

HR Practices for Employees Retention and Minimizing Turnover



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Abstract

The dilemma facing organizations is whether to invest more time and money fine-tuning their recruitment strategy or to pay extra attention to retaining the talent they already have. Recruiting new staff is expensive, stressful and time-consuming.

Think retention as re-recruiting your workforce. Recognize that what attracts a candidate to a particular job is often different from what keeps that person there. While salary certainly is a key consideration for potential employees, pay alone won't keep them in a job (Angott, 2007). Advantageous aspects other than strictly compensation attract good employees; something more than a number retains them. Today employees are looking for a career package, including a comfortable company culture, career path, diversity of responsibilities, and a work/life balance (Griffiths, 2006).

Keywords: Employee Retention, Workforce, Orientation Program.

Introduction

Employee retention refers to the various policies and practices which let the employees stick to an organization for a longer period of time. Every organization invests time and money to groom a new joinee, make him a corporate ready material and bring him at par with the existing employees. The organization is completely at loss when the employees leave their job once they are fully trained thus making it importance for organization to retain their employee.

Employee retention is very important mainly because of two reasons:

1. Turnover is costly
2. Best Talent drives Companies performance.

After studying several retention surveys it is found that there are some proven practices of HR which are very helpful and effective.

Such Six key practices that organizations can implement with technology support to retain their top talent:

1. Recruit the right people in the first place.
2. Improve the line manager's ability to manage.
3. Give employee's constant feedback about clear, meaningful goals.
4. Empower employees to manage their own careers.
5. Proactively drive talent mobility.
6. Continuously measure and improve retention strategies.

It is also found that 90 percent of employees make their decision to stay at a company within the first six months. To Check this we should make sure:

1. Ensure an accurate match between role and candidate
2. Automated skills-based matching
3. Speed up the recruitment process to secure top candidates
4. Automate workflow of recruitment process
5. Proactively build talent pools of suitable candidates
6. Build and mine talent pool database
7. Ensure new hires are productive as soon as possible.
8. Coordinate all onboarding activities Improve Line Management Capability

Measures to Prevent Turnover

Start with solid on boarding and orientation program:

1. The highest level of turnover occurs during the first 90 days of the job.
2. The purpose of on boarding is to assimilate the new person into your organization, so make the first few days a positive, memorable experience.

3. Develop a good relationship with your employees. A recent study conducted by Indiana University found that a bad boss is the main reason people quit job.
4. A good manager, must be a good communicator, clearly communicating expectations and providing encouragement for a job well done. Good bosses acknowledge the work of others and genuinely care about their employees.
5. Build a flexible workplace: Workplace flexibility is no longer a perk, it's a business imperative, according to the White House

Retention Proven Practices**Training**

Training of employees reinforces their sense of value (Wingfield, 2009). Through training, employers help employees achieve goals and ensure they have a solid understanding of their job requirements (Maul, 2008).

Mentoring

A mentoring program integrated with a goal-oriented feedback system provides a structured mechanism for developing strong relationships within an organization and is a solid foundation for employee retention and growth (Wingfield). With a mentoring program, an organization pairs someone more experienced in a discipline with someone less experienced in a similar area, with the goal to develop specific competencies, provide performance feedback, and design an individualized career development plan (Goldenson, 2007).

Instill a Positive Culture

A company should establish a series of values as the basis for culture such as honesty, excellence, attitude, respect, and teamwork (IOMA, 2008). A company that creates the right culture will have an advantage when it comes to attracting and keeping good employees (Main).

Use Communication to Build Credibility

No matter what the size of the organization, communication is crucial to building and maintaining credibility. Many employers get communication to "flow up" through a staff advisory council (or similar group) which solicits and/or receives employees' opinions and suggestions and passes them on to upper management (IOMA). It's also important for employees to know that the employer is really listening and responds to (or otherwise acknowledges) employee input.

Show Appreciation via Compensation and Benefits

Offering things like competitive salaries, profit sharing, bonus programs, pension and health plans, paid time off, and tuition reimbursement sends a powerful message to employees about their importance at the organization. The rewards given to employees must be meaningful in order to impact their perception of the organization and therefore have a marked influence on its retention efforts. Moreover, if an organization promises a reward, it should keep that promise (Gberevbie, 2008).

Encourage Referrals and Recruit From Within

Having current employees offer referrals could help minimize confusion of job expectations.

Current employees can realistically describe a position and the environment to the individual he/she is referring. Another way an employer can lessen the impact of turnover is to hire from within, since current employees have already discovered that they are a good fit in the organization (Branham, 2005).

Coaching/Feedback

It's important for companies to give feedback and coaching to employees so that their efforts stay aligned with the goals of the company and meet expectations. During an employee's first few weeks on the job, an employer should provide intensive feedback. Employers should also provide formal and informal feedback to employees throughout the year (Branham).

Provide Growth Opportunities

An organization should provide workshops, software, or other tools to help employees increase their understanding of themselves and what they want from their careers and enhance their goal-setting efforts (Branham). It's important to provide employees with adequate job challenges that will expand their knowledge in their field (Levoy, 2007). According to Right Management, employees are more likely to stay engaged in their jobs and committed to an organization that makes investments in them and their career development.

Make Employees Feel Valued

Employees will go the extra mile if they feel responsible for the results of their work, have a sense of worth in their jobs, believe their jobs make good use of their skills, and receive recognition for their contributions (Levoy).

Employees should be rewarded at a high level to motivate even higher performance. The use of cash payouts could be used for on-the-spot recognition. These rewards have terrific motivational power, especially when given as soon as possible after the achievement. It's important for employers to say "thank you" to employees for their efforts and find different ways to recognize them. Even something as simple as a free lunch can go a long way towards making employees feel valued.

Listen to employees and ask for their input as to what rewards might work best at your organization. Conduct meetings and surveys to enable employees to share their input (Branham). Most team members will work harder to carry out a decision that they've helped to influence.

Lower Stress from Overworking and Create Work/Life Balance

It's important to match work/life benefits to the needs of employees. This could be in the form of offering nontraditional work schedules (such as a compressed work week, telecommuting, and flextime) or extra holidays. When work-life balance is structured properly, both the employee and employer come out ahead. For example, the employer will experience more productivity in the workplace because employees will be less stressed, healthier, and thus, more productive (Wingfield). Encouraging employees to set work/life goals, such as spending more time with their children, communicates that you really do

want them to have a life outside of work and achieve a healthy work/life balance.

Foster Trust and Confidence in Senior Leaders

Develop strong relationships with employees from the start to build trust (Stolz, 2008). Employees have to believe that upper management is competent and that the organization will be successful. An employer has to be able to inspire this confidence and make decisions that reinforce it. An employer cannot say one thing and do another. For example, an employer shouldn't talk about quality and then push employees to do more work in less time. In addition, employers need to engage and inspire employees by enacting policies that show they trust them, such as getting rid of authoritarian style of management (Branham).

Contemporary Tools for Retention

Offer Fair and Competitive Salaries

Fair compensation alone does not guarantee employee loyalty, but offering below-market wages makes it much more likely that employees will look for work elsewhere. In fact, research shows that if incomes lag behind comparable jobs at a company across town by more than 10 percent, workers are likely to bolt. To retain workers, conduct regular reviews of the salaries you offer for all job titles — entry-level, experienced staff and supervisory-level. Compare your department's salaries with statistically reliable averages. If there are significant discrepancies, you probably should consider making adjustments to ensure that you are in line with the marketplace.

Remember that benefits are important too

Although benefits are not a key reason why employees stick with a company, the benefits you offer can't be markedly worse than those offered by your competitors

Train your front-line supervisors, managers and administrators

It can't be said often enough: People stay or leave because of their bosses, not their companies. A good employee/manager relationship is critical to employee satisfaction and retention. Make sure your managers aren't driving technologists away. Give them the training they need to develop good supervisory and people-management skills.

Clearly define roles and responsibilities

Develop a formal job description for each title or position in your department. Make sure your employees know what is expected of them every day, what types of decisions they are allowed to make on their own, and to whom they are supposed to report.

Provide adequate advancement opportunities

To foster employee loyalty, implement a career ladder and make sure employees know what they must do to earn a promotion. Conduct regular performance reviews to identify employees' strengths and weaknesses, and help them improve in areas that will lead to job advancement. A clear professional development plan gives employees an incentive to stick around.

Offer retention bonuses instead of sign-on bonuses

Worker longevity typically is rewarded with an annual raise and additional vacation time after three, five or 10 years. But why not offer other seniority-based rewards such as a paid membership in the employee's professional association after one year, a paid membership to a local gym after two years, and full reimbursement for the cost of the employee's uniforms after three years? Retention packages also could be designed to raise the salaries of technologists who become credentialed in additional specialty areas, obtain additional education or take on more responsibility. Sign-on bonuses encourage technologists to skip from job to job, while retention packages offer incentives for staying.

Make someone accountable for retention

Measure your turnover rate and hold someone (maybe you!) responsible for reducing it. In too many workplaces, no one is held accountable when employees leave, so nothing is done to encourage retention.

Conduct employee satisfaction surveys

You won't know what's wrong ... or what's right ... unless you ask. To check the pulse of your workplace, conduct anonymous employee satisfaction surveys on a regular basis. One idea: Ask employees what they want more of and what they want less of.

Foster an environment of teamwork

It takes effort to build an effective team, but the result is greater productivity, better use of resources, improved customer service and increased morale. Here are a few ideas to foster a team environment in your department:

1. Make sure everyone understands the department's purpose, mission or goal.
2. Encourage discussion, participation and the sharing of ideas.
3. Rotate leadership responsibilities depending on your employees' abilities and the needs of the team.
4. Involve employees in decisions; ask them to help make decisions through consensus and collaboration.
5. Encourage team members to show appreciation to their colleagues for superior performance or achievement.

Reduce the paperwork burden

If your technologists spend nearly as much time filling out paperwork, it's time for a change. Paperwork pressures can add to the stress and burnout that employees feel. Eliminate unnecessary paperwork; convert more paperwork to an electronic format; and hire non-tech administrative staff to take over as much of the paperwork burden as is allowed under legal or regulatory restrictions.

Make room for fun

Celebrate successes and recognize when milestones are reached. Potluck lunches, birthday parties, employee picnics and creative contests will help remind people why your company is a great place to work.

Write a mission statement for your department

Everyone wants to feel that they are working toward a meaningful, worthwhile goal. Work with your staff to develop a departmental mission statement,

and then publicly post it for everyone to see. Make sure employees understand how their contribution is important.

Provide a variety of assignments

Identify your employees' talents and then encourage them to stretch their abilities into new areas. Do you have a great "teacher" on staff? Encourage him/ her to lead an in-service or present a poster session on an interesting case. Have someone who likes planning and coordinating events? Ask him to organize a departmental open house. Know a good critical-thinker? Ask him/ her to work with a vendor to customize applications training on a new piece of equipment. A variety of challenging assignments helps keep the workplace stimulating.

Communicate openly

Employees are more loyal to a company when they believe managers keep them informed about key issues. Is a corporate merger in the works? Is a major expansion on the horizon? Your employees would rather hear it from you than from the evening newscast. It is nearly impossible for a manager to "over-communicate."

Encourage learning

Create opportunities for your technologists to grow and learn. Reimburse them for CE courses, seminars and professional meetings; discuss recent journal articles with them; ask them to research a new scheduling method for the department. Encourage every employee to learn at least one new thing every week, and you'll create a work force that is excited, motivated and committed.

Be flexible

Today's employees have many commitments outside their job, often including responsibility for children, aging parents, chronic health conditions and other issues. They will be loyal to workplaces that make their lives more convenient by offering on-site childcare centers, on-site hair styling and dry cleaning, flexible work hours, part-time positions, job-sharing or similar practices. For example, employees of school-age children might appreciate the option to work nine months a year and have the summers off to be with their children.

Develop an effective orientation program

Implement a formal orientation program that's at least three weeks long and includes a thorough overview of every area of your department and an introduction to other departments. Assign a senior staff member to act as a mentor to the new employee throughout the orientation period. Develop a checklist of topics that need to be covered and check in with the new employee at the end of the orientation period to ensure that all topics were adequately addressed.

Give people the best equipment and supplies possible

No one wants to work with equipment that's old or constantly breaking down. Ensure that your equipment is properly maintained, and regularly upgrade machinery, computers and software. In addition, provide employees with the highest quality supplies you can afford. Cheap, leaky pens may seem like a small thing, but they can add to employees' overall stress level.

Conclusion

Retention involves five major things

After having read all the retention tools/techniques we can conclude that almost all the retention strategies revolves around these five parameters they are:

Compensation

Compensation constitutes the largest part of the retention process. The employees always have high expectations regarding their compensations.

Environment

Environment is another factor which contributes to employee retention. A motivated employee wants to contribute to work areas outside of his specific job description.

Growth

Growth is an integral part of every individual's career. If an employee can not foresee his path of career development in his current organization, there are chances that he will leave the organization as soon as he gets an opportunity.

Relationships

Sometimes the relationships with the management and the peers becomes the reasons for an employee to leave the organization. The management is often not able to provide an employee a supportive work culture and environment in terms of personal or professional relationships. A supportive work culture helps grow employee professionally and boosts employee satisfaction. There are times when an employee starts feeling bitterness towards the management or peers, which leads to less satisfaction and eventually attrition.

Support

Employee today are asking for a work place that helps them balance the demands of their work and family lives, rather than forcing them to choose one over the other.

Schemes Like

1. Special schemes for their children
2. Scholarships
3. Medical benefits
4. Trainings etc.

Figure: Five Major Aspects of Retention



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