

GOOD PRACTICES FOR ATTRACTING & RETAINING PEOPLE IN FOREST OPERATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Attracting, retaining and training labor is a challenge for forest operations in North America. FPIinnovations attended the Pacific Logging Congress (PLC) in November 2015 where one of the technical sessions focused on attracting and retaining people to the industry, in particular to contractor operations. The majority of the strategies presented in this Info-Note were suggested by logging contractors presenting at the PLC. A few others gleaned from other sources were added as well.

Human Resource Management Strategies

- Try to have people that naturally get along well together to work in teams
- For workers with long commutes to the work sites, develop extended shifting regimes to provide for longer off- work time (e.g. 9-14 work days; 5-7 off days)
- As long as the basic skill sets are met, hire family members of staff
- Provide a financial bonus to employees that bring in new staff (that stay with the company for a minimum period, e.g. 3 months)
- Provide temporary or seasonal work for sons & daughters of staff

- Provide competitive wages (regionally) to reduce competition with other job sectors
- Provide a financial advisor for staff to help them manage their personal finances
- Provide employer-funded (fully or partially) benefits; pension, medical, dental
- Coach & mentor new staff with experienced operators/mechanics



- Develop training plans for each employee incorporating your needs and the employee aspirations
- Put-out “fires” (address personal conflicts) quickly to avoid escalation; don’t let things fester

- Consider hiring more women on the workforce (excellent to run equipment or drive trucks)
- Have a formal employee evaluation process in order to provide positive and constructive feedback to the employees

Equipment strategies

- Run new equipment, keep in good operating condition (to limit downtime & repair time) – most people don't like to operate old machines that are not in good mechanical condition and where they often need to get out of the machine to repair
- Provide nice, comfortable ergonomic cabs; this is especially important to attract young people
- Invest in technology; provide the “cool” factor to attract young people comfortable around technology

Company Management Strategies

- Strive to elevate the company image (value honesty, integrity, honor)
- Ensure the company operates under high quality standards in all phases of the operation (this will guarantee success, repeated contracts and thus work security), it also improves the image/ reputation of the company, making it a desirable place to work
- Offer steady (year-round or quasi-year-round), secure and long-term employment
- Give employees (even operators) an opportunity to move up in the company (even to supervisory positions)
- Recognize employee strengths & weaknesses, and adjust job responsibilities accordingly (play to people's strengths)

- Maintain high standards for a safe work environment, with rigorous safety policies that are conscientiously adhered to
- Ensure all employees, regardless of years of experience, are properly trained on new machines entering your worksite (safety and operational efficiency)
- To identify potential future employees and promote the forest sector as a possible alternative, make your company known in the local community; attend high-school job fairs (and have a kiosk), 4-H clubs, etc.
- Be present on social media to promote the company and its values (e.g. praise employees on Facebook)

Contractors presenting at the PLC

- Jacqui Beban, Nootka Sound Timber Company, Nanaimo, BC
- Bob Danielson, Danielson Logging, LLC., St. Maries, Idaho
- Kirk Luoto, Cross & Crown Inc., Carlton, Oregon
- Robert D'Agostini, J & R Logging Co., Plymouth, California
- Don Banasky, Tamihi Logging., Ltd / Dorman Timber Ltd., Nanaimo, BC
- Jeff Unger, Jeff Unger Logging Inc., Reedsport, Oregon
- David Nygaard, Warrenton Fiber / Nygaard Logging Co., Warrenton, Oregon
- Roger Smith, R. L. Smith Logging Inc., Olympia, Washington

