



## CREATING A HIGH-PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION AND COMPANY CULTURE

Executive Overview for:

### The Art and Science of Keeping the Keepers

*"Every company is blessed with people who have the skills and attributes, exhibit an outreaching personality, motivate people with their positive attitudes, demonstrate exceptional energy and set the example for high performance within the role they play. We call these people "Keepers" and they can surface at any or all levels of the organization.*

*There is a great tendency to pay less attention to those associates because they are low maintenance. This is an easy trap to fall into. I have seen, over the years, where these easy to manage "Keepers," for a lot of different reasons, lose heart. It usually occurs when they are not included in something they think they should have been, not appreciated, not recognized or not talked to about an open opportunity. If you, as the Leadership Team and Department Managers identify these current or potential "A" players we call "Keepers," it is imperative that you continue to challenge and develop them, and even more important, communicate with them and develop a relationship that allows you to be a mentor as the "Keeper" advances toward their full potential. Don't ever get in a situation where you are surprised by a Keeper who resigns from the company. They are the future of your company and represent its long-term value." - YourBoard.US*

1. The elements that bond the "Keepers" with the Ownership and Management of the company.
2. How to keep the "A" players who we call "Keepers".



YOUR WEB-BASED BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD

All content is intended for use by active YourBoard.US members only. Any representation or re-use of this content outside of the YourBoard.US, LLC, membership terms and conditions is strictly prohibited by law.

There is nothing more upsetting, especially in a small or mid-size company, then to have one of the key people and future leaders of your team who is counted on to achieve goals every day and also consistently encourage others to achieve their potential, announce they are leaving for another job.

That is when I, as a leader, used to think to myself that I didn't do my job or this surprise most likely would not have happened. The first thought always is, "I thought they were happy here." As I look back on those situations, if I didn't really know if they were happy here or not, then I wasn't as close to an associate that I considered a "keeper" and future leader as I should have been.

I served on the board of a search firm for over twenty years. I watched how professional recruiters picked off these "keepers" from competitive companies and I witnessed how the "keeper" walked into his manager to resign and how the boss was totally taken aback and always (100% of the time) responded with "why didn't you tell me you were looking" or "tell me you weren't happy"? My first thought after I got off the floor from laughter was "why didn't you ask?" The headhunters would joke about how the candidate just wanted to see the love. In several cases, when you considered all of the hidden cost to change jobs, especially when there was a move involved, the "keeper" did not see much more, if any, additional money in his pocket, but he still made the decision to resign.

In the vast majority of cases, the "keeper" was available for a new job and was easy pickings for a headhunter, not because of money but because the absolute critical elements that bonds people to their manager and company were missing:

- A. Appreciation for work performed and ideas presented.
- B. Recognition for accomplishments.
- C. Reward for continued accomplishments (raises and/or incentives).
- D. Never being blindsided by a change in strategy or approach.
- E. Not having the opportunity to offer meaningful input, or receiving feedback on that input or participating in the strategies for their position and their role in the decision-making process.**
- F. Assurances that their role, their career path and their company are aligned and the "keeper" is on a good path for future personal growth. There was never enough discussion regarding personal career path and personal goals.

**Remember two things:** People work for people, not for companies, and in most cases people are not running to a new job but for some reason running away from the one they have.



#### YOUR WEB-BASED BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD

All content is intended for use by active YourBoard.US members only. Any representation or re-use of this content outside of the YourBoard.US, LLC, membership terms and conditions is strictly prohibited by law.

## How do you keep your “Keepers?”

- A. First of all, it generally only takes a manager, owner or senior leader about 15 minutes in front of a piece of paper to write down the names of the people you consider high performers and that you would like to maintain in your company long term. In most cases these “keepers” you have in your mind, and now listed on a piece of paper, are also the next team up to lead your processes, departments, divisions, remote locations and ultimately your company.
- B. After you have identified the “keepers,” it is important to have a “keeper plan”. That can be as simple as a sticky note on the “professional development” section of the RROI-Position and Performance Agreement.
- C. The key is to be certain you stay in contact with the “keepers” through the Leadership Loop Meetings and other company forums. It is important to be certain that the “keepers” be charged with more and more responsibility and involved with leading more tasks.
- D. The most important activity is to review regularly, both informally and formally, the “keepers” role and results and be certain that there is appreciation and recognition expressed. Regular discussions build confidence and trust in the managers and leaders. Never listen to anyone, especially a “keeper” who says he does not need recognition to maintain his motivation. That is a “Red Flag” for everyone. It is also a lie. That is simply not true and goes against human nature itself.
- E. You should review, on a twice-yearly basis, the “keepers” Personal and Professional Development Plan and be certain that their career path is discussed. Be certain they are getting exposed to the training that will expand their capabilities.
- F. In the way of rewards it is important to be certain the “keepers” are competitively compensated for both their position and level of performance. In the compensation segment, we outline compensation and incentive ideas that can be used as a tool for providing recognition and reward. Repeated results deserve both recognition and reward.
- G. The true “keepers” need to be exposed to, not only increased responsibilities and opportunities, but also be exposed to the company leaders. This periodic exposure to the Owner and Senior Leaders is key to developing loyalty.

Rarely does any “keeper,” or any associate for that matter, who is positively and interactively connected to his superiors, and feels they have meaningful input into plans, strategies and decisions (no matter what level they are on) leave the company without a private & confidential discussion in advance.



### YOUR WEB-BASED BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD

All content is intended for use by active YourBoard.US members only. Any representation or re-use of this content outside of the YourBoard.US, LLC, membership terms and conditions is strictly prohibited by law.

At the beginning of this section we talked about the first words out of the mouth of the manager or owner who just found out that one of his “keepers” just resigned. “Why didn't you tell me you were looking or you weren't happy?” The goal we have is to use the tools we have discussed to build the faith, trust and confidence in each associate's mind that he has the comfort and access to actually discuss with the “Boss” other opportunities that have come up and seek genuine guidance and council.

It is important to understand that maintaining our cadre of high performing “keepers” is critical to perpetuating the foundation of core philosophies and strategies that can be built upon by the next generation of managers and leaders that will assure these five outcomes for your company.

1. The maintenance of a high performing company organization and culture.
2. Continued growth and exceptional financial performance for the company.
3. Continuity and consistency.
4. A perpetuation of high productivity and performance.
5. Company sustainability and longevity.

Do the things necessary to keep the “keepers.” They truly represent security for your organization and future business success for your company. Keeping the “keepers” is the core of succession and transition planning.

Always ask yourself, if a headhunter called one of my “keepers” today, would he actively listen to their spiel?

“Love Your Keepers” – they are the future for your company's value increase, the owner's retirement income plan and also represent growth and security for your associates and longevity for your business.



#### YOUR WEB-BASED BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD

All content is intended for use by active YourBoard.US members only.  
Any representation or re-use of this content outside of the YourBoard.US, LLC,  
membership terms and conditions is strictly prohibited by law.