

**An Evaluation of the Level of Employee Morale and Employee Retention  
in the Twenty-first Judicial Circuit of Missouri in the  
Circuit Clerk's Office of St. Louis County**

Institute for Court Management  
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This project reviews the employee morale and employee retention problems in the office of the Circuit Clerk, St. Louis County, Missouri. While the problems are court wide they are more readily apparent in the areas where the court is experiencing a high turnover. These include the Associate Civil, Circuit Civil and Courtroom Services departments. With the court wide vacancy rate escalating to 38% during the course of the year, turnover, recruitment, and training costs are using court resources needed for new initiatives and are lowering the morale of remaining staff.

Louis County Courts. The findings and conclusion will be based on a review of relevant literature, four surveys completed by court employees and a review of resignation letters from employees who have left the court.

This research project seeks answers to the following questions:

- What is the court doing right for its employees?
- What is the court doing wrong for its employees?
- Why are employees leaving the court?
- Why are some candidates declining job offers after completing the entire recruitment process?
- Are any of the successful employee morale and retention practices in the private sector or other public sector agencies applicable to the courts?

The research methodology used was four surveys of permanent court employees was conducted in August, September and October of 2002. The survey group consisted of two hundred employees in the Circuit Clerk's Office. The survey consisting of a total of four instruments, which are the basis of this project. The entire Circuit Clerk's Office received the first two surveys. Seventy-eight employees received the survey with three open-ended questions. And the fourth survey was a telephone interview given at random to the employees that did not respond to either survey. The surveys will be used to evaluate the employees' morale and work environment.

- The first survey consisted of ninety (90) true/false questions to evaluate the work environment/climate scale.
- The second survey was taken from the Gallup List, consisting of twelve (12) questions to measure the strength of a workplace. These twelve questions perhaps did not capture everything one

may want to know about their workplace, but the questions did capture the most important information. These questions measure the core elements that are needed to attract, focus, and keep the most talented employees.

- The third survey consisted of three (3) open-ended questions that were given to long term (10 years or greater) employees. These questions will measure what the courts did right to retain the employees for this length of time.
- The fourth survey consisted of eight (8) questions conducted over the telephone by the Human Resources Manager who selected at random, individuals that did not respond to the initial surveys. These questions were designed to get responses from the individuals who either did not have the time to complete the surveys, or felt it wasn't important at the time the surveys were given to them. Yet, their input was very valuable and important.

Based on the responses from the surveys, the respondents top concern is money. There is no known date or schedule for a pay increase with the State of Missouri. There is no known date or schedule for a cost of living increase. The State of Missouri is operated on a uniform pay scale.

The Circuit Clerk's Office should continue to offer other benefits or incentives to the employees; i.e. send the employees birthday cards, send flowers for hospitalization or sick and shut-in, things along this nature. To have effective communication with the employees ask genuine questions, show concern, and have open communication with the employees. And do what you say you will do for the employees. The researcher believes that the Circuit Clerk's Office should initiate committee work groups to accomplish this task.

This [research paper](#) is available in its entirety in portable document format. To access, you must first obtain and install the Adobe Acrobat Reader.



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