

SPACE COAST CREDIT UNION: TURNOVER SUCCESS



Survival in chaos is the name of the game for Space Coast Credit Union. When hurricanes Charlie and Francis slammed into Florida's coastline, the credit union (with assets of \$1.3 billion) kept its ATMs running and its head office open

If surviving that calamity wasn't enough, the company immediately had to face a new 800-person call center landing in town, aiming to poach the best and brightest from Space Coast's talent pool. However, even though the area's unemployment rate dropped to record lows, the company managed to retain its top talent and reduce its turnover rate.

While Space Coast's 2001 turnover rate of 35% was a far cry from its peak of 62% three years earlier, the company knew that if it didn't raise the bar on hiring practices it would be highly likely to experience retention issues as the job market heated up again.

The first thing the company did was to address the obvious things. It instituted behavior-based interviewing, helped hiring managers spot turnover flags on resumes and introduced a realistic job preview – which meant that prior to accepting a job offer; the candidate would spend half a day on site to get a better feel for the job and the culture. This improved new hire retention rates immediately and turnover fell a few points.

According to HR Manager Donna Carson, there were still gains to be made. "I knew we could do better. In looking at existing staff, I could tell that, although many were qualified to do their jobs, there were some who clearly were not a good fit for the job that they were in. With my psychology background, I knew employee and recruitment profiling could help us."

A NEW PLAN

Space Coast turned to The McQuaig Institute, an organization offering behavioral assessments for hiring and developing employees. Space Coast chose McQuaig because of its high levels of accuracy, its track record of success in reducing turnover and the fact that the company was easy to work with.

This decision paid off. Within a year the turnover rate on new hires plummeted to 20%.

"What profiling told us was that, although we were hiring people with the right skill set, we weren't hiring a good fit. McQuaig worked with us to develop desired job personality profiles in order to determine the perfect fit for the job." Carson says.

By knowing exactly what traits they were looking for, Space Coast could begin testing new candidates and determining precisely which job they would be best suited for. They stopped wasting talent by putting a person with the right skills in the wrong job on the premise that while skills can be taught, the right character cannot.

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HOLDING THEIR OWN

When a large banking call center moved into the Melbourne area the company poached several of Space Coast’s staff. But, given the people that left the company were also lower performing employees and the more successful ones were retained, the company once again overcame adversity.

“We credit our new approach for the success we had during this very difficult period” Says Carson. “McQuaig truly deserves a large part of the credit, as this one change provided the greatest difference in terms of retaining our best and brightest and reducing our turnover rates.”

PICKING & DEVELOPING LEADERS

The company also used McQuaig to help identify candidates from within that would succeed in various roles. Carson adds “It was far easier to choose from within once we knew what the job profile was and how our people matched up against it. This allowed us to reduce the number of people we needed to bring in from the outside and it helped some of our own people to become far more engaged”

Marian Cacciatore, a Career Development Manager uses the profiles as part of a management certification program. “When you are trying to get high-potentials to take it to the next level, self-awareness in terms of who you are and how you can build on your strengths is a critical first step”, says Marian.

CREATING STABILITY

So while the job market has been spiraling, Space Coast has been stable. They are seeing some positive internal moves, and are continuing to maintain high retention rates. Employee morale has grown and more employees are asking questions about their professional development, an indicator of high levels of engagement.

