

## **Recruit, Engage and Retain: Create a Workplace Where Your Employees Will Thrive**

*By Emily Franchi*

The WIIFM, the age-old acronym for “What’s In it For Me,” is the mantra of today’s workforce, whether for prospective candidates or long-term employees. Firms are being pressed into looking for creative ways to attract talent and to retain that talent. And with the cost of onboarding a professional rising to the tens of thousands, firms are eager to maximize their return on investment.

It goes without saying that happy employees are less stressed, more productive, and most importantly, engaged. An employee who is engaged will support the firm’s mission, trust management, and look for reasons to stay. Humor and laughter are just two ways to support happy employees. Smiling and laughing can be contagious, defuse conflict, and bring people together. Messaging starts at the top, and employees will follow the lead, so why not encourage management to incorporate “happy” into your management style? Employees who feel appreciated are happier. Firms who encourage celebrating employees are more attractive. Everyone enjoys a moment in the limelight, so shine the attention on employee wins such as bringing in a new client, passing the CPA exam, achieving a tenure milestone, etc. Taking the time to stop and celebrate each other supports workplace happiness. In addition to feeling happy and positive at work, employees want to know they are working for a firm that demonstrates belief in the greater good. In fact, studies have shown that 83% of Millennials remain loyal to companies who contribute to socially responsible causes such as green energy, climate, and other environmental-related causes. Firms can show their commitment to employees who support philanthropy by allowing paid time off for volunteering, hosting a firm-wide fundraiser, matching an employee’s donation, or simply highlighting a non-profit organization supported by an employee.

A recent survey conducted by the American Psychological Association revealed that 77% of workers reported experiencing work-related stress with symptoms ranging from emotional exhaustion, lack of motivation, and a desire to quit, just to name a few. During busy seasons, firm employees often spend more time with coworkers than they do with their own family. The lines blur between work and home and co-workers and family, which means work-related stress can flood an employee’s personal life. Again, the messaging starts from the top, meaning partners and managers must be mindful of their messaging and pay attention to signs of burnout. Firm-sponsored wellness programs aimed at reducing stress are plentiful and a low administrative burden on firm administrators. Providing a stipend to offset the cost of an employee’s health club membership, a weekly in-house yoga or mindfulness class, and firm-sponsored applications to praise employees for positive mental and physical health hygiene are just a few of the initiatives that firms are incorporating into their culture to demonstrate support for an employee’s mental and physical health.

Recognizing and understanding an employee's needs begins with active listening and paying attention. Focus on the positive, but be prepared to recognize the negative. Create a workplace where employees thrive, support others, and realize the value of an employer who cares about what's important beyond the business and the bottom line, and employee retention will flourish.

If your firm has an Employment Practices Liability policy with CAMICO, feel free to contact CAMICO at 800-652-1772 or send an email to [lp@camico.com](mailto:lp@camico.com) with your employment-related questions.

*Emily Franchi is a Loss Prevention Supervisor for Employment Practices at CAMICO. She provides CAMICO firms that have Employment Practices Liability coverage with support on a variety of human resources management issues, focusing on employee relations and legislative compliance for the workplace. Franchi works with firms to reduce exposure to potential employment practices claims, and she provides education and assistance in creating professional work environments.*