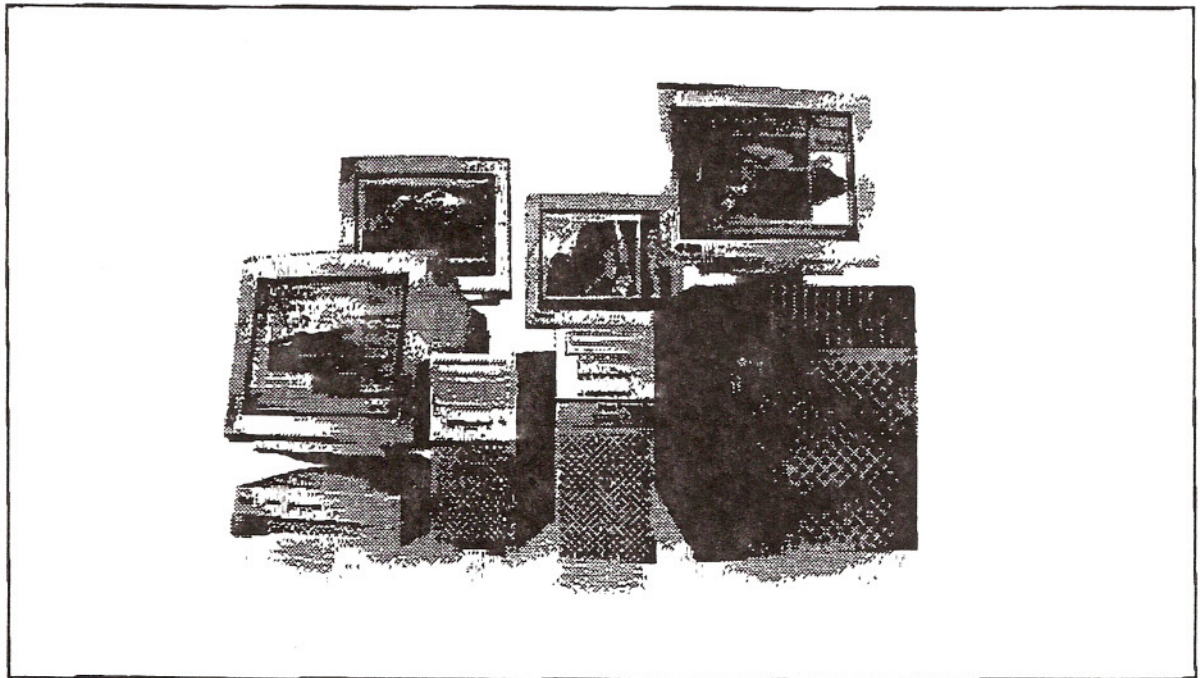


SUN MICROSYSTEMS

ATTRACTING, TRAINING AND RETAINING



The explosive growth of the IT industry over the past five years has been plagued by a lack of qualified employees. As a result of this skills shortage, which has left only eight out of every 10 IT jobs filled, many companies have gone to great lengths to recruit and retain employees.

Although the compensation packages for highly skilled staff members continue to swell with perks, turnover rates continue to skyrocket. This dilemma leaves many managers wondering, "What do my employees really want?" Some managers may feel that no price is too high for the spark of innovation that qualified employees bring

to the table, but they must also remember that employees need more incentive than the amount of their paycheck to stay loyal to a company. Fortunately, many of the alternative incentives to cash bonuses and salary premiums are more mutually beneficial to the company and the workforce.

Industry analysts have determined that beyond salary and bonus programs, the most common ways to increase job satisfaction and improve employee retention rates are:

- availability of training
- use of new technologies

- opportunities to contribute to business goals
- opportunities for advancement
- clearly defined decision-making authority

(Source: Computerworld's 1997 Annual Job Satisfaction Survey)

A combination of all of these methods may lead to higher employee retention, but only one of these methods can benefit a company three-fold: the opportunity for training and certification. Training and certification are invaluable to an organization because they can increase the loyalty and retention rate of employees, increase efficiency and profitability to the company, and increase the value provided to customers.

THE BENEFITS OF TRAINING

A 1998 report by Gartner Group states that clients investing "more than seven days a year on training for each employee have a consistently better retention record than those that invest less time—a small price to pay compared to the losses associated with turnovers.

The employees who are well-trained not only demonstrate a willingness to stay with an organization, but also tend to be more effective and motivated, according to Diane Tunick-Morello, Research Director for Gartner Group. The certified employees can also be recognized as experts in their fields, which increases their chances for advancement, and is another incentive for loyalty.

Research also indicates that a company that invests in training is likely to see increased profitability as a return on its investment. A study done by the American Society of Training and Development compared companies that spent the most on training with companies that spent 60 percent less, and found that the companies spending

more on training achieved 36 percent higher gross profits per employee.

Not only do profits increase, but companies with a highly trained staff can leverage the number of IT-certified employees to competitively differentiate themselves, thereby potentially increasing sales and customer satisfaction. In the ever-growing IT industry, there is nothing more important than staying ahead, and highly skilled employees give companies an invaluable advantage in the market.

If education and training are the answers, Sun is uniquely qualified to help organizations get the full business benefits from systems technology and employees through training. Sun Educational Services is one of the world's largest IT training organizations delivering education, consultancy, and training in over 140 training centers worldwide. As the pioneers of the Internet and the intranet, the premiere provider of Java™ technology and Solaris™ operating environment training and the number one UNDX® training provider, there is no doubt that trainees will receive the best education possible because it's directly from the source. Sun has the resources and the knowledge to provide competitive companies with a wide range of world-class education solutions that help make the most of technology investments and staff.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CERTIFICATION

Although training employees in the IT industry is an accepted practice, some say that the benefits associated with certifying technology employees may not be worth the costs and risks, given there is no empirical data to prove certification's impact on employee effectiveness and retention. But certification has been progressively

regarded in a more positive light over the last five years. A 1997 study by Gartner Group showed that in 1994, 65 percent of corporate managers agreed that it "provides extra value," and by 1997, that number went up to 77 percent. A 1995 International Data Corp. study stated, "...the payback time for the certification of one employee [with the employer paying wages and training/testing costs] is less than nine months."

Two trends in the IT industry are also working together to make certification very important to employees and organizations. The first is that traditional universities do not offer curriculum needed to gain the newest IT skills, and if they did, they could not accurately measure the professional knowledge and capability of the student. Certification helps to measure job-related experience and the professional capacity to perform. Secondly, the business environment of today demands constant training and development in order to stay competitive. Certification and recertification programs help to update and reskill employees through training in the newest technologies. Preparation materials for certification represent the richest sources available for training and professional study by incorporating the latest in technological, ethical, professional, and legal topics. The bottom line is that not only does training and certification increase employee retention and satisfaction, but it can also help ensure that employees have the knowledge, experience, and background to keep a company competitive in the dynamic IT market.

The Sun certification process, which includes pre-assessment, technical training, and testing, validates the knowledge of IT employees and points out where skill gaps exist. At Sun, a trainee can be certified as a Programmer for the Java Platform, Developer for the

Java Platform, Architect for Java Technology, System Administrator for Solaris, and Network Administrator for Solaris. These certification programs provide a method for updating and enhancing the staff knowledge base. It's also a measurable standard for core competencies. For employers and employees, certification means confidence. The knowledge gained in the Sun certification process helps eliminate employee error, improves reliability, and increases service quality. It offers a proactive way to manage knowledge and capture business benefits.

CUSTOM EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION SOLUTIONS

Although opportunity for certification does not guarantee that employees will stay with a company, providing specialized training works to reduce that risk. Sun Microsystems now offers custom training and certification packages tailored to each company's needs. The packages teach skill sets specific to employees' jobs rather than a broad skill set that could be used at any IT company, therefore it can reduce the odds that the employees will seek jobs elsewhere when the training or certification process is completed.

By gaining an understanding of a company's IT business objectives, Sun can design, develop, and deliver a tailored education solution. Sun Educational Services offers an approach to IT education that merges company needs and requirements with proven, comprehensive course offerings, world-class consultants and instructors, top-notch technology-based training products, and global resources and facilities.

Training and certification in programming languages and

Internet skills are increasingly accepted as a standard element of employment and compensation packages, and have evolved to suit the needs of the fast-paced IT industry. Sun Microsystems offers many different methods for technical education including instructor-led training, customized training, CD-ROMs, on-line training and custom certification. All of Sun's teaching methods focus on four major areas of professional training, technology, employee excellence, leadership and management and field education. Although skill sets are quickly outdated in the IT industry, Sun's numerous curriculum paths offer continual training options in the newest technologies.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

Companies concerned with recruiting top prospects, retaining valued staff, and reskilling to meet right-sizing goals have a competitive advantage with Sun. Sun's multi-platform, multi-scenario training options have helped many companies stay on the leading edge of technology, as the following testimonies show.

"Sun Educational Services did an outstanding job of setting up a custom education program for our unique requirements. I've heard nothing but praise about the quality of the instruction and the content of the courses." - Hugh Allan, Manager of Information Technology, Dunlop Tire Corporation.

"Sun Educational Services' Java technology training helped fill our gaps for Java technology skills and enabled our Web developers to do what was needed to take advantage of Java technology for the Internet/intranet." - Mary Anne Waltman, Curriculum Manager for Computer Technology Training, Eastman Kodak

"This massive effort to get our people certified has brought us a

major benefit—a lot of credibility and an increased confidence level in the organization. And that's a big deal." - Larry Dix, Worldwide Technology Support, Semiconductor Group Texas Instruments

"I feel very positive about the decision we made to go with Sun Educational Services, and I'm confident it will be an expanding relationship." - Ian Tuller, Director of Computing and Customer Support, Administrative Computing Departments of the University of California, San Francisco

"The Sun certification process helped me immeasurably. Now, I have a foundation of knowledge that makes me a better and more productive programmer." - Brett McLaughlin, Technical Staff, Oracle Corporation.

"Sun Educational Services offered 3Com the Solaris training needed to increase the productivity of our IT staff, and they offered certification exams that provided third-party validation of our staff's skill level." - Paul Schwarz, Operations Manager, 3Com Europe, Ltd.

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