

Keeping the right people

Holding on to the best candidates means more than just money says Andy Savva



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One of the greatest challenges facing garage employers today is discovering and retaining good technicians, reception personnel, as well as support staff such as administrators, valets and drivers.

As a former garage owner, I know how difficult this can be. I realised early on in my business career that focusing on recruitment, selection and retention was one of the most important steps towards building a successful business.

The implications of poor recruitment selection decisions for the business as a whole can be catastrophic and so often visiting garages up and down the country I find staff members who are placed in positions without the necessary skill set for the job they are doing.

Why this is? Well the answer is garage proprietors are reluctant to pay a salary for the right person, so they end up recruiting people without the

business? That's exactly what I did, and guess what? It always caught people by surprise because they were never asked that before. They never knew what to reply back to me, so I used to ask them what their current salary was, and when they replied back £32,000, I'd say well we are in luck then because I'm prepared to offer you £36,000, is that ok with you? If only I could take a picture of look of happy shock on their faces.

SALARY CAP

If you are going to worry about £2000 or £3000 per year, per employee or have salary cap for specific positions or any roles for that matter you will never attract the right person in an already under skilled sector. My attitude was find the right person and offer them a package they could never say no to.

You don't just want to compete on money to get and keep the best candidates though. You want to demonstrate that you have created a workplace that attracts, retains and nourishes good people by doing things like providing an adequate staff room, and acknowledging good work. There are logical and consistent operating policies and procedures. You provide them with the correct tooling and equipment to carry out their duties, and let them know that they will be a respected team member who will be asked their opinions before business decisions are made that could affect them.



information. I wanted my team to know where the company they were working for was going and what it will look like in the future. I wanted my employees knowing how their specific jobs fitted into the grand scheme and what they can do to help my business get to where I wanted it to go. My experience taught me if you operate in an open environment where information is shared you will certainly benefit from higher retention rates.

I would have failed if I knew my employees had thoughts like:

career positions are very much restricted. This was always on the back of my mind, and to be honest, there was not much I could do in this area if a particular employee decided to leave for a senior role which I could not offer, however hard that was for me seeing them move on, although luckily for me, this only happened a couple of times. My overall goal as an employer was to make my business a place where people wanted to come to work. A place of discipline yet fun to be in and a place where everyone

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right skills and then asking them to fulfil jobs that they are just not capable of doing. You may ask me: 'What's the right salary?' Well my answer to that is clear.

If you have identified the correct person with the right skill level and pedigree, why not ask them what they would like to be paid to work in your

MISSION SHARED

Do they understand your vision and values? If it's a yes to all the above before you know it your creating a retention environment. Why would they want to leave you? Where would they go? Are there many other garages offering the package they currently have?

Above all I insisted on a culture of openness and shared

- "It doesn't feel good around here."
 - "I don't get the support I need to get my job done."
 - "They wouldn't miss me if I were gone."
 - "I am not paid enough"
- The lack of opportunity of staff promotions in most independent garages can create problems as some employees who are ambitious to progress in their

respected each other to cultivate a feeling of family. These are the fundamentals that are needed to succeed in recruiting and maintaining a stable group of team members. Yes, I may have been the owner of Brunswick Garage and the driving force behind so many ideas however none would have been implemented without my wonderful team that I assembled.