

# Building CHARACTER

March 2003 Edition

## Hiring for Character Reduces Employee Turnover

Every business experiences the need to hire and train new employees. This is one of the most critical decisions corporate leadership must make.

Hiring new people can end up becoming an expensive and time consuming process. Unfortunately, more and more businesses today are facing alarming turnover rates, especially among employees who have been working in the business for one year or less. These high turnover rates quickly become a financial drain and lower moral among other employees. In fact, a recent survey by the American Management Association states the average cost to replace an employee is 30% of their annual salary.

While it is easy to recognize the need, the solution to this widespread problem is less obvious. In 2001, Hancock Memorial Hospital, located in Greenfield, Indiana, experienced a high termination rate among first year employees. Hiring and training new workers over and over became a real drain on the hospital. Fortunately, hospital leadership took a hard look at the root causes of the problem and started to make changes which resulted in a 13% reduction just one year later.

Renard Alotta, team leader of Education Resources at Hancock Memorial, is in charge of *Character First!* initiatives with the hospital's nearly 800 employees. He says that what really changed the statistics on the termination rates was a new way that leadership approached hiring.



**Hancock Memorial Hospital has seen a reduction in hiring mistakes since beginning to hire based on character.**

"We started interviewing related to character," Alotta said. Because of basing hiring decisions on character, not just skill, Hancock Memorial can select the best people for a position knowing that someone with good character is more likely to stay on at a position and become a productive part of the hospital community.

In the face of tight labor markets, many companies have wavered from a commitment to consider character in the hiring process. If someone looks good and has the skills, they are quickly hired. This, however, is guaranteed to leave the company with the tab if that employee is discovered to have serious character weaknesses. Efforts put into hiring the right people the first time will undoubtedly return sizeable dividends in time, money, energy, and morale.

For more information on how you can begin hiring for character in your company, contact *Character First!* at (405) 815-0001.



## Simple Happiness

The deer mouse is just a simple animal, happy to be what it is and making the most of what it has.

A great part of this mouse's extensive success is due to its ability to make the most of any situation. This characteristic is most evident in where the mouse makes its home. It may locate in a crevasse between rocks, in a hollow tree stump, or in a cave. Mice may just as happily set up house in a cardboard box, a dresser drawer, a mattress, or even someone's shoe. The deer mouse is content with nearly any situation.

Once the mouse finds a suitable location, wherever it may be, it then proceeds to make its home into a comfortable place to live. By gathering soft grasses, fabric pieces, or any other material it finds, the mouse soon creates a cozy abode.

How hard do you find it to be happy with your surroundings? Often times, even though an

environment may be practical and functional, it is difficult to accept it, especially when it is perceived that others have things much better. Though you should strive to better your position in life, take a lesson from the deer mouse. Aspire to make things better, but not at the expense of being ungrateful for what is presently possessed.

The deer mouse also shows great contentment with the food that it eats. Though it prefers seeds, berries, and nuts, when necessity demands it, the mouse is happy to eat insects, and larvae, or to even scavenge the carcasses of small animals.

Can you be happy with "plan B" when necessary? Though your eyes are set on certain goals and possessions, can you be content if you must settle for less?

Enjoy the things you have, especially friends and family, and make the most out of what life sends your way.

### Five aspects of contentment

- Be thankful for what you do have.
- Do not complain about what you don't have.
- Do not always ask for "one more".
- Value people above things.
- Want less and give more.

## Parent Presentations

Like any other subject, character education requires teachers and parents to work together in order to be effective. One way to encourage parental support is to let them see some of the character lessons that students have studied this year. As the end of school approaches, consider organizing a parent presentation at one of your parent meetings to give your students a chance to share what they have learned.

A highlight at any parent presentation is when students recite a *Character First!* poem or sing one of the character songs. Other options include reading essays that students have written about the character qualities or reports about the animals they have studied in the curriculum.

The goal of these presentations is to excite parents about the character-building process and

remind them of the qualities so they can reinforce and apply them at home. Encourage parents to follow the three steps for building character:

1. **Emphasize** character by explaining what each word means and relating it to daily life.

2. **Require** character by reminding children of the qualities when they fail to remember them.

3. **Recognize** character by celebrating the good things that children do.

When parents get excited about character training at their child's school and start emphasizing character in the home, radical changes in the life of every student become a real and wonderful possibility.



*Character presentations are great ways to encourage parents to help their kids grow in character.*

**“I can’t believe all the good things my children have learned!”**

—A mother from Louisiana

## Enjoy Life

A wealthy businessman was disturbed to find a fisherman sitting quietly beside his boat. “Why aren’t you out there fishing?” he asked.

“Because I’ve caught enough fish for today,” said the fisherman.

“Why don’t you catch more fish than you need?” the rich man asked.

“What would I do with them?”

“You could earn more money,” came the impatient reply, “and buy a better boat so you could go deeper and catch more fish. You could purchase nylon nets, catch even more fish, and make more money. Soon you’d have a fleet of boats and be rich like me.”

The fisherman asked, “Then what would I do?”

“You could sit down and enjoy life,” said the industrialist.

“What do you think I’m doing now?” the fisherman replied as he looked placidly out to sea.

True contentment may be easier to find than you think. Slow down and enjoy the blessings you already have.

## Families of Character



“It will make your family a family that will have relationships forever.”

This is just one quote from parents, grandparents, and community leaders from all across America who are excited about the newly introduced Character Family Seminar.

In an effort to create a culture of character, *Character Cities* around the nation are hosting Family Seminars presented by *Character First!* This dynamic seminar is designed to acquaint families with character-based principles and equip them with practical insights on how to effectively build character within the home.

Using the powerful character resource *Achieving True Success* as its primary textbook, the Family Seminar is showing parents how they can identify and minimize challenging behavioral problems, correct character weaknesses, praise children for good character, and build strong family relationships.

One family declared, “Since attending the seminar we find ourselves sitting around talking about character. We now know how to define what character is and can identify it in others and ourselves. We talk about people we appreciate and what character they show that causes our appreciation.”

When one lady was asked if she would encourage others to

attend the seminar, she enthusiastically responded, “Why would a thirsty man not fall into a stream of water? Who wouldn’t want these character traits in their lives?”

For more on sponsoring a Family Seminar in your area contact *Character First!* at (405) 815-0001.

## Police Dynamics Seminar

This powerful seminar can make outstanding police forces even better by building integrity, accountability, and professionalism.

[Download more information](#) about this seminar, being held in Indianapolis, Indiana on April 17–18, 2003.

## About CTI

The Character Training Institute (CTI) was established to encourage true success in businesses, organizations, schools, communities, and families by encouraging character growth and development. With forty-nine qualities at its center, *Character First!* offers a variety of training and resources to stimulate character growth in individuals from all walks of life.

The Character Training Institute is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization based in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.