

LOOK FOR A BETTER WAY

By John Madden

We cannot solve today's problems with outdated remedies. Mark Twain said, "If you want to change the future, you have to change what you're doing in the present.

A new client called to seek help with their high employee turnover problem. When I met the management team, I asked what steps they had taken up till now to reduce turnover. The human resource director told me they'd been conducting exit interviews *religiously* for several years!

"Has this helped?" I asked

"No, It's gotten worse"

After some brainstorming, we decided that a different and more radical approach might be necessary to help solve this problem which was costing thousands of dollars every year, and was drastically cutting into productivity and profits.

We developed a simple questionnaire. Instead of asking those who were leaving why they were leaving, we decided to ask those who stayed why they stayed, and what, in their opinion, was causing the turnover problem. We included questions on job satisfaction, career growth, the ability to make decisions, their involvement in the goals of the company, the managerial styles, and their ideas for improvement

New information surfaced which had not been evident in the past. Some procedural issues were identified, such as poor orientation for new employees, inadequate training, and limited supervisory coaching skills, all of which led to discontented and frustrated employees.

Now they knew which direction to take.

If you have a similar problem that you've been struggling to resolve, here are some ways to approach a solution:

1. **Look for the second right answer - and the third.** There's more than one way to cure a headache, right? There's more than one way to make a sales call, to recognize good performance, to reduce turnover.
2. **Use previous experience and knowledge.** Something you learned in your previous job or career will often help you solve a problem you have right now.
3. **Ask: 'what if?' and 'why not?'** This forces you to look at a totally different approach, to get outside the box ,and to be more creative.

That's how the cell phone - and the Internet came about. Ask Al Gore!

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