

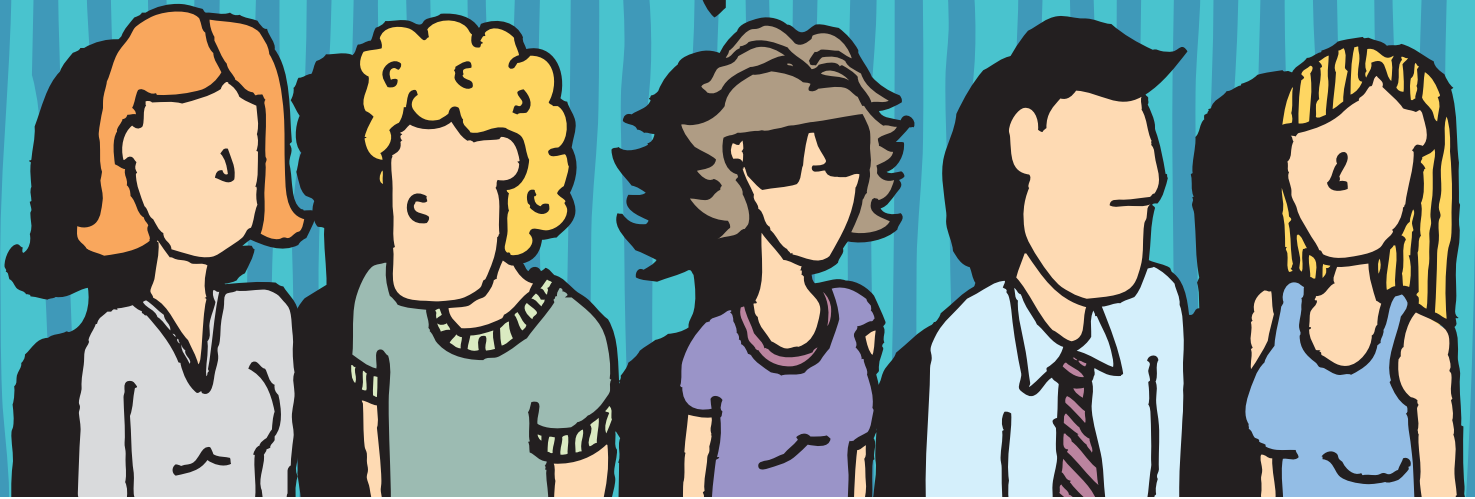
*Why doesn't upper management listen to any of my ideas?*

*No one has ever told me about my earning potential...*

*It's always noisy in my area. How am I supposed to get anything done?*

*I showed up for my meeting with Kim but she never came...*

*Have you had a performance review yet? I have no idea how I am doing.*



**How do I retain my Top Performers?**

# Retain your Top Performers

Key employee retention is critical to the long term health and success of your business. Managers readily agree that retaining your best employees ensures customer satisfaction, product sales, satisfied coworkers and reporting staff, effective succession planning and organizational knowledge and learning. If managers can cite these facts so well, why do they behave in ways that so frequently encourage great employees to quit their jobs?

Employee retention matters. Organizational issues such as training time and costs, lost knowledge, mourning, insecure coworkers and a costly candidate search aside, failing to retain a key employee is costly. Various estimates suggest that losing a middle manager costs an organization up to 100 percent of their salary. The loss of a senior executive is even more costly.

Employee retention is critically important for societal reasons as well. Over the next few years while Baby Boomers retire, the upcoming Generation X population numbers 44 million compared to 76 million Baby Boomers available for work. Simply stated, there are a lot fewer people available to work.

One of the primary measures of the health of your organization is employee retention. If you are losing critical staff members, you can safely bet that other people in their departments are looking as well. Exit interviews with departing employees provide valuable information you can use to retain remaining staff. Pay attention to what they say. You'll never have a more significant source of data about the health of your organization.

Here are 4 tips to help you in your employee retention efforts:

- 1. A satisfied employee knows clearly what is expected from him or her every day at work.** Changing expectations keeps employees on edge and creates unhealthy stress. They rob the employee of internal security and make the employee feel unsuccessful. Provide employees the specific framework within which they clearly know what is expected from them.
- 2. The quality of supervision an employee receives is critical to employee retention.** People leave managers and supervisors far more often than they leave companies or jobs. It is not enough that the supervisor is well liked or a nice person; starting with clear expectations of the employee, the supervisor has a critical role to play in retention. Anything a supervisor does to make an employee feel unvalued will contribute to turnover.  
  
Many employee complaints center on these areas:
  - Lack of clarity about expectations
  - Lack of clarity about earning potential
  - Lack of feedback about performance
  - Failure to hold scheduled meetings
  - Failure to provide an environment in which the employee believes they can succeed
- 3. The ability of the employee to speak his or her mind freely within the organization is another key factor in employee retention.** Does your organization solicit ideas and provide an environment in which employees are comfortable giving feedback? If so, your employees will offer ideas, give constructive criticism and commit to continuous improvement. If not, employees will bite their tongues or find themselves constantly 'in trouble', until they leave.
- 4. Talent and skills utilization is another factor key employees seek in the workplace.** A motivated employee wants to contribute to work areas outside of his or her specific job description. How many people could contribute far more than they currently do? You just need to know their skills, talent and experience, and take time to utilize them.



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