

Retention **the intention**

By Josephine Gillespie

RETENTION strategies are no longer just buzz words, with many organisations implementing a range of policies in an effort to retain current staff and attract new employees.

Australian Professional Recruiters Group managing director Robert Bromage said there was a range of retention policies organisations were willing to try in order to make their employees feel valued.

"Increasingly, organisations are encouraging and paying for qualifications that add value back to the organisation and offer learning and development opportunities to the employee," Mr Bromage said.

"Another bonus which organisations have begun to explore are life items, which allow the bonus to be spent on gymnasium membership or going to the movies to relax.

"Employees choose how to spend the money, as long as the item improves the quality of life. It can not be used for buying groceries.

"It says that the organisation cares about the wellbeing of its staff and looking after them. Staff can choose what item is the best fit for them.

"Everyone is different," he said.

Mr Bromage said that, on a basic level, being part of an organisation which recognised when one of its employees had excelled, was also an important retention tool.

"When people reach a

RECRUITERS Group's Robert Bromage . . . 'Recognition is a form of remuneration and a retention strategy'.

Picture: PETE JOHNSON

certain point and exceed beyond that, they expect to be rewarded," he said.

"Generally, recognition is a form of remuneration and a retention strategy.

"When people perform strongly in relation to their experience, it does need to be recognised.

"Basic recognition goes a long way.

"We've seen a lot of people perform well above their ability and not be recognised so they feel undervalued.

"The psychological contract needs to extend to the actions of the organisation as well."

Mr Bromage said that, with the commencement of any new job, the employer and employee entered into a psychological contract or an informal understanding of the role each expects the other to play and the responsibilities and actions



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- Robert Bromage

expected of that role.

"A lot of time, when people are dissatisfied and want to leave, it is because there has been some change to this informal contract," Mr Bromage said.

"The job may have changed or there is a new superior and the contract is broken.

"It may be the employee has been promised the incentive of a promotion after a certain period and after that period has

lapsed, they haven't received that, they back off their effort and what's required and vote with their feet, finding another job that they thought they had when they signed on."

He suggested a way to avoid

breaking the "psychological contract" was for the candidate to have a clear understanding of what they were trying to achieve from the role and the workplace in question.

Mr Bromage said the candidate should clearly express what they wanted from the workplace, whether it was part-time employment, job sharing or internal career advancement, at the interview stage.

He said it was then up to the company to decide whether or not they could provide the desired retention strategies to accommodate the employee.

"One of the most common reasons people exit a company is for family reasons, which is why we're seeing a lot of part-time and job-sharing positions, which went out of vogue but are starting to come back in," he said.

There also is the possibility of working from home.

In the financial services industry, it is becoming increasingly common for managers to have the ability to work from home periodically.

"Some managers are using this time as thinking and quiet time and others to achieve work/life balance with their families," Mr Bromage said.

"Furthermore, a lot of organisations are establishing work-from-home solutions for process orientated positions.

"This solution is being readily grabbed at by return-to-work mums and those seeking flexibility and family life/work balance," he said.