

Finding talent is good, retaining talent is better

A comprehensive HR policy in 9 steps

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We are taught that if we value something, we should treat it carefully, and workers are no exception. Good employees are few and far between. If they leave to work elsewhere, a suitable replacement is usually hard to find, and the onboarding process also takes time. That's why it's important to be an attractive employer, and remain so. A proactive recruitment strategy, clear onboarding process (especially now that many people are onboarding at home), and prioritizing personal development will strengthen your business both now and in the future.

Pop quiz: How does your organization stay competitive? By ensuring that the right skills are available at the right time, of course. We are currently seeing a major shift in the best way to go about it. Whereas the focus used to lie on attracting new staff, the emphasis is now shifting increasingly toward the retention of talent through good employment practices. Your organization's success begins with talent retention.

If you fail to hold on to talented workers, you run the risk of falling behind the times. Constantly finding and hiring new employees costs time and money, and creates organizational instability. A comprehensive strategy for attracting and retaining personnel is therefore essential. The nine steps below will help you to get your HR policy off the ground.

1. Offer fulfilling work

Your mission should be to excite & engage employees. [Various studies](#) have shown that challenging and stimulating work is important to us all. Employers of course want to put their workers where they will generate added value for the organization, rather than waste their time on administrative tasks. An employee likes to make a difference to the organization. So an initial step is to ask employees whether they still enjoy the work they are doing, what improvements can be made and when they would choose to change jobs.

2. Opinion polling

Gauging your employees' opinions will tell you what you need to change to be a better employer. That can vary from better coffee in the office, to more flexible digital workstations or better career opportunities. These valuable data will also tell you when certain employees are planning to leave the organization. As a LinkedIn manager, these data helped me to predict future attrition rates. We also found out what we needed to focus on as a management team in order to give our staff the proper support. For example: an (anonymous) employee satisfaction survey might show that several members of the sales team are likely to leave over the next six months. The first logical step would be to talk to them, and find out how you can make their lives easier. And in any case, it is better to have a replacement ready the day before they leave, rather than a day too late.

3. Strengthen your brand

Know your competition: what are their terms and conditions of employment, and what secondary benefits do they offer? Where do their strengths lie, and why would people choose your company over theirs? Develop your Employee Value Proposition (EVP), and use social media to highlight your business's strong points. Do you have a relaxed corporate culture? Do you offer a killer salary? Do your positions offer plenty of job security, or plenty of career opportunities? Do you have a vision that energizes your customers and staff? Then tell the world about it! This is important, as [50% of Dutch employees say they would not work for a company with a bad reputation](#), not even for a higher wage. Compare your draw cards to those of your competitors, and think carefully about which to highlight when approaching particular employees.

4. Take a pro-active approach

Be wary of employment gaps in your organization. Unfilled positions will affect your company's continuity and productivity, and often put pressure on the remaining personnel, which may cause them to start looking for another job. So it's best to start searching for suitable staff as soon as possible. Be strategic when approaching potential candidates: look at your own position in the sector, and compare yourself to your competitors. If there is a region where they hold a clear advantage, for example, pick an area where the chances of success are greater, and start talking to people.

At LinkedIn, we knew we would have several vacancies each year, and we wanted the best people in those positions. But the people we needed likely already had jobs elsewhere, so we decided to start hiring pro-actively. That means that we would actually hire somebody before the vacancy had even appeared, and because they already had a job, they were prepared to wait until it did. A win-win situation! It also meant that candidates could be onboarded by their predecessors, creating a smooth transition, faster success, and avoiding patchy teams within the organization. Whenever somebody regrettably did leave, I always had a replacement waiting in the wings.

5. Start working on retention during recruitment

New employees don't like to be thrown into the deep end without a life vest. They feel isolated, useless, helpless, and their colleagues sometimes suffer needless interruption. Proper support during the induction period helps personnel find their feet from the outset, and in 58% of cases results in a tenure of more than three years.

It was for this reason that even before new staff had signed their contract, I told new staff as much as possible about the organizational culture and procedures. I checked in with them regularly, and briefed them on what was going on within the company. That way, they felt engaged and welcome before they had even started. Always paint an honest picture of the organization – rose-tinted glasses will usually only cause new employees to leave sooner.

6. Structure your onboarding

The first days on the job is usually taken up by searching for all kinds of information: where and how to claim deductions, fill in timesheets, apply for leave or report sick. Sometimes these questions even have multiple answers. And now that many people no longer work at the office, who do you even ask? It is useful to cover these frequently asked questions in a single app, given to new staff members before they start work. Not only will they find their feet much faster, but it also reduces the number of standard questions that other employees have to deal with.

7. Boost team spirit

Team spirit and working towards a common goal are crucial elements of a pleasant working environment. So it's a good idea to encourage people to get together, virtually or otherwise. Colleagues will come to know and appreciate one another, adding to a sense of communal belonging. Some ideas include virtual pub quizzes or daily virtual coffee sessions, or even a connection app that links colleagues up at random.

8. Development opportunities

According to studies by Randstad, 73% of employees believe that internal training and subsidized personal development are important. So offer them additional training – managers included, since remote management does come with its own unique quirks. Want to know how to offer more support to your staff? Ask them! Or actively go out in search of training courses that suit certain positions and make them available, either physically or virtually.

9. Give staff the right tooling

Any employer wants their staff to be able to concentrate on adding value to the organization. That's why it is important to support them with the right tooling. A lack of adequate tools can lead to major frustration among personnel. Before you know it, they'll start using their own digital solutions without going through IT, which can often create security and other risks.

Help with the entire HR process

Your staff are the people who make your company, day after day. That's why it's best to listen to them and help them achieve their potential. Microsoft can help with a wide range of HR matters. Want to strengthen your brand on LinkedIn, or [offer free training courses](#)? Or would you rather talk about how to empower your employees" this also ties nicely into our mission: "empowering every person on the planet to achieve more"? We can help. Not just with the technology, but also through our specialized partners. Your success is our success.

To find out more, take a look at our webinar on attracting and retaining talent. See you online!