Human resources is a field full of acronyms. Just when you think you know them all, new ones arrive on the scene. Government agencies, specific regulations, employment forms, and types of performance appraisals are just some of the formal terms that are condensed into catchy acronyms. In the foodservice field, you’re no doubt familiar with abbreviations such as FDA, USDA, CMS, MDS, QAPI, HIPAA – and that’s just the tip of the iceberg.

Last year, I ran across a new acronym in an article in Gallup Business Journal titled, “What Attracts the Best Employees to a Company?” The short answer is a focused EVP!

For those of you not familiar with this particular acronym, EVP stands for employee value proposition. Although closely connected to an organization’s employment brand, it is defined as the balance of rewards and benefits that an employee receives in return for what they contribute to the workplace. In the article referenced above, Apple (yes, the Apple that periodically makes big product announcements) was highlighted due to its decision to offer full educational reimbursement to employees. By doing so, they set themselves apart in the war for talent by demonstrating commitment to invest in employees who have a desire to learn and grow. An EVP speaks to a workplace’s culture and allows job seekers as well as current team members to assess organizational fit.
In a Food and Nutrition Department, the EVP might include education opportunities – such as tuition for dietary management training or the fee for the CDM Credentialing Exam. Or it could be a perk such as free or reduced price meals during their shift.

Most competitive employers undoubtedly have an EVP, even if they have not taken the time to commit it to writing or communicate it consistently to the outside world. If you fall into that category, there is no time like the present to think about this important topic and work with your key leaders to craft a clear, concise summary of your EVP that will resonate with the type of talent you hope to attract and retain. If you are not sure where to start, Gallup recommends studying your best performers to determine what attracted them to your organization. Then, take a close look at your work environment and cultural elements that keep talented employees from considering other employment opportunities. Finally, make sure that your EVP enables you to stand out from the competition. What separates you from others in the marketplace and what are your unique distinguishing qualities? Is it your mission, innovative products, generous benefits, etc.?

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It is the norm for employers to pour significant financial and human resources into their brand image in order to attract customers. Given the importance of talent in organizational success, it is essential that more resources be allocated to defining and articulating an EVP. If you already have a strong one, make sure that the applicants you are trying to attract understand it. When interviewing a promising candidate for your organization, spend some time articulating the EVP. It’s more than just explaining compensation and typical company benefits. Stress to the candidates the value-added perks you provide – like tuition reimbursement if you have it, free meals if you offer them, or even feel-good intangibles like the opportunity to nourish our most vulnerable populations. For some people, the chance to make a positive difference in the lives of others is highly motivational and may even outrank more traditional employee benefits in terms of personal importance. Still others strongly value work-life balance and are attracted to employers that offer flexible scheduling. Obviously, some positions lend themselves to a more fluid schedule than others, so be careful not to promise a perk you really can’t deliver.

For the employees you are trying to retain, make sure they know and understand your EVP as well. Wise employers make it a point to communicate their EVP periodically. During their early days on the job, a new recruit may have too much on their plate to consider taking courses, achieving certifications, etc. But after they get up to speed and become proficient at their job tasks, they may be searching for the next challenge, which may come in the form of further education. If they’re reminded that their employer is willing to underwrite part or all of their education expense, they are more likely to stay on board to utilize this valuable benefit. And chances are, they’ll remain loyal to an employer who supported their personal or professional advancement.

Be perceptive and proactive in ascertaining the benefits your staff members find most valuable. And keep in mind that they’re probably not the same for every employee. If you are going to begin developing an employee value proposition, good luck. If you already have one, make sure you promote it to those who will benefit: your current and prospective employees.

**REFERENCE**

1. The acronym EVP stands for:
   A. Extra value proposal
   B. Employee value proposition
   C. Employer value predictor

2. EVP is defined as:
   A. Rewards and benefits an employee receives for contributing to the workplace
   B. What employers bring to their client base
   C. The opportunity to earn paid time off

3. The benefit of identifying your EVP to prospective employees is:
   A. You will look like a nice boss
   B. Your workplace will stand out in the eyes of applicants
   C. It expedites the application process

4. Examples of distinguishing qualities that could make your organization stand out to employees include:
   A. Innovative products
   B. Generous benefits
   C. Both of the above

5. Specifically in a Food and Nutrition Department, an EVP that might appeal to a new employee could be:
   A. Opportunity to take a dietary manager training course
   B. The chance to earn the CDM, CFPP credential
   C. Both of the above

6. The goal when outlining your EVP to current employees is to:
   A. Make them feel valued and engaged
   B. Make them wish they worked for your competitor
   C. Make them sorry for not appreciating what a great employer you are

7. As an employer, you should articulate the EVP
   A. During the job interview and throughout an employee’s tenure
   B. During their exit interview
   C. During their meeting with the union boss

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Reading *What is Your Organization’s EVP?* and successfully completing these questions online has been approved for 1 hour of continuing education for CDM, CFPPs. CE credit is available ONLINE ONLY. To earn 1 CE hour, purchase the online CE quiz in the ANFP Marketplace. Visit www.ANFPonline.org/market, select “Publication,” then select “CE article” at left, then search the title “What is Your Organization’s EVP?” and purchase the article.

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