



People don't leave companies. They leave leaders!



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I have employed thousands of people over the years. And every time one resigned, a little part of me died. (OK, I lie. I have actually danced a celebratory jig around my desk on the odd occasion, but that's another blog!)

Mostly, my natural reaction has always been a human one I suppose. "What possible reason would they have to do that?" or "What's wrong with them?" or even, "She must be leaving for money. The fool!"

But I grew wiser as the years rolled by.

Mostly, people don't change jobs solely for money. They almost never resign on a whim, or in a fit of anger. They joined your company because they believed it right for them, and actually they *want* it to be right. Something, at some point, makes it wrong. And if you really take the time to dig into their real reasons for leaving – and you should – you will find that it's not 'the company' they blame. It's not the location, or the team, or the database or the air-conditioning.

It's the leadership!

Sure, they may not use that word. Indeed, they may not mention management at all. But when they talk about 'morale', when they say 'communication is poor', when they express frustration at the lack of clarity for their career progression – they are telling you that it's the leaders they are leaving. For it's obvious, isn't it? Leaders are responsible for morale, communication and career path.

So, for maybe 15 years I have been irritating the senior managers who report to me, by stopping them in mid-sentence when they start venting at the stupidity, lack of gratitude and disloyalty of the departing employee.

Looking into a mirror can be a shocking experience. Especially if you have not done it for a while.

A 'company' is just a legal entity. A 'business' is a collection of desks and computers. No one resigns because of that.



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It's the decisions, the motivation, the atmosphere, the ethos, the support, the training, the vision, and the direction set by the leadership that they will follow.

Or not.

So next time you get a resignation, resist the temptation to laugh it off as 'another dumbbo who doesn't get us'.

Take a moment to reflect on what it *actually is* they are resigning from.

It's not the departing employee who doesn't 'get it'. It's not the company they are leaving.

It's you.

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