

Insight

HR professionals face a changing workplace

Want to learn what works and what doesn't in recruiting loyal and hard-working employees who will stay the course? What measures have been most effective in an environment where change is inevitable? How do you find "diamonds in the rough" in the company work force?



Shelly Williams

I recently attended the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) convention in Colorado, an event that attracted participants from as far away as Washington, D.C. The prevalent themes throughout the conference were leadership and strategic planning.

I left the conference knowing that in the days ahead, human resource professionals must manage work forces much differently than in the past. The work force includes members of more different generations than in any era before, making it more difficult than ever to recruit and retain the valuable employees organizations need and have invested substantial time in training.

HR professionals face challenges to become more innovative and creative in managing employees and asserting leadership.

One strategy involves looking for diamonds in the rough among employees working for the company. Closely watch employees to determine who's creative and finds ways to better serve customers. Once you know who those employees are, apply their techniques to other areas of the business. Then it's a matter of watching, rewarding

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and celebrating as the company grows and prospers.

Jerald Jellison, an author and professor of psychology at the University of Southern California, presented a course at the SHRM Academy before the conference. Jellison used information from two books during the session — "Overcoming Resistance: A Practical Guide to Producing Change in the Workplace" and "Managing the Dynamics of Change."

In my last column, I wrote that the greatest challenge facing executives, managers and supervisors is to effectively elicit and harness the resources of their companies.

Jellison presented a clear and concise program for implementing rapid change through honest, open and sincere communication.

Much of his work involves getting to know employees and recognizing their individual qualities as well as their goals.

Those who work with these individuals should

develop a growth plan that meets their personal objectives. At the same time, businesses should strive to create environments where employees feel valued and respected. Employees no longer feel the necessity to remain loyal in a business relationship that is inequitable and will look for opportunities elsewhere.

Jellison offered a few suggestions to HR professionals and managers to help them through the process:

- Let people know you care.
- Extinguish the monsters created in employees' imaginations. In reality, they are not possible.
- Give employees genuine praise.
- Make changes incrementally.
- Front load rewards.
- Celebrate each small success — it validates the change process.

HR professionals and managers must develop the ability to see and experience the company through the perception of others. Establish responses and behavior that rely on facts in conjunction with minimizing exploitation. Foremost, HR professionals must believe in themselves and their employees.

Shelly Williams is a benefits specialist for the City of Grand Junction and director of communication for the Western Colorado Human Resource Association. The WCHRA meets at 11:30 a.m. the second Wednesday of each month at Two Rivers Convention Center, 159 Main St. in Grand Junction. For more information, call 243-6505 or log on to www.WCHRA.org.

