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MANAGING TURNOVER:

**8 Tips for Keeping Your People
and Engaging Your Best Talent**



Why Employees Leave



If you've ever wondered why employees unexpectedly leave for another job, you're not alone. It's a common problem in just about every type of business. How can you reduce employee turnover and improve employee retention? First, we'll briefly explain why retention issues happen and the surprising scope of the problem. Then you'll learn three proven strategies for successfully managing turnover.

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), about three out of five people who leave their job don't get fired or laid off—they quit. Too often, people walk away not because a great opportunity has appeared, but because they are unhappy where they are.

If they aren't consistently given the attention and resources they need to thrive, they'll struggle to be successful. Instead, they may become frustrated, give up, and leave. That failure is not what you want, and it's certainly not what they want.

Managing High Turnover Is Expensive

The costs of employee turnover are high. Some costs can be measured in dollars, such as recruiting and onboarding a replacement. Estimates of those expenses vary. One study by SHRM finds that replacing a salaried employee typically costs 60 to 90 percent of that person's annual salary. Other research suggests those numbers could be even higher.

Other cash costs of turnover may include lost clients and revenue, as well as overtime expenses for other employees who do extra work until a replacement can be found. As you can see, successfully managing turnover and improving employee retention can save you lots of money. But when you tally the expenses of turnover, it's not only about cold, hard cash. There are many other indirect costs that could be painful. Among them:

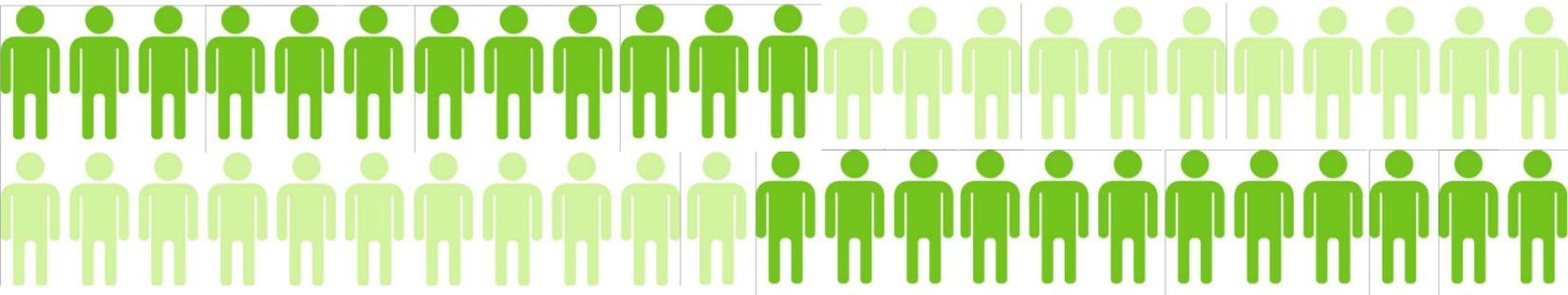
- Lower employee morale and reduced engagement
- Increased workload and decreased productivity
- The permanent loss of institutional knowledge when a key person leaves
- Increased absenteeism and burnout

That's quite a list. But now that you have a better idea of what you're up against, let's focus on solutions. Fortunately, managing turnover effectively and reducing employee retention problems can be simpler than you may think.

Effective Strategies to Reduce Employee Turnover

Great news: the same strategies that will benefit you and your business are also good for your employees. Everybody wins! A well-rounded game plan for successfully managing turnover can help everyone in your firm from new hires to seasoned pros. As engagement and job satisfaction grow, productivity and employee retention improve—and issues like absenteeism and burnout diminish.

Here are eight of the key steps to help set your company and your people up for greater success. If you're already doing some of them, that's terrific—but don't dismiss them. Think carefully about whether they are working as well as you'd like and what you can do to improve them.



1. Find the Right Fit

If your company makes widgets, don't rush to hire the first applicant who walks in the door with widget-making experience. Having the needed job skills is essential, of course—but it's only part of what makes someone a good fit for your firm.

Finding the right fit means matching a candidate's values, desires, and goals with your company's goals, needs, and culture. Mutual success and satisfaction naturally follow when an individual aligns with their position and the company's overall needs. Chances are such people will be more engaged, more productive, and less likely to look for another job.

It may take a little longer to find a candidate who's a good fit, but it's one of the most important things you can do for both their long-term satisfaction and your own. As best-selling business author [Jim Collins](#) says, "You absolutely must have the discipline not to hire until you find the right people."

Another point that is often overlooked: don't forget how important fit is for employees who have been with you for years. Just as your company continues to evolve, your people do too. Sometimes a position that used to be a great fit for an employee no longer is. Watch for this situation and do something about it before you lose a valued worker.

2. Practice Smart Onboarding

Getting your new employees off to a good start helps them go the distance. According to [The Wynhurst Group](#), “new employees who went through a structured onboarding program were 58 percent more likely to be with the organization after three years.”

[Thoughtfully planned onboarding](#) helps a new person have a great experience with your company from day one. But helping them succeed requires more than just making a good first impression. It calls for a personalized onboarding process that is tailored to the individual’s needs, role, and performance goals. In a nutshell, during their first weeks and months in your company you help them grow and show them how.

In their [book](#), onboarding experts George Bradt and Mary Vonnegut identify three essential steps for doing this:

- Accommodate. Give new employees everything they need to do their job well.
- Assimilate. Make sure new hires are told clearly and completely what their responsibilities are. Also, help them learn about your culture and how to fit in.
- Accelerate. New employees need help getting up to speed. Put yourself in their shoes and think about what you would need to improve the quantity and quality of your work.

3. Use Employee Recognition Strategies

It's human nature: we like to do things that we are rewarded for. And who doesn't enjoy being appreciated? Rewards and recognition show your people exactly what your company values about their behavior and help guide them to success—fostering job satisfaction and loyalty. Here are pointers for [recognizing and rewarding your people](#) in meaningful ways:

- Keep your eyes open. Constantly look for people who do a great job as well as those who go above and beyond when an exceptional challenge appears.
- Be consistent and frequent. Regularly rewarding and recognizing employee achievements throughout the organization can ignite engagement, motivation, satisfaction, and performance.
- Be sincere. Don't diminish the value of employee recognition by giving praise and rewards that aren't fully deserved. Employees will realize that this kind of recognition doesn't mean much.
- Think outside the cash box. Simply being recognized and praised can boost an employee's self-esteem, especially when it happens in front of their colleagues. Use your imagination, and use more than one reward whenever you can.



Happy, appreciated employees are more likely to stay with you for the long haul. That's why smart recognition strategies should be a high priority in your overall strategies to reduce turnover.

4. Provide Clear Expectations, Direction, and Purpose

Two of the [top 5 reasons employees leave](#) are lack of job satisfaction and misalignment with career goals. When employees feel like their jobs are uninteresting, unimportant, or misaligned with their future goals, they're more likely to leave your organization. People are happiest when they are delivering on the expectations set for them. When people don't know what expectations are, they feel adrift, spending their work hours checking boxes without knowing why.

Setting clear expectations, direction, and purpose starts with a candidate's first interview, and carries out through the entire employee journey. Team managers should be conducting quarterly career conversations with their direct reports to discuss:

- Performance expectations
- Career goals and progress
- Impact on team and organizational success
- Future career aspirations
- Key milestones in career growth

Connect your employees' tasks with their career goals and the company's overall direction and purpose, and they will be less likely to leave.

5. Support Career Development

Employees stay in jobs where they know their superiors are looking out for them – and this includes looking out for whatever job comes next. By supporting career development – whether it be paying for skills classes, sponsoring conferences, or encouraging employees to take on new responsibilities – you are communicating that you care about the growth and future well-being of your employees.

[According to research by Quantum Workplace](#), these are the top 5 learning and development opportunities employees use most:

1. Online training sessions/webinars
2. Coaching from manager
3. Classroom-style learning
4. Coaching from peers
5. Cross-training



Employees are more likely to be engaged when they receive frequent career coaching from their manager.

6. Create a Culture of Feedback

Feedback is essential to a healthy work experience; think of how your front hedge would look if you never pruned it. In the same way, it is important to coach your employees early and often (though we recommend a less violent method than pruning shears).

When employees receive feedback, they feel cared for and cared about -- two things that they're not guaranteed to find at another company. Additionally, frequent and early feedback may prevent conflicts that might otherwise end in voluntary (or involuntary) turnover.

However, how a company incorporates feedback into culture could greatly impact employee engagement and retention. [Research](#) shows that feedback initiatives, such as one-on-one meetings, formal recognition programs, and annual employee surveys, are far more common at highly-engaged companies. And if they're done well, these practices can help to decrease organization-wide turnover.

Here are [10 tips for creating a strong feedback culture](#) within your organization.

An illustration on the left side of the page shows two stylized human figures from the chest up, facing each other as if in conversation. The figure on the left has dark hair and is wearing a teal shirt. The figure on the right has dark hair and is wearing a light blue shirt. Large, abstract teal shapes, resembling speech bubbles or overlapping circles, are positioned behind them against a light blue background.

7. Maintain Strong Team Relationships

Poor team dynamics is one of the [top 5 reasons employees leave](#) their organization. Furthermore, when an employee develops a close relationship at work, [their satisfaction increases nearly 50%](#).

So what can you do to decrease turnover while increasing employee satisfaction? Team building! But old and tired team building activities won't do the trick. Make sure your team building is bonding with a purpose. Need some fresh ideas? [We've got 50 team buildings ideas in this ebook!](#) Here are 4 main objectives you can accomplish with team building:

- **Goal Alignment:** aligning team members around a common purpose and working cooperatively to set and make progress toward goals
- **Relationship Building:** creating effective and trusting relationships and improving interpersonal skills
- **Problem Solving:** working collaboratively to discover solutions to problems
- **Member Appreciation:** understanding, valuing, and respecting individual strengths and talents

8. Collect Turnover Feedback

Exit interviews and surveys have a bad reputation, but done right, they can provide some of the most insightful information you'll receive -- and help you prevent bad turnover in the future. Here are three common misconceptions to collecting exit data, and why they're wrong.

Exiting employees aren't honest.

Your exiting employee might under-represent the reason for leaving, but chances are you'll still get a glimpse of the truth. To get a more complete picture, consider a social exit survey, which collects feedback from the exiter's peers, reports, and managers.

It's too little too late. They're already gone.

Exit interviews or surveys aren't meant to convince an employee to stay, they're meant to collect candid feedback so you can prevent other top performers from leaving. A lot of opinions come to the surface when you're asked or choose to leave an organization, and those are vital to ensuring current employees are taken care of well.

Leaders won't do anything with the information.

The most common reason nothing is done with exit interview and survey information? Leadership has no way to quantify the information and track trends or patterns. Invest the time to code and analyze the data yourself, or invest in a [survey software and analytics](#) that can do this for you.

Conclusion

Taken together, optimizing these tips leads to the final level of helping employees feel valued at your organization: ensuring that they take pride in their skills and their knowledge. When you do this, you will find that people will start to share their insights and ideas, and become loyal to your company rather than to their paychecks.

How do you instill a sense of pride in your employees? Lay out your company goals and communicate honestly with them about the challenges your business is facing. When you let employees know that the company needs them for important tasks that only they can perform successfully, they will rise to the occasion.

Often times, what the management team feels will motivate, inspire and retain their employees is very different than what employees feel will be motivating to them. Instead of assuming you know what employees care about, ask them what will motivate, retain or instill pride in them. This will give you insights into employees' non-financial intrinsic motivations, which can be far more effective levers than money.



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