

Straight Talking

By **PHIL GREEN** CBS



Power to your People

As anyone in business knows, recruiting and training new staff can be a costly and time-consuming process. With an estimated 75% of employees staying less than 5 years in their job, companies need to think hard about how they can do more to retain staff.

Investing in your staff does not necessarily mean spending thousands of pounds on training or team bonding exercises. We are all individuals with our own wants and needs. Good employee relations start with taking the time to get involved with your staff and to make them feel appreciated.

Connecting with your staff shouldn't be all about work. But how can you increase opportunities for interaction – and introduce more fun into the mix?

One of the reasons CBS has been so successful in keeping staff is by keeping them constantly challenged and motivated. An active community engagement programme provides opportunities for our team to shift a gear, taking them out of their normal environments – and potentially out of their comfort zones. For example, we work with local organisation Connect Reading to relocate unwanted business furniture and fit out offices for charities, giving staff a chance to practice their project management and space planning skills, as well as meeting a real need. One of the plus benefits of this policy is that it gives management and staff a chance to connect and have fun outside of the office environment. Charity work can literally be life changing, while increased confidence makes people better ambassadors for the business.

What about the company needs?

While loyalty and support is a two way street – and employees have to recognise they also need to be flexible – it is important to check with staff what they feel they need to do their job. At CBS we have always tried to support our staff in developing their role within the business and increasing their own personal skills. Sometimes this means moving staff between different roles until the right fit is achieved for both parties. Also important is taking action to address skills gaps. In recognition of this, we have recently signed up to the Government's Skills Pledge Programme, which aims to encourage organisations to invest in raising the skills of their workforce.

As well as actively supporting employees to strengthen basic literacy, numeracy and technical skills, this involves helping them to go on to work towards relevant higher-level qualifications where appropriate.

Do you have any creative ideas for encouraging employees to stay put? Let us know what your company does. Email me at phil@cbs-plc.co.uk.



Building employee skills:

CBS' Kevin Burton, receiving the Skills Life Learner of the Year award at Bracknell and Wokingham College for outstanding literacy and numeracy.

