



A Complete Guide To

Employee Retention

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Introduction

You have attracted and hired the top talent for your business...now you need to make sure they stay! In order to do this, you must keep your employees engaged, satisfied and on track with their career path as they grow and develop within your company.

High employee turnover rates can be detrimental to the success of your company, damaging your business revenue as well as your company culture and brand. Unfortunately, in a competitive candidate driven market, it is more prevalent than ever. According to **CIPD's Spring 2019 Labour Market Outlook**, **33% of employers state that it has become more difficult to retain employees compared to previous years.**

These high turnover rates may be due to global talent shortages in numerous industries, as well as the different values and requirements of the new generation of employees entering the workforce. Because of this, an increasing number of companies are now putting a much greater focus on their retention strategies.

Employee retention trends are becoming increasingly focused on strong company cultures, frequent feedback and consistent development. When employees have multiple job options at their fingertips, it is essential to ensure that yours is the most valuable.

Keep your top talent engaged, motivated and satisfied by focusing on these six areas outlined in our complete guide to employee retention:

1. **Company Culture**
2. **Onboarding and the Probation Period**
3. **Effective Performance Management**
4. **Employee Development**
5. **Learning and Development**
6. **Turnover and Exit Interviews**

Contents

1. Company Culture **5**

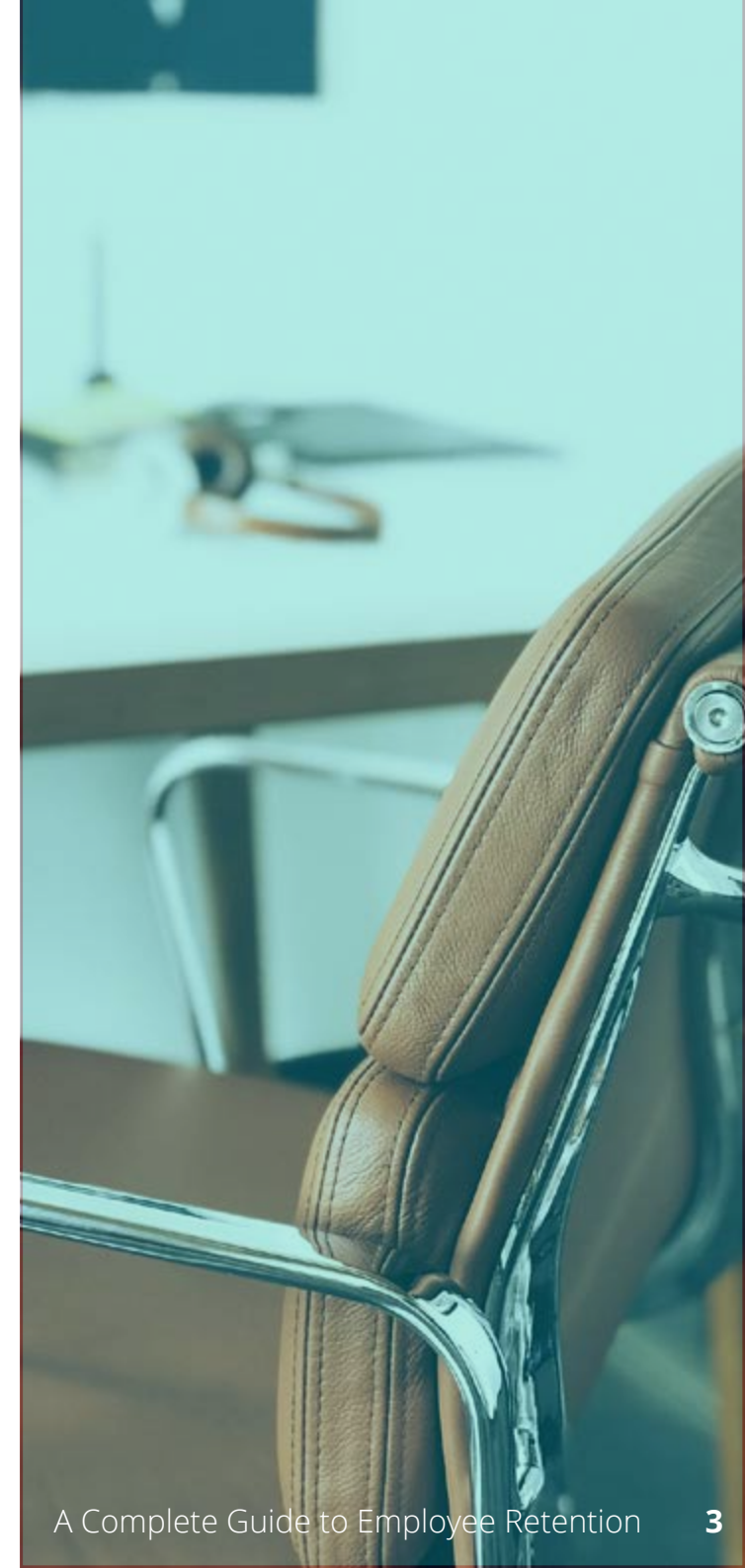
Create a Company Culture That Reflects Your Vision, Purpose and Values.....	6
How to Implement and Promote Your Culture.....	7
Companies Doing Company Culture Right.....	8
A Look at the Benefits That Benefit.....	9
How to Create a Well-being Strategy for All.....	10
Encouraging Diversity & Inclusion.....	11

2. Onboarding & The Probation Period **12**

Create a Repeatable Onboarding Checklist	13
Training Programmes to Set New Employees up for Success	14
Ensuring an Employee Fits in.....	15
1, 3 and 6 Month Onboarding Plan	16
Continuous Monitoring and Clear Milestones	17
Make Employees Feel Valued	18

3. Effective Performance Management **19**

Annual vs. Ongoing Feedback	20
How to Deal with Underperforming Employees.....	21



Promoting Employee Innovation and Contribution	22
How to Deal with Employee Burnout	23

4. Employee Development **24**

Managers vs. Earners - Which are your employees?	25
Establishing Clear Career Pathways.....	26
Programmes to Support Career Advancement	27
Successful Succession Planning.....	28

5. Learning & Development **29**

The Primary Objective of Learning and Development: Availability & Accessibility	30
L&D... it's for millennials	31
L&D isn't a One-Size-Fits-All Initiative	32

6. Turnover & Exit Interviews **33**

Make the Most of Turnover	34
The Art of Letting Go: How to Deal with Firing Employees	35
Create an Exit Interview Strategy to Benefit All.....	36
Review Your Recruitment Strategy: Are You Hiring the Right People to Begin With?.....	37
The Cost of Replacing an Employee.....	38

1. Company Culture

An appealing company culture is essential for attracting and retaining top talent. However, according to a study by **Deloitte**, **87% of companies say that culture and engagement are their top challenges**. Factors such as generational gaps and the ever-changing nature of work environments can make creating an attractive company culture difficult.

A strong company culture is directly linked to employee engagement, as well as employee retention. In fact, **employees that are engaged with their company culture are 59% less likely to look for a new job in the next 12 months**, according to a **Gallup** study.

A lot goes into fostering a culture within your company which is engaging and inclusive for employees. In order to help you engage and retain employees at your workplace, we've put together this complete outline on how to create a winning company culture.



Create a Company Culture That Reflects Your Vision, Purpose and Values

According to [Forbes](#) culture is the most important aspect of retaining top talent. However, you must first establish a company culture that reflects your business and the kind of employees you want to attract and retain.

There is a strong correlation between employees who feel happy and valued at work and those that say their company has a strong culture, according to [Deloitte](#). You can determine what makes your employees feel valued by regularly collecting employee feedback and data.

According to [Teresa Hassara](#), the head of workplace solutions at [MassMutual](#), to create a strong culture you need to understand:

- Who your employees and candidates are
- What motivates and excites them about their roles
- Why they chose to work for your company
- What their value sets are
- What their challenges are

When deciding what type of company culture you wish to create, you also need to ask yourself: “What are the aligned values, beliefs, behaviours and experiences that make up my company and its environment?”

You should have a clear idea of the purpose and values that matter to you and your business and always keep the mission statement of your company in mind during every stage of the process of creating your company culture. This will help you create a company culture that aligns with your employer brand and attracts and retains the best talent for your individual organisation.



How to Implement and Promote Your Culture

According to [Silicon Republic](#), good company culture trickles down from the top of the organisation. Managers, leaders and CEOs must be the first employees to illustrate a positive culture in the workplace.

In order to ensure your company's culture is inclusive and attractive to both current and potential employees, communication is key. Listen to what matters to your employees most, and be ready to accept feedback. Similarly, you shouldn't be shy in giving feedback to your team when they've done a good job.

Make sure that your company culture suits not just some, but all of your employees. Don't be afraid to embrace the diverse ideas and backgrounds of your team.

Promoting your company culture is equally as important as maintaining it. Some of the best ways of effectively promoting your company culture are:

1. Providing ongoing and informative company culture updates
2. Hosting regular breakfast briefings

3. Carrying out regular culture check ins
4. Holding company awards or other culture-related events
5. Distributing branded products and materials which promote company culture

Another important (and simple) way to do this is to make sure your social media presence and website's career page accurately and positively reflects the overall culture of your company.

To give an insight into your company, share pictures and blog posts of the achievements and activities of your team, and encourage your employees to speak up about the aspects of the culture that they love. Once you have implemented a winning company culture, your employees should want to shout about it!

Companies Doing Company Culture Right

HILTON HOTELS

Hilton Hotel has been named both as one of **the 100 Best Places to Work** and **one of the 100 Best Workplaces for Millennials** by **Fortune**. Hilton Chief Human Resource Officer Matt Schuyler says that when it comes to creating a great company culture, *“The first strategic objective is a great global culture around mission, vision and values.”* Those values include Hospitality, Integrity, Leadership, Teamwork and Ownership.

As a way of showing “hospitality” to its employees, the company held a day in the run up to its busy season during which employees at the head office were treated to a visit from some of the finest food trucks in Washington D.C. This kind of token of gratitude makes employees feel their hard work is being noticed – and appreciated.

Schuyler also recognises the importance of keeping company values in mind throughout the recruiting process. “We recruit for our values. We screen for those when hiring, check for those when you’re here and are constantly reminding people of those”

For Matt Schuyler and Hilton, the secret to a successful company culture is ensuring that the company’s values and vision are constantly being considered and represented in day-to-day life at work.

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

A Warrior Spirit, a Servant’s Heart, and a Fun-LUVing Attitude. This is “The Southwest Way” which employees are encouraged to embody. **Southwest Airlines** has an attitude that treating its employees well leads to happier customers. This is why it puts such a high value on having a great company culture. It’s a theory that clearly has merit: **Southwest boasts an extremely low voluntary turnover rate of 4%, not to mention the lowest number of customer complaints in the industry.**

Some of the ways that Southwest keeps its employees happy are through “culture blitzes” during which a Culture Services team visits an airport and puts on events and provides food for the employees there; and making sure that employees and their managers are notified when they have been given a compliment.

The mission of Southwest Airlines is “dedication to the highest quality of Customer Service delivered with a sense of warmth, friendliness, individual pride, and Company Spirit.” It’s this “company spirit” that makes Southwest such a great place to work.

A Look at the Benefits That Benefit

A survey by the **Employee Benefit Research Institute** found that there is a strong correlation between great benefits and higher levels of employee satisfaction and morale. In fact, 59% of respondents who reported being extremely satisfied with their benefits were also extremely satisfied with their jobs.

Your benefits shouldn't just be trendy perks that look good on a job description; they should be chosen specifically to increase the happiness of your employees and align with your company values and culture.

The most important consideration when creating a benefits package are your employees. What is the gender and age breakdown of your overall workforce? If you have a particularly diverse team, the benefits you offer should reflect this. **Ikea** tailors its workspaces to its staff, offering lactation areas, prayer rooms and sometimes gyms to suit the needs of its employees.

Some examples of benefits that can be useful for everyone, regardless of age, gender or religion are healthcare coverage, sabbatical programmes or offering a wellness stipend.

Glassdoor found that benefits which employees currently

value the most are flexible hours, more holiday time and more remote working options.

If you have a slightly older staff, some benefits you may want to consider are

- Offering attractive pre-retirement options and savings plans
- Presenting the option of shorter shifts
- Supplementing the cost of expensive medication

While your younger employees may prefer

- A more relaxed dress code
- A monthly budget for staff get-togethers
- Robust e-learning and development opportunities

How to Create a Well-being Strategy for All

Employee engagement in workplace wellness programmes is directly linked to employee retention, according to a study by **Optum**. When creating a wellness programme, keep in mind that what is important to millennials, for example, might not be as relevant for Baby Boomers. **Offer a diverse range of wellness perks so there is something for everybody and nobody is overlooked.**

HubSpot suggests multiple opportunities to create a stronger workplace wellness programme, such as:

- Standing desks
- Lunchtime yoga sessions
- Healthy snacks
- Nutrition counseling

Additionally, more and more companies are turning to technology to establish a well-being strategy that effectively engages their employees. Companies that offer the **Virgin Pulse** wellness app, for example, noticed that **employee engagement had increased by 65%. They also noticed that their turnover rates had decreased by 32%.**

Johnson & Johnson redesigned its wellness program to make it less clinical and more lifestyle-oriented, and in doing so **managed to achieve 90% employee participation.** **L.L. Bean** encourages employees in different locations **to design their own wellness initiatives** relevant to their department's needs.

Send out an employee survey to identify what out a survey to employees, to identify what the most sought after perks or packages might be. Every workplace is different, so make sure any wellness initiatives you offer suit the unique needs of yours.

Encouraging Diversity & Inclusion

According to a survey by [Glassdoor](#), 67% of respondents consider diversity to be an important factor when choosing an employer. However, many employers with diversity policies still have trouble retaining the candidates they attract because they don't focus on inclusion once the employee is hired.

According to [HubSpot](#), **“culture fit” does not mean that a new hire looks, thinks or acts like you and your current team.** During the hiring process, employers should instead **think of culture fit as a “culture add.”** This is someone who can bring something new and diverse to your workplace, which can result in improved innovation and problem solving.

Diversity and inclusion is about more than just quotas or demographics, and shouldn't end at the hiring process. In order to embrace D&I in the workplace, people of different genders, ages and races must be treated equally, listened to and respected in a tangible way.

Technology company [Lenovo](#) has a number of initiatives and groups which champion minorities and those on the margins. Some of the programmes it offers include: Women in Lenovo Leadership, Black Leaders Achieving Success in Technology, Hispanics of Lenovo Association and New and Expectant Mothers Outreach, to name just a few.

At [T-Mobile](#), employees have the opportunity to participate in “Employee Network Groups” as well as local diversity and inclusion chapters across the country. **Retention rates were found to be higher with employees who actively participated in the company's diversity and inclusion network.**

Consider creating a Diversity and Inclusion council or committee in your workplace. This will ensure everyone is held accountable and actively encouraged to promote D&I.

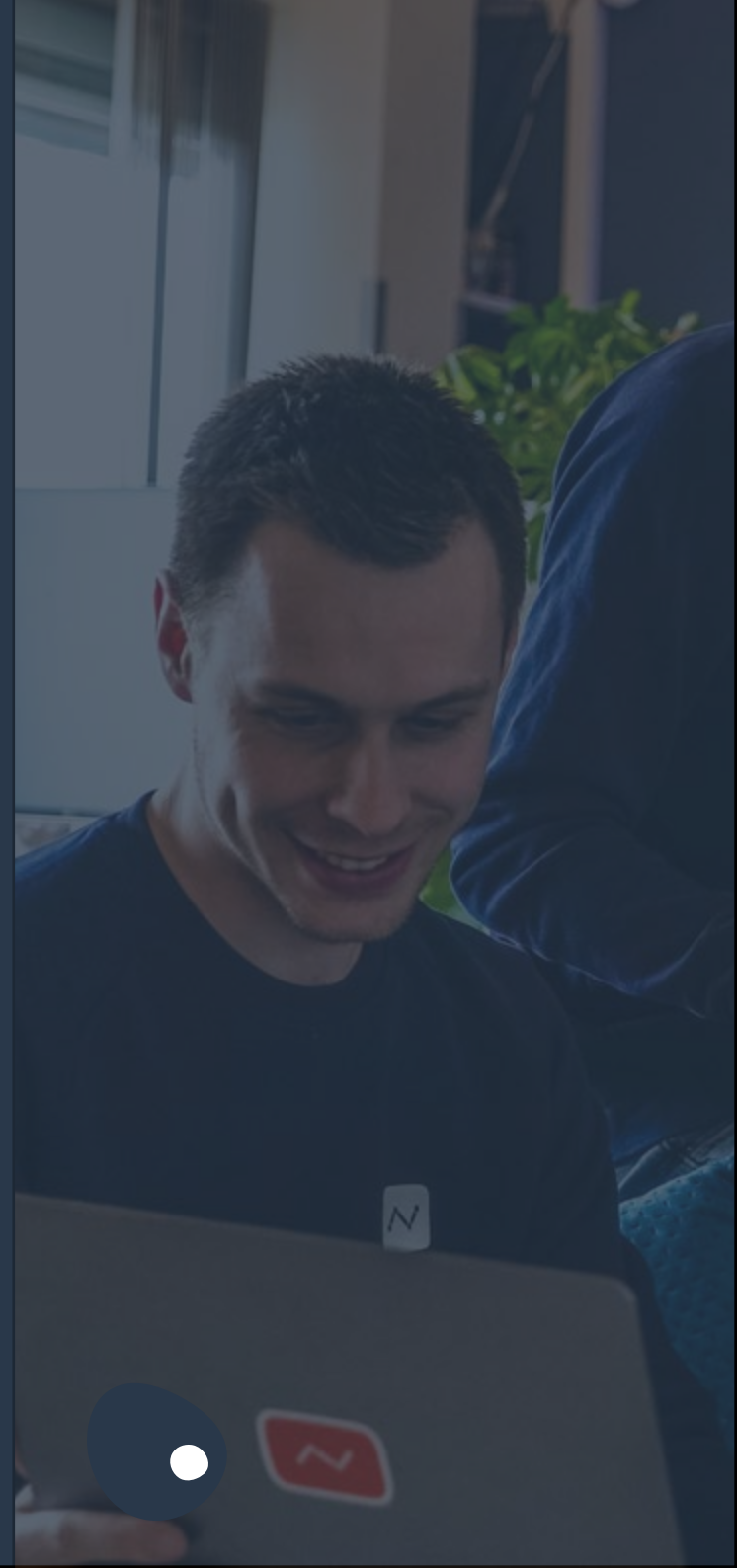
While D&I is about more than just statistics, they're a good place to start. Post your employee demographics on your blog or company careers page. Being transparent about the gender, age and race breakdown of your company will motivate you to maintain a good mix.

2. Onboarding & The Probation Period

Approximately **20% of employee turnover happens within a new hire's first 45 days**, according to a **Jobvite report**. A highly effective onboarding process makes employees **18 times more likely to feel highly committed to their organisation**, and **33% more likely to be engaged with their work**, according to **BambooHR**.

According to Christine Marino, the Chief Revenue Officer at **Click Boarding**, **employees who participate in structured onboarding programmes are 69% more likely to stay with an organisation for three or more years.**

Having an effective onboarding process can lead to a decrease in employee turnover and help save you time and money. The importance of onboarding cannot be overstated, with that in mind we've created this complete guide to onboarding and the probation period in order to help you effectively retain your top talent for years to come.



Create a Repeatable Onboarding Checklist

Companies run the risk of wasting large sums of money – and an untold number of man-hours – on ineffective onboarding. Taking the time to create an onboarding plan or checklist for the department's direct manager that can easily be repeated with each new hire will help you to streamline your onboarding process and save you money and time in the long run.

PRE-BOARDING:

- Send a welcome email to your new employee. Include the start date, time, location and schedule for the first day, as well as the office dress code.
- Prepare the new employee's desk and equipment. Order any IT equipment and office supplies they may require, create their company email account, add them to the office or department calendar, order their business cards and provide an office key or ID card.
- Touch base with HR or the hiring team. Get the documents you will need for the new employee's first day, and ensure that they have completed any necessary background checks or tests.
- If possible, set up a coffee with the new employee before they start to answer any questions and put them at ease.

FIRST DAY:

- Go over paperwork and contracts. Discuss compensation, benefits, work policies, safety and security policies and your code of conduct. Sign any necessary forms, and provide the new hire with an employee handbook.
- Conduct a general job orientation. Provide a tour of the office and facilities, introduce the new employee to their colleagues, help them set up their desk and equipment

(if applicable) and explain how a typical day works at your company. This will give them an insight into your company culture.

- Have a meeting with a CEO or company leader. Go over your company's mission, values, goals and vision, and explain how your new employee fits in. This is a good opportunity to convey your employer brand.
- Schedule a formal one-on-one meeting. Review the job description, explain the employee's upcoming schedule, set goals for their first few months and discuss the employee's development plan.

FIRST WEEK:

- Check in with your new employee briefly every day to ensure that they are settling in okay.
- Assign them their first project on the job.
- Schedule necessary training sessions.
- Organise a social gathering to help them get to know everyone on the team.
- Hold a Lunch and Learn to make your employee feel welcome while communicating valuable information.
- Discuss parameters and requirements of probationary period.

Training Programmes to Set New Employees Up for Success

As Ben Peterson, the CEO of **BambooHR**, says, *“If you aren’t communicating what new hires are supposed to be doing and arming them with the tools to do it properly, you’re setting them up to fail.”*

It can take up to eight months for a new hire to become **fully productive**, according to an **Allied Workforce Mobility survey**. Onboarding, however, has been proven to greatly reduce time to productivity by training them on workplace expectations and procedures.

Overly intensive training during the first day or week can overwhelm your new hire, leaving them stressed and unsure about their new position. The best training practices for a new hire’s first week, according to **Michael Falcon** from **Prudential plc**, is to **share information necessary for their daily responsibilities through bite-sized, step-by-step tutorials**.

Video tutorials are very effective, as they are reliable and easily repeatable, and they can be broken into various segments.

This ensures that skills are taught in a consistent and timely way. What’s more, when **Microsoft made the switch from classroom training to video learning, per-employee costs on those events were almost 20 times lower**.

Online training programmes are becoming increasingly popular, and have the advantage of saving time and money, ensuring informational consistency and giving you the ability to digitally track your new employees progress.

Gamification is another big trend in employee training. This is a fun and engaging way of relaying information to employees and it’s success rates are hard to ignore: **The 2018 Gamification At Work Survey** found that **employees feel that gamification makes them more productive (87%), more engaged (84%) and happier (82%) at work**.



Ensuring an Employee Fits in

A **Columbia University study** found the likelihood of job turnover at an organisation with high company culture is a mere 13.9 percent, whereas the probability of job turnover in low company cultures is 48.4 percent.

One way to overcome this challenge is to prepare your team and ensure that once the new employee starts, you are actively helping them to fit in.

Before your new employee arrives for their first day, you should send an email to your current employees, updating them on the upcoming addition to your office. This email should state the new employee's job title, department, start date and time.

In this email, you can encourage your employees to reach out to the new hire, as well as include information about plans for a welcome event with the entire team. Use this welcome event to help the employee fit in immediately and organically. Organise a creative team building activity, such as a board game championship during lunch, a reservation at a local escape room or workplace bake-off.

On the employee's first day, you should also assign them a peer mentor within their department for their first few weeks on the job. This will provide your new hire with an experienced person to turn to with questions and go to lunch with. A mentor will also help the new employee:

- Learn the company structure & department organisation
- Understand workplace planning and scheduling
- Meet colleagues in a more organic way
- Embrace the company culture

According to the **Aberdeen Group**, **high-performing companies are more than twice as likely to assign a mentor during the onboarding process** than lower-performing companies.

General Electric implements professional development programmes that emphasise mentorship. Its Commercial Leadership Program, for example, boasts “active coaching throughout the program” according to GE it is the “premier entry level program for our sales organisation and the best way to develop and expose successful candidates to opportunities in sales and sales support at GE.”

In **Boeing's** rotational program, early-career professionals can experience work life in the business, engineering, HR or IT departments for approximately two years. During this time employees are paired with a mentor at the senior manager or executive level.

1, 3 and 6 Month Onboarding Plan

According to the **Aberdeen Group**, onboarding programmes that last less than a month are detrimental to employee retention. However, only **37%** of companies have onboarding programmes that are longer than a month.

The most effective onboarding programmes effectively relay information and incorporates activities, such as completing forms, introducing company culture and providing on-the-job training, over a few months. This elongated process maximises the programme's impact.

MONTH 1:

- Schedule regular meetings in order to provide feedback.
- Offer three areas of development and three areas of success.
- Conduct an employee onboarding survey.
- Review past and upcoming assignments.
- Assess what the employees wellbeing needs are and create a tailored wellness programme based on this.
- Ensure that the employee is on schedule with training and payroll.
- Develop on the employee career development goals that were established in the interview stage. Ask them what they would personally like to achieve in and outside of the company. Create a career development document.
- Inquire about their interests and values outside of work, and align their growth strategy accordingly.

MONTH 3:

- Schedule an informal performance review.
- Set performance goals, and check in with past goals.
- Evaluate engagement levels and reassess culture fit.
- Ask for feedback about the company and its onboarding process.

- Ask if they would be comfortable taking part in a video testimonial or writing a blog about their experience so far.
- Check in to see if their values are being represented and their wellness needs are being met.
- Check in on their training and development, allocating resources and plan where needed.
- Discuss the end of the employees probationary period.

MONTH 6:

- Conduct a formal performance review to determine whether probationary period requirements were fulfilled.
- Seek feedback on satisfaction with company culture and wellness initiatives.
- Go over previous goals, and set goals for the next 6 month period.
- Ensure that the employee has received all the required training.
- Conduct one-on-one to discuss culture, satisfaction with wellness programme, manager and peer feedback.
- Conduct a "stay interview" to understand why the employee wants to keep working for you, as this will assist with establishing your employer brand.
- Establish if their development and goals both personally and professionally are being met adequately.

Continuous Monitoring and Clear Milestones

A **HCI report** found that most organisations who stop their onboarding process after the first week leave new hires feeling confused, discouraged, and lacking in resources. According to **SHRM**, however, the end of the first year is when onboarding transitions into employee retention and satisfaction.

For example, in order to ensure that its employees are fully satisfied with their new jobs, **IBM** has a two-year online learning tool that provides information about company values, strategy, tools and resources necessary for new employees to be successful.

Close monitoring during the employee's probationary period is essential, but even after one year, you should continue to monitor your new employee by:

- Conducting performance reviews--preferably more frequently and informally.
- Discussing previous goals and projects and setting new plans for the upcoming year.
- Outlining a long-term career development plan.
- Reviewing compensation and raise policies.
- Receiving feedback through surveys.

These surveys should give you insight about how your employee is adjusting to the company, as well as how you can improve the onboarding experiences of future hires.

A **PwC** survey found nearly **60% of survey respondents reported that they would like feedback on a daily or weekly basis – a number that increased to 72% for employees under age 30**. Millennials in the workplace are actively seeking more continuous feedback and reviews.

Ask your employees what they think their biggest accomplishment was this week or month, and what they could have possibly done better. Check if there are any particular resources they feel would help them to overcome any challenges they may have. Discussing these things can give you and your employee important insight, and make them feel listened to and valued.

Continuous monitoring and communication with employees is essential in order to ensure they are achieving their career goals and are satisfied with their job. This, in turn, will lead to higher levels of engagement and retention.

Make Employees Feel Valued

Increased job satisfaction can lead to improved performance and reduced turnover. As well as this, employees who feel valued are more likely to compliment and praise their employer, which enhances your employer brand.

Many companies are getting creative to make their new hires feel valued during the onboarding process. For example, **LinkedIn** provides employees with a swag bag suited to their personal interests on their first day. Additionally, **Birchbox** decorates a new employee's desk with a welcome flag.

According to **Fast Company**, you can also make a new employee feel valued by:

- Having a welcome basket ready, which can be filled with office supplies, snacks, business cards, company branded items and an introduction card from the team.
- Commemorating the new employee's first week or month, whether through a celebratory email, a handwritten letter or a team lunch.
- Implementing an open-door policy and making it known to the new hire, so they feel welcomed to express concerns and suggest ideas.

More and more companies are also using technology to make their onboarding programmes more user-friendly and to acknowledge the employee's progress. A gamified onboarding programme, for example, allows new hires to earn points and rewards as they complete certain training and activities. These rewards can be unique to your company culture or to the values of the individual, such as extra annual leave time.

Josh Braaten, the CEO and co-founder of **Brandish Insights**, says, *"It's one thing to appreciate employees in the way that makes sense to you, but the gamification platform we used allowed people to be appreciated in a way that was most meaningful to each individual."*

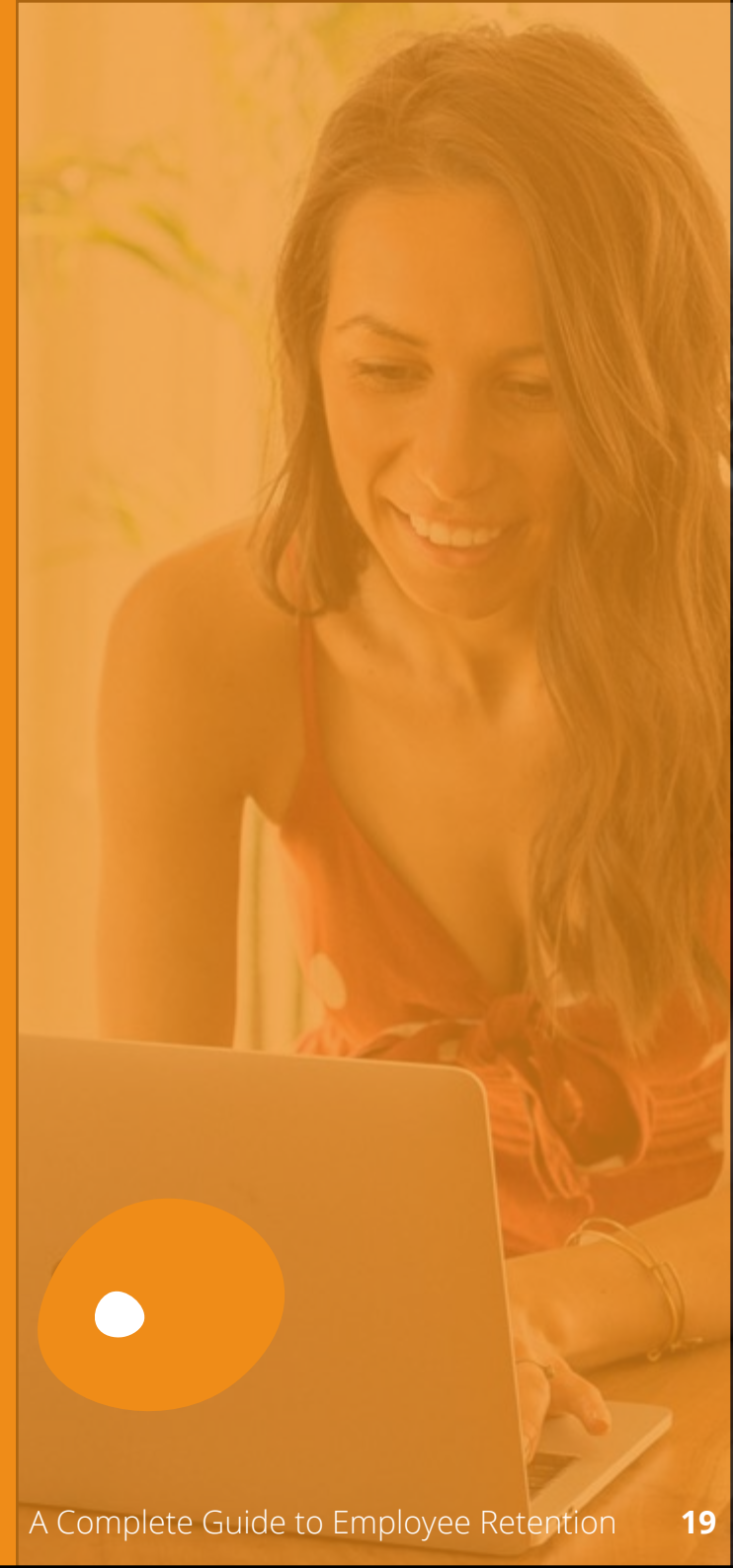


3. Effective Performance Management

According to **Michael Armstrong's Handbook of Performance Management**, performance management is defined as: "the continuous process of improving performance by setting individual and team goals which are aligned to the strategic goals of the organisation."

75% of employees want to receive feedback as soon as something happens, whether it is positive or negative, according to **ClearCompany**. This is probably why more and more companies are adopting continuous performance reviews as opposed to traditional annual performance appraisals. These frequent check-ins focus on employee development and future career paths, as well as both positive and negative feedback.

In order to help you make the most out of your employee reviews and feedback, we've put together this guide to effective performance management.



Annual vs Ongoing Feedback

According to a [Quantum 2018 Employee Engagement Trends Report](#), one in five employees don't believe that their manager provides regular and constructive feedback.

However, **providing regular weekly feedback has been proven to lower turnover rates by 14.9% and increase employee engagement rates** according to [OfficeVibe](#). **Feedback can also positively impact individual performances**, according to 68% of employees surveyed by [McKinsey and Company](#).


This is especially true for the new generations of workers: **80% of Generation Z employees would rather receive on-the-spot recognition instead of planned formal reviews**, according to [LinkedIn](#). Additionally, **72% of employees under the age of 30 want feedback on a daily or weekly basis**.

Feedback can be given in a number of different ways, depending on what your employee needs or is looking for. Try an informal chat if you want to give a quick tip or compliment. A lot of the time feedback is now relayed online, or through HR software such as [eloomi](#).

[Amazon](#) has a daily Q&A program called "Connections," in which Amazon employees start their day by answering a work related question that pops up on their computer screens. The questions are typically work-related, with topics

ranging from thoughts about managers to the length of meetings, or the number of times they've received positive feedback in the past week. In some cases, it asks less sensitive questions, like how crowded bathrooms get, and even throws follow-up questions when needed.

It is important that both you and your employees receive regular and constructive feedback, in order to keep performance levels up and frustrations to a minimum, and establish how your company is perceived by your employees.



"One in five employees don't believe that their manager provides regular and constructive feedback."

How to Deal with Underperforming Employees

For an underperforming employee, it is especially essential to provide direct feedback. According to **OfficeVibe**, 4 out of 10 employees become actively disengaged when they receive little or no feedback. This can lead to underperformance and result in turnover.

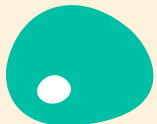
However, this feedback doesn't just have to be positive. According to **OfficeVibe**, **82% of employees appreciate receiving feedback regardless of whether it's positive or negative**. Additionally, **92% of employees agree that as long as negative feedback is delivered appropriately, it is effective** at improving their performance, according to research by **Zenger and Folkman**.

When you have an employee that is underperforming, it is better to provide them with feedback and a progressive plan rather than taking disciplinary action. Follow these steps when giving the employee constructive feedback in order to boost their performance:

1. Explain what needs to change. Explain how their actions affect the rest of the team, as well as their job development, promotional opportunities and chances for new projects.

2. Confirm that you and the employee are on the same page. **Inc.** suggests **listening 80% and talking 20% in order to find the root of the problem**.
3. Discuss ideas for solutions. Set clear expectations and goals, including review dates, and explain the next steps if there is no improvement.
4. Offer the necessary training and resources that the employee needs to improve their performance. You may want to pair them with a high-performing mentor.
5. Appreciate and recognise any positive movement or effort that the employee makes to progress toward set goals. Reinforce what they are doing right, and continue to provide feedback along the way.

For a more in-depth look at the importance of employee feedback see our video on Feedback Training for Managers [here](#).



Promoting Employee Innovation and Contribution

According to **ClearCompany**, leaders need innovation and contributions as much as employees do. According to a survey by **Robert Half**, 35% of leaders say that the greatest roadblock to organisational breakthroughs is a lack of innovative ideas at their companies.

In order to motivate employees to contribute and innovate, they need to feel like their feedback is welcome and appreciated. Keep office doors open, facilitate brainstorming sessions and create an anonymous suggestion box or tool.

According to members of the **Young Entrepreneur Council**, you can also inspire innovation and contribution by:

- Introducing variety into the day-to-day with team projects and inter-departmental co-ops.
- Leaving titles and hierarchy at the door during brainstorming meetings.
- Getting your team out of the office and into a new atmosphere for a day.
- Giving your employees time to work creatively on their side projects, whether it relates to your business or not.

Here are a few examples of how some companies are motivating their employees to get creative and contribute to the organisation:

1. The software company **Atlassian** gives their employees “FedEx Days,” which are paid days off to work on any problem or project that they want. They were given this name because employees are expected to deliver something of value within 24 hours of the day.
2. **Accenture** organised a Festival of Ideas, in which 1,400 employees came together in one room to brainstorm new ideas. They narrowed the ideas down to the top ten, and then turned them into reality.

Just taking on ideas can go a long way. You should make sure that you are listening to all employees and give them a space to contribute and feel that they are making a difference.

How to Deal with Employee Burnout

Burnout is increasingly impacting workplaces for the worse. According to a survey conducted by **Kronos Incorporated**, **95% of HR leaders said that employee burnout is sabotaging their retention rates.** In fact, the survey found that **20% to 50% of employee turnover is due to burnout.**

According to the **Journal of Applied Biobehavioral Research**, burnout happens when employees:

- Expect too much of themselves
- Feel unappreciated for their efforts
- Are trying to achieve unreasonable demands
- Are in roles that are not a good fit for their skills

According to **Business.com**, the employees that are most likely to experience burnout are perfectionists, pessimists and over-achievers. Burnout is also more likely to happen if employees experience an imbalance between their work and personal lives.

It is important to provide a safe space where employees – irrespective of their style – feel comfortable talking about their potential triggers and worries.

High levels of burnout can result in poor physical health, reduced job satisfaction, decreased productivity, increased

absenteeism and higher rates of turnover. However, you can prevent this by:

- Providing clear expectations for employees
- Ensuring that employees have the resources and skills necessary to meet those expectations
- Providing ongoing training
- Enforcing reasonable work hours and work loads
- Encouraging socialisation among teams and departments
- Supporting breaks and physical activity during the work day
- Giving feedback, both positive and negative, and asking for feedback in return
- Setting formal goals and tracking the progress
- Challenging your employees and giving them opportunities for advancement
- Building a positive and fun work environment

With the help of an effective performance management system, you can maximise the potential – and job satisfaction of each and every one of your employees.

4. Employee Development

According to an APA survey, 61% of employees say that their employer offers development opportunities for hard and soft skills. However, nearly half of respondents say that they aren't given adequate time for career development, and a similar amount say that their employer doesn't provide development training that is sufficient for advancement.

Insufficient employee development opportunities can be detrimental to your company retention rate. In fact, 93% of people advance their career by taking a job at a different company, according to a survey by Gallup. This is usually due to a lack of opportunities within their current company.

Career development opportunities are essential for keeping your top talent in your company, and a successful development plan will save you time, money and energy on recruitment. To help you make the most out of your current talent, we've outlined everything you need to know about employee development.



Managers vs. Earners - Which are your employees?

Erin Kasch, the director of people operations at **Dealer Inspire**, says, “Not everyone wants to be on a leadership track, but they want to develop their skills. That’s where a lot of leadership programs get it wrong.”

Employee development does not automatically mean moving high performing employees to management positions. Some employees may already be in the role they’re best suited for, or they may want to move to a completely different department. In this case, growth can develop laterally.

Additionally, having potential for a higher position is not the same as being ready for a change in roles. You may think that an employee could be a great manager, sales person or HR leader, but they may be comfortable and satisfied with their current role. When an employee is ready to move forward in their career, they should have the desire to do so, as well as the experience and skills necessary.

It’s important to ask employees how they want to develop, and to pinpoint where and how they will be most successful at your company. Follow these three steps to find out what motivates your employees in their career path:

1. Conduct a survey asking your employees to rank a series of motivators in order of individual importance. Include categories such as: career development, comfort, work-life balance, leadership,

learning, recognition, financial security, status, task accomplishment, teaching and mentoring. Additionally, have experts in higher level positions take the same survey to determine their motivators for those roles.

2. Schedule one-on-one meetings with each employee to discuss the survey and their motivations. Based on their results, you can match them up with a higher level position they may be suited for. During this meeting, ask if they may be interested in a new role, if they have any skills they want to develop, and if they want to do more with the company than they are already doing.
3. Act on the results of these surveys and meetings. If possible, customise a motivation plan and development path for each employee, based on their desires. Get the employee on the right track to move to their ideal position in the company.

Establishing Clear Career Pathways

In order to establish career pathways, assess your current workforce and identify the key positions and employees. According to **Julie Giulioni**, creating an effective career pathway involves matching the employee's career goals with your company's needs. Keep in mind:

- The employee's background and past accomplishments
- The future and growth of your company and industry
- How the employee's skills intersect with the company's growth

When developing pathways, also be sure to identify your team's development gaps. It's important to spot exactly where and how employees can improve and grow in order to meet your company's needs.

Abbot Labs' development programme, for example, offers six areas of focus: finance, IT, manufacturing, quality assurance, engineering, and environmental health. Within those areas, participants can choose a variety of learning paths. After two to three years, programme participants graduate with a well-rounded skill set and broad understanding of their focus area.

These pathways should act as roadmaps for each employee, and they should include measurable goals and a realistic timeframe. Establish these roadmaps by:

- Outlining typical career paths for each of the key departments at your company: This can include a diagram that illustrates potential vertical and horizontal position changes for each team
- Creating position profiles for each role at your company: Outline the role's main responsibilities, skills and requirements, as well as the training, qualifications and attitude that are necessary for success in the position
- Defining performance standards that an employee will be expected to achieve if they follow a certain pathway: These performance standards should be matched up with the behaviours that are typically shown by top performers in each role

"Creating an effective career pathway involves matching the employee's career goals with your company's needs."

Programmes to Support Career Advancement

There are several methods available to assist employees advance their career, as well as develop both their hard and soft skills. While many companies provide access to e-learning courses or reimbursement for professional training and certification classes, your career advancement programmes don't have to include standard training. In fact, **on-the-job development makes up 75% of effective learning**, according to [Inc.](#)

Your main goal is to engage the employee throughout the development process in order to keep them motivated. Some creative and engaging programmes that support an employee's career advancement and skills development are:

- Encouraging employees to train other less-experienced colleagues
- Assigning more ambitious targets (or stretch goals) based on the employee's previous projects
- Having the employee shadow or join the team of a high level employee
- Creating a mentorship programme with a higher level role

- Providing cross-departmental training days
- Developing soft skills with activities such as volunteering or conducting presentations during meetings

Many companies also implement job rotation, in which employees change positions within the organisation for days, weeks or months in order to expand their experience and improve their skills. This rotation can be both vertical and lateral, this means someone can take on a position either above or below them, or a position with similar responsibilities to their own. It's a great way to expose employees to higher levels of company operations that they may be working toward in their career path.

During these programmes, be sure to define specific target goals that you and the employee themselves want to achieve. If the employee meets these goals, ensure that the programme results in real change, such as a promotion, investment in training for necessary hard or technical skills or a lateral role change. You don't want the employee to feel like they are being given extra work without any tangible benefits within the company.

Successful Succession Planning

According to [Forbes](#), succession planning is all about anticipating the future needs of your company and your talent. It is about creating tracks that carry employees to the next level of their careers while also benefiting your company long-term.

Succession planning is essential for keeping your business running smoothly, without having to spend time and expenses on recruitment when employees in high positions leave or retire. Despite this, **40% of companies have no formal succession planning process**, according to a survey by [XpertHR](#). Additionally, **20% of companies lack confidence that they have the talent necessary to back up critical positions**.

In order to determine the best succession plan for your company, set yourself a bigger picture goal and ideal outcome. Ask yourself:

- How do you want this development to affect your team, your department and your company as a whole?
- What departments or roles have employees reaching retirement age?
- What roles or departments would disrupt the functioning of the company the most if a gap were to occur?

Next, pinpoint the employees that have the most potential and desire to fill these positions or potential talent gaps. Create a succession plan with these high-performing employees by conducting assessments to determine what skills and experience they will require for the key roles. Don't discount employees with good potential, or who possess the soft skills

suitable for the position - as mentioned, training programmes can overcome these drawbacks.

Prepare the employees to fill a new role with career development programmes we have discussed, such as training, mentoring and job assignments. According to [Great Managers](#), it's best to **stretch your plan out over a longer period of time in order to keep the employee engaged**, and ensuring that your business needs are met sufficiently and at appropriate times.

You also want to track the employee's performance as the plan plays out in order to see the effectiveness of your methods and to ensure that they are the right fit for the position. Provide and encourage feedback, and give them tasks that will put their new skills to the test before promoting them to the new role.

Once the employee has advanced, their position will need to be filled. When you have found a suitable replacement, it's beneficial for the departing employee to be involved in mentoring, development and training of the new hire. This will help build leadership skills and gives you a good insight into their progression.

Remember that employee development, when implemented correctly, benefits not only the employee in question, but your organisation as a whole.

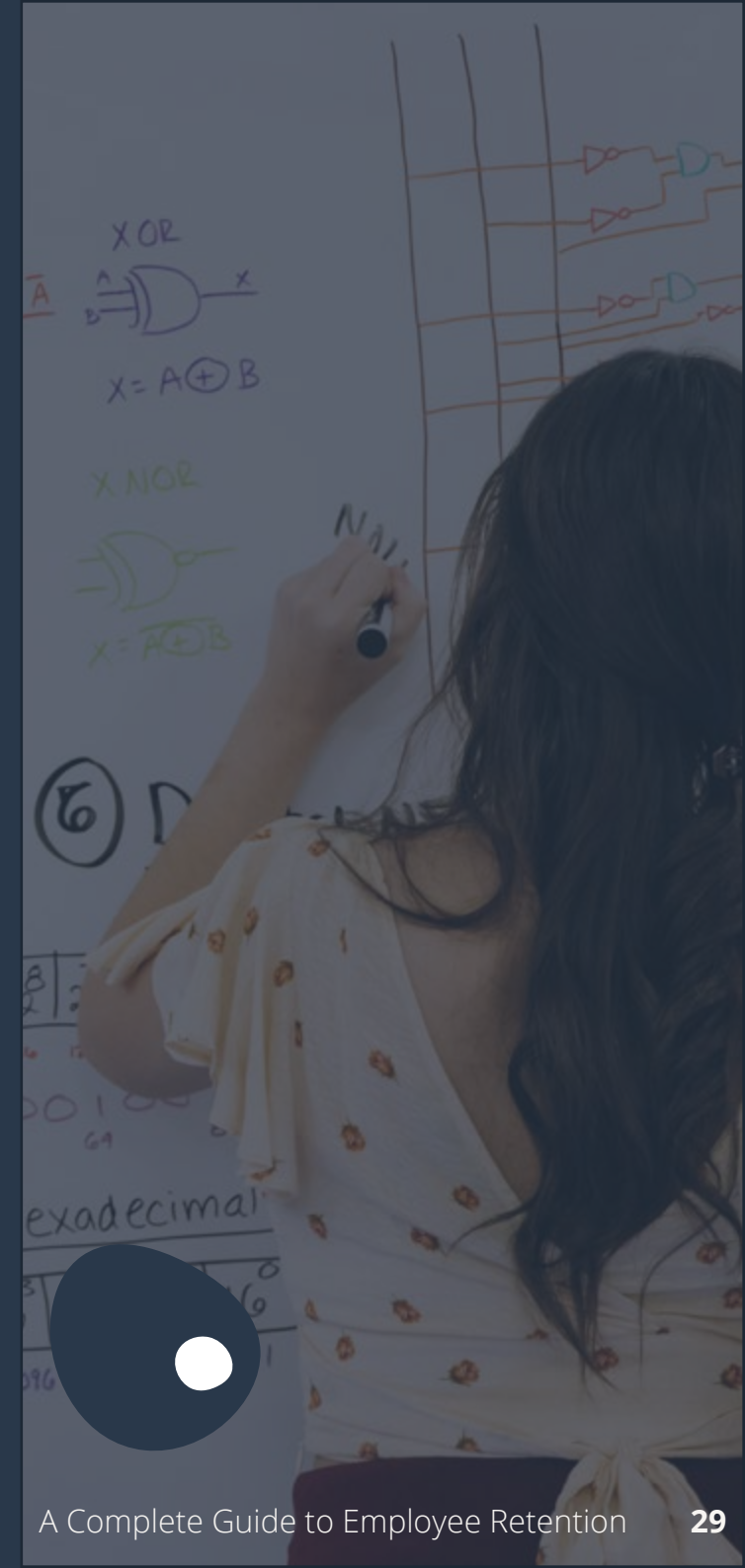
5. Learning & Development

Learning and development initiatives are essential for improving productivity in the workplace, as well as retaining top talent. Candidates are now listing “opportunities for learning and development” as one of the top criteria for joining a company, and a lack of L&D as a reason that they are leaving their companies, according to research by McKinsey.

Employers that focus on learning and development initiatives also perform higher on metrics such as revenue, market position and future growth, according to the **Harvard Business 2018 State of Leadership Development Report**. This may be why one in four companies plan to increase their L&D budgets in the next year.

As distinct from employee development, which is a joint initiative to upgrade the existing skills and knowledge of an individual, a good L&D initiative should represent a mix of the employees personal and professional goals, and also align with a company’s goals and objectives.

The best companies encourage their employees grow with them in order to maintain and advance their skill sets. In order to help **you attract and retain the top talent in your industry, we’ve put together this guide to learning and development.**



The Primary Objective of Learning and Development: Availability & Accessibility

According to **eLearning Industry**, self-paced online training was one of the top L&D trends for 2018. This is because different employees require different training tools, as well as different training content, goals and timelines.

Make your L&D initiatives available and accessible by allowing your employees to set their own schedules, develop their own target goals and autonomously seek out online training resources.

One of the best ways to make learning and development accessible to all of your employees is with a range of mobile platforms and programmes. According to a **2018 L&D report**, **companies with strong learning cultures are more likely to be frequent users of learning technologies.**

Elearning opportunities create a user-friendly learning environment that employees can access wherever and

whenever. According to **Deloitte's 2017 Global Human Capital Trends report**, it is the employer's responsibility to **create an environment that enables employees to constantly learn and train**, whenever it is convenient for them. Additionally, companies with continuous learning opportunities and a strong culture of development outperform their peers.

Further to this, more companies are relying on the easily accessible informal training of mentorships as valuable parts of their learning and development programmes. Setting up mentorships increases engagement and creates a more positive company culture.

L&D... it's for millennials

69% of millennials aspire to be leaders in the next five years, according to research by **The Hartford**. However, **63% of millennials state that their leadership skills are not being fully developed**, and **71% of millennials will leave an organisation within two years if they aren't satisfied with the development of these skills**, according to **Deloitte**.

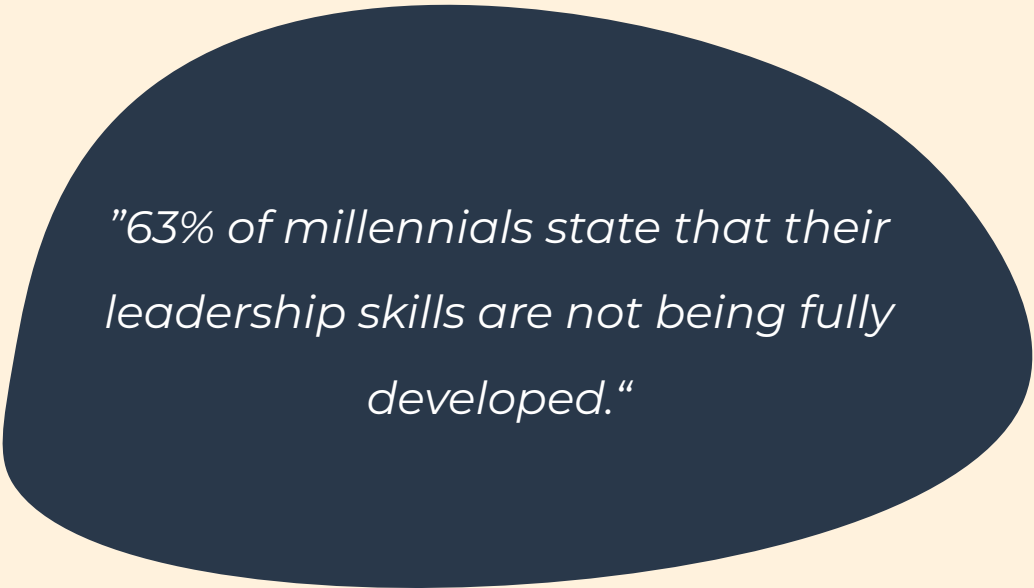
In order to attract and retain top millennial employees, you must foster a company culture and environment that prioritises L&D. According to a study conducted by **Christy Price** at **Dalton State College**, there are five main factors that create an ideal learning environment for millennials:

1. L&D initiatives that are interactive and participatory
2. Team and group activities
3. Training programmes that are relaxed and enjoyable
4. A range of multimedia formats such as podcasts and videos
5. Real-life examples that are relevant to their position

According to **PwC**, **millennials don't want formal classroom training**. Even more than e-learning opportunities, ensure that you provide your younger employees with mentorship

and cross-training L&D initiatives. **Millennial employees are actually twice as likely to stay with a company for more than five years if they have a mentor**, according to **Deloitte**.

L&D initiatives can be used to create a sense of community and value at your company. At **Google**, **80% of all tracked trainings are run through an employee-to-employee network called "g2g"**. Not only does this help to improve employee skills, it can also have the added effect of promoting a culture that values learning and improving inter-office relations.



"63% of millennials state that their leadership skills are not being fully developed."

L&D isn't a One-Size-Fits-All Initiative

According to **eLearning Industry**, personalised learning paths have been at the top of L&D trends in recent years, while one-size-fits-all programmes are losing popularity. This is because personalised and customisable initiatives allow employees to focus on individual areas in which they want or need improvement, rather than keeping pace with colleagues.

As **Brianna O'Hara**, the Content and Creative Manager at **BizLibrary**, said, *"It's important to deliver training in the learner-preferred format"*. As well as this, the content covered in L&D programmes should also reflect the employee's interests and needs. Group like minded people together to encourage employee engagement and cross ideation.

According to research by **LinkedIn**:

- **68% of employees prefer to learn at work**
- **58% of employees prefer to learn at their own pace**
- **49% of employees prefer to learn at the point of need**

In order to maximise engagement with your L&D initiatives, you should implement a variety of training options that will appeal to the diverse needs of your employees. These could be anything from structured training courses to mentorship programmes to at-home

elearning programmes, but the employee should have the freedom to choose their best fit.

For example, as a way to enable employees to have control over their development, the consultant group **North Highland** created an initiative called "LearnFest." This learning initiative gives employees the chance to either independently learn a new skill or subject of their choice, or to attend a variety of events run by their colleagues.

Learning and Development is crucial in any business for keeping employees engaged, motivated and productive.

"Personalised and customisable initiatives allow employees to focus on individual areas."

6. Turnover & Exit Interviews

According to **Fora**, it is **harder than ever to attract and retain employees**--especially in Ireland, due to the major talent crisis. Unfortunately, high turnover can be detrimental to a company's revenue, employer brand and employee morale.

According to Derek McKay, the managing director of **Adare Human Resource Management**, ***"This balance between recruitment and retention is particularly critical in a tighter-than-ever labour market where it is taking large organisations an average of over six weeks to recruit a new employee."***

On average, **companies lose around 10% to 19% of their employees every year**, according to **TinyPULSE**. In order to help you retain your top talent, we've put together everything you need to know about understanding and utilising employee turnover to help you retain talent and help you hire smarter next time around.



Make the Most of Turnover

Ralph Nader, an advocate, lawyer and author, says, *“The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.”* If an employee is leaving for a higher level position, whether within your company or somewhere else, it means that your company succeeded in leading them down their career path.

In this way, turnover is not completely negative. An employee departure also gives you the chance to:

1. Gather honest feedback about how your company is performing: Try to understand why the employee is planning to leave, as this information will help you improve future initiatives for retaining and attracting top talent. It's important for you to have the chance to fix a problem, such as poor management or an undeveloped wellness programme, before more employees decide to leave.
2. Establish lifelong advocates for your company: Ensure that the employees leave on a positive note by throwing a farewell event, acknowledging their contribution by emailing staff or giving a gift and conducting an exit interview to discuss any issues. By parting in this way, the employee may be more motivated to encourage others to apply and to leave
3. Improve the team dynamics in your workplace: A vacancy gives you the opportunity to internally promote an employee, or teach existing team members new skills. This is also the time to be open and transparent with your remaining employees. Explain how you are dealing with the departure and open your door for any feedback or ideas about the team.

positive reviews on sites like **Glassdoor**, this in turn promotes your employer brand.



*“The function of leadership
is to produce more leaders,
not more followers.”*

The Art of Letting Go: How to Deal with Firing Employees

If an employee isn't performing well in their position, ensure that you have done everything possible to improve their performance before letting them go. The dismissal should not be a surprise--they should have been receiving feedback, coaching and even a performance improvement plan in order to remain with your company.

However, if the employee continues to fail to meet performance goals, it is better to let them go than to allow them to decrease your team's productivity and morale, and is also best for the employee themselves. The next step is to help them find a better fit within your company, or help them move on to another organisation.

When planning to let an employee go, create an employment termination checklist. This will keep you organised, compliant and ensure that you cover all the necessary topics and legal formalities during the dismissal. Examples of what to include on an employee termination checklist include; disabling employee email account and permissions, collecting any company property, informing payroll, receiving employee resignation letter or providing employee termination letter and presenting any legal or official documents as required.

According to **Forbes**, your **final meeting with the employee should also be kept short and to the point.**

Decide beforehand who will attend. Does the meeting require the employee's direct line manager or just a HR representative? Ensure all necessary paperwork is on hand and keep things fair and professional, as you want the employee to leave on as positive a note as possible.

At the end of the meeting, you should wish the employee well in their future endeavours. According to **Balance Careers**, you should say something along the lines of: **"You have many talents and we are confident that you will find a position that can take advantage of them."** This will hopefully help you maintain a good relationship with the departing employee, a positive employer brand, and it should also help with employee morale for the remaining team members.

Create an Exit Interview Strategy to Benefit All

Utilising exit interviews correctly can greatly improve employee retention, company culture and talent attraction so it is in your company's best interest to invest in an effective and repeatable exit interview strategy. It's why **91% of Fortune 500 companies conduct employee exit interviews, and 87% of mid-sized companies do the same**, according to a survey by **Burke Incorporated**. A departing employee is likely to give you honest feedback, which you can then use to improve the recruitment process and reduce your turnover rate.

When an employee decides to leave, have someone that is as impartial as possible conduct an interview about their experience with your company - generally someone in HR. An interviewer who was not directly above the employee will give them a chance to be more honest and provide valuable feedback. This is also your chance to ensure that the employee leaves your company with positive feelings, and it is also a great opportunity to gather insight about how to improve your workplace for remaining and future talent.

During the exit interview, address topics such as:

- Specific reasons for leaving
- Whether the job training and development programmes were sufficient

- How the company can be more efficient
- What attracted them to the company they are leaving for
- How they felt about company culture, perks and benefits, and your wellness programme
- Do they have managerial or peer feedback on their team or generally
- Was salary a deciding factor
- Does the company values aligned to the employee values
- What could the company do differently

This information will help you determine where and how to improve everything from your recruitment strategies, to your onboarding process, to your entire company culture. According to research by **OfficeTeam**, after exit interviews:

- **29% of employers update job descriptions**
- **24% of employers address comments about management**
- **22% of employers make changes to the work environment**
- **19% of employers review employee salaries**

Review Your Recruitment Strategy: Are You Hiring the Right People to Begin With?

According to the **Wall Street Journal**, **hiring the right people from the start is the best way to reduce employee turnover.** Ensure that candidates have the necessary skills *and* that they fit well with the company culture, management and current employees. If employees don't feel like they belong in your workplace environment, they will take their skills to a company where they are a better fit.

As **Susan Heathfield**, the human resources expert and writer for Balance Careers, says, *"Select the right people in the first place through behaviour-based testing and competency screenings. Sure, an onsite interview gives you a feel for whether the person can fit within your culture, but your key to selecting the best employees is to determine how well they can do the job."*

In addition to behaviour-based testing and competency screenings, you can assess a candidate's fit by:

- Clearly describing your company culture upfront
- Inquiring about how their career goals align with your company

- Observing how they act in different professional situations
- Showing them around your workplace and seeing how comfortable they are
- Conducting job auditions in addition to traditional interviews

According to the **New York Times**, the top three principles that will help you hire the right person are:

1. **Be creative:** Find a way to really understand how the candidate thinks and works.
2. **Be challenging:** Put the candidate in situations that encourage them to show their true selves.
3. **Allow your employees to help:** Trust the opinions of the people that will be working with this candidate.

For more tips on creating a top notch recruitment strategy check out our Complete Guide to Recruitment **here!**

The Cost of Replacing an Employee

According to **SHRM**, the average annual turnover rate globally is 19%, and the cost of replacing an employee is 90% to 200% of their annual salary. In Ireland, this cost comes out to an average of €13,100, according to research by **Adare Human Resource Management**.

We the Talent, however, estimates that the total costs of replacing an employee are closer to €70,000. According to their research, the direct costs of replacing an employee include:

- External and internal recruiters' salaries
- Job postings and advertisements
- Recruitment software
- Training programmes
- Extra work or overtime from employees during a vacancy
- Temporary employees

The indirect costs include:

- Time and work for screening candidates, including interviews
- Time and work for onboarding and training
- Time and work lost during vacancy

While these costs change depending on the level of the position (higher level roles cost more to fill), the amount of time it takes for your hiring team to find a replacement and

the tools that you use during recruitment and onboarding, they quickly add up. According to **PayScale**, the cost of turnover also goes beyond just financial losses. These costs include:

- Lower workplace morale
- Lower employee engagement and productivity
- Loss of team-based knowledge

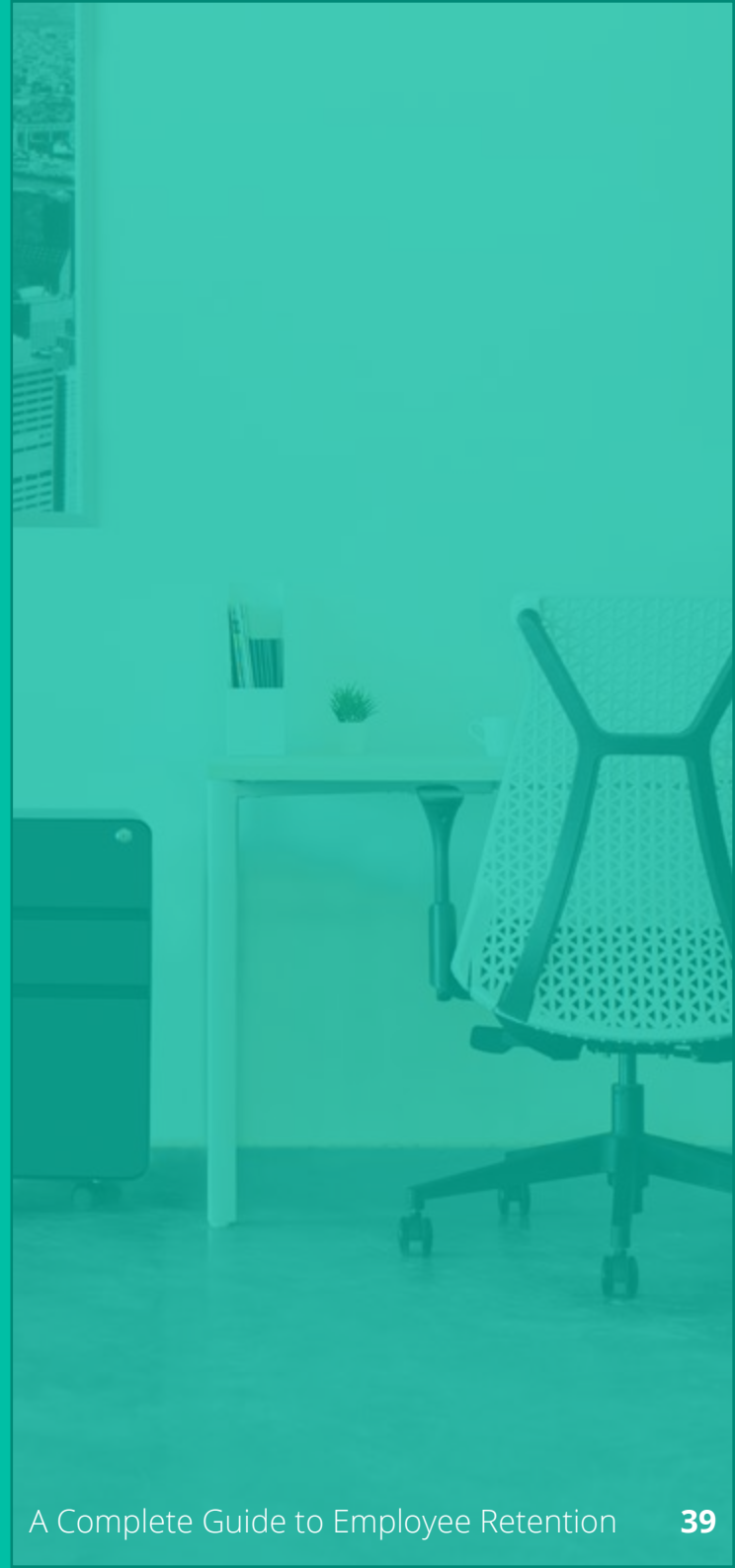
Ensure that you are prepared for these costs in each department and role within your company with the use of succession planning and modern tools such as recruitment software. Succession planning can help you save time and money when hiring, as well as this 94% of employers surveyed by **Software Advice** reported that having a succession plan positively impacts their employees' engagement levels.

Although losing an employee isn't always nice, or easy, it's possible to make the most out of the situation. In an ideal world, both you and your former employee will learn and grow from the experience.

Conclusion

Having the best talent on your team is crucial for business success. Recruitment is only half the battle; in order to hold onto your best employees long term, you must keep them engaged and motivated with their career path at your company. Boost your employee retention rates by:

1. Building and promoting a diverse and inclusive company culture with benefits and values that align with the desires of your employees.
2. Developing a thoughtful onboarding process with a thorough checklist, personalised training and continuous monitoring.
3. Boosting employee performance with frequent feedback, individual support and a focus on flexibility and collaboration.
4. Encouraging employee development within your company with the use of clear career pathways and a succession strategy.
5. Perfecting your learning and development strategies by ensuring that they are easily accessible, customisable and updated for the new generation of employees.
6. Making the most out of turnover by gathering critical feedback, creating positive goodbyes and reviewing your recruitment strategy.



In addition to these six steps, consider implementing Occupop's recruitment software to help you find the best talent for your company. We can save you time, energy and money on sourcing and hiring the best candidates, so you can stay focused on what comes next: retaining and engaging them.

Occupop is a recruitment software built with your hiring needs in mind. With the help of AI technology, Occupop increases job exposure and removes recruitment admin, resulting in a reduced time-to-hire, improved hiring team collaboration and an enhanced candidate experience.

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