Get to Know the What, How, and Why

By

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For a number of years there has been a talent shortage in supply chain. It is due to several factors including the growth in the importance of the supply chain industry but has been recently exacerbated by the retirement of the Baby Boomers and those retirements have only increased with the pandemic.

Organizations are constantly on the lookout for supply chain talent at all levels. They must find, develop, and ultimately work to retain this talent to succeed. It is a lot like juggling; all three balls need to be in the air constantly. Drop even one ball and you could be in for trouble. Drop two and it could be disastrous.

But of the three steps, the key is developing people. An organization that is known for talent development has little problem with finding or retaining people. But developing supply chain talent is hard, and it is in this step where most companies fail. There are three parts to a successful talent development program. The first involves some sort of orientation, which may be formal or informal. Here, the new employee is indoctrinated in a history of the company, learns the organization, its vision, and goals. Hopefully they will be also able to meet some of the company leadership. This type of training gives them a baseline and a point of reference. They get to know the organization and what is stands for giving them a feeling of purpose and belonging. The second part is on-the-job training, or OJT. Here they are usually teamed with someone that provides general direction on specific processes and procedures. But if this is all they get, they won’t stay long.

Developing people is more than just winding them up and letting them go. Orientation and OJT provide the “What” and the “How.” To retain people, companies must also provide the “Why.” As organizations invest in new products, processes, market channels, and techniques to stay competitive they also need to invest in their people. Developing people is an ongoing exercise that never ends. This comes in the form on a continuous training plan. This involves the input of employees, their manager, and Human Resources professionals Training rewinds, reinvigorates, and reenergizes employees and keeps them engaged. Successful organizations are never stagnant, and neither are successful people.

When being recruited, you need to ask about training. You should ask if the organization has:

* A formal training program
* Individualized, annual training plans that include internal, external, and specialized training as necessary
* A tuition reimbursement plan
* Encourages and supports participation in professional organizations
* Encourages employees to expand their personal networks by participating in local chapters of these organizations and when possible, attend or even present at annual events

If the answers are “Yes” to these questions, then the organization is built on a culture that is serious about developing people and will take a long-term view of you and your career.