

How to Retain Talent By Meeting Social and Emotional Needs



Over the life of your organization your employees will come and go for a variety of reasons, many of which you have no ability to control or impact. Employees commonly leave for personal and professional reasons that you go beyond your organizations sphere of influence. However, there are times employees leave for reasons that you do or could have influence over. If you can take some time to understand and then address these reasons you might find you are able to positively influence the employees you want to stay.

Prioritizing Employee Retention

No one needs to tell you there is a significant cost associated with employee turnover including the financial cost associated with hiring and training the person in the first place and then hiring and training a replacement in the second. Additionally there can be non-financial costs such as a loss of productivity or even moral in a team or department at the loss of a great contributor. At the end of the day most organizations want to keep their best players and losing those employees can significantly impact an organizations performance in the short and long term.

Prioritizing employee retention efforts is often well worth the investment of both money and time. Even during difficult economic times employees, often the top employees, are able to shift to new employment opportunities. The best companies cannot stop all great employees from leaving because there are many legitimate reasons some employees really should or need to move on. However, smart organizations do try to develop programs to both attract and keep great employees.

Top Reasons Good Employees Leave their jobs

- Relationships with their 'boss'
- Bored or unchallenged
- Relationships with co-workers
- Do not feel they are contributing to achieving organizations goals
- Lack of autonomy or independence
- The work is not meaningful to them
- Organizations financial stability
- The culture of the organization

We often think that money is the main reason people switch jobs. Although leaving one

job for another more lucrative job does happen it is often not the primary reason people leave. There are times your employees will just need to move on or make a change. There are many personal reasons including their health, finances and family that an employee may need to leave and while you cannot address all issues you can create an atmosphere that makes it easier for an employee to stay.

Meeting Social and Emotional Needs = Improving Retention

People are usually driven by their emotions. They make decisions and take actions that make them feel good, because they don't feel good or to avoid feeling bad. The majority of people want to be happy, healthy and financially stable and once their basic needs are met they want to feel that they matter, are valued and have the ability to make a contribution. These are the elements any employee retention program should keep in mind.

If your organization does not provide employees with the resources they need to meet their basic needs they will only stay as long as they need to and they may not perform optimally. To keep and enhance the performance of your employees you need to go beyond the basics of meeting their survival needs and focus on their meeting their social and emotional needs.

If you want to retain employee's keep these needs and wants in mind

- Employees need financial stability to stay
- Employee want to feel socially connected to your organization
- Employees need to be healthy
- Employees may need to have better quality of life including time with family and a personal life
- Employees want to enjoy their work
- Employees need to feel valued

Employees who stay are more likely to feel connected and as though they are cared about and valued them for their contributions, no matter of small. There are often simple things your organization can do on a regular basis to help employees feel valued.

5 Things Your Organization Can Do To Improve Retention.

Employee wellness programs are great, it would be a nice option if you could build an employee workout room, hire a fitness and wellness instructor, a yoga instructor, a concierge and more to help improve the health, wellness and happiness of your employees. These are just a few of the things that the large Silicon Valley employers offer to attract and retain their employees (in addition to offering them money). Most organizations cannot afford too many costly perks but there are things you can do to let employees know you value their health, wellness and happiness.

- **Encourage healthy workplaces:** Create walking groups, build standing desks, bring in a yoga instructor once a month to teach employees yoga then can practice for until the next month, bring in speakers to talk about health, nutrition offer discounts on fitness activities and memberships and more. In many instances you can hire these professionals for a fraction of the cost to deliver group sessions over the Internet with Live feedback and demos. There is some cost involved in these activities they should not break the bank.
- **Encourage and recognize contributions from all employees:** This one is obvious but sometimes it is easy to forget. Recognition can include simple thank you's and mentions on a regular basis. Let your employees in on the game plan and why they are important contributors so they can take both ownership and pride in the

work they contribute.

- ***Train managers to be better managers.*** Provide your managers with training on emotional intelligence and how to recognize when employees are not happy. Provide your managers with coaching, it can be less expensive to provide one leader with a coach that leader can consult with than to try and provide everyone with coaching.
- ***Support and encourage professional and career development:*** Facilitate professional development when possible by helping employees identify trends in the industry and locate appropriate courses. If possible provide time and/or financial incentives and reimbursement, even if only a small percentage.
- ***Share your Leadership vision and plans:*** People are more likely to stay when they have confidence that leadership is steering the ship well. Transparency of a strong leader with a vision that includes flexibility can build confidence in employees and when employees feel confident they are better able to feel healthy, well and happy.

People leave for reasons of career advancement, for better work life balance or for financial reasons some of which you may have control over and some you may not. Focussing on why people stay allows you to provide them a place they want to stay and work hard for because they feel valued and socially and emotionally connected.