The manager's toolkit

Tackling employee retention

The top strategies and resources
to stop your best people from leaving.

Linked in Talent Solutions

How to tackle employee retention

The state of employee retention

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Every 30 days, around 3.5 million people in the U.S. voluntarily leave their jobs.

With the cost of replacing an employee at **between 50–200%** of their annual salary, the repercussions can have a huge impact on your business.

Quits, seasonally adjusted, in thousands

Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019

Jan 04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Jan 19
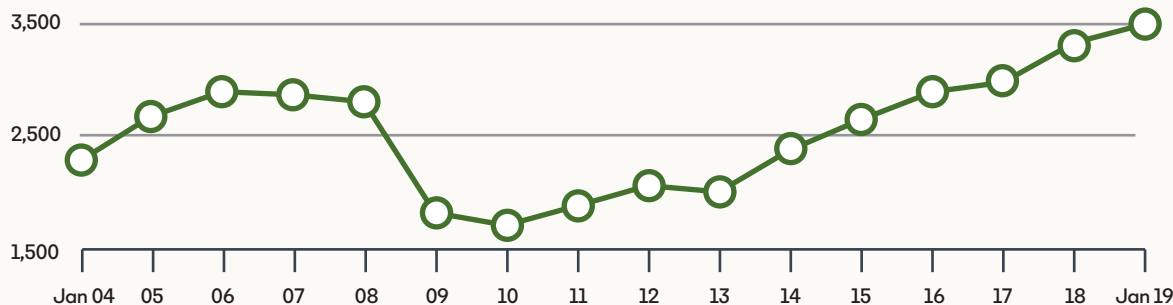
When you factor in lost institutional knowledge, plus a dip in productivity and morale that can follow a valued employee's departure, it's easy to see why curbing attrition is high on the list of priorities for many managers.

Build stronger relationships

Although job hopping is on the rise, most employees *won't* leave an environment that nurtures them and their evolving needs. As a manager, you are in a prime position to build stronger teams that stick around for the long haul.

That's why we've created this helpful guide to the tactics, tools, and templates you need to spot an employee from leaving before it happens — and create a positive employee-manager relationship.
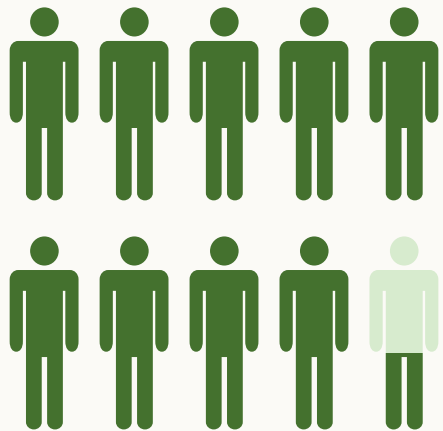
94%
of employees would stick around longer if a company invested in their career.
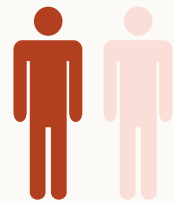
Workplace Learning Report, 2018

Identifying flight risks

As a manager, you have the power to address employee concerns head-on and create a supportive workplace for all, starting with being able to stop a worker from considering leaving. In this chapter, we'll give you several different ways to stop attrition in its tracks.

1 in 2 employees have left a job to get away from a bad boss.

Gallup, 2015

Benchmark your retention rate

Turnover can be a normal part of the workplace lifecycle. But when one of your best employees leaves, it often has a snowball effect in which others become disengaged, morale drops, and productivity plummets.

Calculate your employee retention rate quarterly and compare it to the benchmark you've set for your company.

(# of quits / # of employees) x 100 = % retention rate

Spot the warning signs

Do your employees feel like like they're supported, valued members of the team? Do they feel challenged? Are they maintaining a healthy work-life balance?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, then you may have a flight risk on your hands.

Identifying employees who might leave requires a two-pronged strategy: knowing what the signs are and approaching the problem through a solution-oriented lens.

While employees don't want to be micromanaged, if you notice uncharacteristic signs, carve out time to meet with them to gauge how they're feeling.

Use **LinkedIn Talent Insights** to collect data in real time, assess your risk levels, and spot company and industry trends over time.

Identifying flight risks: A handy guide for managers

Watch out for these common nonverbal warning signs that an employee may be thinking about leaving, and take action before the idea can take hold.

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Hasn't been promoted in a long time

Reason: If an employee spends 25 months in a role without a title change, the chances they'll quit **increase by one percentage point.**

Solution: Outline a promotion plan and discuss it with the employee to prevent them from growing dissatisfied or restless.

Is working too much overtime

Reason: If an employee is working beyond the usual demands of their job, they're at high risk of experiencing burnout.

Solution: If an employee's workload is more than they can handle, offer additional support like helping them prioritize or offloading work.

Becomes significantly less productive

Reason: An employee who is less productive and motivated than usual may be ready to move on.

Solution: Have a frank discussion with them about how they're feeling, but be careful not to come across as angry or passive-aggressive.

Is hesitant to commit to a long-term project

Reason: Flightiness surrounding a long-term deadline can indicate that an employee doesn't see themselves remaining at the company.

Solution: They may not want to commit for other reasons, but having a conversation early can help to keep them happy and engaged.

Calls in sick more often

Reason: When an employee is interviewing elsewhere, they may start taking more sick leave or personal days than usual.

Solution: Let them know how their absence impacts the team but make sure they know you're not blaming them for anything.

Begins dressing differently

Reason: If an employee usually dresses casually but switches to more businesslike attire, it may signal they're looking elsewhere.

Solution: Facilitate a friendly discussion with the employee to gauge their happiness level and address their career path.

Communication is key

Keeping open lines of communication is often easier said than done, but doing so is an integral part of fostering employee relationships.

If you know how an employee is feeling, you'll never be blindsided by someone leaving. And mastering this critical component of the employee-manager relationship can soften barriers and lead to more open, honest conversations about what you can do to improve the workplace climate.

52%
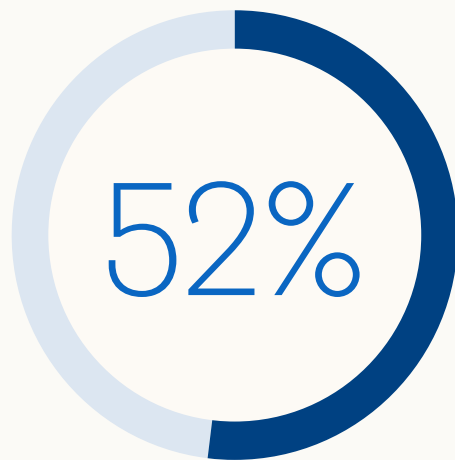
of all employees who voluntarily leave their job say their manager or company could have done something to keep them from leaving.

LinkedIn Talent Blog, 2019

Communication is key

Build a meaningful foundation

Here are some ways to gain your employees' trust and help them feel valued:

Speak face-to-face
Email is convenient, but impersonal. Set aside in-person time, which may empower the employee to speak up.

Connect with your team on a personal level
Learning more about who your workers are — their hobbies and interests, likes and dislikes — can help you connect with them.

Share that you make mistakes too
Rather than projecting perfection, show employees that no one is error free. This can encourage them to be more vocal when they make a mistake.

Listen to what your employees want
Whether it's flexible hours or team building, letting employees have a say in the company culture can make them feel valued.

Communication is key

Practice active listening

Set aside emails, turn off notifications, and focus solely on the person you're speaking with. Listen attentively as they talk and wait until they're finished describing a situation or problem to offer your expertise or advice, rather than interrupting their train of thought. Remember to be neutral — if you seem overly critical or judgmental, employees may not feel empowered to speak up in the future.
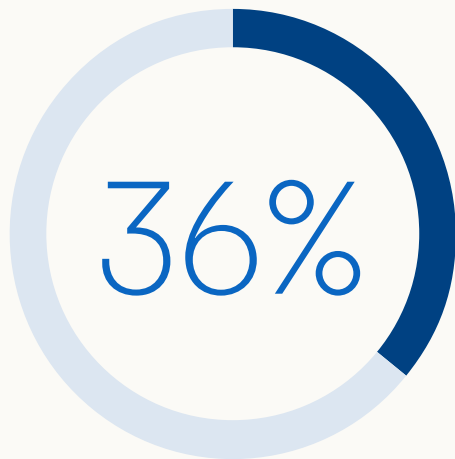
36% of employees would leave a job because a manager sets vague, unrealistic, or unclear expectations.

LinkedIn Learning Survey, 2018

> " Practice active listening. This includes keeping sight of your purpose; being mindful of the vibe you're giving off; and minimizing potential pitfalls, like avoiding multitasking."

Tatiana Kolovou, Lecturer, Kelley School of Business at Indiana University

Tips for working with me
Use this simple template to steer initial conversations and help employees feel comfortable.

Communication is key

Set clear expectations from the outset

Setting clear expectations for a new hire or new project can eliminate confusion and keep the environment positive and productive. Make sure employees feel comfortable flagging any situations where they're unsure what's expected of them.

Outline a new employee's roles and responsibilities in a document to reduce anxiety.

Master nonverbal communication

As a manager, what you don't say is just as important as what you say. Employees are perceptive and can easily pick up on a manager's body language. What you project affects the entire office. Carry yourself and speak confidently, and your staff will feel confident too.

When speaking with someone on your team, make eye contact to show respect for what they have to say.

Making meeting time count

It's important to host regular meetings with your team. Ensure employees feel valued in each team huddle or one-on-one by offering regular key takeaways, and always feel free to reschedule if a meeting has become unproductive.

The average person spends 35–50% of their time in meetings.
LinkedIn, 2017

Find purpose and identify outcomes

Prior to meeting with your team, identify the goals of the session. If the meeting's purpose isn't clear, the team may struggle to find a solution.

Practice openness and transparency, because identifying individual and collective objectives can get to the heart of an issue much faster than speaking without aim.

Ensure that goals are met following a meeting by generating actionable items to resolve.

Consider sending a follow-up email to confirm what was discussed, and establish a timeframe in which you'd like to see the next steps being completed.

Lead efficient team meetings

Making meetings more productive in a few simple steps can give employees a more positive outlook about them and increase engagement.

1. Identify if you're the best person to lead the meeting, or if a member of the team should take charge
2. Come prepared with an agenda and share it with all attendees
3. Outline clear roles and responsibilities at the start of the meeting
4. Stay conscious of meeting time and how long you're dedicating to each topic to keep the discussion on track

50%

of workers say that feeling like their contributions to team meetings were valued gave them a sense of belonging.

LinkedIn, 2017

Making meeting time count

Hold effective one-on-ones

A one-on-one meeting is an opportunity for employees to lead and receive managers' full and undivided attention, air their likes and dislikes, and identify what they feel they need in order to grow with the company.

To help everyone prepare for a successful meeting, send your team this template to fill in and address when you meet.

Guide to successful one-on-ones

Status

Provide a brief overview of your current projects and their status.

Successes

What's one of the most prominent successes or highlights you've experienced recently?

Challenges

What are some challenges or roadblocks you've been having? Provide possible solutions for each.
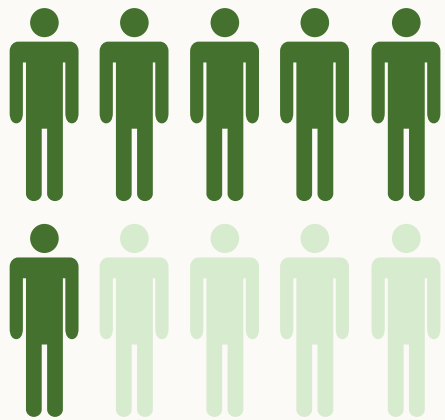
Goals

Share any goals you have in mind to accomplish, and how we can support you.

Relationships matter

Managers can contribute to employees' individual growth — as well as the growth of the company — through thoughtful mentorship and networking opportunities.

Nearly **60%** of workers say they would like feedback on a daily or weekly basis

LinkedIn Talent Blog, 2016

Investing in your employees' futures is also an investment in your company's future, so make relationships a key tenet of your workplace.

Your team will feel more connected and cohesive once these bonds are in place.

"

Mentoring is not a magic wand. The process needs careful management and open-mindedness from all parties involved."

Andreas von der Heydt,
Director of Kindle Content at Amazon in Germany

Relationships matter

Create a supportive network for employees

You can play a role in forging career-defining relationships for employees by incorporating relationship-building opportunities into the company framework.

Pair employees with mentors and teammates as early as their first week on the job to help them establish connections, drive their career evolution, and help them feel supported.

One conversation could change your career

Mentorship is key for developing and sustaining a satisfying career and improving your professional life, regardless of whether you're giving or receiving some form of mentorship.

Turn mistakes into growth opportunities

When an employee makes a mistake, use it as an opportunity to provide guidance and mentorship. Constructive criticism builds a strong foundation for employees to stand and grow upon.

If an employee is able to understand what they did wrong and find a solution, they'll be better equipped to handle similar situations in the future — and **less likely to repeat the same error**.

Encourage diverse thoughts

Strive to make your workplace a safe space where different ideas, approaches, and perspectives can be heard.

These opportunities are important for employees from underrepresented groups who often receive **less advice and advocacy** from managers and leaders. Find them advocates to increase their company loyalty.

How to give constructive feedback
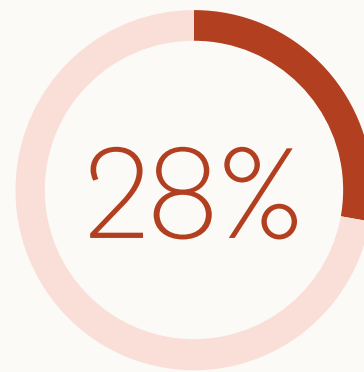**Download our dos and don'ts checklist** for giving advice.

Celebrating employees

Employee recognition from a manager or leadership is a crucial aspect of retention. Everyone values praise – just make sure you accurately assess the individual's comfort level in regards to whether you celebrate them publicly or privately.

28%

of employees recall receiving their most memorable praise from a direct manager.

Gallup, 2016

Give praise where praise is due

Certain accomplishments warrant different levels of praise, so adjust your response accordingly.

An employee may be uncomfortable with being singled out in front of the whole company for something small. Conversely, a large win may call for a team-wide celebration.

Weigh up the size of the accomplishment, but don't neglect the small wins. Even a handshake, high five, or thank-you email can make an employee's day and ensure they feel appropriately valued.

Celebrating employees

Provide genuine, authentic praise

The most meaningful praise is genuine praise. There's no formula for being genuine, but there are ways to appear more authentic and be direct:

1. **Give individualized praise.** If an employee knocked a project out of the park, describe to them what they did well to show you're paying attention.

2. **Mean what you say.** Positivity isn't always necessary for growth. Don't be afraid to give constructive criticism.

3. **Don't compliment the status quo.** Employees don't want special recognition for showing up and performing their job.

4. **Keep track of accomplishments.** A simple way to stay on top of employee recognition is to set reminders and keep track of feedback.

Promote your team's achievements externally

Your company's social media channels can be powerful tools to help celebrate wins externally, as well as internally, and can build a sense of pride and accomplishment in your workforce.

Celebrate employee or company wins with a post on your personal or company **LinkedIn page.**

Hiring for the long run

As a manager, you can influence retention early on by playing a larger part in the hiring process. Looking to the future and being proactive in your search can save you from replacing employees later on.

Approach the interview process with a crystal-clear view of what you want in a hire and what the company has to offer.

Find the right fit

When you have limited time, making a quick hire may feel like a priority. But don't sacrifice quality for speed. If the candidate isn't a good fit for the role and vice versa, you may find yourself replacing them before you know it.

LinkedIn Jobs offers the tools you need to reach the most relevant candidate for your opening.

Clearly communicate the objectives of the role and address the candidate's desired career trajectory to ensure the job is mutually beneficial.

To quickly find people with the right skillset, try **LinkedIn Recruiter**. You'll get unlimited access to great candidates you won't find anywhere else.

Hiring for the long run

Hire for potential

Most candidates aren't looking to step into the same role they just left. A lateral move can result in boredom, burnout, disengagement, and ultimately, turnover. Instead, focus your search on someone who's seeking a challenge and who can grow with your company.

Be transparent with candidates

Don't try to hide the less-than-glamorous parts of a job. If there are challenges involved that may seem unappealing, frame them as growth opportunities, but never try to glaze over something that might cause an employee to leave.

Try to put yourself in the candidate's shoes. What would you want to know? Why would you take this job over an offer from another company? It's better to find someone who will thrive in a challenging role, rather than someone who will just put up with it.

LinkedIn Learning is the leading online learning platform that recommends expert-led courses to your employees so they develop the most relevant, applicable skills.

Focus on the first 45 days

You found a hire who seems like the perfect fit, and their first day is right around the corner. Now what?

The first 45 days on the job are critical. If it doesn't feel like a good fit right away, many employees won't stick around to find out if it's going to get better.

Employees should feel like they know how to successfully do their job and navigate the company culture. That involves developing and implementing a comprehensive onboarding process that sets them up for success.
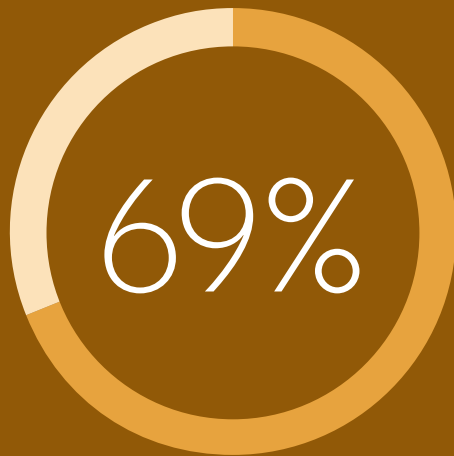
In the first week at a new job, employees want to learn how to start contributing meaningful work.

BambooHR, 2018

Those who go through
a structured onboarding
program are

69%

more likely to stay with
a company for at least
3 years.

BambooHR, 2018

Focus on the first 45 days

Phases of a successful onboarding experience

Onboarding requires a plan for before, during, and after a new hire's first day. Here are the key takeaways from each stage:

1. **Day 0:** Prepare a work space, communicate with the team and the hire, and schedule their first week

2. **Day 1:** Introduce your new hire to the team and make the new hire feel welcome and appreciated

3. **Day 2:** Get your new hire up to speed on day-to-day work life, and schedule trainings

4. **Day 7:** Give a first assignment and set expectations for the weeks ahead

5. **Day 45:** Encourage success and foster growth by giving regular feedback, and setting clear expectations and goals

Use the **Complete Guide to Onboarding New Hires** during this crucial period for employees.

Conclusion

Keep employees happy and good things will follow

Communication is at the core of all strong leaders' toolkits. As a manager, you have the opportunity to positively impact employees' lives, make their time at the company enjoyable, and – above all – make them want to stay.

People don't leave bad jobs – they leave bad managers.

Equipped with empathy, a clear vision for employee growth and development, and a winning onboarding strategy, you're well on your way to building a rock-solid team excited to stay for the long haul.

Building effective performance reviews

Performance reviews shouldn't be a one-way – or even a two-way – street. Generate 360-degree feedback by encouraging employees to self-review, as well as review their peers, in order to gain insight into how well the company is operating.

Peer reviews

Peer reviews can encourage a culture of constructive feedback that helps the team build stronger foundations and run like a well-oiled machine.

Use the "Stop, Start, Continue" template on the next page as a way to mine for useful peer feedback.

Self-evaluations

Self-evaluations give team members an opportunity to thoughtfully assess their productivity levels and reflect on overall performance – including achievements they're proud of, challenges they're facing, and areas they can improve upon.

Ask employees to fill out the template on the next page prior to their performance assessment.

The annual performance review should never be the first time an employee receives feedback. Set short-term goals and discuss areas that need improvement during regular meetings.

LinkedIn Learning Blog, 2017

Employee peer reviews

Ask team members to answer these three questions.

Stop

What are some of the things your peers are doing
that are preventing you from being wholly successful?

Start

What are some things your peers could do to help you
be more successful?

Continue

What are some things your peers are doing well that
they should continue doing to help you be successful?

Employee self-reviews

Take time to fill in details for each section below.

Accomplishments

What are some key performance benchmarks you've
had this quarter?

Challenges

What are some of the challenges you've faced, and
how have you approached them?

Opportunities

Are there any opportunities you aren't getting that
you feel you need in order to succeed?

Next steps

What are the actions you need to take to further your
career development?

Linked in Talent Solutions

Experience LinkedIn in action

Help to nurture your employees so they stop leaving. LinkedIn has the right tools to help stop attrition in its tracks.

Founded in 2003, LinkedIn connects the world's professionals to make them more productive and succesful. With 630+ million members worldwide, including 75% of the US workforce, Linkedin is the world's largest professional network.

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