

# Five Easy Ways to Lose Your Best Talent

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Why are professionals leaving jobs? Low pay, limited career growth opportunities, and lack of flexibility, to name a few reasons. Make sure your top performers aren't the next to leave by avoiding these common pitfalls.

It's a hot job market now, making it easy for your strongest people to jump ship. But starting a new job is stressful, so if you're committed to keeping your talent

pool, you're doing them a favor if you make it easy for them to stay. And needless to say, a high turnover rate does nothing to help your organization's continuity, team cohesion, and overall performance.

So what are common pitfalls that might have your best people running for greener pastures? Insights on the state of the workplace from Pew Research, Gallup, and others may hold the answers. Consider these common mistakes employers are making—and how to remedy them.

## **Defining Roles Hazily**

According to Gallup research, only 60 percent of workers strongly agree that they know what's expected of them. Inevitably, this will lead to conflict over who owns a project, frustration over duplicative efforts (or the opposite: an assignment going untouched), and confusion around who's responsible for what. Your best employees won't appreciate these headaches.

To remedy this, get specific at the very beginning of the hiring process: the job description. Your employees will thank you, as not even a close-knit workforce can work through this lack of clarity. Gallup's report suggests that confusion over one's responsibilities can override the benefits of team camaraderie.

"Employees may feel connected to their team members, but if, among other challenges, they don't know what's expected of them ... their affiliation with their team members is unlikely to have a positive impact on their performance," the report states. "Instead, time spent with their peers may more closely resemble a gripe session than productive teamwork."

## **Focusing on the Job at the Expense of the Career**

More than half of those who left a job in 2021 said they wanted a career switch. You might not be able to support your membership director's dream of becoming a chef, but you can help people discover new careers where they are. Career transitions within the same organization are not unheard of, and you may be able to accommodate them by providing training opportunities that expand employees' skillsets, letting employees shadow colleagues on other teams, and establishing a mentorship program where employees can learn from leaders in other disciplines.

## **Making Promotions a Surprise**

Nearly two-thirds of workers leave because they don't see a way to advance. Even if you had plans to promote your best people, that won't make a difference if they're unaware of the opportunities you have in mind. Having a clear path to promotion can help people see where opportunities at your association lie.

"One of the most important factors in fair and successful internal advancement is transparency," wrote Maria Haggerty, in *Inc.* "Each step should outline specific, actionable criteria that establishes and warrants progression to the next level."

To help employees visualize where they can go, create an org chart that shows how your organization is structured and where positions ladder up to. Then, show the organization is interested in employee growth by having them define yearly goals that, if completed, will set them up for a promotion.

## **Keeping the 9-to-5 Schedule**

According to Gallup, roughly half of workers say they left a job because of a lack of flexibility to choose when they put in their hours. Two years into a pandemic—and a remote work revolution—this sentiment has never been stronger. Professionals have found that they're just as productive when they work outside of the rigid 9-to-5 schedule, and some organizations have even experimented with four-day workweeks—finding positive results.

"[Asynchronous work is] just the way it's going to be in the future, and I think that companies that don't accept that are going to be disadvantaged in the war for talent because employees have choices and are looking for that," said Jay D'Aprile, executive vice president at Slayton Search Partners, in an interview with *Harvard Business Review*.

## **Freezing Salaries**

The number-one reason people leave jobs is pay. Negate the lure of signing bonuses with a transparent, well-communicated salary review plan that involves a regular evaluation conducted by managers to determine if employees' salaries fairly reflect their work performance. How do employees get raises, and when? How much will that raise be? None of the answers to these questions should be a mystery to your workforce.