

Grow Your People to Grow Your Business

Making people-development a priority can get lost in the pressures and demands of everyday business. But investing in your employees' growth and learning can pay off with a more engaged workforce, retention of your top talent, and a stronger bottom line.

Attracting and retaining high-performing people is not just a good business strategy - it may be the top business strategy.

Consider these facts:

- Total people costs are typically 70 percent of a company's operating expenses, so maximizing these assets is important for long-term organizational performance.¹
- Top talent is up to eight times more productive than average performers.²
- Companies with happy employees outperform the competition by 20 percent.³
- 70% of employees report that they don't have mastery of the skills needed to do their jobs.⁴
- 47% of Harvard Business' How we Learn survey participants said they are dissatisfied with their employer's learning and development programs.⁵

Investing in People: The Benefits Add Up

Attracting and keeping great employees is one of the top benefits of creating people development programs because the cost of losing and replacing a highly valued employee is significant. The Society for Human Resource Management estimates that it costs an average of six to nine months' salary to replace an employee. If the position requires intense information knowledge or customer interaction skills, then it can be damaging to the company's productivity when that person leaves.

Employee retention can be a significant challenge and expense for your dealership. People who receive professional education and development tend to be more loyal and less likely to seek other employment opportunities. People development is also a benefit that is attractive to new employees and can help establish your reputation as a great employer because you care enough to invest in your employees. Attracting people who want to improve their skills will also help build your business. As your people grow, so will your business.

"One of the biggest shifts over the last decade is how people not only want, but expect, their employer to be investing in their growth," said Tracy Lampert, Head of Learning, Employee Experience and Culture at Zurich North America. "People are choosing to join or stay with a company because of its culture of growth and learning. Millennials in particular want a strong connection to their workplace through management that supports their individual career path."



“At Zurich, we’ve found that it pays to give people the time and space to speak openly about their career goals,” explained Tracy. “We encourage people to consider themselves ‘CEOs of their own career.’ Our managers prioritize having conversations with their people about their goals and interests.”

Without a strong culture grounded in individual growth and development, you could find yourself losing recruiting and retention battles.

More secure leadership and succession planning.

People development programs require that you always have an eye on the future. What kind of leaders do I need? What do customers want from my people? Who can succeed the present leadership when the time comes? People development programs result in employees who are ready to advance to roles with more or different responsibilities because their strengths and weaknesses have been addressed.

Preparing for shifting customer demands and aligning your talent strategy is a clear benefit of having a people development program.

Q1

Set objectives with each employee and determine skill-building needs.

Q2

Schedule a career development conversation and review quarterly progress on objectives and skill development.

Q3

Provide structured feedback with the employee on progress toward meeting objectives and identify areas that may need extra attention.

Q4

Deliver a performance assessment using qualitative and quantitative metrics (e.g., customer feedback, sales goals, etc.).



Beyond attracting and retaining employees, there are other business-building benefits that your organization can experience from investing in people:

- **Higher customer engagement.** People who participate in development programs are more likely to be satisfied with their job, engaged in the company, and have a positive employee experience. Since people are the face of your organization, customers that interact with more satisfied employees are likely to have a more positive experience. This, in turn, leads to higher customer engagement.
- **Stronger culture.** Investing in people development can also improve your company culture. Employees want to learn, develop their careers, and be happy going to work every day.

Grow Your People *Continued*

Implement Different Training Approaches

Once you've established the performance and skill objectives for each employee's individual development plan, there should be a training component to meet these goals. The right choice of training for your employees will depend on content, schedule, and budget.

In-house training

One of the simplest and most economical approaches to training is to have your employees coach each other. Who better to instruct either new employees or those moving into a new role than someone who knows your company, process, and customers? In-house training can take the form of brown-bag lunches, a mentoring program, or one-on-one training to explain a new process or program. An added benefit is the trainer's development of leadership skills.

Online training

Thanks to today's sophisticated interactive web interfaces, online training can be a highly engaging method to access knowledge across a wide range of subjects, including management and technology. Online training is also flexible, allowing people to schedule the training session around other commitments. Once you and an employee agree online training is the right approach, honor the time commitment the employee will need to put in during the workweek.

Zurich's online learning and development platform, Zurich University, provides dealership employees interactive training on a variety of topics including F&I sales presentation, objection handling, compliance, harassment, and discrimination, and more.

Virtual training

Communication platforms that offer videoconferencing, file storage and sharing, and workspace chat functionality have made virtual training standard practice for groups small and large. These platforms are cost effective and the multi-user format that allows for interactive and engaging.

Zurich's training for the fixed operations team, for example, is conducted in a virtual setting and offers both topic-specific training as well as certification programs, helping service advisors of all levels to develop knowledge and proficiency in important job skills.

Industry associations

Many industry associations provide training for their members, either online or through seminars, conferences, or other events. One of the advantages of this training option is that the content is specialized and targeted to your business and customer needs. It's also an excellent way for people to stay current with industry trends.

External training programs

Professional training organizations sponsor training events open to employees from different companies or even industries. The cost per employee may be less than individual training programs and offers a unique opportunity for networking. Make sure the training content is directly applicable to the employee's learning objectives.

Zurich offers Regional F&I Training seminars and workshops throughout the year in each region across the country. The training is designed for dealership management and their F&I teams. Attendees build stronger sales presentation skills, discover ways to integrate technology into the sales process, broaden their knowledge of compliance and regulatory requirements, and strengthen their ability to deliver improved results and an optimal customer experience.

On-site training

Contracting with a training organization to come to your dealership provides a customized experience for your employees. Investing in a high-quality half-day or full-day on-site training session demonstrates to your people how much value you place on developing their knowledge and skills.



Connect Your People to Your Purpose

Regardless of the employee job title or which training approach is implemented, people development always needs to be grounded in your dealership's vision and values. When your people understand the vision, they can see more clearly the contribution they can make to achieve it.

"People want to feel like they are making a difference to the organization," said Tracy. "The biggest ROI from people development is that you are growing more productive contributors, and that results in happier customers, which leads to a healthier bottom line."

1. Jeanetta, Anthony. "8 Benefits of Investing in Your Human Capital Development." The Olson Group. 27 January 2017. <https://theolsongroup.com>.
2. Keller, Scott, and Mary Meaney. "Attracting and retaining the right talent." McKinsey Quarterly. April 2017.
3. Siu, Eric. "It Really Pays to Have A Rich Company Culture." Entrepreneur. 21 October 2014. <https://www.entrepreneur.com>.
4. Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning Survey: How the Workforce Learns, 2019. <https://hbr.org/2019/10/where-companies-go-wrong-with-learning-and-development>
5. Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning 2019 Survey: How the Workforce Learns; <https://www.forbes.com/sites/chriswest-fall/2019/10/08/new-survey-workers-unsatisfied-with-learning-and-development-programs-training-leadership>