

Top 10 Reasons Why Employees Quit Their Job

A Checklist for Talent Retention

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Employees quit their job for many reasons. They follow spouses across the country, stay home with children, and go back to school. Those reasons are tough to address by an employer because they involve life events in the employee's world outside of work.

But, the majority of reasons why employees quit their job are under the control of the employer. In fact, any element of your current workplace, your culture and environment, the employee's perception of his job and opportunities are all factors that the employer affects.

The best way to retain employees is to stay in touch with what they're thinking. Are they happy with their work? Are their needs for challenge, belonging, development, and meaningful work met? Do they have the communication, problem solving, feedback, and recognition that they need from their boss?

If you stay in touch with your employees, you can head off potential retention issues. But, you must think about employee retention every day. Are the systems, processes, and requirements in your company supportive of employees?

Do they support the most important needs of your employees for meaningful work, market compensation and benefits, and the ability to have an effect on their work and workplace? Most importantly, do they make employees want to stay?

Ask them. Hold stay interviews to determine why employees stay with your organization. Then, pay attention to and enhance the factors they identify that keep them coming back every day. Employees job search for a reason. Find out what it is before the employee announces her departure.

Sure, a great opportunity drops into an employee's lap occasionally. But, this is not the norm. Provide that great opportunity in your company – and know what that great opportunity is – to retain your best employees.

Here are ten critical reasons why employees quit their job. You can manage them.

- **1. Relationship with boss**

Employees don't need to be friends with their boss but they need to have a relationship. The boss is too much of an integral part of their daily lives at work for an uncomfortable relationship. The boss provides direction and feedback, spends time in one-to-one meetings,

and connects the employee to the larger organization. To have a toxic relationship with the person an employee reports to undermines the employee's engagement, confidence and commitment. A bad boss is also the number one reason why employees quit their job. Here's how to get along with your boss.

- **2. Bored and unchallenged by the work itself**

No one wants to be bored and unchallenged by their work. Really. If you have an employee who acts as if they are, you need to help her find her passion. Employees want to enjoy their job. They spend more than a third of their days working, getting ready for work, and transporting themselves to work. Work closely with employees who report to you to ensure that each employee is engaged, excited, and challenged to contribute, create, and perform. Otherwise, you will lose them to an employer who will.

- **3. Relationships with co-workers**

When an employee leaves my company, every email that is sent to the whole company, to say good-bye, includes a comment about passionate coworkers who the employee cares about and will miss. Second only to an employee's manager, the coworkers with whom he sits, interacts, and serves with on teams, are critical components of an employee's work environment. Research from the Gallup organization indicates that one of the 12 factors that illuminate whether an employee is happy on their job is having a best friend at work. Relationships with coworkers retain employees. Notice and intervene if problems exist.

- **4. Opportunities to use skills and abilities**

When employees use their significant skills and abilities on the job, they feel a sense pride, accomplishment, and self-confidence. They are participating in activities that they are good at and that stretch their skills and abilities even further. Employees want to develop and grow their skills. If they're not able to do this in your jobs, they'll find one where they can. This includes opportunity. If an employee can't see a path to continued growth in their current organization, they are likely to look elsewhere for a career development or promotion opportunity. Make sure that you're talking with them and that you know their hopes and dreams.

- **5. Contribution of work to the organization's business goals**

Managers need to sit with each reporting employee and discuss the relevance of the

employee's job and key contributions and deliverables to the overall strategy and business plan of the organization. Employees need to feel connected and that they are part of an effort that is larger than just their job. Too many managers assume that the employee will receive the communication from executive staff and make this leap. They don't. They need your help to understand and connect their job to the bigger picture. If they're not part of it, you'll lose them.

- **6. Autonomy and independence**

Organizations talk about empowerment, autonomy, and independence, but they are not something that you can **do** to people or give them. They are traits and characteristics that an employee needs to pursue and embrace. You are responsible for the work environment that enables them to do this. They are responsible for doing it. A colleague presented a session about the Oz Principles at a recent company event. He pointed out that by creating a culture of accountability, you create empowerment as employees own and execute their responsibilities. Without this, your best employees will leave.

- **7. Meaningfulness of job**

Ah, yes, meaningful work. We all want to do something that makes a difference, that isn't busy work, or transactional work, and that contributes to something bigger than ourselves. Ambitious and doable. But, managers must help employees see where their work contributes to the execution of deliverables that make a difference in the world. With some products and services - cancer research, feeding the hungry, animal rescue, diagnosing and curing illnesses, producing milk or crops - meaningful is obvious, but everyone's work needs the same meaningfulness. Help employees connect to why their work has meaning or they will find an employer who will.

- **8. Organization's financial stability**

Financial instability: a lack of sales, layoffs or reduced work hours, salary freezes, successful competitors highlighted in the news, bad press, employee turnover, mergers and acquiring companies, all lead to an employee's feeling of instability and a lack of trust. Employees who are worried tend to leave. Make every change and potential change transparent. Let them know how the business is doing at all times and what the organization's plans are for staying on track or recovering in the future.

But, the most important issue here is the employees' trust in and respect for the management team. If they respect your judgment, direction, and decision making, they will stay. If not, they will leave. After all, they have the financial stability of their families to consider when they decide which executive they will follow – or not.

- **9. Overall corporate culture**

While it's not the top item on employee lists, the overall culture of your company makes a difference for employees. Does your organization appreciate employees, treat them with respect, and provide compensation, benefits, and perks that demonstrate respect and caring?

Is your work environment for people conducive to employee satisfaction and engagement?

Do you provide events, employee activities, celebrations, and team building efforts that make employees feel that your organization is a great place to work? Employees appreciate a workplace in which communication is transparent, management is accessible, executives are approachable and respected, and direction is clear and understood. Your overall culture keeps employees – or turns them away. Which gets you what you want and need for success?

- **10. Management's recognition of employee job performance**

Many place employee recognition further up the list, but this is where recognition scored in a recent Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) survey of employees. While recognition is important, it is not among employees' chief concerns. A lack of recognition can affect many of the above factors, especially culture, but it's probably not the deciding factor in an employee decision to leave your organization. Provide a lot of genuine appreciation and recognition as icing on the cake for employee retention. But, pay attention to the more significant factors, the cake, if you wish to retain your best employees. Make recognition the way you live in your organization to keep your best talent.

If you pay attention to these ten factors, you will reduce turnover and retain your most wanted employees. If not, you'll be holding regular exit interviews and good-bye lunches. It's expensive to recruit a new employee. Why not expend the effort necessary to retain the employees that you have already painfully recruited and hired?

<http://humanresources.about.com/od/resigning-from-your-job/a/top-10-reasons-employees-quit-their-job.htm>