

COMFORT ZONE

ISSUE 3: VOL 2



ISS KITCHEN

Apple Cranberry Crisp

6 cups sliced and peeled apples	3/4 cup quick cooking oats
1 cup sweet dry cranberries or fresh cranberries	3/4 cup all purpose flour
1 teaspoon cinnamon	3/4 cup packed brown sugar
1 tablespoon lemon juice	1/2 cup butter (softened)
	1/2 cup chopped walnuts

In a large bowl combine the apples, cranberries, cinnamon, and lemon juice. Put mixture into a glass baking dish (12 x 8 or 11 x 7). In a large bowl combine the remaining ingredients and whip with fork until crumbled. Sprinkle the mixture onto of the fruit. Bake at 375°F for 35 to 40 minutes until the apples are tender, the juice is bubbling, and the top is golden brown. Serve while still warm with ice cream. Enjoy!!

Recipe by Erika Bodwell

THE UNIFIED GROUP

We are an independent association of the country's elite HVAC commercial contractors. We help our members increase productivity, profitability and customer retention, and we also provide a network for national and regional customer business solutions. Visit us at www.theunifiedgroup.com.



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KEEP GOOD PEOPLE

It's the last thing you want to hear—an important employee announcing that he or she is leaving. Perhaps it's to join a competitor, or to leave the industry altogether. Whatever the reason, you lose out.

A Last Ditch Effort

After this announcement, you may put together a deal to convince the employee to stay. Many times this tactic succeeds but only because the employee is flattered by the attention and because the employer has thrown money at the problem. These are short-term satisfiers. If the employee is dissatisfied with other aspects of the job, it's probably just a matter of time before he or she moves on.

Retention Strategy

Employee retention efforts should start when people are hired, not when they threaten to leave. Companies must recognize what employees want to achieve and help them meet those objectives.

First Day Ritual

The employee's first day is the perfect opportunity to remind him or her why your company is a great place to work. Create a first day ritual for all new hires. In addition to personal introductions, be sure to introduce the new hire at staff meetings or via email.

This is just one part of new employee orientation. Have the employee sit down and talk with each manager in the company. Be sure to provide written materials that he or she can review later. With all this new information as well as new faces, the first week at a new job can be a little overwhelming. Having an organized orientation program will impress your new hires and make a lasting, positive impression.

Motivators

Surprisingly, money is not necessarily the most important aspect of a retention strategy. The "bigger picture" often counts the most.

Everyone wants more money, of course, but once employees feel secure financially, their needs shift to enhanced self-esteem and self-actualization. Non-monetary issues—a boss who listens, recognition, being informed, opportunities for career advancement, and chances to broaden skills—become more important than their compensation. Showing employees their value and potential can be more effective in keeping good people than money.

Improve employee retention by following these guidelines:

- Don't assume anything. Too many managers assume they know what motivates their employees. Find out what new employees want and how they want to grow. Then help them structure a career path.
- Evaluate performance and set goals and objectives. Too many employees leave because they feel they never receive proper recognition.
- Communicate the results of employees' efforts. They need to feel like they know what's going on in the company.
- Finally, don't overlook money completely. Think in terms of total compensation: base pay, incentives, and benefits. All employers have to determine the value of a job and what they want to pay in their market. Then the employer must decide what total compensation program will fit all of the employees' needs and the company's budget.

Abbreviated from "FMI Quarterly" publication, 2003, Issue 1 "50 Lessons Learned in 50 Years." FMI provides management consulting, investment banking, and research for the worldwide construction industry.



ISS is a leader in the commercial, healthcare and industrial air conditioning and refrigeration industry. We excel through our commitment to protect the health, safety and welfare of our clients and our employees.

INNOVATIVE SERVICESOLUTIONS

2513 Industrial Boulevard
Orlando, FL 32804
innovativesolutions.com
407.296.5211



O N E L I N K O F T H E C H A I N



HVAC MAINTENANCE—CAN YOU AFFORD THE LOW BID?

“It is unwise to pay too much, but it is worse to pay too little”
 —JOHN RUSKIN (1819-1900)

This quote is true of most products and services, but especially true when selecting an HVAC preventive maintenance program. Building owners and managers realize that their HVAC equipment requires proper maintenance and servicing. But how much should be invested, and when is a bargain not a bargain?

“Lower the price—no problem!”

If this seems to be the attitude of your HVAC service provider, there is a good chance you will be paying the price—and a steep one—for choosing the low bid. The unfortunate reality is that some contractors offer a low priced Preventive Maintenance (PM) program by simply reducing the time spent for planned maintenance. While the annual agreement price might seem attractive, is it really the bargain it appears to be?

Total cost of ownership

The fact is that the annual maintenance represents only one small part of the cost of HVAC equipment ownership. Other costs include energy consumption, repairs (parts and labor) and the cost of equipment replacement. Usually these other costs are the real cost of equipment ownership, and they are all directly impacted by the investment in preventive maintenance. Those building owners who choose to pay too little to maintain their equipment will inevitably pay much more in energy consumption, repairs, and premature equipment replacement. The worst part is they may never know until it's too late.

Selecting the best value

- Like any investment, a PM program should provide a return. Here are some tips to making a sound investment:
- Look beyond the price of the PM program, verify the tasks being performed and with what frequency.
 - Conduct a thorough interview with each HVAC contractor.
 - Ask for references. Call them to determine their level of satisfaction.
 - Verify the qualifications of the contractor. Find out the tenure and experience of their technicians and their capabilities and training.
 - Visually inspect for yourself the HVAC equipment on a periodic basis.
 - Ask about ways to verify equipment performance. There are tools available that can analyze and document the efficiency and performance of HVAC equipment.

Selecting a quality preventive maintenance program from a reputable contractor is the best way to protect your investment and minimize the total costs of ownership.

SAVE ENERGY THIS WINTER

Improving the energy efficiency of buildings and industrial facilities this winter will not only save on utility bills, it will also prevent carbon dioxide emissions and improve the reliability of the nation's energy supply. By taking several simple steps, businesses can identify commonly overlooked areas for energy savings, save on energy bills, and help establish an energy management strategy that saves money year after year.

- Establish the energy use of your building(s) and set a savings goal
- Inspect heating equipment and perform monthly maintenance
- Turn back, or turn off heating and cooling equipment when not needed
- Get occupants involved
- Improve lighting systems

These steps represent a good start on real energy savings this winter. Keep the savings going with a long-term strategic energy management plan.

Source: www.energystar.gov



PREPARING YOUR BUSINESS FOR THE UNTHINKABLE

The health, safety and welfare of our clients are of our utmost concern. I felt that sharing this American Red Cross guide could benefit your businesses in Disaster Preparedness.

Even if you think you are not in a disaster-prone area, something like a chemical tanker truck overturning can prevent you and your employees from getting to your facility. Even if a flood doesn't put your business under water, customers and supplies may not be able to get to you. Power outages, brown-outs or surges can affect your daily business operations. Many disasters, like wind storms, tornadoes and earthquakes, can strike quickly and with little or no warning.

No business should risk operating without a disaster plan.

While reports vary, as many as 40 percent of small businesses do not reopen after a major disaster like a flood, tornado or earthquake. Here are some suggestions your may want to consider when building your plan:

- Keep phone lists of your key employees and customers with you.
- Designate one remote number on which you can record voicemail messages for employees.
- Arrange for programmable call forwarding.
- Leave keys and alarm code(s) with a trusted employee or friend.
- Install emergency lights that turn on when the power goes out.
- Keep a backup tape of computer data off site.
- Use UL-listed surge protectors and battery backup systems.

- Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio with a tone alert feature.
- Stock a minimum supply of the goods, materials and equipment you would need for business continuity.
- Consult with your insurance agent about precautions to take for disasters.
- Keep emergency supplies handy, such as flashlights with extra batteries, first aid kit, tools, and food and water.

Protect Your Employees; Customers and Business

Designate one employee from each work shift to be the safety coordinator. This person will make all decisions relating to employee and customer safety and to the safety of the business itself. Safety coordinators should know how to contact the owner or operator at all times.

Everyone in your facility should know how to prepare for a disaster and what to do if a disaster occurs. Contact your local Red Cross chapter for specific information about how to stay safe in a tornado, earthquake, fire, flood, hurricane or other hazard.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Name: Paul Coveney, Operations Manager
Years in the HVAC Industry: 24; **Years at ISS:** 3
Years working with the Bodwell Family: 21
Major Job responsibilities: Managing and maintaining a quality and profitable service operation.
Most challenging part of my job: Managing people
Family: 4 children; Dylan (5 years old), Hailey (10 years old), Heather (15 years old), Tim (17 years old) Fiancé: Julie
My very first job was: Refrigeration and AC Service Technician
Hobbies/Past times: Fishing and playing with the kids
Town: Orlando, FL
Achievement I am most proud of: Seeing my refrigeration designs working for our clients.

