

Becoming an Employer of Choice

Attracting and Inspiring the Best

The following Fact Sheets are available on line at www.aofp.ca:

1. Becoming an Employer of Choice
2. Employee Turnover
3. Using the Turnover Calculator
4. Fostering Employee Commitment
5. Keeping your Good Employees
6. Employee Engagement
7. Essential Skills
8. Workforce Diversity
9. Managing a Family Business
10. Rewards
11. Recruiting Foreign Workers
12. Orientation
13. Employee Empowerment
14. Introducing Technology
15. Effective Appraisals

How can this Fact Sheet help me?

Is your company struggling to fill critical positions? Are you losing valuable skilled workers to the competition? Do you find that your employees do only the minimum required and won't take responsibility?

This fact sheet is designed to help start you on the road to becoming an Employer of Choice, the employer that everyone wants to work for, the employer with eager enthusiastic employees who really care about the organization.

Challenges and Opportunities

Ontario is facing a labour shortage. Employers in the food and beverage processing industry are particularly affected. Wages are relatively low and working conditions are often undesirable.

Finding and keeping qualified workers has become difficult for most organizations. Yet, there are some employers people want to work for. These companies are Employers of Choice.

A productive, fully-engaged workforce can give you a competitive advantage, but with fewer people looking for work, companies have to work strategically to get and keep good workers. Employers of Choice are companies that employees actively seek out. These are the employers who have their pick of the best available workers. They can attract more and higher quality applicants, they can raise performance standards, and they can count on their employees to go the extra mile for the organization. How do they do this? They adopt workforce management Best Practices that enable them to find, engage, and keep qualified and committed workers, which ultimately leads to company success.

Employers of Choice recognize that effective workforce management practices lead to organizational success. They don't have a set solution or formula, but have developed a customized system of managing people that fits with their culture and beliefs and thus cannot be copied by other companies.

Did you know?

In effective organizations, it is 35% more likely that:

An employee understands how his or her job contributes to the firm's success.

Top management is committed to and leads the way in knowledge sharing.

The organization regularly communicates information about production, customer reaction and financial results to its employees.

Solutions

You can become an Employer of Choice by following industry Best Practices:

- Communicate regularly and openly with employees.
- Involve employees in problem-solving, planning, and decision-making.
- Delegate authority through formal job responsibilities.
- Assess and manage your supply of employees and your need for employees.
- Develop an effective recruitment strategy.
- Select the right employee for the right job.
- Have an effective orientation program.
- Value employee development.
- Develop a learning culture.
- Provide employees with ongoing feedback.
- Institute a formal performance management system.
- Conduct effective performance appraisals.
- Offer a fair and competitive compensation and rewards package.
- View employees as an investment to be used to create success, rather than as a cost to be minimized.
- Recognize and celebrate exceptional individual and team-based achievements.
- Establish and support effective workplace teams.
- Implement cross-training and cross-utilization.
- Design a safe, productive, and healthy work environment.
- Promote respect and understanding among and for all workers.
- Creatively harness the strengths of a diverse workforce.

Did you know?

Employers of Choice:

Attract, on average, over 35 qualified applicants per position (compared to eight for those who aren't).

Use validated selection tests in approximately 30% of their selection decisions.

Fill over 60 percent of positions from within.

If you choose to adopt Best Practices, there are a number of important things to consider:

- Take the long view. Achieving competitive success through people takes time.
- Know who you are and what you value. It is important to develop a workforce management philosophy that includes a deep understanding of your policies and practices and of why they are important to the organization.
- Best Practices are interrelated. They are unlikely to prove beneficial if used in isolation.
- Develop a tailor-made approach. Best Practices are generic principles that must be modified to suit each organization's unique culture and business context.
- Implementation is everything. Employers of Choice engage in careful planning, dedicate appropriate resources, and communicate effectively.
- More is better than less. Successful firms tend to engage in a greater number of Best Practices than less successful ones.
- Align policies and practices. What you say and what you do must be the same.
- Use human resources professionals as a strategic partner. A human resources professional can help you to design and implement programs to meet your goals. Whether you have internal resources or use the occasional external professional, make sure that they understand your business goals.
- Measure results. What gets measured gets done. Make sure measures are meaningful and that workers know results so that improvements can be made.

References

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The following diagnostic tool may be helpful in assessing your position as an Employer of Choice:

Best Practices Assessment

This resource is available on line at www.aofp.ca under Workforce Development.

How do I start?

1. Consider to what extent your organization already is an Employer of Choice.
 - a) How many unsolicited resumes and job applications do you receive?
 - b) How many applicants respond to your job advertisements and postings?
 - c) How long does it take to fill vacant jobs?
 - d) What do your employees (past and present) say about your organization to their friends, families, coworkers, potential employees and customers?
 - e) How engaged are your employees with their work? How much direct supervision do they need?
 - f) What percentage of your employees are looking for work elsewhere?
 - g) For those who decide to leave, what explanations do they provide?
2. Identify your organization's areas of strength and areas for improvement using the Best Practices Assessment available on-line at <http://www.aofp.ca>.
3. Decide which three things you could do differently to improve your position as an Employer of Choice and read the associated fact sheets or take a course to learn more.

ADVANTAGES OF BEST PRACTICES

- More qualified job applicants
- Better trained and informed employees
- Better health and safety practices
- More engaged and productive employees
- Fewer line interruptions
- Fewer product quality problems
- Easier implementation of new technology
- Lower absenteeism and employee turnover
- Higher sales per employee
- Higher market value to book value