

TRIGGERING EVENTS

At some point, a *triggering event* causes the associate to seriously evaluate his or her situation and decide whether or not to leave. High-retention field leaders recognize these triggers and use them as an opportunity to reconnect and re-establish the value of their relationship with their top performers, especially those who have been showing signs of discontent.

Some common triggers include the following:

- ◆ A change in management
- ◆ The departure of another top associate
- ◆ Having a huge case fall through—or having another company underwrite business that their primary company passed on
- ◆ A personal crisis or life change, such as marriage, divorce, birth of a child, death of a parent, etc.
- ◆ An act of dishonesty by the field leader
- ◆ A change in the compensation package

What You Can Do:

- ◆ Keep a list of triggering events in your office as a reminder. Review this list with your management team and staff. When one of your associates experiences such an event, be prepared to offer assistance and guidance as needed. Create an informal network among the management team so that you are informed when senior associates are affected by one of these triggering events.

Triggering Events | EXCERPT FROM AN INTERVIEW

- ◆ *“I’ve earned the loyalty of the staff, so if they hear anything that may be troubling, they come and tell me right away. If a top associate didn’t get a commission, staff will say to one of the managers, ‘You need to have this fixed.’ Every day I have someone come into my office and say, ‘Listen, this is what is happening.’ We talk about how to resolve the issue, and then they give me the feedback. Then I’ll pick up the phone and tell the associate, ‘We’re on it, sorry it happened.’ Then I’ll schedule lunch with that person in the next week or two. There is no way I would have known it without the staff person telling me.”*

SEPARATION BEHAVIORS

Once a high-performing sales associate has decided to leave, he or she begins getting affairs in order, but at this point, still has not informed the field leader of the decision to leave. The field leader still has time to reach out to the associate and save the relationship if he or she is good at recognizing changes in the normal patterns of the associate's business. The following behaviors are examples of such pattern changes:

- ◆ Getting current in commissions; minimizing trailers
- ◆ Writing a larger proportion of business with other (not primary) companies
- ◆ Contacting inactive clients
- ◆ Moving their practice out of the field office

What You Can Do:

- ◆ Monitor your top associates' business patterns. When deviations from the normal patterns occur, speak with the associate to determine the reasons behind these changes. Try to listen for what associates *don't* say as much as for what they *do* say.

Separation Behaviors | EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS

- ◆ *“About two years ago, I made the decision I was no longer viewing this company as my primary company. I was no longer going to be loyal. I just diversified, started to accumulate as much cash as I could so I could make the move. Started placing business elsewhere, but not to the detriment of my clients, only to the company. I never placed a product unless the client was equal or better off. It took a year and a half to make the move...I didn't know where I was going at the time, but I was making a move. I did not do it rashly. The new company is top, top, A++++, triple-rated. I knew what I was doing.”*