

10 tips to ensure retention

Our 10 tips will help to ensure your staff don't head for the door.

1. Create a retention strategy

Work to create a viable retention strategy for your business that identifies how much turnover your business ideally needs in relation to its future outcomes. How much external recruitment do you want to do across what levels of the business? If retention is a clear issue for your organization, analyse exit interview data to understand who is leaving and why, and if possible carry out a validation study to identify what actions you can take to address this.

2. Get the right people in the right roles

In selection, pay attention to information on strengths to identify an individual's areas of best fit. Look at the specific behaviors to see where people may be best placed within the business. Re-assess existing employees to ensure you are utilizing the skills people are best at.

3. Set clear expectations

Make sure that both line managers and new recruits are clear on expectations. Recruit candidates who can do the job and, importantly, want to do the job. Help line managers to communicate clearly on requirements to ensure realistic and well-managed career expectations.

4. Promote early engagement

Aim to make new starters feel valued. Setting up new starter communities through Facebook or other social networking sites can be a creative way of kick-starting organizational citizenship and building early engagement levels. Use buddying and/or mentoring and ensure that new recruits have support outside their immediate line structure. Don't be too slow to look at development planning and mapping progress for individuals.

5. Identify potential early

Look for ways to ensure that those with the most potential are recognized and nurtured from early on. Make sure that line managers are skilled at communicating and encourage honest conversations around potential. Take time to oversee and manage how these conversations happen. And don't forget to nurture and reward your consistent deliverers who may not be high potential.

6. Look beyond the length of a program

Rather than a fixed two-year graduate or management

trainee program, try something more flexible that can help project your people forward into differing longer-term career paths. Consider introducing 1+2+2 year development pathways. Saville Consulting research has found that people develop most in the first 10 years of their career - this is when the approach you take to development can have the biggest impact.

7. Provide plenty of opportunity for development

Identify areas where skills are needed and balance this with development that hones in on the skills required for future business growth and the personal growth of individuals. Allowing movement and rotation for individuals within the organization can help retain those that may be looking to transfer their skills to a different business area but do not yet seek promotion. Getting a hold on any overplayed strengths could prevent early derailment.

8. Give regular feedback

The need for feedback is particularly pertinent amongst 'Generation Y' and younger demographics where it is a key motivator. Feedback also allows the organization the opportunity to understand what the individual is seeking. Build in regular formal feedback programs such as 360 performance review cycles and ensure that those presenting feedback are upskilled to do so. Train your managers to give feedback and regularly assess them on it.

9. Build good middle management and coaching skills

Look for individuals with clear management skills rather than promoting workers that have been in the job role the longest. This may mean recruiting someone with the right management skills into the business in order to retain lower-level staff that need to be well managed. This may also mean extending an alternative career path which rewards professionalism and specialism but does not carry line management responsibility.

10. Understand motives

Look at individual's talents and motives to understand not only what they are good at but the areas of work they enjoy. Have honest conversations across the business to find out what will drive performance in your organization. Once the information has been gained be sure to recognize what is important and work to create the right opportunities and rewards.