

The Flight of the Cashiers

Keeping the turnover rate low is among the priorities for Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home. It is the goal, in fact, of most businesses and industries.

It has been estimated that the cost of employee turnover to for-profit organizations has been between 30 percent (the figure used by the American Management Association) to upwards of 150 percent of the employees' remuneration package. The true cost of turnover, however, is going to depend on a number of variables, including ease or difficulty in filling the position and the nature of the job itself.

In the book *Destination Profit* by Scott Cawood and Rita V. Bailey, an example that is instructive for any of us in business is offered.

High employee turnover is a constant in the fast-food industry. Yet at one restaurant chain, cashiers were exiting at almost twice the industry rate. To find out why, managers began listening closely to what these employees had to say.

The scoop? Since customers had minimal contact with other employees, the cashiers were the company's "face." And behind that face, no matter how pleasant the smile, was confusion.

Cashiers were serving two masters: They handled money for the organization and complaints about everything from food and bathrooms to parking for the customers.

Although they had been trained to be proficient with the registers, the cashiers had received no training on the other half of the job – the human side.

So management added customer service skills to the cashiers' job description and trained new hires accordingly. Once coached to field complaints and soothe disgruntled customers, they did well – and chose to stay on the job.

The lesson? Don't expect associates to lead a customer service cavalry charge unless you teach them to ride.

The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher (Luke 6:40 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter

