

# Agenda



## Re-recruiting can keep good employees on board

By **Don Sadler**  
For the AJC

Even in the worst job market in a generation, forward-thinking business owners know they can't afford to take their best employees for granted. No matter what the unemployment figures are, great employees are in demand.

A recent survey conducted by Robert Half International bears this out.

Even in the current high-unemployment environment, four out of 10 (39 percent) senior executives said employee retention is their greatest staffing concern, and another two out of 10 (22 percent) named recruiting.

"Companies that lose top performers may not only experience declines in productivity, but they

also incur significant costs in replacing these professionals," said Robert Half International CEO Max Messmer, author of "Human Resources Kit for Dummies."

According to the 2009-10 PricewaterhouseCoopers Saratoga U.S. Human Capital Effectiveness report, organizations spend an average of \$2,675 to hire each candidate and lose an average of \$39,291 for each voluntary employee separation.

"Given the high cost of employee turnover, companies should focus on retaining their high performers and pivotal employees," said Ann O'Connell, a principal in the PricewaterhouseCoopers Human Resource Services consulting practice in Atlanta.

Kimberly Douglas, an Atlan-

ta-based human resources and management consultant, noted attracting and retaining the best and the brightest employees is always a challenge.

"However, leaders know that the futures of their companies depend on hiring and keeping high-quality employees who can help innovate them out of this recession," she said.

One strategy some companies use to hold onto their top employees is known as re-recruiting. There's a good chance your competitors are targeting your superstars in their recruiting efforts, so why not implement a structured plan to re-recruit them yourself?

The first step is to determine how committed your top employees are to their jobs and your

company. Have them complete a formal self-evaluation in which they give you their feedback on how satisfied they are with their current duties, responsibilities, opportunities for advancement and work/life balance.

You'll probably be surprised at some of the answers, said Douglas. "I've found that money typically isn't the biggest motivator for top talent. It's more about creating an environment where they want to work," she said.

Based on the results, you can create re-recruiting initiatives tailored to each high-value employee. These initiatives typically include things like implementing mentoring, training and ongoing education programs; offering formal career planning assistance; aligning your recogni-

tion and reward systems with the things that actually motivate these employees; and practicing open-door and open-book management.

"There are some traditional programs like recognition, pay for performance and career path management that need to be paired with organization-wide accountability to support high-performing star employees," said Marie S. Hamilton, who leads the Human Capital Practice for Atlanta-based Innovar Partners, an operational improvement firm.

"Perhaps most importantly, the managers of star employees need to be held accountable for their development and movement in the organization," Hamilton said.