

Retention Convention - A cut of the best

Early in October I had the distinct pleasure of attending the 2013 Recruiting retention Convention in Toronto (Hosted by Over the Road). I met several great speakers and industry leaders. I also met recruiters (dah). I was very impressed with the focus of the average recruiter. They not only were eager to learn how to do their job better but after talking with most of them I realized they really cared about their drivers. When they heard of the non-taxable benefits and how it applied to their operators they genuinely sounded interested in helping them save taxes. They also cared about turnover, not just because it made their job more difficult but they felt a sense of sadness in the loss of most drivers who left.

I generally sit on the opposite side of the table from recruiters, representing the interests of operators rather than companies. I often hear the negative treatment too many operators have received from companies. I do have several touching stories of how trucking companies truly cared and helped their operators, projecting an atmosphere of family rather than cut throat business. However, too often I get overwhelmed with the slashing stories of how companies gouge clients with illogical behavior.

I took the time to reflect on the last few years of writing for Over the Road. I can think of more times my articles focused on negative behavior rather than positive. I know that I had to in order to illustrate my point, but it may have come across a little sensationalistic. My motives may have been sound, trying to warn operators of potential abuse, but in so doing I may have tainted the industry canvas with too much blood.

Without a doubt 2009 was the worst year ever for trucking and it filtered down to the way operators were treated. However, most operators survived the financial tsunami with all tires intact and on the road. Though many dug a hole and put on a helmet (being grateful just to HAVE a job) we all must realize survival of most operators must be contributed to some very strong and ethical trucking companies. These are the REAL leaders in the industry, the ones who (oftentimes while corporately spilling a lot of red ink) mostly demonstrated fare, just and compassionate treatment of their employees. Desperate times require desperate measures, and therefore fare and just treatment can still require trimming excess capacity (laying people off). To those who are laid off it may not seem compassionate but as Spock so aptly stated, “the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the one (or few)”.

I remember my professor (and also my dad) both stating... “the best investment anyone can make... is in themselves!” The best employers re-invest in their employees. The return on investment will be the building of a truly great company.

Re-investing in yourself means learning to do our job better, it’s a lifetime commitment. It all comes down to attention to detail, respecting those around you and following through with commitments. It is so much more than just a nine to five focus. People who focus on making lives better for those in and around them have a lifestyle of re-investing.

Companies who invest in their employees typically don’t spit blood on the canvas of the industry. Those who take the time and resources to send their recruiters to a recruiting convention generally keep the industry canvas clean. I would have to say that those companies who demonstrated harsh examples over the last few years weren’t present at the convention.

Choosing a trucking company requires operators finding out where management invests their time and resources. Take a good look at the owners and directors. Do they reflect a lifestyle of re-investing? Are they building a great company or one that takes the path of least resistance... a fast buck rather than a steady honorable one? Trust cannot be earned

by anyone except those who have character, good character. Working with people you trust reduces stress by so much it's worth every penny of research invested.

Robert D Scheper operates an accounting and consulting firm in Steinbach, Manitoba. He has a Masters Degree in Business Administration and is the author of the Book "Making Your Miles Count: taxes, taxes, taxes" (now available on CD). You can find him at www.thrconsulting.ca and thrconsulting.blogspot.com or at 1-877-987-9787. You can e-mail him at robert@thrconsulting.ca.

