

Caption: Motivating employees: empowered & appreciated
Flight 001, Manhattan, New York

Brad John: With all the changes in the airline policies, charging for check-in now, are you seeing a difference with customers looking for carry-on?

Amanda Shank: Yeah, we get a lot more requests now for the carry-on luggage. They want something they can take with them. They don't want to deal with the headache of checking a bag. They just want something light that's easy to carry on with them; something around this size, the 21.

Emily Griffin: I think that one of the big reasons we're successful in keeping people at a very high level of dedication and motivation in our stores is that they really feel a personal connection with people at the corporate level.

My name is Emily Griffin, and I manage crew development for Flight 001. They can call one of the owners on the phone if they want, and that person will – you know John or Brad will answer their questions. There's really an open door with every single person here. So I think that they both feel then a personal connection to the company and a personal loyalty, which I think goes a long way.

But they also feel like they're plugged into the bigger picture. They don't feel like they're just given a list of tasks to do, a list of numbers to hit. They feel like they are part of the broader growth of our company – which they are. We're depending on them.

Amanda Shank: I think it's very important for me that the owners are involved with the store.

Hi, my name is Amanda. I'm assistant store leader here at Flight 001. Having worked for companies where the people who own the company or the CEO is just some unknown person – you might not even know their name – that is in an office halfway across the country, it's like here they actually visit their stores, are involved in it. And it makes you feel like well, if it's important to them it's important to me too, you know?

I've definitely worked places where I felt like the owners just didn't care, and so it's sort of if they don't care why should I? But I feel like they really value their store, and it's contagious. If

they're excited about what they're doing then everyone else is as well.

Emily Griffin:

And sometimes I just have to pinch myself at how lucky I am to have grown in a small company where the owners are really tolerant of error. They're not tolerant of poor work ethic or if you're really not dedicated, but if you're there and you're really trying, it's really okay. They've been really patient with me with the learning process, and I think they recognize that I am bringing a talent to it that they aren't equipped to bring to it, because of what they have to focus on.

So it's not that it's better than nothing, but they do still recognize the contribution, even if I'm not quite getting it right.

Claire Rainwater:

I think in an ideal world, in the ideal job setting, you would have both the dream salary and a ton of encouragement every single day.

Hi, I'm Claire Rainwater, and I'm the store leader here at Flight 001. It's really important that you make enough to where you can pay the rent and get by, but at the same time your quality of life really does suffer if you don't feel a connection with where you're spending your hours every single day, and if you don't feel like you're supported and like you're valued. And so I think it really is a combination of both – you need both.

Amanda Shank:

I have struggled with motivation. You know I've worked for companies where they flat-out said, you know, "You're just a number. You can be replaced at any time." And when you're told something like that, why do you want to put any effort in? Like you know what is in it for you? But in this company I think they make an effort to show you that you're appreciated.

You have a say in what goes on. You're given compliments, you know or your told what you could be better at – you're given feedback.

Claire Rainwater:

I think the biggest thing that I try to think about is paying attention to what people's natural strengths are and really trying to use those in the store. If someone's really talented visually, definitely encouraging them to work with merchandising and placing the product in a way that's attractive. Someone's really great in terms of organization, operations, kind of delegating to them, letting them take on specific projects in that area.

Amanda Shank: Being respected and being taken seriously – having somebody listen to your ideas – that’s something I take very seriously. If I don’t feel that I’m being given a chance to express myself; if I don’t feel that I’m being valued as an employee, I’m just less likely to stick around that place of employment, you know. I want to go somewhere where my skills and my hard work are valued.

I don’t wanna go to a job where I just feel like I’m completely disrespected and taken for granted.

Claire Rainwater: It really makes a difference to have people who are here in the store who you also have kind of built that positive rapport with. And it doesn’t necessarily have to be something really personal where you share intimate details about your life. It can be something that’s just a way, a pleasant way of working together; a way of interacting and bringing fun and humor into the setting, so it really makes a difference.

And how did the training go yesterday?

Amanda Shank: It went really, really well. I mean he’s gonna be a really great fit here.

Claire Rainwater: Good.

Amanda Shank: He’ll be in again today at 2:00 –

Claire Rainwater: Okay.

Amanda Shank: To start.

We’re very careful in hiring people to make sure it’s gonna be a good fit for the company; that everybody will be able to work together really well. The store is such a small environment that you really have to get along with everyone, and everyone has to mesh really well.

Emily Griffin: One of the things I love about retail is that there’s room for everybody in retail. Everybody who works at corporate and everybody who works in our stores are such an unbelievable variety of backgrounds and interests. And that’s what makes it interesting, and that’s what our customers want, quite frankly. They wanna walk into a store and have people that are interesting that they can talk to.

You know they don’t just want somebody chewing gum behind a register.

Brad John: So Emily, tell me what's going on with store number six, with the store leader leaving and –

Emily Griffin: Well, we have good news. We talked to the store leader in the Berkeley store, and like we thought, she's really open to relocating.

Brad John: Terrific.

Emily Griffin: Yeah. We think we could probably get her to be here as of August 1st then.

Emily Griffin: And the double-edged sword is a lot of times those interests come to the forefront in their lives, and they need to make a life change and they end up leaving retail. Retail is temporary for a lot of people. I thought retail would be temporary for me. I'm completely shocked that I'm actually building a career in retail. It was a total accident. I had no idea how much there could be to do.

And there are some people in our stores and I see that in them, and I know that you know they can really grow with us. And then there are other people that I'm always kind of watching like okay, you know, maybe it's just temporary, and that's okay. But I have to plan for some of them you know leaving.

Questions: Motivation is often a challenge in retail stores. What has Flight 001 done to ensure a happy and motivated workforce?

Would you be happier in a small local company working closely with the owners or a large global company?

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