



Employee Happiness 101

The official **Bucket List** report on the top 3 ways to retain your best talent, create a culture of recognition, and build a world class culture.

Retention is a common problem that costs companies thousands each year not only in revenue, but through loss of expertise and morale, making it clearer than ever that a strong retention policy should be a priority.

However it's difficult to know which policies will be the most effective. The success of your efforts will depend on how well they address the root causes of your retention problems.

And diagnosing the true problems can be very difficult. Facing your company's problems can be a difficult exercise, as most would rather not face their organization's deeply rooted issues. However it's an important step to take and once the root causes are discovered, it gets easier to know the right steps to take.

Here are some common reasons why employees leave companies, and the top 3 strategies that you can take to retain your best employees and build a stronger overall workplace culture.

Problem #1 Lack of Transparency

A recent study by the American Psychology Association found that 1 in 4 employees don't trust their employer.¹

Many companies value transparency, holding regular company meetings and allowing employees to engage in open workspaces. However, transparency also relates to information. It's important that employees feel they have enough information to do their jobs correctly in order to contribute fully to their organization.

Often times information is withheld for no particular reason, resulting in a sense of demoralization, as well as confusion as to company activity. While managers may feel that too much information will overwhelm or distract employees, by contrast they are encouraged and made to feel included in company aims.



Solution: Be Transparent

You'd be surprised at how much information kept on a need-to-know basis would in fact be useful and appreciated by employees. It's difficult to establish a common mission if everyone isn't in the loop.

Next time you stop short when disseminating information to employees, think twice and ask if the information would help provide a richer context for your employees' work.

Small moves to increase transparency go a long way in creating a positive retention culture.

A great example of transparency in action is the open book policy regarding finances at Advisor Websites, an award-winning tech company in Vancouver, BC. Employees at Advisor are updated about revenue and profit at regular company meetings. Advisor Websites also has an employee profit sharing program, allowing employees to benefit from company successes, and share the effort to get back on track when company performance dips.

Problem #2 Poor Management

The often cited axiom ‘employees leave managers, not jobs’ is true, but it’s difficult to see a ‘poor manager’ in a tenured, high-performer or executive. Most of the time poor management isn’t a glaring issue; broadly defined, it is a manager’s policies or actions which cause difficulty or bottlenecks to an employee’s performance.

A common complaint is micromanagement. Often thought of as looking over the shoulder of an employee, it can also include getting too far into the weeds with the person you’re paying to do the job. This can manifest as requesting unnecessary progress updates, and other time-consuming or redundant procedures that sap an employee’s energy and time.

Solution: Embrace Independence

Even the most well meaning managers can be micromanagers, so a best practice is to embrace independence as an organization, and allow your employees time and space to do their best work. Address issues once a week in a meeting instead of constantly on the fly.

Addressing poor management is important to do, as a 2014 Career Builder Survey² reported that 37% of employees surveyed were likely to leave their jobs due to a poor opinion about their boss’s performance.



Organizations such as 1-800-Got-Junk have formalized the weekly One on One meeting to a GS&R, short for Goal, Set, and Review. A more structured and formalized version of a 1 on 1, this meeting is a way for managers and leaders to check-in with team members to gauge weekly and monthly progress. GS&R’s typically track an employee’s KPI, top 3 objectives, and encourage a meaningful conversation between employees and managers

Problem #3 Lack of Recognition

If either of the first two problems plague your company, lack of recognition can be the straw that breaks the camel's back. Companies are under more pressure than ever to produce with limited budgets and timelines, which means employees are doing more than ever.



That's why it's so important to give employees public recognition for their achievements. In addition, the ability to give employees to recognize each other for their hard work is important as well.

A 2012 study by Globoforce³ showed that 41% of companies that use peer-to-peer recognition have seen marked positive increases in customer satisfaction.

Solution: Build a Culture of Recognition

There are countless ways to implement recognition programs in your company, with a seamless online tool such as Bucket List, you will be able to reward employees for their personal and professional achievements.

By building a culture of recognition based on the behaviors and values your company supports, you help employees reach their personal and professional goals, which leads to happier, more productive employees.

Notes:

1. American Psychological Association, *2014 Work and Well Being Survey*. 1-46.
2. Career Builder, *Job Satisfaction National Survey*.
3. Globoforce, *SHRM Globoforce Employee Recognition Survey*.