

Where do you think you're going?

a guide to employee retention

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About the editor

My name is Ben Eubanks and I am... Well, I'm a lot of things. My day job is a generalist role with a government contractor in Huntsville, AL. I recruit, create manager training, juggle benefits, and handle <insert-HR-task-here>. When I get off work, I have a few things that take up my time, whether it's volunteering with my local SHRM chapter as the [Social Media Director](#) or writing my blog about [HR, leadership, culture, and passion](#). I'm the 2010-2011 Chairman of the SHRM YP Advisory Council. I cofounded an unconference event called [HRevolution](#). I've written a handful of [eBooks](#). Told you I did a lot! In my spare time I read, connect with other great HR pros, and play with my kids. Want to connect? I'm on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and you can always hit me [via email](#).

This book was put together with the support of Shauna Moerke, [HR Minion](#) and keeper of the [HR Carnival](#). I appreciate her willingness to assist!

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Introduction

I love coming up with humorous titles for these guides, and this one is no exception.

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In my mind, that phrase implies that we think we are in charge of the person we're talking to in that manner. Unless it's a four year old, that's not likely. People tend to have their own opinions and ideas, and that makes for an interesting workplace.

With the economy fluctuating in recent years, people are preparing to "jump ship" and look for new jobs. How can we keep the solid contributors to our organizations from making that leap?

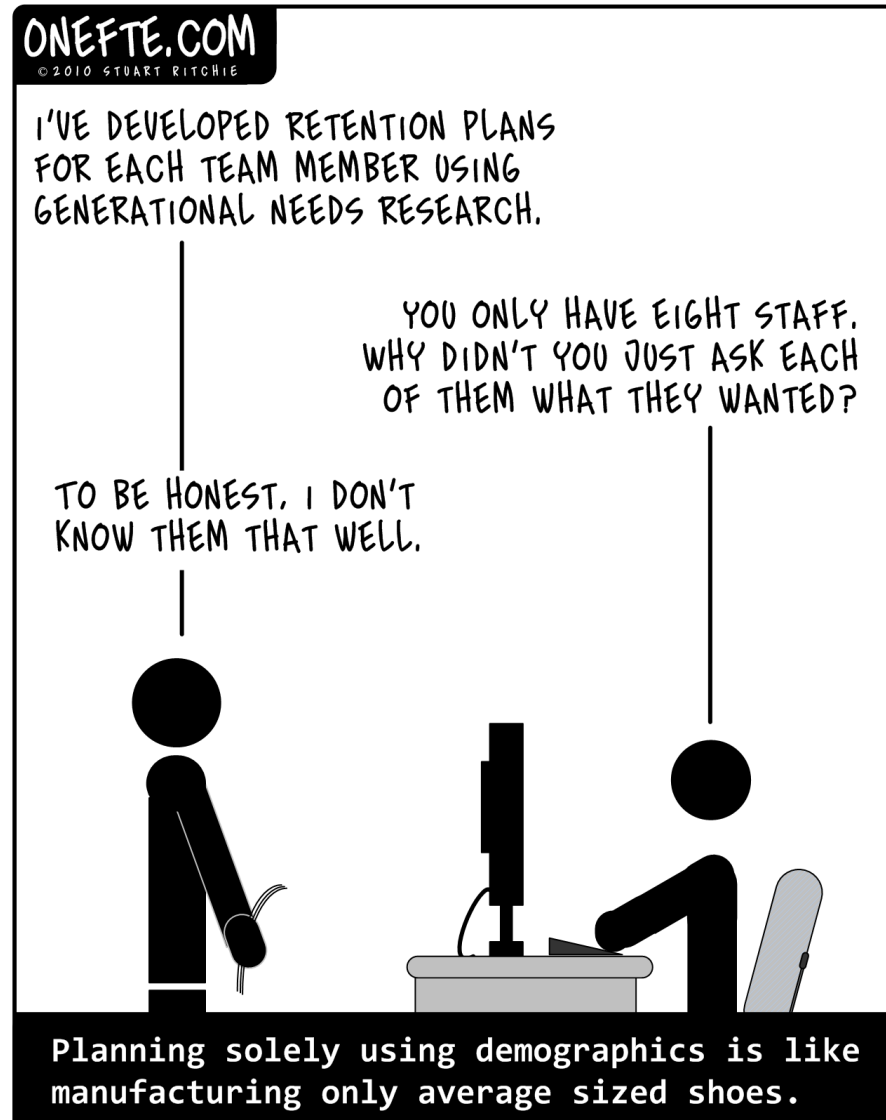
In my day job, I don't see this kind of fear. Why? Because we have a great culture, we pay people well, and it's pretty easy for them to see how their efforts make an impact on the business as a whole. *Great selling points and reasons to stick around.* Probably why we've only had two people voluntarily leave the company in the last three years. Still, what happens if one of our stars decides to leave? We take a heavy hit. *Ouch.*

Notice I'm distinguishing between "good" employees and not. There's no reason to keep the poor performers around, so don't think that 100% retention is a goal to set your sights on. So let's sit back and learn together over these next few pages. I want to keep my good people and you want to keep yours.

I hope you enjoy this guide and learn some new tips and tricks. **Note the wide margins.** I leave those so you can take notes, scribble ideas, and make connections between what you read and how things are at your own organization. By the end of this guide you should have a handful of ideas to follow up on. Have fun!

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Stuart is the genius behind 1.OOFTE.com.

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Retention Fixes on a Shoestring Budget

I love small and medium sized HR shops for a number of reasons, but none more than for the simple fact, smaller sized HR shops have to be creative. My grandma grew up during the Great Depression and got real use to have nothing, so like many people during that time in history, they worked their butts off and made do with what they had, and came up with some really creative ways to get things done. In retirement she loved eating out at restaurants, probably because she was forced to cook all those years because she couldn't afford to go out, but in retirement she didn't really have the money to do this as much as she wants.

To solve this problem (Great Depression people are real problem solvers!) she tinkered at home, cooking the dishes she liked the most from her favorite restaurants, until you couldn't really tell the difference between hers and the restaurant. I remember showing up at her place late one night with my younger brother and he was hungry, and grandma couldn't wait to feed "boys" (she lived for that), and she asked him what he was hungry for (he was 12 at the time) – he told her "nachos". Now I was pretty sure she had no idea what nachos were, but she went to work and about 20 minutes later she came out with a plate of nachos stacked so high with melted cheese and ground beef and salsa and sour cream, etc. you would have thought she drove down to your favorite sports bar and brought it back! 15 years later – my little brother still talks about those nachos.

Creativity and small HR shops, remind me of grandma.

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Having worked in big HR shops the one thing that frustrated me most was sitting around in large meetings, trying to figure out how to “fix” retention – and listening to all the ways and how much money it was going to cost. In the end I always came back to, if we just take all this money we are going to spend on the “fix” and just go out and hand to the employees, we probably won't have a retention problem – but large HR shop folks don't like to hear that! So, for you small HR shop folks out there, with little or no money to spend on increasing your retention – I came up with a few ideas you might want to try before you go spend all that money on that recognition software and anniversary awards.

No Money Retention Fixes:

1. **Fire the manager with the lowest retention.** (You have the data, you know who is turning people over – your organization needs to send a message that managers, not HR, not the CEO are responsible for retaining talent. This has to be the first step – your leaders have to have a clear understanding it is their job to retain, their employees – and they'll be held accountable for it.)
2. **Measure it by Department, and post it publicly for all to see.** (No, don't just share it in meetings – put it up in the lobby, down the halls, everywhere. Then just wait – it will almost change overnight – no one likes to be at the bottom of any list, and have everyone know it.)
3. **Fire your worst performers – then use that money to compensate your best employees more.** (It's a wash – your worst employees aren't helping your productivity anyway, and your best will

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appreciate the increase, appreciate you noticing the bad people were taking away from the team, and they'll give you more discretionary effort. The result – same cost (actually less if you factor in benefits, taxes, etc.) more productivity, a little less headcount.

4. **Have your senior leadership talk about retention publicly, constantly.** (That which gets measured will get changed, that which gets measured and has the eye of senior leadership will get changed much quicker!)
5. **Institute a “Save Strategy” for employees who want to leave.** (Save Strategy? If an employee puts in their notice, have them go meet with your CEO and explain to her why they are leaving – you'll be amazed at the results and how many people will change their minds. Some people just want to know you care – and sitting down for some one-on-one with the CEO, shows that a whole bunch.)

Tim Sackett writes at [The Tim Sackett Project](#).

Why You Shouldn't Focus on Employee Retention

I don't talk about employee retention much. There's a reason why.

If you [recruit great people](#) and [inspire them](#) to do amazing things, they won't really have much of a reason to leave your organization. (The exception is if people are leaving for things like relocation or to undergo a massive career change – in which case, there's not much you could have done anyways)

Retention is the easy part. It's the other two that are hard. Focus your energy on getting the right person into the right job and inspire them to do their best work. Chances are pretty good that they'll want to keep working for you.

Do a good enough job at this and the process fuels itself. Employees start to talk about how awesome it is to work there, and more great people want to come work for you.

Chris Ferdinandi is the author of [Renegade HR](#).

Employee Retention—Are Surveys Causing the Problem or Just Reporting It?

Probably the most explosive statistic HR folks have been exposed to recently is the [Manpower Survey](#) announcing that 84% of employees plan to look for a job in 2011. That's quite a few. It's not the only place you can find that data, and it's not just the good ol' USA.

In [India the statistic is 40%](#) who plan on quitting. Another [survey by Monster](#) says 66% will be looking. A [Career Builder survey](#) shows that 15% of the workforce is actively searching and another 76% would change jobs for the right opportunity.

So – if these statistics are anywhere near correct, HR has a tough, tough job ahead of it in 2011.

But let me help you a bit.

Social Proof

I'm beginning to think these surveys aren't accurately reflecting the true desires of employees. I don't think they're lying – but I do think there is something else at play here.

And that is the principle of social proof.

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As someone who makes their living influencing behavior, I'm always keeping my eyes open for these types of issues.

A Definition: Social proof at its core is simply this: we, as humans, like to “go along.” When we don't have a strong idea of what the “right” answer is, we look to others to see what they think. Our behaviors are influenced by what we believe the majority is doing. If we see everyone dressing like Don Johnson or Madonna – we will adapt some of those fashion elements in our own style (c'mon guys and gals – you know you did it... don't hide... it was cool back then.)

Social proof can be one of the major behavior influencers.

Simply put – it's what the cool kids are doing - and we want to be cool.

Surveys Cause Statistics

My thinking is that the first survey on employee intention to leave might have had some validity – but every survey after that could have less and less validity. It might just be that employees, having seen the previous survey results think... ***“Hey – if a lot of others are doing it, should I be looking into it as well?”***

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Is it any surprise that the most recent surveys report the "highest intention to leave" percentage? I'm thinking that employees aren't really wanting to leave – but they are wanting to be like what they think **OTHER** employees are like. And if they're thinking about leaving, I should too. I could be wrong – but in reality, if employees think everyone else is thinking about leaving (real or not) it will influence their behavior.

As an HR person you need to, first be aware of the effect of social proof and second, you need to be prepared to counteract its affects.

To help me help you, I've enlisted Brian Ahearn – [one of only 25 certified Cialdini Trainers \(IN THE WORLD\)](#) to discuss ways HR can help mitigate the effects of social proof (if in fact it is playing into these statistics.) Brian – in addition to being an all-around great guy, also [blogs at Influence PEOPLE](#) – read, know it, subscribe to it.

Below is a modified exchange between Brian and myself about these sobering statistics on retention.

Me: First off Brian – Do you think that the principle of influence called social proof is having any impact on the data that is being promoted on the web?

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Brian: Absolutely. The principle of social proof is hard-wired into our brains. Just seeing statistics like this will influence an employee's behavior. Even if they never had thought of leaving a company - seeing that a majority of "other employees" are considering leaving will impact their feelings. And that would have to show up in subsequent surveys. The first one wouldn't have much social proof – but if the survey population saw the results from the first survey, it would be almost impossible for it not to influence the outcome of every other survey.

Me: Okay – if we assume some portion of the results from these surveys is due to the effect of social proof – how can an HR person help reduce the impact of that effect within their organization? Are there any communication and management techniques that can soften the effect?

Brian: First of all I'd be very careful putting out any of the statistics to your own employee base. It is very possible that they have not seen the statistics. Sending out an email saying something like, "***I know you've all seen that 80% of employees are looking for work but not here,***" – will just reinforce the problem you are trying to avoid.

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I would do things like the following:

- If you have a survey mechanism in place, begin highlighting the positive results from that survey – create your own social proof. If you have high satisfaction scores, highlight them. If you have low turnover – highlight that (be careful – cite how many stay, not how many leave.) Any facts and figures that promote how great an organization you are – put them out there and create your own buzz.
- If you don't have great statistics – look at trends. Highlight that satisfaction is up 20% or something like that. Use the positive aspects of your own data.

Now, if you think your well is already poisoned I'd:

- Start by casting doubt on the statistics like a good lawyer would do in a jury trial. Who's citing the statistics? Do they have a vested interest in the statistics being bad? Most of the numbers are coming from companies that will do better financially if the survey results are valid – so I'd start by planting seeds of doubt about the numbers themselves.
- Secondly – I'd teach employees about the principle of social proof. Educate them about how it works and how it manipulates their

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thinking. Once employees realize that the numbers are simply an influence technique – they will be less influenced by the technique.

Me: Thank you Brian...

There you go folks –from a **certified** influence trainer. (BTW – that's the [authority principle](#) in play.)

If you're worried about your own employee turnover/retention in light of these statistics, I suggest you take Brian's advice: get ahead of the curve by highlighting your own positive statistics – and if you have to – address the issue head on and sow the seeds of doubt.

And finally, show your employees how these types of stories play on human psychology.

Don't take my word for it – all the cool HR folks are doing it.

Paul Hebert writes for [FOT](#) and [I2I](#).

The Retention Puzzle

Recently, an HR colleague of mine was relating a story over lunch of the continuing trouble his organization experiences with new hires. They show up for Day 1 (New Employee Orientation) and then don't come back for Day 2. And this, or so it sounded like, is a regular occurrence. He indicated that the follow-up phone calls to find out "what happened?" are placed and the common answer is "oh, I don't think that job is for me; I didn't know you had so many rules."

Unrealistic and unprepared workforce? Possibly.

Inadequate recruitment process? Absolutely.

Avoidable turnover? Definitely.

So often, we who are HR professionals or business leaders or managers of large departments, work to align the puzzle pieces together in order to play the Retention Game. We try to measure it, often through some convoluted formulas, and we strive to reach some magic retention percentage. Sometimes we differentiate between turnover and retention; as if there's some sort of magic square that will TRULY give us a real sense of what's going on in our workplace. We may have a portion of our bonus or incentive pay based on hitting that number – and some of us may even be in

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fear of losing our jobs if the retention percentage falls below a certain number.

So we measure and we calculate. We put plans in place and we talk endlessly, while slicing and dicing the data. Is our turnover voluntary or involuntary? Are we retaining the right people? Is the turnover a problem by position? By department or job or function? By manager? And who OWNS retention/turnover? Many organizations seem to think it's Human Resources. Is it?

The bottom-line

Turnover has associated costs. The dollars we spend on recruitment and training are a direct expense. And savvy HR professionals are tracking productivity spend – what is the financial burden of an un-trained or new employee during a specified timeframe before they're fully productive... 3 months? 6 months? A year?

And if there's a continual churn of employees, this can lead to a lack of sufficient staff to complete the basic and essential functions of a company – leading to dissatisfaction, burnout, frustration and just plain anger amongst the employees who remain. The employees who remain may themselves become less productive and eventually, join their recently departed brethren by adding to the turnover number.

And what about the impact to customer satisfaction? Dissatisfaction can be an unfortunate result whether one's customers are high-paying corporate

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clients or the regular visitors to your local yogurt shop. There are numerous studies that have linked high turnover in health care facilities to reduced patient outcomes. And service-industry businesses, notorious for high-turnover, need to realize that their regular customers enjoy consistency in staff and don't enjoy seeing a new face every-time they pull through the drive-up window. Can that customer satisfaction be measured as a piece of the retention puzzle? It sure can – and is a factor that needs to be considered.

What's Causing the Turnover?

We realize that not all turnover is bad. Sometimes, employees have a natural shelf-life and the turnover is expected and may be even good, or certainly acceptable. Joe who's retiring; Betty who's reached the top of her pay grade, wants to earn more money but doesn't understand that the company's compensation structure is not based on merely providing automatic pay increases based on length-of service. And Carl who complains, causes dissent and is just plain unhappy – boy, don't we all rejoice when Carl leaves our organizations?

But for the most part, we dislike turnover and seek to understand and prevent it. And while there are numerous ways that turnover can be tracked and analyzed, there are some fairly basic questions that one can start with:

- When does the turnover occur? If it's occurring on day 1 (as in the example above), that speaks to an inefficient recruiting process.

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- What are the working conditions? Are there basic working conditions, inherent in the job, that have been downplayed or minimized in order to placate new hires/existing employees? Things such as scheduling or hours required to work or expectations for conduct/behavior that are specific to the organization? Perhaps employees have become frustrated due to lack of clarity in some of these general areas.
- Is the job what the employee was led to believe it would be? Were things miscommunicated about the nature of the job? Is there a mismatch between the work and the employee? It's possible this was a poor hire in the first place (not a poor candidate... a mismatch). This could range from job tasks to salary/compensation structure. Perhaps the employee was led to believe that pay could be \$yy (i.e. down-the-road), yet their pay continues to be \$xx.
- And what about the culture of the organization/location? Ineffective managers, too many silos and lack of communication are just some of the reasons an employee may choose to leave.

Who OWNS Retention?

Some will argue that turnover and retention initiatives are solely the responsibility of the Human Resources staff. HR Managers and corporate recruiters have turnover metrics tied to their yearly bonus plans (*as frustrating as time-to-fill being tied to them when the Hiring Managers are involved... but that's another subject*).

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And while HR has responsibility for items that lead to employee satisfaction (benefits, compensation, aspects of culture and related programs), sometimes there are other forces at work, outside the HR domain, that impede HR's ability to effectively manage retention/turnover.

A number of years ago I interviewed for an HR position in the banking industry. Needless to say, the bulk of their positions were service-oriented; tellers, personal bankers and others who worked on the front-lines, directly dealing with the customers. This institution was known in the industry for paying starting wages, for these positions, that were the lowest of any in the market. During the course of the interview process, I met with the President and I asked him about turnover (it was very high) and for information on primary causes of turnover. He readily admitted that turnover was high and primarily due to the low wage – but he stated that it was OK and they built it into their model and welcomed high turnover because their belief was it cost less to replace/hire/train new employees than to pay high wages to retain experienced staff. They welcomed turnover and WANTED it.

I guess that's one way to tackle the Puzzle.

Robin Schooling writes at [HR Schoolhouse](#).

Employee Retention—Working at it Every Day

Employee Retention, it is supposed to be a good thing. When I hear the word retention, it makes me think of attorneys and – retainers. If an attorney is retained, you either pay to use their services, or you pay to keep them available so you can use them. So now back to employee retention; we do pay them and hopefully they stick around. That is the premise, you want to keep them around – or do you? This was a subject me and my Project Social partner Laura Schroeder discussed last week. You can read [her take on the matter here](#).

Now regarding employee retention, Jack Welch, former CEO of G.E. felt that, at a minimum, 10% of workforce needed to leave every year. Now, this theory did get Jack and his company in a little hot water. Even so, SHRM must have tacitly endorsed this, as they had Jack as an opening speaker in 2009 in New Orleans. So some turnover can't be all bad, and there is going to be a certain amount of turnover no matter what. Employees will move, leave, graduate, quit to care for loved ones, die and/or whatever else you can imagine.

So with all of that out of the way it boils down to what are you doing to keep most of your better employees from jumping ship? For the last several years, the economy has been in the doldrums and very few people have left any job because there were so few to move to. But now some of the soothsayers are prognosticating that when, the economy turns around, and

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it will, *Katy bar the door*. The theory is that all of the best talent will be stolen. It will be courted away from your business with more pay, better benefits, on-site daycare and employee massages.

Now there are some of us employers who really have not been able to land the top tier talent. For example: my son who graduated last year with a B.S. in M.E. told me that Microsoft visited his campus and was only interested in talking to the top 10 in the class. (*That may be factually inaccurate, but suffice it to say they set the bar pretty high.*) I have never had a swing at those kids, or employees of that caliber. Our organization has had to settle for the kids with a 3.0 who have a well rounded balanced life and are not expecting the world's treasure's at their feet.

Ever since these folks, the 3.0 ers, just like all of our employees, have come to work for our Company we have tried to treat them with respect and provide them with the best pay and benefits our Company can afford. That's all we can do. We will continue to do so. If this doesn't keep our "B" level talent then I guess we will have to move down to "B-" or "C+" talent. We can't give the store away and will never have the resources of Microsoft of Exxon.

We will hire the people who wish to work at our Company and keep them as long as they want to stay. I hope this is for a long time. I am sure that any employer who treats their staff fairly, pays them a fair market based wage and offers reasonable benefits, will in-turn keep most of their best folks.

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Here is the **takeaway** *Focus on what you do control TODAY – and how you and your Company treat people EVERYDAY.* Too much time spend worrying about what could be is simply wasted effort.

Dave Ryan writes at [HR Official](#).

Employee Snow Storms

With the new year beginning, I started thinking about what the year might hold for the workplace and employees. Well, I'll be honest; I was really thinking about snow and skiing. Those two are at least fun — I know, I know. Unless you have to get on the roof with the hairdryer to de-ice the gutters before the second storm hits and the snow wrecks the house (true story). Been there, done that. Sunny Florida beckoned. I went. Still miss snow, though.

But it did get me thinking about employees and their needs. There's this old adage that says, red sky at night, sailors' delight; red sky at morning sailors take warning. Meteorologists and sailors alike know that a red dawn means high water content from an approaching low pressure system. Simply put, a [snow] storm is brewing.

Well, we have a red dawn coming. Employers have enjoyed loyalty from their workforce, especially with the down economy. While 2010 may still be a downer, things seem to be looking up job-wise, which means that employees will soon be on the move again. There's a tempest coming and with it new work ethics, attitudes and priorities. It's the perfect storm. But, in spite of record unemployment, a dismal economy, and Gen Y entering the workforce, employees still have the same expectations they always did. [Spherion](#) points out in its 2009 Emerging Workforce Study that despite the significant change workers have witnessed over the past few

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years, there is surprisingly little change in how they perceive the employment relationship. While people may stay at an organization because the current economy demands they do so, holding a job and being motivated in that position are two vastly different things.

So, how can organizations prepare for the stormy employer-employee relationship in 2010? Three things: 1) concentrate on the social-emotional connection, 2) offer developmental opportunities that link to the organizational mission, and 3) take advantage of social media.

Focus on the social-emotional connection. One of the greatest causes of misery for employees is the feeling that the organization they work for isn't interested in who they are and what goes on in their lives. Combat this by training supervisors in social-emotional intelligence. No matter what the business climate, the generation of the worker, or the technology available, **all** people want to feel important. The Hawthorne Studies of 1924 found that if managers paid more attention and cared about employees, it raised morale and increased productivity. That still holds true today: a recent [worldwide engagement study](#) that found that organizations with the highest percent of motivated employees increased income 19% and earnings per share 28%. Creating the social-emotional connection also means that basic HR programs have to be in place to meet employee needs. This includes having a decent compensation and benefits package, providing accommodations for the disabled; offering flexible work

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arrangements, establishing special-interest networks, and presenting good career prospects.

Provide developmental opportunities that link to the organization's mission and vision. The “perfect storm” of the emerging employment contract implies that there will never be job security, that employment will be contingent on added value, and that workers have the right to demand the freedom and resources to do their jobs well. So, if workers are to add value, help them by providing ample opportunity to improve skills and capabilities. There are many ways to do this such as through education and training, job enrichment or enlargement, coaching and feedback.

Take advantage of social media. Social media is the new way of connecting and tech-savvy workers are using it to keep in touch with friends and family, share information, surf for a new job, and provide opinions on their work and their workplace. Social media is a virtual conversation and because of this, business is now a virtual conversation. With the advent of social media, an organization's brand or reputation can be literally one comment away from disaster – from a Twitter blurb, Facebook post or Epinions review. Someone out there is talking about the organization and they can say whatever it is they want. What you can do though, is help manage the conversation.

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Managing the conversation however, does not mean telling employees what to say. It means creating an authentic atmosphere where people can initiate a conversation. In the era of business transparency, empowering people to tell the truth can be risky, but also rewarding. Think about how your organization can use social media to its advantage. Introduce rules of engagement for employees and encourage them participate with an understanding of those rules. Use social connections to share information about the company – create organization Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, or company wikis and blogs where people can share information, celebrate accomplishments, trade opinions. If something bad pops up, have a person in the organization accountable for responding to it appropriately. Just keep the conversation going.

While workers may be staying in their respective jobs due to the economy, if the relationship is not a strong one – or is abused – when the storm is over, employees will leave for greener pastures. Whether it's today or tomorrow, organizations that invest in their people will find that their people will invest in them.

Heather Vogel is the author of [HR Whisperer](#).

Retention: Rhymes with Detention

We've all heard the buzz about retention. There's a war for talent on. Your best talent is at risk. Replacing employees is expensive. Yada, yada, yada.

Don't get me wrong, retention's important. But while my project social partner Dave Ryan and I were chatting about retention last week, the words 'rhymes with detention' just popped into my head.

If you think about it, there's a fine line of distinction between the two words: To retain someone means you secure them for possible future use. To detain someone means you hold them back. In both cases you're hanging onto someone or something for your own purposes, but detention implies confinement.

Typical retention policies focus on rewards but rewards alone can leave employees feeling trapped, for example if they receive seniority pay that they can't match somewhere else. If you don't also offer good management and some sort of career development you may be detaining employees rather than retaining them.

Depending on the circumstances an unmotivated but adequately performing employee may be better than no one. But if you're detaining people instead of retaining them, chances are you've got a performance gap that's impacting your bottom line.

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Or, a better way of putting it might be that you have an opportunity to increase shareholder value by closing that gap. So, what you really need is an **engagement** policy because engaged employees are more likely stick around and make you glad they did.

Where to begin? Dave Ryan wrote a [great post](#) about retention that I highly recommend. And don't miss the free [eBook on Engagement](#) in this same series.

Bottom line:

Hire the best people you can.

Treat them with respect.

Give them opportunities to learn.

Don't micromanage.

Pay fairly.

Reward excellence.

Say thank you.

Lighten up.

Laura Schroeder is the author of [Working Girl](#).

Talent Management: Guess What? It's All About the Talent

When I hear the term Talent Management, I often hear it talked about in the context of recruiting and sourcing. Now I may be completely off, but to me, Talent Management is much more than just finding people for the role. It's much more than finding the RIGHT people for a company to fill a job. Talent management is more than just recruiting. It is about how you interact, engage and build the people you have, to retain and develop them and even if they leave you, they will want to come back!

One definition I found was this: *Talent Management is a holistic approach to optimizing human capital, which enables an organization to drive short- and long-term results by building culture, engagement, capability, and capacity through integrated talent acquisition, development, and deployment processes that are aligned to business goals.*

Umm yeah... right. My eyes roll to the back of my head like when I was in my human psychology & anthropology classes' freshman year.

There are many debates within the circles of HR on how you should *Manage Talent*. Here is what Talent Management is to me.

Talent Management = Sourcing: All you are doing is finding ways to differentiate you from the competition. Just like a candidate, you are defining and setting up how you will identify, search and contact talent. At the same time, maybe subconsciously you are projecting that beautiful and trendy word called a 'brand' that will attract the best, the brightest and help

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you somehow keep them! At the beginning of hiring, it is a sourcing strategy. You outline responsibilities; define the steps, & plans for contingencies. You also define what success looks like. Your methods become a toolkit that will set your approach and allow you to be flexible. However, this doesn't mean you should just network or source to fill orders, meet deadlines or be "on to the next one."

Talent Management = Talent Development: If you get the best and the brightest and ignore their need for development after they arrive, you lose the potential you once had. Talent development happens within performance management and consulting. It works when you help an individual identify and assess their needs in order for them to be prepared in performing their responsibilities to the company. By identifying where they are, where they need to be and the gaps that exist; you will keep them from or allow them to succeed. By identifying the appropriate tools and experiences for that individual, you better position the current talent to reach their full potential and contribute to the value and bottom line. This makes everyone's job much easier ~ at least in theory.

Talent Management = Succession Planning: This simply means that an organization identifies key roles that need to be filled and the people that need to fill them when the time is right. It is preparing people and positions, getting them ready for a transition and change; not just with the possible change of a person in a position but also within the organization.

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I talked to a colleague the other day and I think that there is a lack of this happening. In the current economy you would think that planning for possibility of replacement of key roles would be essential. That you would create opportunities for cross-training, identify people within the company that could fill the pipeline for unforeseen or potential. Yet with budgets dwindling and the focus being on surviving, many are forgetting that they may be surviving now, but when they get out of the trenches, will they thrive?

Talent Management = Saying what you mean, mean what you say: If you boast a great brand. Preach an awesome culture and praise what the organization will do for current and potential employees... and then don't deliver... you not only hurt the company but also your own reputation. Now is a time where people want and appreciate honesty. Just as you are trying to make a well informed decision from the talent pool you have at your disposal, the candidates are also selecting you based on the promises you keep and the lies you tell.

Talent Management = Leadership: All of leadership, from the hiring manager and recruiter to the department head and CEO need to walk the walk, talk the talk and be ready to show that if need be, they will run with the heard to do the work that needs to be done to help make everyone be successful.

Above all Talent Management = People: In the end, it's about people. I mean, you're not managing androids, recruiting machines or training dogs. You are maximizing an individual's potential to help you and the

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organization maximizes results! Don't just be about the money they make for you. Don't just hire them, forget them and then move *On to the Next One...*

Benjamin McCall is the author of [RethinkHR](#).

What You Might Do to Keep Your Talent

Businesses are always looking for ways to improve upon retention, regardless of how well the numbers appear. Have you, your HR organization, or individual managers reviewed ways to improve upon your retention figures?

One important note to begin, regardless of how desired your company is (like Google) that does not make every person a match for your company. Some people just do not work out and that will happen forever. So what are a few ideas your company may consider to improve retention? Below are 5 (five) ideas to get you thinking:

Manager Reviews

An important topic from 2 (two) perspectives. First, put the right people into management positions. Let's face it, being a manager isn't for everyone and there is nothing wrong with that! Managers need to be trained and provided with tools to allow them to be successful. But don't put someone into this role who isn't equipped to make others grow, succeed, learn and improve. Second, allow employees to provide candid feedback, a 360 is a nice tool to use. This review will answer two potential concerns; (1) how are managers effectiveness with their group and (2) are their areas of concern that arose from the team that could be a reason for them leaving. Get ahead of the curve and understand what is happening on a micro-level.

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Corporate Culture

Culture is an important part of any company. Negative culture is sure to either chase or scare talent away. If your company is progressive that is an important consideration. What about intangibles such as team outings, company sponsored events, free coffee, on-site cafeteria, healthy living programs, and so many other avenues to think about. If employees enjoy coming to the office, enjoy who they work with (and for), and feel the company is there for them... there is still something to be said for these considerations.

Benefits

In an age of benefit discussions, like Obama-care, benefits remain a selling point. Health care is a hot-button and is one topic that always is discussed in the hiring process. If your company has a strong health plan, I bet it is easier to attract talent in the offer stages (presuming the company and work are interesting as well). But what if your company has a poor health plan? Do you find it something you have to sell around? I bet so. I also bet that strong health packages are an encouragement to retain employees as well.

Physical Work Environment

This overlaps the “company culture” topic a little. Do employees have a cube or an office? Is collaboration encouraged? Is your company in a desirable location? Minor enhancements to an office can make a huge impact on your employees.

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Actual Work

Are your employees interested and challenged with their day-to-day activities. Do you hear excitement when they talk about their job? If any employee is not happy with what they are doing, that is a sure clue that talent may be leaving soon. Take a proactive approach to learning how motivated and interested your employees are, showing interest is just the starting point to being interested in your workforce.

Are all of these realistic for your company? Maybe, but as I said, these are just ideas to get you thinking.

The competition for talent will always be a priority for companies, and so will the challenge of retaining talent. How your company adapts will certainly be a part of this evolution and reflect into the metrics. Help make your company a company with a #winning retention mentality.

Keith McIlvane is the author of [HR Farmer](#).

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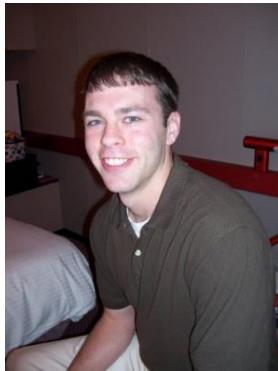
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Hopefully you've *retained* some of what you learned in this guide. What now?

You have a few things to do.

- First, share [this book](#) with anyone who might find some value in its contents. It doesn't help anyone if it's not being read, digested, and put into action!
- Second, look back through any notes you might have made while reading and see what ideas you can start exploring in your own organization. I'd enjoy hearing if you were able to put some of these ideas in motion!
- And finally, keep your eyes peeled for [more guides](#) coming throughout the year. The easiest way to do that is to [subscribe for free email updates](#) so you never miss a thing.

If you enjoyed this guide at all, I'd love to hear about it. My contact info is below. Have a topic you'd like to see covered a future guide? Let me know!



Rock it,

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