The Impossible Dream

You've hired a fabulous staff: How do you keep them from leaving?

taffs come and staffs go.
According to ComputerWorld's job satisfaction survey. IS departments reported a nine percent tumover rate in 1995. IS departments in industries such as healthcare and retail incurred an 11 percent turnover rate. This job switching can be attributed to a variety of desires, such as increased salary, more responsibility, or a more positive work environment.

As a manager, you must get past the frustration that can accompany staff turnover and focus on retaining and rebuilding the remaining staff. Here are some strategies you can implement to make your work environment a more positive one. Of course, the success of these tactics relies on flexibility and adaptability on the part of management and the company.

IT MIGHT BE ABOUT MONEY ...

Often, a pay increase is the only motivation needed to jump ship. Because headhunters call regularly, some companies systematically increase the IS staff members salaries to match the competition's rates. Don't assume that staff members are unaware of their coworkers' or peers' salaries. Although salaries should be private, they rarely are.

Another money issue that can cause problems is ongoing budget cuts. Continuous scrimping in the areas of staffing, training, and projects wears people down. Parsimonious departments have higher turnover because no one wants to be in an environment where budgetary constraints hobble them from doing their best job.

... BUT IT MIGHT NOT

Money talks, but not as loudly as it once did. According to LAN Magazine's 1995 salary survey, network managers weighed the opportunity to advance and the quality of upper management as more important than their salary (see figure). Following are management techniques, other than salary increases, that contribute to a satisfied network team

• Job challenge. Cultivate your most
valued employees with choice
assignments. Network managers in
LAN Magazine's 1995 salary survey.
ranked job challenge as the most
important aspect of their job.
Working conditions. People don't
thrive under undue stress. As a
manager, you are responsible for
making the work environment a
humane one. A friendly atmosphere
with reasonable deadlines and that
focuses on communication and
teamwork will build staff morale.
 Bonuses. Recognize exceptional
work on a specific project, consis-
tent hustling, or overtime with a
one-time bonus. Keep in mind that
some employees may value a
bonus in the form of extra paid time
off rather than as more money
 Nontraditional work environ-
ments. Telecommuting or work shar-
ing may be a worthwhile perk for
some employees, especially those
who face long commutes, less tradi-
tional work patterns, or significant
family or outside responsibilities.
• Training, Training can be an effec-
tive retention weapon when consid-
ered an investment in an employ-
ee. It must be followed by opportu-
nities to exercise the new skills and
recognition when employees reach
recognition when employees reach

HEALTH ISSUES

new levels of expertise.

Extended keyboard work can lead to a host of physical problems. The research on workplace ergonomics is far from conclusive, and many common beliefs and general rules have not held up to scrutiny. Carpal tunnel syndrome seems to be running rampant, along with back and neck injuries that may be as much a result of stress as bad furniture design. Have a qualified physician or your organization's occupational health and safety office (if it has one) evaluate your department's work area.

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in the Wis Lan Magazine Satury Survey, network managers were asked to rank aspects of their jobs on a scale of 1 through 4. A ranking of four represented high settination or importance and a ranking of one represented low satisfaction or importance. The job pactors listed above represent those aspects of the network managers for that have the highest continued. Network professionals now these factors as very important, but are not satisfied with last current state in the workplace. These are treas managers should local or return valuable staff members.