

hanging on to top engineering talent

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EETimes.com has a fairly entertaining and interesting read titled "How to keep engineers happy." Why is it entertaining? For one, while some of the quotes seem right on, a few are questionable at best and a few others promote old and mostly ineffective management doctrines. Take, for example, the following quote by Andrew Iseron that is mentioned in the article: "Most workers would rather not change jobs," unless influenced by external factors. A terrible generalization by any means, but especially inaccurate when applied to younger workers that have graduated in the last ten years or so. Most young engineers that I have encountered in my career don't see any problems changing companies. As a matter of fact, the majority views changing companies as one of the best ways to obtain a significant salary boost, gain new skills as well as experience, and to broaden their professional network. This is especially true for engineers that are not tied down by families or are located in booming economies. Furthermore, many younger engineers have witnessed major semiconductor companies cut down on pension plans and other benefits, at a time when startup companies in related fields such as computer-science and bio-engineering were luring workers with significant perks, thus further decreasing employee loyalty. This leads directly to one of the major points that the article fails to address: nobody wants to work for a "cheap" company. There is a proper time and place for cost-cutting, but if a company's major plan for increasing profits is cost-cutting of office supplies and coffee stirrers, and not a good strategic roadmap for future products, the company should really not be surprised if their top talent decides to jump ship. Anyhow, be sure to check out the charts that accompany the article as well, since they yield some interesting information about general hiring practices.