



A Happy Employee Recipe From Top Companies

by [Steve Brown](#)

You are working so you probably don't have time to check out TV in the middle of the day, but if you did, you would see the line-up is riddled with cooking shows. It appears whatever demographic is watching TV midday likes to eat or at least get recipe ideas. This isn't good however, because a recent Cornell University study finds food TV lovers who actually cook the recipes are likely to weigh significantly more than those who watch for entertainment purposes only. The study underscores the findings of research from the UK-that TV recipes are higher in calories and fat than the World Health Organization recommendations. Researchers suggest that promoting more nutritious food on cooking shows could help people eat healthier.

Through careful observation, banks too can learn how to create healthier, more productive work environments for employees. One way to begin this journey is to get a check up on what employees value the most about their employers to see where you stand.

In December, Glassdoor announced the winners of its 8th annual "Employees' Choice Awards." These awards honor the Best Places to Work across North America and parts of Europe. Winners are determined by feedback from employees, so the information should be good for all to use.

To make the comparisons most relevant to community banks, we focused on Glassdoor's list of the 50 Best Small & Medium Companies to Work For. Each of these companies has less than 1,000 employees. Perhaps enterprising community banks can use the takeaways gleaned from this feedback to help improve your own corporate culture.

The most important value to consider according to the survey is allowing for the right work/life balance. It's clear from the feedback that employees don't want to feel chained to their desks. They like the fact that companies offer flex-time work options. They also appreciate when employers understand about the need to take off a few hours for the occasional doctor's appointment or dental cleaning. Employees relish when companies are mindful of their well-being outside of work, offering fitness incentives and other perks like a paid vacation day on their birthday.

Another significant suggestion by employees was that they feel more valued when they are recognized as individuals. Employees want management to know them and acknowledge their efforts on an individual basis. They don't like being just another face in the crowd. It's a boon when management takes the time to get to know the individuals in an organization. Employees also enjoy

having their opinions valued and when everyone works together for the collective good of the organization.

Creating a fun and relaxed atmosphere is yet another valuable effort to consider. Employees like it best when work doesn't feel like work. The best is when people enjoy what they are doing and genuinely want to be at work. Employees said they like it when companies do things to make them feel good about being at the office. Food is often a motivator. For instance, employees seem to really love when companies host employee appreciation parties or events like Bagel Wednesdays or Pizza Fridays. Also popular is when companies provide a fully-stocked food pantry for those who get the munchies during the workday.

Lastly, providing career development opportunities will also generate a source of pride in the workplace. Employees particularly want leadership opportunities. They crave new and exciting growth opportunities, creative freedom and opportunities for internal promotion. They like working for companies where new ideas are encouraged. They also like to feel that coworkers are supportive of their efforts and guidance and mentoring opportunities are plentiful.

Clearly many ingredients have to be mixed together to make up a healthy workforce, and it is important for banks to add their own flavorings into this process. Focus first on what your employees value and then continue to tinker until you find the recipe that brings you long-term success.

BANK NEWS

Millennial Banking

A CCG Catalyst study of millennials finds: about 90% have a financial services relationship with a bank or credit union; 68% use online banking to manage activities; 48% use checkbooks; 46% use digital banking to pay bills; 44% send money online; and 39% make mobile deposits.

Debit Fraud

The Wall Street Journal reports research by FICO finds debit card fraud has reached a 20Y high. The same article points out that fraud at bank branch ATMs has jumped 174% over the prior year and off-site ATM fraud has soared 317%.

Regulatory Issue

The CFPB has warned banks that they must make sure information received from credit reporting companies is accurate when determining consumer creditworthiness or face enforcement action.

Gradual Hikes

Cleveland Fed President Mester said that while the path of fed rate hikes will depend on the economic outlook and are data dependent, she expects current economic conditions (including volatility in financial markets and oil prices) "will evolve in a way that will warrant rates moving up gradually over time to more normal levels."

CRE Demand

Research by Deloitte on commercial real estate (CRE) conditions for 2016 projects: there will be higher demand for dynamically configurable spaces; subleasing will be bigger than leasing; leasing approaches and lease administration will undergo significant transformation; and the collaborative economy is coming to real estate sooner than expected.

Consumer Borrowing

TransUnion reports the number of people taking out unsecured personal loans has climbed 30% since 2013. Many have used the proceeds to pay down more expensive credit card debt or boost savings accounts.

Weakness

Bloomberg reports the weekly percentage change in goods carried by train in the US has been in the red and declined every week since Q1 of 2015.

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