

Your future is based on growing your own

Use employee reviews as a tool to gauge goals, growth and performance

Many times when you have a lack of accountability or performance in an employee, you want to blame them first. There is a good chance you could have done something different to change that outcome. If you really believe there is a technician/service advisor shortage, you better start growing the ones you have already hired. ATI Coach Kim Hickey says most of the lack of employee growth is coming from lack of regular employee reviews. Let's listen to what she has discovered as typical with even great shop owners and managers.

What is an employee review? It is not something only corporations need to do. It is not something that you are "too small" to do. It's also not something you do only when you want to terminate an employee and need documentation. A review is a retrospective view or survey, and/or an act of carefully looking at or examining the quality or condition of something or someone.

When you hired your employees, hopefully you gave them a clear understanding of your expectations as well as

what they should expect from you. Many business owners boast that their employees know exactly what is expected of them. That assumption could not be any more false. Luckily there are several tools in your toolbox that will remedy that situation — and one of the most underutilized is the quarterly employee review.

For the purpose of this article, I am going to assume that when you hired your employees, you set up clear performance goals, provided standards for their behavior, supplied an employment manual that outlined attendance,

continued education expectations, informed your employees that they would be receiving scheduled reviews, and that new hires have already received their 30, 60 and 90 day reviews before receiving their nonprobationary status.

Why?

A review provides a benchmark by which you can measure for productivity, performance and any other goals you set. While a review is one of your best tools for developing an employee, if necessary it can lay the groundwork for nonperforming employees so you can take action steps for reprimand or termination. A scheduled reoccurring standardized review sets the stage for nonemotional feedback.

When I first have the "review" discussion with my clients, the first thing they tell me is "I don't need to do reviews; I have an open door policy, and my employees can come to me any time." An open door policy is not a real policy. How approachable do you really think you and your "open door" are? When you are rushing in, sitting in your office or running around the shop, vendors are waiting to speak to you, customers need to speak with you — do you really think that your employees look at that environment and say to themselves "Bob has an open door policy, so I am going to interrupt him right now and share with him how I am feeling?"

When?

So just how often should you be looking at the quality or condition of your employees? The timetable that I see the

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best results with is the quarterly review. The time period allows a short enough time between reviews so that if a major course correction has to be made, it can be done in a timely manner; and it is long enough between reviews to implement any changes and track results. By performing reviews quarterly, you can address low efficiency and other issues at a quicker pace.

Having your reviews scheduled for the year and posted on your calendar for everyone to see does a few things. Some of the things it does are:

- It holds both you and your employees accountable. If it is on the schedule, you are much less likely to put it off or not do it.
- It gives your employees a set time that they know they can speak with you and have your undivided attention.
- It sets the stage for a nonemotional discussion. Instead of losing it with an employee because you let stuff build, you can speak with a clear head and even temperament.

Be prepared

Don't come to the meeting unprepared. Prior to the meeting, gather whatever data is needed and review it yourself first. Have a list of what you want to cover and know how long you are going to spend on each item. Prior to the meeting, give your employees the same review form you are going to use and ask them to complete it on themselves. Ask them to take time and thought into filling it out, and you do the same. During the review, lay both review forms on the table side by side for comparison. If you are doing your job as a leader correctly, the forms should be almost identical. If the employee has scored themselves higher than you scored them, then you have a problem. If the employee scored themselves lower than you scored them, then you have a problem. Make no mistake, if an employee does not think they are doing as well of a job as you do, that is as much of an indication of poor leadership as if they scored themselves higher than you did.

Follow up and make it effective

After the review, supply a constant stream of feedback. Follow-up should be ongoing throughout the entire year, not just at the quarterly review. The goals for the next quarter can't be out of sight, out of mind. Set dates, track progress and/or lack of it. If your employee stays on track, make sure you acknowledge that fact. If your employee does not progress as planned, you need to acknowledge that as well — in writing.

Figure out what makes your employees tick

Find out what really motivates them. Tie in sales/hours goals with how they can earn more money to reach their goals. Figure out what resources you have available that you can use to help them achieve their goals.

What types of things should we measure?

- How many hours of continued education they logged
- Comebacks for the quarter
- Productivity
- Percent of Courtesy Checks
- Attendance, tardiness, excessive time off, patterns of certain days missed (example Monday Flu)
- ARO, LHPT, hours billed versus labor inventory, sales
- CSI scores

The items listed above are just some examples of what you could be measuring, setting goals and tracking progress for. To get sample forms and our webinar on how to perform a quarterly review, for a limited time you can simply go to www.atonline-training.com/2018-07. chubby@autotraining.net



CHRIS "CHUBBY" FREDERICK is the CEO and founder of the Automotive Training Institute. ATI's 130 full-time associates train and coach more than 1,500 shop owners every week across North America to drive profits and dreams home to their families. Our full-time coaches have helped our members earn over 1 BILLION DOLLARS in a return on their coaching investment since ATI was founded. This month's article was written with the help of ATI Coach Kim Hickey. chubby@autotraining.net



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