



The Context Group

For Clients Who Value Results... More Than Advice

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"Employees make the best dates. You don't have to pick them up and they're always tax-deductible."

Andy Warhol

The Context Group

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Creating Commitment

Much has been said about the "new" employment contract. Companies theoretically agree that employees are not going to stay very long but somehow figure that if they are treated well (e.g., provided with training and interesting work) the people may agree to return when the company needs them. My sense is that most companies would prefer people to stay and be committed to the organization. But how do you create commitment?

You want to make people feel like they earned their way on to the team. One method of doing this is using rigorous [selection](#) procedures. While recruiters often do not like these because they require larger applicant pools, people who have to struggle some to join your organization are likely to feel more committed. The difficulty in joining translates to an "If they hired me after all of *that* I must be good and they must really want me" attitude. This leads to new employees feeling positively about themselves and toward the organization.

Once people have gotten over the bar you will benefit from making them feel wanted and taking affirmative steps towards integrating them into the organization. It sounds simple, but most people want to feel as if they are liked and cared for, even in huge corporations. Part of our psychology is to return those feelings because we tend to like those who act positively toward us.

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My son started at a new school this fall. Immediately after he enrolled this spring we got calls from other parents wanting to get him together with their kids, inviting us to ask questions, sending us tickets to school events, etc. Regardless of whether one thinks that this is going overboard (we didn't), it does show the organization's commitment to us and encourages us to feel the same way toward the school.

While you can select people who are more conscientious and tend to have stable work histories, there is no commitment gene. Your organization has to take the first steps to encourage employee commitment.

If you are interested in learning more about [creating an effective culture](#) in your organization, please contact [Warren Bobrow](#).