Employee Retention Best Practices
TalentKeepers
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Employers today are striving to retain a greater number of valued employees. Increased performance, improved customer satisfaction, higher sales and more all result from improved retention. Keeping well-performing employees in today’s competitive market is an essential business objective. Retention must be approached with the same energy, focus and resources just like other core business strategies in your organization.

Based on our work with organizations around the world, representing every industry and size, we have compiled a number employee retention practices proven to reduce attrition. Actively engaging your leaders in the retention effort is essential. Many of these tactics involve leaders and their role in connecting with employees. Holding leaders accountable for the performance, motivation and retention of their team members is one of the key reasons you promoted them into leadership roles.

It is important to understand that, like any successful business strategy, sustained execution over time will deliver the best results. Assign an internal champion to launch, track and report progress on the recommendations you pursue.

General Retention Recommendations

1. Accountability for retention is one of the most important keys to improving retention. Leaders on all levels, including frontline supervisors, should have a retention goal (measured weekly/monthly/quarterly as appropriate) as a key performance indicator. Goals should be tied to meaningful rewards when achieved and appropriate consequences when not.

2. Ask leaders to forecast turnover for their business unit. Forecasting a retention goal brings added attention and focus on doing things that increase the probability of people staying.

3. Establish retention as a standing topic in leader meetings to review feedback, individual leader performance, and manager progress on action plans.

4. Get personal. When discussing turnover in management meetings, avoid using only statistics and percentages. Talk about specific people – why they left, what
might have saved them, is anyone else potentially at risk, did the manage see it coming?

5. Report turnover by each leader and at regular intervals, such as weekly or monthly, and review at 30, 60, 90, 180, and 360 days to examine trends.

6. Track turnover based on controllability, or managed and unmanaged. Refine your list of “leave” reasons and the primary causes of turnover by organization factors (e.g., pay, location), job factors (e.g., schedule, tasks, training), and leader factors (e.g., trust, communication, coaching). Analyze data down to the frontline leader level, program or project, shift, business unit, and entire organizational levels.

7. Implement a systematic process to improve leaders’ retention coaching skills that includes training on retention knowledge and skills related to strengthening communication.

8. Establish a “best practices” online forum or process to provide leaders with an opportunity to learn tips and tactics from each other that are having a favorable impact.

9. Evaluate your market pay rate information and determine if salary, wages and benefits are competitive.

10. Incentive compensation often is a big, under-leveraged opportunity. Be sure that every leader and employee knows how the incentive compensation plan works, and more importantly, how maximize the payout. Compensation is one of the most frequently cited reasons that cause people to leave.

11. Create real and perceived growth opportunities to keep employees longer. Evaluation your overall compensation models and banding for ways to add additional stratification, with smaller incremental changes but more frequent advancement. This can be done without increases to the compensation budget.

12. Similar to compensation banding is the opportunity for title and “level” stratification, with added levels within the employee’s role that creates additional career growth steps.

13. Explore offering training on a part-time basis during evenings and/or weekends for employees hired to work these hours.

14. Trainers play an important role in retention. Set retention goals for trainers to control certain types of turnover (e.g., job abandonment during training, exits due to trainer controlled factors).
15. Consider implementing the **Leader Engagement Index**, a short survey that measures a leader’s skill in retaining and engaging their team members and provides detailed areas of focus to guide retention tactics and action.

16. Recruiters must play a part in retention beyond selecting good candidates. Give them a retention goal that extends up to 30 days into the employee’s tenure. Require recruiters, when feasible; periodically be in contact with their new hires over the first 60 or 90 days.

17. Profile acceptable performing employees to determine demographic characteristics that can be included in recruiting efforts.

18. Consider an “Alumni” program to consider to rehiring good performers who have left the job.

19. Compile and present a monthly sourcing and attrition report that contains an applicant flow analysis showing how many candidates were sourced and the number and percentage that dropped out of the hiring process for skill, schedule, pay, call center environment, etc. We will continue to work with you on this analysis.

20. Introduce managers to trainees as early in the employment process as possible, during training or onboarding, to begin the relationship-building process.

21. Schedule stability is an important variable in call center scheduling. Consider a limit to the number of shift-bids to as few as possible throughout the year. Collaborate with workforce planning to ensure schedules align as much as possible with employee needs.

22. If you are not using this, consider a “cascading” shift bid process where Team Leads bid first which allows employees to follow preferred leaders to new shifts.

**Staffing Services and Temporary/Contract Employees**

The following best practices apply when temporary or contract employees prior to the point of conversion to regular status employees.

1. Consider adding a retention clause in your contract with staffing agencies. Include penalties for high turnover.

2. Closely monitor conversion to ensure that all qualified temporary employees convert to regular status within the stated conversion period. Separate employees not qualifying for conversion due to performance.
3. Clearly communicate the opportunity for each hire to become a regular status employee and the steps required to do so. Make certain that applicants understand that conversion is based on acceptable job performance and when conversion will take place.

4. Set clear expectations for the number of employees who will be offered regular status positions and the number of employees who will always be contingent.

5. Provide on-the-job performance evaluation metrics (e.g. Scorecard data) for all temporary employees on at least a monthly basis.

**Part-Time Employees**

Part-Time employees generally need more schedule flexibility than full-time employees and their schedule availability will change from time to time as their other obligations change.

1. Provide as much schedule flexibility as possible. Ideally, provide part-time employees with the ability to set and modify their schedules as their needs change. If schedule flexibility is challenging, consider providing it first to employees who achieve certain performance levels.

2. Provide realistic job expectations with regards to duties and schedules during the recruiting and selection process.

3. Hold recruiters accountable for early-tenure-attribution of part-time employees who resign within the first 30 days of employment due to missed expectations on schedule and/or duties.

4. Explore offering training on a part-time basis during evenings and/or weekends for employees hired to work these hours.

5. Trainers play an important role in retention. Set retention goals for trainers to control certain types of turnover (e.g., job abandonment during training, exits due to trainer controlled factors).

6. Explore if “job sharing” (two part-time employees share the same full-time job) would be an effective way to provide more work-life balance to part-time employees.

7. Provide retention bonuses for part-time employees who achieve tenure milestones. The milestones should be set at tenure lengths which typically have higher attrition rates. The bonuses can be one-time payments or slight increases in hourly wages. Increases to hourly wages are generally more effective.
8. Conduct exit interviews with well-performing employees and ask them if they would consider rejoining now or in the future if the reason they are leaving was able to be addressed. Maintain a database of these employees and contact them as their reasons for leaving are able to be resolved.

9. Consider offering benefits to part-time employees.

10. For students:

   a. Be aware of changes to their schedule needs at the beginning on new semesters. Proactively discuss these needs and work collaboratively to provide a schedule which matches their new availability.

   b. Be aware of when they are approaching graduation and proactively discuss full-time opportunities for which they could apply within the organization even if it is outside of their current role/function/department.

   c. Consider offering tuition reimbursement to part-time employees who achieve certain tenure milestones.