

Looking Within

Pima FCU finds talent from its ranks

By Kerry Liberman



At Pima Federal Credit Union, employee advancement and career development are taken very seriously. In fact, the CU's employees rank opportunities for advancement very high. This is why I included the \$473 million/55,000-member CU in the People Perspectives Distinguished Credit Unions of the Year, an award I created to feature some of our successful clients. Of all the CUs that conducted employee surveys with my company in 2015, Pima FCU had one of the highest overall averages for both employee satisfaction and engagement. Not only that, but Pima FCU had the highest average of all of our clients on the opportunity for advancement dimension. Let's find out what they're doing that has led to such high marks from its staff.

Promoting from Within

Pima FCU (www.pimafcu.org), Tucson, Ariz., is dedicated to promoting from within whenever possible. Open positions are posted internally for five days, and priority is given to the qualified applicants who are already members of their team.

In 2016, Pima FCU has already filled 12 management positions, with more than half (58 percent) filled internally. According to CUES member Angi Griffin, VP/human resources, "It is a great morale booster for our staff to see their co-workers taking on new challenges and seeing the results of Pima's confidence in and dedication to our employees."

Additionally, Pima FCU is steadily growing, which provides more new positions and more opportunity for internal growth.

On the other hand, if an employee

who applies for an open position does not have the required qualifications, the hiring manager contacts the employee and provides feedback about the decision. Then the manager, often in conjunction with the employee's current manager, has a career pathing discussion with the employee. "By doing this, we hope to show employees that we are truly interested in their growth; plus, it allows us to understand their interests and preferred paths so we can help them get there through mentoring, coaching and training," says Griffin.

Career Development

Pima FCU has what it calls an Employee Exchange Program, which enables employees in one department to shadow an employee in another department. For instance, if the CU has an open loan officer position, a teller can shadow an officer for a few hours to learn more about what is done in that role on a daily basis. This not only allows employees to better understand their own desired career path, but also establishes better rapport between employees, creates awareness of what other departments do, and opens the channels of communication between departments and employees.

"All of this contributes to higher morale, higher levels of teamwork, better service to our members and a heightened awareness of the importance Pima holds for internal career development," says Griffin.

Pima FCU also emphasizes empowerment. Employees are encouraged to learn different aspects of their positions and take on tasks that may not traditionally be included in their everyday duties. They are also encouraged to be involved in

various committees within the CU, which allows them to be exposed to different areas and ideas.

In addition to internal development, Pima FCU supports and encourages employees to seek professional certifications and take advantage of educational opportunities through industry associations. Plus, the CU reimburses employees for a portion of their higher education tuition costs.

"Once someone joins the Pima team, our goal is to develop them and provide them with opportunity to build a career, not just fill a position," says Griffin.

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Resources

Read the first three articles in this series: "Employee Engagement & Satisfaction Done Right" at cues.org/0416employee; "Happy Boss, Happy Office" at cues.org/0616happy; and "A Satisfied Staff" at cues.org/0816satisfied. Read more articles by Kerry Liberman at cues.org/kerryliberman.

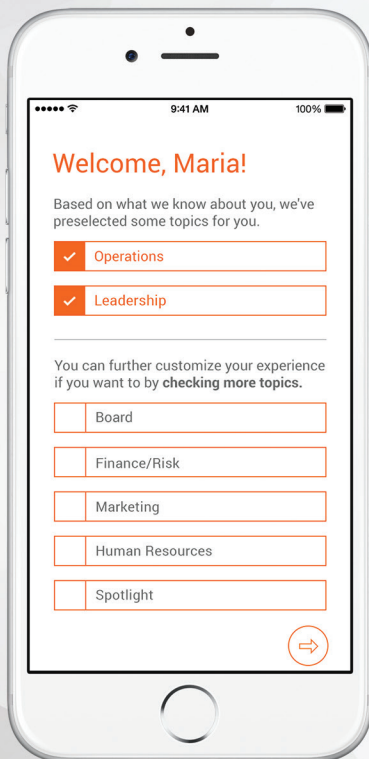
And read an article about career pathing at cues.org/0916soar.



Pima FCU's leadership team (which has a CUES Executive Group membership) includes, from left, Cindy Fisher-Campano, CSE, chief lending officer; Laura Ward, VP/risk management; Eric Renaud, president/CEO; Bruce Baca, chief retail officer; Georgina Beatie, executive assistant; Danny Smith, VP/consumer lending; Angi Griffin, VP/human resources; Gary Angeles, former Pima FCU chief operating officer (currently president/CEO Chocolate Bayou FCU); and Tricia Norman, VP/retail support and development.

Pima FCU Takeaways for Other Credit Unions:

- 1. Be genuine.** Provide honest feedback and have frequent conversations about performance so employees understand both their strengths and opportunities for growth and are ready for the next opportunity.
- 2. Promote internally whenever possible.** Don't be afraid to promote internally, even if the learning curve is a little steeper than hiring externally. Your efforts will be rewarded with dedicated, loyal employees and higher morale.
- 3. Encourage open lines of communication throughout the organization.** Starting from the top, promote frequent and transparent communication; encourage employees to trade feedback and ideas.
- 4. Invest in your employees' development.** Show a personal interest in each employee, find out what interests them and help them get there.
- 5. Create a culture that values employees and make the tough decisions necessary to protect it.** By defining who you are as a company and then making sure your actions both promote and protect that culture, you naturally build trust, respect and dedication with your employees.



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