

10 Tips for Retaining Top Talent



Results Through
Strategic Human Capital Development



By Donna de St. Aubin

There is no doubt the financial services industry has been facing some of its biggest challenges in a long time. Among the many issues being faced today, Talent Retention remains near the top of the list. Good organizations work hard at keeping their best people. In tough times it is always the best people that are quickly recruited to another firm. How can we retain our best talent during these turbulent times? Here are ten factors that might help:

1. **Have a Retention Strategy.** Retention does not just happen, success results when organizations plan and implement their strategy for retention at all levels. In fact, in the 2007-2008 Global Workforce Study conducted by Towers Perrin the top retention drivers differ significantly from the top attraction drivers. For example: competitive base pay is an attractor while the company's reputation as a great place to work is a top retention driver. Challenging work is an attractor while having a good relationship with the supervisor is a top retention driver. Being a convenient work location is an attractor while understanding the potential career track within the organization is a retention driver.

It is important to focus on what the real ways are to retain the talent we want and need to maintain the business success that we have achieved or are working toward.

2. **Emotional Intelligence.** Hire the candidates that fit the job specifications as well as the culture of the organization. Competitive edge stems from the skills of your talent but retention stems from the correct cultural fit. When people are truly aligned with the mission and values of the organization they are more likely to stay rather than look for a better match elsewhere.
3. **Opportunities for Advancement.** Providing opportunities for individual growth and career development on and off the job are powerful incentives for individuals to stay onboard. When people know that they can grow and advance, they are more likely to want to achieve where they have already invested time and performance. Make sure you remind top employees about the potential opportunities that exist for them given continued performance and growth.

4. **Recognition and Reward System.** Compensation is clearly not the number one reason organizations retain talent, but it is essential that you are competitive and fair when it comes to compensation and benefits. Internal equity with those who are doing similar work and performance is important. When people feel they are compensated appropriately compared to others, they will feel better about staying.
5. **Communication.** People love to be kept informed. Share the good news as well as the bad with your employees. Talk to them and field questions so they really feel they have a voice and that you listen and care. Feedback is essential.
6. **Retention Surveys.** Measure employee's feelings by conducting retention surveys on a regular basis. Issues will surface and enable you to intervene and save talent that may otherwise be lost.
7. **Company Mission and Values.** Clarification of what you are as a company and where you are headed helps to retain the right talent. Make sure your employees know and buy into your mission and values and are portraying your intended image. It is much easier to retain someone who is committed to the mission and the values than someone who is just looking for a place to hang their hat.
8. **Leadership.** Stability at the top filters down to feelings of security, trust and mutual respect for the entire organization. Leaders can and should attract and retain the best possible talent and they should understand their role in that process.
9. **Manage Accountability for Turnover.** An individual's direct manager has the most impact on employee turnover. It is therefore, essential to hire, train and develop managers that are effective at retaining top talent. Rewarding managers with low turnover rates and letting those managers mentor others will improve retention.
10. **Social Responsibility.** A particularly effective way to cement an employee's commitment to the organization is to provide opportunities to serve as an external ambassador of the corporation, through such activities as serving on the board of a community, charitable or arts organization, or being appointed to a professional task force. When the employee is seen as a visible representative of the organization and finds fulfillment in serving in an external leadership role, the person is less likely to jump ship.

Retention within your organization can be benchmarked by industry standards but the best companies set their own standards and strive to constantly improve their employee retention. As the financial services industry continues to navigate through this difficult period, it is important to focus on your best talent and implement your own retention strategy. These ten tips should help pave the way.

About the author



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