

JOB RETENTION

An issue that keeps coming back to all of us is clients keeping a job. In the next few weeks I would like to discuss some ideas that help clients keep the job and would appreciate your feedback on experiences, so I can pass them on.

I hope that you have a great week.

Paul

Keeping the job once they get it.

By Paul Clayton

Some of the people that we work with, (usually the welfare side) seem to be able to get a job but then in a few days, weeks, a month, they are back in the office with a sad story about why they quit or got fired. Everywhere I go I hear the same stories.

There are several issues that interfere with people keeping a job and I don't think that we are addressing them in most cases. Many of our welfare clients have some real issues at home, these include managing their home life with working. I think it is hard enough for those who have had role models to manage the household and work without crossing the line of jeopardizing either one. Many of us when there is a conflict between the two have family members or friends that we can call on to help in a pinch. Many of our welfare customers do not have strong relationship ties or have just moved to the area. In addition many that I have met are in abusive relationships and get little support from their relationship while working. My problem is that most places do not address these issues in a workshop or in counseling. Instead many put them in a job search class which is good for many but not the ones with big issues. My suggestion is that we put clients in classes that teach about how to deal with the personal issues like relationship at home when they won't cooperate. What things to expect from their children who may want them to stay home. How to deal with schools when the children are in trouble or get sick. We need to have classes on how to make friends and cultivate them. The most important activity is to have former clients, who have successfully made the transition from home to work, come to the classes either through video tape or in person and share their struggles and how they over came them. I believe that this could be done in a few weeks if it were organized well. If you have things that you do in this area or are running classes let me know and I will pass them on.

Responses

I received many responses from the thoughts on Retention and have put them together. They are well worth reading. Many of our coworkers are experiencing the same frustrations. Retention is a real problem for all of us and employers too. I hope that your week goes well and that you are safe.

Paul

In response to your latest letter dated May 18th. I think you have touched on one of the most frustrating issues for most of us in the "post-Welfare Reform era". With a "work first" ethic, which is propounded by many, the effort seems to be to "get these people off TANF and get them to work", forgetting or disregarding the fact that many of them are, simply put, not ready to work -- due to the many, critical issues in their lives which are not addressed, or paid for, by pre-employment training.

Here are some of the techniques I used to keep my WtW applicants on the job.

1. Pre employment assessment interview is a one-on-one meeting between JD and applicant to assessment their job readiness skill. (this would give me an opportunity to know and understand my applicant skills, ability and need, while area of comfort and trust are being developed.
2. Provide time management, financial management and organization/responsibility techniques to be aware of and prepare prior to entering workforce. it is very critical that the WtW applicant learn how to manage these techniques personally).
3. Provide resources information and contact information that are vital to their need prior to and after entering employment. This would provide them with comfort, confident and trust that they could get all possible assistance in both personal, professional and employment related issues.
4. Help them to Establish their job search plan that would work for them. * Where to look for work (provide them with resources and information, where, when and how to search for jobs thru classified job markets, hidden job markets and networking), * How to do it (provide the following job search cover letter, follow up letter, thank you letter and other job search resources for their job search preparation and how to look for work beyond traditional job hunting (Search job thru website and e-mail resume) * When to look for work (I suggest all of my applicants to select two day out of the week that would work best for them to look for work, following up with their job search, stay focus in job search and to spend the rest of the week with family and friend and enjoy themselves (stressfree)

How to keep job (WtW applicant tense to quit their job within the first six month of their employment). I have utilized the above job search preparation techniques as a powerful tools for my WtW applicant to keep their job and it's worked). As part of employment retention and follow up we are offering an ongoing counseling, supportive services, incentives, and other technical assistance as needed to our WtW program applicants. Please click on link to review other WtW program information. Please let me know if you have any questions.

www.welfareinfo.org <<http://www.welfareinfo.org>> Anthony Hou

on your "how we help clients keep a job", issue.....we in Ventura County, offer a "Job Club", where the first few weeks, are spent covering "life skills", (i.e.how to deal with everyday life, and keep your job).....the topics are very "real life"....they cover things like, "how to call in sick", (that you don't just not show up to work) "how to manage crisis at home, and still get to work on time", "office politics", etc. What we "working stiffs", take for granted, are things that most of our clients have never been exposed to, i.e. proper business attire, customer service, phone "etiquette", etc.....we have found that this "up front" loading of informational instruction and coaching, goes a long way in helping clients maintain their employment.....at the "back end", we offer "Retention Services", (a separate contracted service, besides what our Employment Services staff does).....after a client goes off aid due to over income, which includes job coaching, supportive services, and some basic "hand holding".....while it doesn't work for all, it does seem to help some clients know that they have someone to call, when a crisis does arise at work. :o)) CA Ellen M.

A local worker here has observed that Welfare-to-Work has ignored the "to".

What we have now is a revolving door. When the Act went into effect, there was an immediate, significant drop in the welfare rolls. Many persons went to work, never to return to the rolls. The rest, due to the outstanding issues which you have recognized, had/have considerable difficulty either getting work in the first place or staying employed. What we have now is welfare recidivism, and it's costing the states and the Federal government more, in the long run, than if the real problems and issues for this clientele were addressed at the outset.

The recent passage in the House of the next, stricter revision of the Welfare Reform package again ignores the real problems which make TANF necessary in the first place; lack of education and child care, transportation, violence, drugs, racial bias, medical expenses, etc. etc.

There needs to be a concerted, national effort to make this point clear to the Federal Government; you and this newsgroup could do much to initiate that. Bob Hunt

Paul, when I am working with a client that has quit several jobs within 2 to 3 months I find out the reason. As you said sometimes it is just not planning ahead in the childcare, transportation area, or other issues. After that I have every client practice a telephone message that we write together and then call each and every employer that my client has worked for in the last year. My client then has to apologize to each employer. You would be surprised how this type of accountability has changed attitudes! My clients now think twice before walking off a job, or not going in because they don't feel like going to work, or not planning ahead. They know that before I allow them to look for work again they will be calling & apologizing to their old boss in my office. Billey KS

You are correct in your appraisal of what happens with our clients. We have a group that we call "bounce backs", customers we see over and over. It gets to a point where we have exhausted all possible locations for placements due to their poor attendance or propensity for walking off the job. The problem (job loss/quit) is seldom the problem but rather the outcome that we see due to some of the issues you mention. However, there does come a time where folks have to take ownership of their own lives. The key is in finding out how to get them to do that. We do in fact offer a number of workshops at this location and honestly the response has been mediocre. Those who come are so glad they did and carry away little gems of information to move forward with their lives. Those who don't show up...well, I guess they've made their choice to continue down a different path! To make something like these workshops mandatory may be a good idea, but is it appropriate to point out to someone that they don't know how to care for themselves or know how to be a friend? In terms of how you present yourself for an interview, I think the answer is yes, but beyond that, I'm not so sure.

The workshop that is most popular is a self-esteem workshop run through the local Catholic Charities offices. Most attendees are women but men do come as well. Tapping into that self awareness and self valuation are primary focus points and then they move on to hygiene, make-up, hair and clothing. Participants receive outfits (usually 3) free of charge obtained through a program called Donna's Closet. These types of programs exist in almost all areas so it should not be difficult to hook up with them. It's almost like a mini-makeover session with attention paid to the internal work as well. Lots of fun for all who do come. We also have workshops on housekeeping connections to get them into parenting workshops, financial, etc. The difficulty comes in getting folks to come. I welcome all suggestions! Karen Johnson NY

I have found that one of the main issues some of my clients have is child care. Most of our clients work in retail or restaurants. This means they have to work evening and weekend hours. They seldom, if ever, find affordable and reliable childcare. Sometimes a friend or family member agrees to keep their children and then they have a crisis and cancel on them. This also ties into the issue of lack of support from family, friends and community. It would be interesting to form a group with clients who share this problem and work with them on supporting each other. They could even arrange their schedules in a way that they could assist each other with child care. OFELIA CARDENAS FL

Regarding to your title "how to keep a job" I think and believe that a person has to have a conviction. Every time, that you will begin a new job you have to understand, that is indispensable that you don't miss days, do not to be late at work, do not to live before time. People have to understand when they are at work, they personal or family problems can not influence there career. One thing I have learn is to keep separate work from home and VS.

The first thing that I tell to my caseworkers was: do not to assume, to ask what they don't understand, and learn as much is possible. For what I have see from the supervisor point of view is: That I do something to them, like they are doing me a favor by be working for

me, sometimes the supervisors do know nothing, they know everything. It's difficult to find good people with good working background that they want to work.

First: I have to face many problems due to the fact that in my community, everyone, or all most everyone are related in some way. That makes my job difficult, because you always have to be more condescendence. Second: People do not want to be supervised, don't accept criticism well (positive).

It doesn't matter what age are, they have lost the sense of responsibility punctuality, morals, and work ethics. Workers need to learn to sense of "confidentiality". Especially in jobs where you have direct contact with consumers, clients, patients, etc. As well with other co-workers.

It has been a challenge for me as a Program Director, supervisor, and worker. I always try to keep my father's slogan in mind "when you at work, do your best, so when you live they will know what they lost. It doesn't matter if is supping floors, be the best ever."

A lot of these issues are consequences of a lack of family structure. Our society is living the age of single parent home (female), with lack of control and sense of unit, belonging. Children are raising children. So is not guidance as and other homes where two parents looking after family structure. M. T. AK

As a supervisor now I don't teach classes any longer but even when I did this does seem to be a major problem or adjustment for clients who have not been in the workforce for some time or ever. I really think it is important to get everyone involved. I use to talk about this in my workshops. Don't wait until you get the job to plan, plan now. Some of the things I use to talk about was get your kids involved, it is a major change for them, not having you at home all day. Sit them down and explain some of the changes give them some input in how everyone can make this happen ask for their ideas, what can they do; some extra chores, make dinner certain nights etc. this helps them adjust and also feel responsible for the success of it. It is addressing the fear of the unknown if they don't know what to expect then they would know how to deal with it. Also talk to them about the positives of mom getting a job. Maybe allowance, more money now we can buy things we could before, go to movies etc. So this will also give them the positives of this working. They don't always understand this because mom had money to pay the rent buy some food and so on they don't realize that it can be better and beneficial to the whole family once mom gets this job. I truly think that there should be some counseling done for spouses or significant others because many time they feel threatened by the other getting a job like; will make more money then they do, will find someone else, will begin to feel self sufficient and not need them and this is where the abuse comes in or increases, this needs to be addressed up-front before they obtain the job because I sometimes think many of the clients set themselves up to fail because in the back of their minds they already anticipate many of these problems and don't know how to address them. And on my last note I think employers need to know how to interview and sometimes some

training on this might help retention. Many employers don't feel comfortable or know how to conduct interviews. If they would spell out their expectations and the job responsibilities more clearly the person expecting this position who know much clearer what is expected in their performance. Many new hires fail because they don't perform to that employers expectations but where those expectations clearly defined!!! Teresa Ramos CA

Paul we have discussed the same things. We agree that most of our clients do not have a stable family life that can give them the advice they need on handling workplace issues, family emergencies, car problems etc. The family would probably tell them to "quit" their jobs. We have been researching a concept called "Options" where we give the clients other alternatives to everyday problems. Possibly even a "job coach" that would either meet them after work or a phone call to discuss their day. This way we may be able to stop the cycle before it starts. We are still in the discussion stage but I will keep you informed of any new developments. Linda CA

In our region, we offer Survival Skills for Women, our Men's class has just gotten off the ground a few weeks ago which is mandatory for those that are receiving federal monetary assistance and are not working. The topics in class are: Assertiveness, Personal Health, Money Management, Child Management, Self Advocacy, Legal Rights, Coping with Crisis, Community Resources, Re-entry to Employment. This is a 3-week course with a graduation service afterward. Instructors are trained especially to teach this class. I believe that the State of Tennessee has also adopted and made this component mandatory. Martha Speers IA

How timely! I am a supervisor with the welfare to work formula program and CalWORKs program. I just finished a memo concerning transitioning people off of welfare and into decent jobs. I feel that the bottom line is that the case manager must take the time to get to know their participant. This includes the good, the bad and the ugly. The participant must be comfortable and be able to trust the case manager before any of the underlying issues can even be addressed. We cannot apply a band-aid, we must address the whole individual. Case managers must have the skill, resources and the knowledge to address very complex "social" issues. (which means that we are going to need additional training) Not like the "good old days." Case management goes beyond employment issues, we are facing very human issues. To sum this up- time, trust and knowing the individuals and what resources are available to assist them are a step in helping them to keep their jobs. Karen Keen CA

We don't have specific seminars that deal with issues of returning to work and how it will impact family life.

With that said, it is my opinion that as job counselors and caseworkers it is our responsibility to address these issues with our participants individually. In our WIA program, job retention is a huge issue. Therefore we keep very close contact with those participants that we know may have trouble keeping a job. I call them weekly or bi-

monthly to see how things are going and encourage them to "use me" when they have a challenge or concern. I keep telling them to call me to discuss work issues or childcare. I have one participant who works the same hours as me, we keep in weekly contact by leaving each other voicemail. It works great!

Please don't put the responsibility of helping participants keep their jobs on the fact that your agency does not have workshops or seminars to deal with this. It is our job to help our participants become successful. Otherwise, we set them up for failure!

Cinthia - California

UP UNTIL 2 WEEKS AGO, WE HAD A SUPPORT COUNSELOR AVAILABLE HELPING PEOPLE MANAGE PERIODS OF HIGH STRESS AND TRANSITION. THEY WOULD DEVELOP GOALS CENTERED ON SHORT-TERM PROBLEM-SOLVING. FEEDBACK WAS GREAT. Gail MA

You make good points of why the clientele has such a low rate of retention. It is difficult for those with work experience to adjust to a workplace culture and balance a relationship and family. This scenario quadruples with individuals with no work experience. True, getting trained in computer skills, CNA, security, etc. will not guarantee that the client will stay on the job. Current training does not address the issue of retention, and if it does it is only briefly. I don't feel that there are enough competent individuals to provide such training. One cannot have a one size fit all type of program/training. We are dealing with lives and each life is unique, therefore, the approach needs to be and a trainer needs to be aware of this and recognize the differences in order to implement the proper training for that individual. And most importantly, the client needs to be made cognizant of the fact that the onus is on him on how his/her life/job will develop. And this is yet another type of training that needs to be provided. Tatiana: NY

The Niagra Falls Job

Fair sounded great. I like the idea of having the workshops on interviewing, etc. the day before the Fair. We're having a Job Fair here on Wednesday and I have some of our teachers doing workshops on Creating A Resume That Works!, Understanding Work Place Behavior, and Job Hunting For The First Time Jobseeker (they're targeting high school seniors, but other first-timers are welcome...especially since the strategies are the same). We're also staffing the Resume Resource Center, helping the customers draft and finalize their resumes that they can then take to the employers who will be at the Job Fair.

I guess the issue of job retention is really a big one no matter where you go. We do focus on this in our two week class (for mandatory TANF referrals), covering such topics as parenting, communication, problem solving ("the big one" with scenarios for role playing), time management, stress and anger management, trust and teambuilding, left brain/right brain orientation (an awareness of which helps one survive in the workplace...as well as in one's personal arena). All of this is covered in addition to the usual job readiness topics (employment inventory, job application, resume awareness, job search strategies and interviewing, work ethics and job retention). We call it non-

traditional education because learning is fun, thus retention is more of a possibility. We do a lot of "right brain" activities to balance the "left brain" information that we are passing on to the customers. Also, because our customers in these two week (8 days really...8:30am -4:00pm)classes are together for this time, they bond and begin to build another support network. They help each other with their job search efforts, child care. Shelly A..HI