help Retention**

**Hi,**

**Several of Tom’s Business “TIPS” recent features have been directed toward Recruiting, Hiring, and Training. I firmly believe if you follow an equitable plan of selecting new CSRs and Managers, you will reap the benefits by having better employees on your staff for a longer period of time. You must constantly be mindful of ‘keeping’ the staff you have worked so hard to obtain. One way I found of maintaining a long-term relationship with employees was to conduct regular Employee Evaluations. That is correct, I said “If you want to keep good employees, you need to tell them how they are performing!” A new CSR should receive a written evaluation from you or their direct supervisor every 30 days for the first three months. After that period of time, an annual review is acceptable. Encourage employees to also write an evacuation of their performance. I know that may sound strange; but I found that when an employee critiques their own performance, they may actually be more critical of their work than I was. I would review previous evaluations with staff members by pointing out certain comments and asking, “Are you making progress since your last evaluation regarding X, Y or Z”? Instead of my criticizing their work standards, I was simply reading back to them their own criticisms. I would also gauge their improvement based on the comments I discussed with them at the previous evaluation. I similarly believe Employee Evaluations should be used to point out the areas where your staff is doing well. That makes it a positive tool to reinforce changes you would like employees to implement. A word of caution, avoid using phrases such as, “I could not run this store without you,” or “You have a job here as long as you want.” Sometimes situations occur in the future that we cannot foresee, or people do change, sometimes not for the best. Evaluations don’t need to be long and complicated. We have one you can implement immediately on our website (Forms and Reports For Your Business). Check it out.**

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**Another topic with regards to keeping good CSRs falls under the category of “Bullying or Harassment”. Bullying refers to *aggressive behavior that is repetitive and* *intentional in which a power differential exists between the victim and bully*. Now, most people believe bullying is between a supervisor and an employee, that’s not always the case. Many times, it simply involves two (or more) employees of equal standing. Sometimes jealousy plays a part. Maybe one employee is ambitious and wants to do a good job to earn a salary increase or a promotion. Maybe one or two employees are satisfied doing a mediocre job and another is trying to do the best job he/she can do, and the others are envious. If you actively work at the store(s) on a regular basis, you should see if this situation is developing. If you are an absentee operator, you may not be aware of the day-to-day issues that are happening. I suggest that when you do visit a location and are talking/working with a staff member, you might inquire, “Is everyone getting along here at the store?” Or you could ask, “Are there any problems of which I should be made aware?” When I owned my stores, I would often tell a CSR, “If anything occurs that you think I need to know about, please let me know.” That was my way of reinforcing my ‘Open Door Policy’.**

**A final concern you should be on guard for is Sexual Harassment, which is defined as *unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature*. This may include unwelcome behavior, unwelcome sexual comments, touching, jokes, or innuendoes. This may happen between a supervisor and staff member or two employees of equal standing. When I started my career in the service station industry in the 1970s, it was largely a male environment. It was not uncommon for mechanics to have calendars on their toolboxes (provided by tool manufactures and auto parts stores) of skimpily dressed woman. After a few years, women became part of our team, and I personally put an end to questionable calendars, pictures, or even off-color jokes. Sexual harassment of any kinds was NOT allowed. As I looked back on my years in this industry, I realize that was part of the reason why I was successful keeping long-term employees, both male and female.**

**As many of you know, I constantly read from a variety of sources about our industry. This link comes from C-Store Decisions. It’s called “Match, Hire, Retain”. I have not done my due diligence; I will leave that up to you. It might be worth your time!!**

[**https://sprockets.ai/**](https://sprockets.ai/)

**It appears the roller coaster ride regarding gasoline prices is in full swing. Supply issues may force short-term price hikes. I have always believed that you must stay with your competition as best you can. In an ‘Up Market’ (one where the prices continue to climb), it’s a little easier to maintain your margins. In a ‘Down Market’ (where the prices fall constantly), it is a little harder to achieve your goals on margins. I always believed if I made some extra $$ on the upside, I was willing to give a little $$, on the downside. Studies have proven, “If the prices of commonly purchased items are fair, then customers will assume all the prices in your store are fair.” Now I ask you, “What is more commonly purchased (or noticed) than Regular Lead-Free Gasoline?” Answer, probably nothing. Remember, many of your customers are looking for ways to save pennies; and if your fuel price is much higher than your competition, you are giving them a reason to check out the competition. Now comes the bad news, they may like the new location they found and might not return to you. Think about it.**

**If your store is falling short of the profitable you desire or need, give us a call or email, we can help! If you are a supplier or organization with retailers, and they are struggling to maintain profitable stores, please reach out to us. We can help these stores operations and improve profitability!**

***If you are not willing to learn, no one can help you. If you are determined to learn, no one can stop you.***

***Zig Ziglar***

**Don't be a victim of the 5 Dangerous Words –**

***‘Maybe I’ll Do It Tomorrow’***

**Do it today because tomorrow (~~could be~~) will be too late!**

Tom
Thomas W. Terrono

**T&S Management Services, LLC
Instructor / Consultant for the Convenience Store Industry
Lee's Summit MO 64082-4864**

**816.550.8048**



**tom.tsms@gmail.com**

**[www.tsmanagementservices.com](http://www.tsmanagementservices.com)**

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