

*Bill Guertin*

## **The Magic of Believing**

Do you believe in what you do?

Stan does.

Stan is good. Very good. And everyone wants him on their team.

Thirty years ago, Stan (not his real name) started working in the marketing department of his company in-between semesters at Indiana University. He loved his job so much, he never finished school after his sophomore year.

Today he's the head of advertising for that same company, and he says he's got the best job in the world.

"I get to do my job, they leave me alone, and we have a great relationship," he beams.

He's modest. What Stan doesn't tell you is that he's one of the most brilliant and sought-after marketing executives in his industry. He's been offered over \$100,000 more in salary alone to join other companies, but he's turned them all down.

"It isn't just the money I'm after. I love my job, and my life is great in part because I love what I do. It's a company we all believe in. It's a great place to work, and we're all treated like family. I've been given the freedom to grow in ways I could never have in any other company. I wouldn't give that up for all the money in the world."

How many people in *your* company can say that?

I believe that belief in the company you work for is the single biggest secret in employee retention and job satisfaction. Stan truly believes in what he's doing, and for whom he's doing it. You can hear his belief coming through in his voice, in his choice of words, and the expression on his face.

How do people in *your* company talk about their employer?

We're all struggling with more work and less workers, high turnover, higher costs of doing business, and reductions in benefits. That's reality. In the midst of this chaos, companies large and small are looking for the one magic thing that will help them attract and retain the best employees.

Here's a simple solution: Build belief in what you do among those who do it.

Salespeople who don't believe in what they sell will not be selling it for long. Employees who don't believe in the company and its goals will be working for the wrong reasons, and will leave at the drop of a hat for a better opportunity.

How do you begin to build a strong belief structure among *your* team?

First, be sure that your company's goals are clearly communicated to every employee. What are we all about? What do we ultimately want to accomplish today, tomorrow, and beyond?

Second, communicate to every employee how their talents, skills and efforts are contributing to the company's success. Show them how they're making a difference, and recognize that effort.

Third, go one step further with your best employees. Give them challenging projects they'll enjoy, and then step back and watch them grow.

There's a growing number of leaders that are embracing "intrapreneurship" as a way to recruit and keep the very best people. Joyce Giola of the Workforce Stability Institute defines intrapreneurship as "the process of allowing and encouraging employees to initiate and oversee new ideas or improvements within the organization."

Her group estimates that 3 out of 4 young professionals in today's workforce want to own their own business, but many of them have no idea what they want to do.

"We see this not as a threat, but an opportunity," says Giola. "You don't have to keep losing your valued employees to the desire to work for themselves. You can give them the opportunity to find that sort of ownership and satisfaction within your company, right now."

The key to workforce stability, she says, is finding ways for your employees to feel happy, successful and important.

I've seen it work at the very best companies. I've experienced it myself, and I'll be ever grateful to the individuals who allowed me to grow in this way.

Listen to your employees, and give them cool stuff to do. Then let them go do it, and see what magic can happen.

Build belief overall, and you'll build a better company.

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