

Human Equation & Business Reality

5 Tips for Winning the War for Talent in Tough times

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Philosophically this isn't quantum physics. Practically it is tough to do. You may be a leader with the resources of a multi-billion dollar global corporation or the owner of a start-up - it doesn't matter, even in the current economic upheaval it remains tough to get and keep talented people. There are five methodologies for balancing a quadratic equation. Here are five suggestions for balancing the human equation.

1. **Money Matters.** Money isn't the only medium of exchange in the employment equation but don't believe for a minute that it isn't important. Reality may cause adjustments. Appreciate the sacrifice, commit to the longer term.
2. **Communicate - Communicate - Communicate.** You've said it once. You're the boss. People should get it and act on it - now. Well, it doesn't quite work that way. In times of great change and ambiguity, direction and messages change, sometimes on a dime. When people are overloaded and distracted more and better communication is essential to keeping people engaged and focused on results.
3. **WIIFM.** From the CEO to the clerk, everyone answers this question persistently and individually. Do you know how each individual you lead defines WIIFM (What's in it for me)? Does each person you lead clearly understand what the business and you expect of them? One size doesn't fit all and you don't have to control the corporate checkbook to make a positive impact here. Understanding and acting here can have a big impact when other aspects of the employment equation have to be out of balance due to business reality.
4. **Commitment is a two way street.** Know each team member and do your best to get them what they need in order to do their best for the business. As a leader you can create something bigger than self, something people are excited to be a part of, camaraderie, appreciation, recognition, opportunity, and professional growth. People hear what you say - maybe. People see your actions that impact them - always. Whether your actions demonstrate caring and commitment or not, people know you by what you do. Employee or employer, this is the truth.



5. Soft stuff is the hard stuff. We expect business results of all from CEO to the shop floor employee. Without growth, revenue and ultimate profitability, all bets are off. Clearly understood expectations, competitive compensation, and a valid system of measuring performance are basic price of admission factors. High performing leaders also apply the perspective and soft skills necessary. They keep talented people engaged, focused, and working effectively with others, to serve customers with excellence. They expand the capability of people and ensure that employees are doing their best for the business.

Leaders are accountable. Good economy or bad we still have to deliver results. We must do what we believe is best for the business and it may not always be what is best for individuals. In some cases it may simply not be possible to keep the employment equation in balance to the extent that the employment agreement must end. That is reality and I do not know any leaders who enjoy the painful process. Short of that we can be conscious of the equation and take steps to rebalance when one aspect of it must go out of balance.

Here are a few questions to ponder in the mirror:

In what ways is the quality of leadership in my business worthy of the talented high quality people that are essential to the success of the business?

What do my leadership team and I do consistently that builds a level of trust and loyalty so that employees will stay engaged and committed during challenging times?

Where is the business at risk due to the human equation being out of balance and what must be done to fix it?



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