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*"We engineer the quality of your success"*

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### Positive Reinforcement:

## Don't Confuse Reinforcement With Expectations

Positive reinforcement is a different form of communication than positive expectations. Although each plays a role in the behavioural side of continuous quality improvement, their roles are different and they occur at different times.

**Positive expectations** occur *before* behaviour. They help cultivate the desired behaviour. In fact, positive expectations are critical in starting the new behaviour patterns needed for continuous improvement. Examples of expressing positive expectations are "I believe you can do it" and "We can cut this in half."

**Positive reinforcement**, on the other hand occurs *after* behaviour. Examples of expressing positive reinforcement include "We're making great progress on this. Keep up the good work" and "It's true your idea really didn't affect our average response time, but the key is that you're always thinking of ways to improve things. We both know they won't all work out, but ideas that aren't suggested can't ever work out. So keep suggesting."

### A Common Misconception

A common misconception with managers of small companies is that QA work is limited to inspection, testing, and documentation. Quality assurance is actually a management function that integrates the quality activities of the whole organization. Its major role is planning, organizing, facilitating, and implementing procedures to improve quality in all operations, and to hold gains achieved. The QA department should be perceived as a group that helps others achieve their own quality goals.

## Reduce Attrition Among Frontline Employees

Companies need to manage retention because high employee retention equals high retention of customers. If attrition is high, the company might not have knowledgeable employees because the new people will always be learning about the company's products.

Customers want knowledgeable employees to deal with. It is annoying for a customer to be told, "Sorry, I'm new here, I don't know." Even if the customer sympathizes with the employee, the customer still isn't receiving the level of service that was expected.

One way companies can manage retention among frontline employees is to hire the right people.

### How To Hire The Right People

As they say in retail sales, success is "location, location, location;" with frontline employees, it's "personality, personality, personality."

While you can teach just about anyone what they need to know about the products, services and procedures, you cannot develop really solid interpersonal skills which are needed for dealing directly with a customer.

Look for people who have the skills and competencies that customers require, and who are capable of delivering the behaviours that customers want.

### How To Reduce Attrition

- Pay employees more generously. The extra money offered will allow companies to hire more talented people who will generally make fewer mistakes, need less supervision, and be more willing to do whatever it takes to make the customer happy.
- Provide ongoing developmental activities such as training, counseling, educational opportunities, etc. Bring in experts to coach employees on new product lines so they can respond knowledgeably to customers' questions. Taking employees out of the workplace for short periods helps to alleviate stress and burnout.
- Give them the authority to make decisions.
- Make employees feel worthwhile and important
- Have motivational programs in place, such as rewards, recognition, etc.

### THE VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER

Successful leaders spend lots of time with customers, but they don't just spend it with their executive counterparts. They get down into client organizations and make sure they meet with the people who are actually using their products and services. They thereby become a voice of the customer and make listening to the customer a cornerstone of all business decisions.

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