

# Long service rewards

Attracting, developing and retaining talented employees

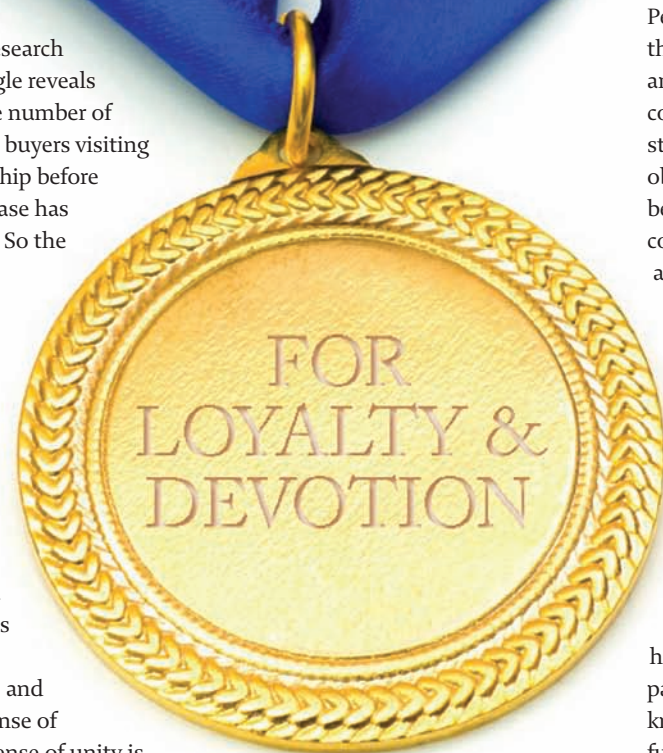
## PART EIGHT

In the final part of this series, TIM BRYANT looks at issues which help to encourage employee loyalty at a time when motor retail continues to experience higher than average levels of staff turnover.

Recent research by Google reveals that the number of new car buyers visiting just one dealership before making a purchase has doubled to 32%. So the need to create a 'positive first impression' for customers has never been more critical. Integral to that impression is the quality of the workforce; a workforce that is responsive to customer needs and has a unified sense of purpose. That sense of unity is all-too-often dependent on loyalty to the employer.

Yet motor retail continues to experience higher than average levels of employee turnover. In 2005, for example, the annual attrition rate stood at 23% (rts Employee Retention Survey) compared with 18% across other sectors.

So what are the methods that the most successful companies are using to create and maintain employee loyalty?



individual contribution fits in. High-performing employees not only want to know what the company mission is, but, more importantly, want to relate to it and feel they can make a contribution. Performance appraisals should therefore tie in directly to the specific areas expressed within the company's vision and mission statement, so that employees can observe a clear and direct link between their individual contribution and the overall success and direction of the whole organisation

### Align personal goals with business objectives

Is it possible for employees to provide an outstanding level of performance to satisfy their current employer's needs whilst at the same time furthering their own careers? Of course! These two factors do not have to be mutually exclusive, particularly when the skills and knowledge that a person acquires to further their own career are also what the company needs to succeed.

It's an approach known as 'goal alignment' – the process of aligning an individual's personal aspirations with strategic business imperatives. To achieve this, managers need to help their people identify links between their own professional goals and the company's goals. When people understand the larger business context in which their company is operating, they can more easily define ways to advance their

### Provide work with a meaning and purpose

The Egyptian stone-mason who stated that he was 'helping to build a pyramid' when he was simply 'laying a stone' is an example of the underlying human need for work to have a bigger meaning and purpose. Today's employees also want to know the big picture and understand exactly how and where their

own careers.

Indeed, when businesses choose to provide employees with opportunities to acquire new skills that support their professional advancement, they frequently win their long-term commitment. This gives rise to another important point: employers can promote company loyalty by helping people grow out of their jobs – ideally, into new ones within the same organisation.

### Encourage employees to develop their skills further

Perhaps the most important factor in gaining the long-term loyalty of employees is a company's commitment to training its staff. The best and the brightest talent want to stay that way, and they therefore expect their employer to support their desire to learn and grow professionally.

I still hear that familiar refrain 'Why should I go to the expense of

training staff, only to see them move to another employer?' While this may be true in some cases, talented employees tend to stay where they feel most supported and appreciated.

And employees can still be 'loyal' to organisations long after they've left. The automotive sector has many examples of employees returning to a previous employer after obtaining new skills and experience elsewhere. **MIM**



Tim Bryant is sales and marketing manager with automotive experts

rts Visit:

[www.rts-uk.co.uk](http://www.rts-uk.co.uk)

Contact:

[tbryant@rts-uk.co.uk](mailto:tbryant@rts-uk.co.uk)

To obtain a copy of 'Leading your Team into 2009', written

by Tim Bryant to support this 8-part CPD series, email

[gpritchard@rts-uk.co.uk](mailto:gpritchard@rts-uk.co.uk)