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Millennials

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SHIFT THE FOCUS FROM RECRUITING TO RETENTION

By Clay Martin

Have you ever spent a Friday night, trying to focus on a nice dinner with your family, but worry about your business instead?

Recent studies show that the thing that keeps most industry owners up at night is worrying about hiring and keeping quality employees.

If you keep struggling with the same issues, then something needs to change. In my business, I have found that an employees' treatment affects their work ethic or, in more extreme cases, their willingness to stay in the job at all.

I've gathered feedback from dozens of clients and hundreds of recruits and a few things become very clear.

According to a recent study published in the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, most hiring managers know within 15 minutes if they want to hire someone and 26 percent make that decision within five minutes. While you might be quick to judge potential employees, have you ever wondered what they think about your company or what they want from the job?

What are you willing to do to ensure that your new employee is happy? What makes your company different from the competition is usually simple—and spoiler alert: it's not all about the money—the most important thing is most often the way you treat people.

A perfect example of a company that is doing many things right when it comes to retention is Zeppa's Lawn Service in Louisville, Kentucky. They have a 70 percent retention rate year over year, which is much higher than many companies in the landscape industry.

I interviewed their employees and asked why they liked working at Zeppa's, and here is what they said:

- There is mutual respect between the owners, managers and laborers.
- We work hard but have fun, the owners even join in on the fun.
- I love everything about this company and how we are treated, I never want to go back to where I was before.
- There is clear communication.
- There is a positive working environment.

Another client with high retention rates is Martin Landscape of Beaufort, South Carolina. [Editor's Note: No family relationship between author and landscape company owner.] One employee who I placed at Martin from Puerto Rico said, "This company is like an angel that fell out of the sky. I want to bring my family here to live. They know how to respect people while maintaining discipline."

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