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Nightline Express boasts 100% employee retention rate

SECOND PLACE SIZE CATEGORY — SMALL



BY LEIGH O'KEEFE

Few companies can claim that they've never had an employee quit. Don Sanders' Nightline Express Inc. is among that elite group.

"I believe I know how to hire good employees," said Sanders, Nightline's president.

Sanders, 46, founded the third-party transportation trucking company in April 1997. That year, with just three employees, Nightline reported revenue of \$643,000. Over the past eight years the firm grew to 11 employees and reported \$7.6 million in revenue last year. Sanders said he expects revenue to jump to \$9 million in 2005.

"I didn't grow the company by myself," he said.

The company enjoys continued growth and high retention numbers due to the above industry average pay Sanders awards to each employee. Nightline employees earn a base salary plus commission and a bonus. "The sky's the limit," Sanders, said of the commission incentive.

Brad Kinsey, operations, started at Nightline nine months ago and said he joined the firm because he wanted to get back into the brokerage business and saw an opportunity to increase his pay.

"Here you earn your bonus weekly," he said of the unlimited commission Nightline offers employees. Kinsey said while he hasn't been able to double his pay on commission yet, he knows of veterans within the company who do regularly.

NIGHTLINE EXPRESS INC.



BRIAN CASSIDY

Nightline President Don Sanders has not had a single employee quit since he launched the company in 1997.

Through the years, Sanders said he has picked up tidbits on managerial styles from contacts. For example, after witnessing a friend and president of a company park in a less than desirable spot, Sanders picked up the habit of giving his employees the front parking spot. "I don't want my secretary getting mugged at night, and I'd rather she park close to the door."

Sanders' mantra of 'Do what you've got to do,' is meant, and taken, quite literally by employees.

Kinsey, father of a 2-year-old daughter and twin 8-year-old girls, said he is able to drop his daughters off at school or leave early to pick them up. "'Do what you've got to do.' I hear that a lot," he said. "Don means that literally, even if it means having to leave the office."

Using the Internet increases communication and flexibility for Nightline

employees by allowing them to work from home. Sanders operates on the philosophy that family is the number one priority.

Kinsey said the office works a lot like a family, "because we don't always get along. No family does and no company does. But we always work towards the common goal and that's what makes us different from other businesses I've worked at."

Communication is another factor Sanders does not lose sight of. "It's why the company is so successful," he said. With the use of instant messaging, e-mail and phone calls, Sanders said the employees are in constant contact throughout the day.

Nightline begins open communication with employees before they are even hired. Applicants meet with the entire staff during the interview process to make sure they are a good fit, Sanders said.