



To Retain Talent, Give Employees a Clear Path for Growth and Development

Description

How effective are you at attracting and recruiting talent? How effective are you at retaining talent? The two go hand in hand. If you're effective in retention, it makes for much better attraction of talent. It means an organization has fewer spots to fill and can be more selective. Plus, new hires enter a retained work team, which makes for better development.

Great retention begins with great recruitment and selection. Once a person starts in their role, of course, it is all about retention.

I recently [interviewed](#) Adrian Gostick, a best-selling author who focuses on culture and employee engagement. He also does a great deal of research. The topic we discussed was how to stop the "Great Resignation."

One thing we talked about was that when an employee leaves, the reason they often give is they got more money or a great opportunity. Yet research shows that the primary reason a person leaves involves their relationship with their direct supervisor. People don't leave a job. They leave their boss. This means that supervisors and managers are in a unique position to impact your retention rate.

One of the greatest "retention tools" a supervisor has is the ability to help develop talent. They are closest to employees and therefore know their potential. And by emphasizing development, supervisors can go a long way toward improving their relationships with employees. (We appreciate those who sincerely want to help us become the best we can be!)

Here are some tips for moving toward a development mindset:

1. Create more opportunity for those who work for you to grow. Gostick's research showed that people want more frequent feedback on advancing their career. They want to learn ways to be better in their role and develop new skills. He used the analogy of going up a climbing wall. Think of each step as a skill needed. Each skill builds on another. This is much like the military, which has levels through which individuals can advance. You might create something similar for each position. Pay bumps could take place as the person shows increased skills.

Take a look at your employee engagement results. Providing development opportunities is an area many of us can improve on. Few people quit a job if the pay is fair and if they have opportunities for growth and one-on-one coaching by a caring leader.

2. Coach employees on how to get ahead. Coaching is a major part of being a leader. This does not mean coaching employees only on their current performance. It means discussing with them additional skills they may want to attain. While most of an employee's time is based on performing in their current role, make sure some time is set aside for them to enhance or learn new skills.

For example, suppose a person working in minor league baseball operations shares that they want to learn Spanish. (In this field, it's a very important skill.) Help arrange that opportunity. A person this year shared that they wanted to learn how to make better presentations. We provided them with a coach to help with that. As a leader, are you meeting with your staff and discussing how learning is a key value inside your organization? This is vital for all; however, it's especially important for interns and people in training roles.

3. Help employees assess their motivators. A Gallup poll of millennials and Gen Z found that 87 percent "highly value" growth and development opportunities. Sadly, just 29 percent felt that they had learned something new on the job in the past month. Discuss with each person what motivates them in their job. Encourage them to pursue development in these areas.

At Studer Family of Companies (SFOC), we open up the Professional Development Institute (PDI) to so many people to learn a variety of skills. All parts of the PDI are recorded for supervisors to use in their coaching, as are these weekly columns and so forth.

4. Individualize development to the person. We created a foundational skill checklist to help facilitate those development conversations. Take time to create the list of skills employees need for their current role, as well as the skills that will help them in future roles. I love how in minor league baseball, development is based on the person. Ask the question: "What do you want to be better at?"

We have the opportunity and the responsibility to maximize our own potential *and* the potential of those we lead. This is one of the most rewarding parts of being a leader. It feels good to watch people become all they can be. And it creates a culture that attracts good people and makes them want to stay.

Date Created

October 4, 2021

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