
Don't let your cookie crumble

By Mark Roberts

As the business climate continues to grow we are seeing a growing disparity among the number of experienced mobility sales and technicians needed and those available and or looking to make a career change. This coupled with the anticipated growth the baby boomer generation as well as medical breakthroughs extending the life span of individuals provides a big and growing challenge for mobility dealers throughout North America:

How to we attract and retain employees in the face of an anticipated tight market for employees?

In recent survey's focused on gaining a better understanding of this challenge, we learned that over 70% of executives ranked finding and retaining high talent employees as a top concern, and over 60% expressed a current concern that the market today lacks quality talent. One survey conducted by Execunet stated "*companies competing for talent in this marketplace are left with two choices: offer bigger paychecks or risk losing their best candidates to competitors.*" In the same survey over 70% of leaders surveyed felt they were adequately compensated, however the same executives would expect an 18% increase in total compensation if they were to make a job change.

What is the cost of losing a key contributor?

Once you consider possible recruitment costs, training, relocation, a possible increased overall compensation package and the loss in productivity during the training period, it is estimated the loss of a key team member costs the company in excess of four times the employee's annual compensation. (That's when companies feel their cookie cutter compensation plans crumble.)

The challenge to attract and retain the key contributors that will add the most value to your business can be addressed in a number of ways: company culture, work environment, communication of values, employee training, opportunity for advancement, and the area more and more growing companies are focusing on most on... strategic compensations plans. "Strategic Compensation plans? "... you may ask? We like to ask questions as well;

What need(s) would you like your compensation plan and pension design elements to address?

Not surprisingly, more and more clients wish to attract and retain the best team members while providing the business and its owners the maximum return on investment. In a recent 401(k) profit sharing design the owner realized .83 of every dollar invested in the plan personally. Often clients come in desiring what the industry refers to as "cookie cutter" pension plans. Some business owners know these as Simple 401(k)'s, as well other off the shelf (inexpensive) pension vehicles. However a big part of our job as pension design consultants is education. It presents me with a question:

Would a Mobility owner spend as much for a pension / 401(k) design as they would a Braun platform lift?

Would it help in making that decision if I shared that for the approximate cost of a platform lift a mobility store owner could retain key contributors while personally reducing their taxable income and realize the maximum pension contributions within the law? Would it help if we added a design element that provided a compensation element without the owner realizing payroll tax on those funds while it insures the employee stays on your team for a minimum of six years?

Another study recently released showed that 95% of business owners do not understand the 2006 Pension Reform Act or the implications it has on their business. This statistic does not surprise Boyce and Associates owner and President Kerry Boyce, as he has served clients with pension plan designs for over 17 years. Kerry went on to say "*we are seeing two major shifts in our market; companies desiring to use their pension plan design as a key element of their overall compensation strategy. Secondly, we see an increase in owners desiring to have plans that increase their ability to attract and retain key contributing employees Rewarding and retention design elements are included in every plan we tailor today.*"

As the market for qualified employees continues to get tighter we often see employees looking at the total compensation package much more strategically. As a result, the cookie cutter 401(k) plans often crumble as key contributors leave. We recognize that "pay" is often not in

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Harmar Access Porch Lifts are safe, smooth and economical solutions to the barriers stairs can create outside a home. Available in 2, 4 and 6-foot vertical lifting heights, our residential lifts are designed to be simple to install and operate and are virtually maintenance free for use indoors and out.

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Harmar Mobility (www.harmar.com) designs, engineers and produces American made lift and ramp products that enhance people's mobility, independence and quality of life. Located in Southwest Florida, Harmar was founded in 1998 by Chad Williams and offers a complete line of auto lifts and access ramps. Harmar's success is based on innovative design, quality products and world-class customer service. Harmar products are simpler, stronger, lighter and easier to use than other mobility products.

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the top five reasons an employee leaves a current position. However we do know “feeling the employer values me and my contribution” as well as “feeling appreciated, and feeling like an owner” do rank in the top three reasons employees stay with employers. We recommend NMEDA dealers consider the strategic nature of their current or future pension plan designs as a component of their overall compensation strategy. Strategic Pension Design Analysis (SPDA) is one tool pension consultant’s at Boyce and Associates use to assess the various design elements of existing pension plans. Ok, an assessment may cost you as much as a set of hand controls, but we are confident this review will add tremendous value to your organization.

The mobility market is tough enough without having to be concerned your key techs or salespeople you trained may be leaving to fill the needs of growing competitors. A strong pension design consultant partner is an investment to insure continued growth and profitability.

About the author; Mark Roberts is the COO of Boyce & Associates located in the North Scottsdale Arizona, and his experience has helped a number of companies grow profitably over the last 25 years. Having worked in the mobility industry as a manufacturer (VMI, VP of Sales and Marketing) and rapidly growing dealer (President, of Arizona Mobility Products) gives him a unique understanding of the mobility dealer landscape.

BENEFITS OF THE FMVSS 201U

By Jacques Bolduc, P. Eng.

The NHTSA has conducted a series of tests to determine if the FMVSS 201U did in fact improve the safety of vehicle occupants, specifically head injuries caused by occupants contacting the vehicle’s upper interior, including its pillars, roof headers and side rails, and the upper roof.

The NHTSA conducted “154 matched pairs of impact tests with free-motion head forms in pre and post-standard vehicles of 15 selected make-models. The Head Injury Criterion, HIC(d) averaged 909.9 in the 154 pre-standard tests and 667.5 in the post-standard vehicles. This is a statistically significant average improvement of 242.4 units of HIC.”

Boyce and associates has served clients throughout North America for over 17 years. As one of less than 7 firms nationally with the capability to custom tailor pension plan designs, Boyce and associates has introduced the Strategic Pension Design Analysis (SPDA) to complement their other tools in helping their client partners with the ideal plan for their businesses. To reach Mark or learn more about strategic pension designs and or have your current plan reviewed; please contact him at 480-212-8200 or mroberts@boycepensions.com.

BRUNO PETITION TO INITIATE RULEMAKING TO ADD NEW HEAD REST REQUIREMENTS TO THE MAKE INOPERATIVE EXEMPTIONS

By Jacques Bolduc, P. Eng.

The new head rest rule that comes into effect September 1, 2008 requires higher head rests in the outboard positions of the front row of seats. Seating systems that extend out of the vehicle are very dependent on the height of the seat. Bruno has been pro-active and is petitioning the NHTSA to add the increased dimensional requirement of the upcoming 202 to the make inoperative exemption (docket 27027). Specifically, Bruno states: “The remedy we seek is an amended 49 CFR Part 595 Exemption in 9595.7 (c)(S)(i), (c)(S)(ii), and/or (c)(9) to accommodate both drivers and passengers, not in a wheelchair, in a vehicle modified for persons with a disability to drive or be transported.

The current version of Part 595, 595.7 (c)(9) exempts the dimensional and test criteria S4.3(b)(1) and (2) of 49 CFR 571.202 in any case in which the driver’s head restraint **must** be modified to accommodate a driver with a disability. Bruno seeks to broaden that exemption to include the passenger with a disability as well. It should also be updated to include an exemption for the current 49 CFR 571.202a S4.2.1 through S4.2.7.



NATIONAL MOBILITY EQUIPMENT DEALERS ASSOCIATION

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An invoice with the amount of purchase and shipping charges will be sent with the order.

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Tire Placard Labels	.50		
Cargo Carrying Capacity Labels	.50		
Wheelchair Logo Pin	2.50		
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