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"I Can't Get No… Satisfaction!"

Addressing the high turnover rate of Personnel in the Automotive Industry

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The turnover rates in the automotive sector of the American economy are among the highest of all sectors. The reasons for this may vary from location to location, but essentially it comes down to the same factors as in other industries – a lack of retention strategies on the part of employers. Employees can't find satisfaction in their jobs.

It is easy to blame the economy, labor shortages, the work ethic of "younger workers," competition, and other external factors, but retention is about developing a culture that focuses on finding committed candidates and ensuring employees don't want to leave.

Finding committed employees starts with a focused job search. AutoJobPros.com is an employment search tool focused solely on the automotive industry. Candidates who are already familiar with and have worked in the automotive industry and are seeking new employment within that industry bring more experience, are more likely to find happiness in their new job, and are thus more likely to stay longer.

Long work hours, weekend work, a lack of career growth opportunities, and "burnout" from overwork are variables within the control of employer management. How many employers put themselves in the shoes of employees being asked to fulfill roles with these obstacles? Employees stay where they are happy and respected. Pushing people into a work environment that challenges their work-life balance is a sure way to drive them off. It is important to establish clear objectives and set reasonable expectations so that both parties – the employee and the employer – can meet them without disrupting the effort to balance work and life.

So why is the automotive industry plagued by this more than perhaps some other industries? Certainly, there are shortages of the skills required for some of the technical jobs as technology continues to evolve. This is particularly true in the service and parts jobs. The employer that recognizes this and continually trains its employees will see much higher retention than those that have to continually "shop" for employees, luring them in with bonuses and a few dollars more in pay. Those employees will continue to switch jobs when others make similar offers, and the turnover issues will persist.

Providing continuing education is one of the most effective ways to improve employee retention.

Clearly, sales positions have one of the highest turnover rates. Creative programs that reward sales reps for performance drive sales, and most salespeople are commission-based. That said, selling cars is about "being on the lot." Continuing education can be a very effective strategy. The more trained a sales rep is on their product, the higher their close rate and the better their chance of getting the sale on the initial visit. Sales reps who start a sale and then lose it to a colleague because the client doesn't return when they're there to make the purchase get frustrated very quickly. Providing a "lock-in" program where a sales rep can register a customer and receive at least a share of the sale provides greater comfort and allows the employee to make more balanced decisions about working long and inconvenient hours.

Compensation is a much bigger issue for unhappy employees. Employers sometimes get caught up in thinking that money is the solution, but examining the work environment and being honest with oneself can lead to policy adjustments that improve retention without breaking the bank with higher salaries.

In brief, the auto industry is no different from any other industry in that it ultimately depends on a culture of loyalty and mutual respect. It starts with finding employees whose expectations align with reality. Focusing the job search on candidates with industry experience is a solid first step. Using tools like those provided by AutoJobPros.com means less time spent sifting through unqualified candidates and a significantly higher likelihood that a qualified candidate with reasonable expectations will surface. If then provided a fair wage, good benefits, continuing education, opportunities for advancement, and an environment where they feel they are a respected part of a unified community within the company, they are much less likely to leave. Simply put, the satisfaction provided by proper expectations and a respectful culture drives retention and increases the payback from the investment made in each employee.