

Crush Employee Retention With These 10 Insider Tips

Among the deficiencies in society for which millennials are shouldering the blame (killing the hotel industry, destroying the American shopping mall, and pillaging avocado farms for toast), one behavior of the current working class is genuinely impacting businesses more than any previous generation: a high employee turnover rate.

Whereas baby boomers were content to remain at their unfulfilling desk jobs for decades, millennials have no qualms about job-hopping. In fact, this penchant for switching jobs is currently costing the U.S. economy about [\\$30.5 annually](#). And your business is contributing to that number.

But before you start cursing the hipsters for your skyrocketing turnover costs, it's important to debunk a few key myths: [millennials are not lazy](#), entitled, or hopelessly distracted. They are, however, encountering insane housing costs, [lower salaries](#) than Gen Xers in 1998, and higher prices on everything from cars to healthcare. Oh, and the soul-crushing weight of student loan debt. Your employees are simply trying to find the balance between a job they enjoy and a job that can provide a living wage. If you make a concerted effort to address their needs, you can dramatically decrease turnover, improve the quality of your employees, and increase your company's bottom line.

Here are ten employee retention strategies that work:

1. Write an honest ad

Employee retention starts long before an employment offer is signed. In fact, it starts by determining exactly what your company *needs*. It's so vital to accurately describe the job to candidates that your [top management should be meeting with HR](#) to accurately outline the job expectations: don't leave this step up to HR alone. Why? Because it's likely HR won't understand the requirements of each job—they may not, for instance, know the difference between a content manager and a content strategist. In that situation, the person crafting the job posting is going to search for a generic job description, slap it online, and hope the ideal candidate comes along.

That might work. But probably not. Your top management should be outlining the qualifications of their dream candidate and using those qualifications to dictate the job posting. That job posting should be **brutally honest**. Stay away from jargon [at all costs](#) and ditch the cutesy job descriptions.

When your ad is clear, honest, and accurate, your candidates will self-select or self-eliminate for you. You'll have more candidates who better fit your job needs and have a higher-quality pool from which to select.

2. Conduct better interviews

Interviewing is an art. It requires a Poirot-like ability to read candidates' body language and intuit their character. It's difficult to tell if a candidate is actually a great fit for your company or if they're simply great at interviewing. On the other hand, don't let a great candidate slip by because he or she is terrible in interviews. Follow the [Harvard Business Review's suggestions](#) for

effectively conducting an interview and be sure to select the right person to interview potential candidates.

3. Offer a realistic salary

Onboarding a new employee is expensive, but turnover is even costlier. It's far cheaper in the long run to simply offer a higher salary to candidates in the beginning. When we say "realistic" here, it's more than just comparing market rates for jobs. Take the time to look at rents within a 40-mile radius of your business and do the math. For instance, a recent job posted at a cosmetics company in Irvine, California, offered a salary of \$70,000 for a copywriting job that required a college degree and six years of experience. A studio apartment within a half hour commute of the job is approximately \$1,600/month. And then there's California state taxes, the cost of gasoline, and inevitable student loan repayments. While candidates may feel that \$70,000 is a great salary, they're likely to feel less enthused after their first paycheck.

If you want to improve your company's turnover, start by substantially increasing salaries.

4. Recognize performance

Salaries aren't everything, though. It's just as important to recognize your employees for doing a good job as it is to pay them well. Recognition is *free*. It's as simple as stopping employees in the hall and complimenting them on a recent project or sending out a group email publicly congratulating a member of your team. Creating a culture of performance acknowledgment creates a positive atmosphere. Again, your employees are humans. They want to feel recognized for their work. They want to feel valued. When your employees don't feel appreciated, they [won't keep working for you](#). Teach your managers how to give meaningful, regular performance recognitions and develop a system for formally recognizing great employees. It will go a long way to crushing turnover.

5. Get flexible

Sitting in front of a computer all day is miserable. Sure, it might not be as bad as being an [18th century French executioner](#), but it's still not the way any of us want to spend our days. Offer your employees both location flexibility as well as time flexibility. They're adults: if they're done with their assignments or projects, there's no reason they need to sit in the office and waste time on Facebook. Letting your employees work from home or the location of their choice combats work fatigue and increases a feeling of employee autonomy.

6. Improve maternity leave

Women have a higher turnover than men, primarily because they're the ones keeping the human species alive. Maternity policies at most companies are woefully impractical and don't take into account the length of time women need to physically heal from pregnancy or the emotional toll of leaving a newborn baby at home. Twelve weeks is simply not long enough for

maternity leave. When Google lengthened their paid maternity leave, their [turnover rate for new mothers](#) dropped by 50%. That's an impressive improvement by any measure.

7. Combat boredom

Gone are the days of punching in for a job on the assembly line, but your employees may still be bored. In fact, boredom is a [large factor in predicting turnover](#). If your employees are bored, they'll quit. Fight the boredom by offering your employees opportunities to learn new skills, attend conventions and conferences, and advance their careers. Stagnation is the death of passion, so fight the ennui and keep your employees engaged and challenged. Ask *them* for employee engagement ideas and ways you can improve employee motivation and morals.

8. Improve work-life balance

Your employees work hard. [Too hard](#). They receive fewer days off and spend more time in the office than any other industrialized country. That contributes to burnout, depression, anxiety, and a host of other issues. Work with your HR team to come up with ideas to improve the work-life balance of your employees. Half-day Fridays, shorter summer hours, and flexible vacation policies are all solid ideas.

9. Create a culture of openness

If you have an employee who is planning on quitting, you should know about it well beforehand. How? By creating a culture of feedback. If your employee is dissatisfied with an aspect of your company, he or she should feel comfortable going to HR or to the appropriate manager and openly expressing those concerns. If the concerns are addressed, congratulations: you just kept an employee and saved your company money. But if the concerns aren't addressed, there's a good chance you'll be back on the job boards hunting for another candidate. It's your responsibility to create an inclusive atmosphere in which your employees are comfortable and happy. Unhappy employees simply won't stay.

10. Get rid of bad apples

Sometimes decreasing turnover means turning over the employees who simply aren't a good fit. If, for instance, you have an employee who is struggling with substance abuse issues, it may be appropriate to fire that person to improve the work experience of the rest of your employees. Sometimes it may not be clear cut: you might have an employee who performs well, but is so annoying and socially clueless that your other employees start dreading coming to work. It may be appropriate to let that person go to improve the working conditions of your other employees. Letting an employee go is a difficult action to take, but it could save your company untold amounts of money if it means keeping your other team members happy.

Learning how to crush employee retention requires staying alert and tuned in to your employees' needs and wants. You'll need to actively pursue ways to make your workplace more

engaging, more rewarding, and more flexible. Treat your employees the way you'd wish to be treated. And, if you're having trouble figuring out how to improve, ask your employees for their opinions. You may find that improving your retention rate is as simple as offering free pizza and employee trips to mini golf. Whatever the results may be, once you start asking your employees what *they* want, they'll feel appreciative you're actively looking to keep them happy. And sometimes that alone can improve your retention rate.