

KEEPING STAFF MOTIVATED

Janine Hill is a recruitment expert who has been working with Cranbourne Body Works in Victoria to recruit the right staff and develop those already on the team.

WITH AN AGEING workforce of panel beaters and spray painters and a growing national vehicle fleet, it is imperative that smash repairers take a long, hard look at their work culture to retain their best workers while adapting new recruitment methodologies to attract new talent.

But where do we start? How do we adapt in an industry that is rapidly changing and keep our staff motivated and engaged? Who needs to make the first move – the employer or employee?

To sustain a long and healthy smash repair business, you need staff. While I've been recruiting in the smash repair industry, I have found a treasure trove of idiosyncrasies that not only make our industry unique, but very much set in its ways.

To retain key employees you need to ensure all staff are on board with your company's vision. For example, at Cranbourne Body Works our vision is to become a well-recognised key player in the industry. All of our employees need to know every step involved in achieving this vision and how we value their integral role in achieving it. To be a successful business in today's market, you must get your staff engaged and empowered enough to want to fight for it.

How many smash repairers today are wanting to embrace change but are hindered by staff that just don't seem to get it? Mindset matters when it comes to embracing change. With a myriad of personalities in the workplace, find out what makes your staff tick and what drives them to work every day. Or even better, consider personality profiling to help understand their behaviours at a deeper level.

For example, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a fabulous way to implement a team-building exercise as well as gain a greater understanding of personality types. Many successful businesses use this tool at the interview process to see how the potential candidate would fit and how best to manage them. If in your team you realised you had an 'ENTP' profile, this staff member loves change and could support other staff during the process, especially those with an 'ISTJ' profile, as they are resistant to change. Google Myers-Briggs and you will find a wealth of information about how others have implemented personality profiling in their businesses.

Staff need to overcome any insecurities and move with the times. When you offer your insight, reassurance and guidance, you will arm them with longevity in the industry. Everyone has the ability to change but for some it's easier than others. Give them clarity about their future with the company and allow them to change within the comforts of their current job, not somewhere else.

TRAINING AND CAREER PLANNING ARE VITAL

Today there seems to be no time for poor skills as smash repairers have little room to move with such small margins. Staff easily feel the pressure from squeezed timeframes and



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zero tolerance of reworks, so training and career development plans are imperative for all staff to ensure that no one gets left behind.

Take the time to invest in training and don't just assume things will fall into place without it. Cracks will appear, profitability will be affected

and pressure will be put on staff morale.

Staff retention is rarely about money. Money is such an important aspect in all our lives and yet it doesn't usually rank as high on the motivation list. Find different ways to incentivise your key staff who are crucial for managing your company's transition through change. Set targets, KPIs and a more vibrant and fun environment to work in. Ask your staff to contribute ideas about the culture of the business. Try a variety of different things – some will work, some won't – but you can't expect to get it right first time.

Sometimes, though, it's the little things that make the biggest difference. Use your judgment and wisdom to create a supportive environment, where communicating and speaking out is respected and valued. Visit your staff personally when they are on the tools, respect and trust your staff and offer your experience to guide them towards a successful future.

Never lose sight of your company's vision and goals for your own future. When you focus so much on others, you sometimes lose sight on why you are working in the first place. Look at the team that you have today before you try to find a replacement. Recruitment can be a long and arduous process.