

Avoid the GREAT RESIGNATION

Spot a struggling employee and create a culture of retention.

A movement that is now widely being called the Great Resignation has surged with over 47 million Americans voluntarily quitting their jobs in 2021. An increase in remote work opportunities coupled with a booming job market has given employees the power to look for greener pastures when they become unhappy in their positions. Workers are gunning for better pay, perks, flexibility and overall treatment, which has shifted the bargaining power in their favor and left many companies scrambling.

Current employees are more valuable and less costly to retain than finding new talent to join your organization. The key to curbing turnover lies within strong leadership, who are responsible for recognizing and combating these signs while creating a culture of retention.

SPOT A STRUGGLING EMPLOYEE

Before an employee considers moving on, they tend to give cues that they're struggling, whether that's showing up late when previously they were routinely on-time, missing deadlines or reflecting an apparent shift in their attitude.

It's important to create a strong foundation of trust by building deeper bonds with each employee early on - one that's outside of the typical manager-employee relationship. This allows you to know them well enough to pick up on the subtle, and often quiet, signs there's something wrong. As Bob Chapman once wrote, "The art of listening is not to hear what someone says but to hear how they feel." Actively listening is a key component of building trust, and it is crucial that managers be genuine in their approach by listening without judgment.

By doing this, you can create a safe environment where employees feel comfortable talking to you. Rather than asking pointed questions regarding missed deadlines and poor communication, take a moment to pull back from a manager-employee mindset and connect with them on a human level by asking,

"How are you doing lately? Is there anything you'd like to talk about?"

Another option to bypass the employee potentially not feeling comfortable enough to speak up is to first be open about stressors affecting you, establishing from the beginning that the topic is not off-limits or taboo. Oftentimes, by showing vulnerability and being open and honest, others are more likely to reciprocate and speak candidly with you about how they're feeling. Thus, seeing the manager as a person with their own challenges and personal demands. This gives the opportunity to let them know you hear them, address their concerns, and work to find solutions, which in turn, can help to potentially avoid their resignation letter.

CREATING A CULTURE OF RETENTION

Traditionally, managers have focused on achieving results with little emphasis on employees' overall wellbeing. Today, we're called on as managers to produce successful outcomes while prioritizing the people within organizations. As such, being able to work in partnership with team members in order to surpass expectations is one key way in which companies can be successful and create a culture of retention.

With this in mind, active listening should be taken to the organizational level by creating a consistent open forum for employees to share their thoughts, concerns and ideas for improvement. Achieving such an experience and environment requires leadership that extends a proactive invitation to talk openly and freely on a regular basis, whether that's a monthly town hall or a bi-annual anonymous survey. This open dialogue will result in a long list of new initiatives, programs, and ideas for betterment. Remember, it's more than just listening as it's also about doing. This cannot happen if their ideas do not spur change. If custom solutions are created and clear next steps are taken to address employee-voiced changes, the improvements along with the

FROM THE US



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manager forum, where leadership is invited to meet regularly and collaborate on people-focused challenges. Oftentimes, companies meet to discuss the overall health of the business, but what about the wellbeing of the people? Here, managers can come together to share what has worked for them with the aim of assisting others who might be confronted by similar challenges. Naturally, these forums will require discretion and confidentiality so that employee information is not shared and should be moderated by members of the HR team to ensure the time is constructive. In the end, this will result in a win-win for managers and employees as it furthers the goal of actively listening and putting people first on both sides.

While better pay and benefits are important, one true thing determines whether employees remain at your company or decide to leave: whether they feel valued. You can provide all the perks in the world to try to get employees to stay but unless they truly feel heard, trust those around them, and feel like they are a valuable part of the company, they too will fall victim to the Great Resignation. ■

feeling of being heard will often result in a longer tenure with the company.

Additionally, it's a two-way street, meaning managers need continuous education, coaching and support as well in order to feel well equipped to help their employees. Therefore, it's important to develop the concept of a

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