



# No Employee Left Behind

## *Ways to boost employee morale at the district office*

Whenever someone says they work in the field of education, most people assume the person is a teacher. We all know that teachers provide our students with the building blocks they need to shape their futures. We also know that students' success does not depend on teachers alone. There are hundreds of support staff in the schools and the district office (DO) that make public education a more efficient business. More often than not, the district office has a higher turn-over rate than any other building in the district. For this reason, we have to work to ensure that DO staff are knowledgeable about district events, happy and satisfied with their work environments. Here are some simple, inexpensive ways to boost morale in your DO.

### **Employees love to give their opinions**

All employees have opinions. Ask for them. These are the folks that live in your neighborhoods, attend church with your parents and students and have a general feel of the emotions surrounding an issue. Tap this valuable fountain of information when your district has a sticky situation or crisis!

Place a suggestion box in the district office break room for employees only. Allow employees to ask anonymous questions about why things are done a certain way. Answer all questions in a timely manner and post them on a nearby bulletin board. This will expel a number of rumors and gossip by the water fountain. During budget times, allow employees to place cost-saving ideas in the box. Award the employee a prize if their cost-saving idea is put to use.

### **Give them ammunition before sending them into battle**

Since the majority of your employees live in your community, they interact with a number of your customers. Make sure all employees are knowledgeable about what is taking place in the district and that they have the CORRECT information in order to combat any misconceptions in the community. Keep staff informed through monthly DO staff meetings with the superintendent. Also supply DO employees with copies of all press releases sent out by the district.

### **Little things make a big difference**

Everyone likes free things. Schools give small tokens of appreciation very frequently. There is no reason that the DO should not have them, too. Treat the DO staff to Krispy Kreme donuts and coffee one morning. Make it more special by sending formal invitations from the superintendent that ask everyone to join him for breakfast in the break room.

Ask a local bakery to donate day-old bagels, pastries and cookies to the office. Pick them up on the way to work and send an email to all staff around 10 a.m. (when the morning snack urge arrives) that they are available in the break room.

All schools have an end-of-the-year luncheon. The DO needs one, too. You can ask two to three local businesses to donate \$100-200 each or ask more to donate only \$50 each. This will more than pay for the luncheon or use the DO's profits from vending machines for funding.

Provide employees with a coupon that entitles them to a free lunch in a school cafeteria on their birthday. If their birthday falls in the summer months, allow them to use it anytime

In July or August, have a Back to School Hot Dog Cook-Out. Set up a grill outside of the DO and let the superintendent or other cabinet members grill the dogs. Serve chips and drinks. This is inexpensive and a great way to build camaraderie.

Send ecards to employees on their birthdays. Most web sites will give you the option to send now or later so you can do all cards for one month at the same time.

Provide all employees business cards. This is a low cost way to show employees that they are important. Business cards are important to employees and make everyone feel like a part of the team.

Have a covered dish lunch. Put a sign-up sheet in the kitchen and ask people to bring whatever they can. Clear the board room from 12-1 p.m. and allow employees to come eat lunch together. You will be amazed at the response you will get.

Recognize employees publicly. Don't forget about district office staff that win awards or contribute significantly to the district. Honor the accounting staff when they receive a good audit, the food services staff after School Lunch Week, etc.

Never forget the DO staff when mentioning student achievement. All employees are important to student success, even maintenance and warehouse workers.

### **Let the creative juices flow**

Hold a pumpkin carving contest at Halloween or Thanksgiving. Get a local movie theatre to donate two passes for the best carved pumpkin.

Begin a charitable giving campaign. Collect toys for a children's shelter during the holidays or build a house together for Habitat. Working together for the common good brings people closer.

### **Get to know each other -- without the time commitment**

Send out "Get to Know Me" questionnaires to your staff. Ask them to tell things that others may not know about them, the funniest thing that has ever happened to them, their hobbies and other fun things. Take bits of the questionnaires and put them on a bulletin board in the break room. Allow people to vote on who they think each person is. Unveil the mystery employees at a staff meeting and recognize the person who got the most correct.

Gather baby pictures from employees and post on the bulletin board. Hold a "Who's This?" contest. You can also hold a "Cutest Pet" contest and ask people to bring photos of their pets.



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### **Provide a sight for sore eyes**

Ask art teachers from each school in your district to display their student's work in the district office. Assign each school a month(s). Hang the artwork in the hallways, the board room and the lobby. Employees and visitors to the DO will appreciate the creativity of the students.