

Choosing Work Perks

Workforce is tight and there are a lot of ideas to retain your skilled workers. How do you choose?



The manufacturing workforce is a challenge. That is not news. That fact is decades old and, with our current economic environment and unemployment at a record low, it is probably not likely to change anytime soon. If you search online, you will find article upon article with ideas of how to retain a skilled workforce (yes, I write articles on it, too) and all the perks which can be offered. But with all those ideas, how do you choose the ideas that are best for you?

A Slew of Ideas

Here is a list of ideas (in no particular order) I have accumulated through discussions with PMPA members and articles I have read:

- Free snacks/free coffee
- Flexible schedules
- PTO awarded for good attendance
- Mini golf course on the roof
- Monthly fun days (lunches with activities)
- Bonuses
- Salary incentives
- Employee of the Month with parking spot
- Indoor golf simulator
- Decked out breakroom with video games
- Sponsor fantasy football league

How to Choose?

It is obvious you can't do everything on that list (if you build the mini golf course, please send me an invite.) And just because you *can* do something doesn't mean you *should* do something. Find a good fit. You know your employees. If you don't know them well enough, then talk to them. What motivates them? What would they consider a perk?

Remember, the people you currently employ are also the type of people you are looking to recruit and incentives play a large part in recruitment.



You don't have to go big — I'm always amazed at what people will do for a free T-shirt or food — but find a great fit. Do you have people with school-age children? They may appreciate the flexible schedule over a breakroom with video games. Many of the incentives also promote team building (fun days and fantasy football league.)

In addition to considering what would motivate your employees, you need to take into account the budget, available space and schedule. You need to find a balance and be flexible. It's the old chicken and the egg dilemma. The company exists to make parts. You can't make parts without employees. Studies show that happy workers are good workers (Oxford University's Saïd Business School, 2019), so finding that balance is worth it.

In short, determine your objective, find a perk or perks that fit into your culture, budget, schedule and space, then make it happen. The perk for the company? Happy, productive workers who stay. **P**

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