



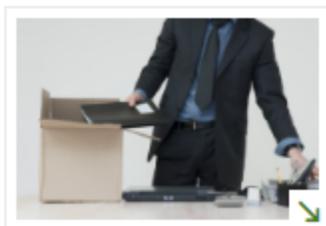
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## Why Good Workers Leave (and How to Prevent It)

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Sometimes workers receive offers they can't refuse — much better salary, a huge promotion. Others are drawn away by necessity — their spouses or partners are transferred to another location. However, assuming that workers receive decent wages and benefits, money is far down on the list of factors that cause people to leave their jobs, according to Autumn Manning, co-

founder and Chief Executive Officer of YouEarnedIt.com, based in Austin, Texas.

“Lack of connection is the biggest reason why people stay or go. Tell workers ‘Here’s what you did that was great and here’s how it impacts the company.’ Regular feedback from people they care about is more important (than money), If you’re not giving people regular feedback, start there,” Manning said.

### Effective Incentives

Although compensation alone won't retain a company's best workers, that doesn't mean managers and owners should ignore incentives. In fact, providing the right incentives can be a powerful strategy in minimizing employee turnover. However, there are no one-size-fits all incentive approach. Instead, employees should be encouraged to express which incentives are most appealing to them, according to Manning.

“Incentives may also change for employees at different levels and at different points in their tenure (with the company). People underestimate the power of choice,” Manning said.

Empowering employees to provide input ensures that the incentives offered are the ones that workers want, according to **Nicole Cox**, Chief Recruitment Officer for Decision Toolbox. While Cox is based in Orange County, California, Decision Toolbox is an entirely virtually-based company.

“One of the best things to do is have a brainstorming session with your employees. Tell them that no idea is a bad one, State that if money wasn’t an issue, what would they want as their perks and incentives? You’ll be surprised at the list they develop. Some of the things they will want you to implement don’t actually cost much or anything at all.” **Cox** explained.

However, companies should avoid providing incentives that they may not be able to maintain. Doing so could actually backfire, creating more dissatisfaction among workers, Cox warned.

“One year a company creating its list of perks may be lucrative so it feels generous, which sets a company up for disappointment in the future if it can’t afford to continue the same perks year after year. Make sure that whatever you implement is something your organization can do for the long haul,” **Cox** insisted.

## **Preventative Measures**

In many cases, employers miss significant signs that their workers are preparing to leave, according to Cox.

“Listen to what is or isn’t being said. For example, are they not committing to things in the distance? Are they less innovative or contributory during meetings? Were they previously grumpy about things at work, but suddenly they are happy? Any change in attitude can be a sign they have found something else,” **Cox** stated.

The burden to recognize warning signs and act to retain good workers falls squarely onto the employer, according to Greg Harris, president and CEO of Quantum Workplace, based in Omaha, Nebraska.

“When employees leave an organization simply because they’re unsatisfied, there’s really no one to blame but the employer. There are so many tools at our disposal nowadays to help us measure, analyze, and track metrics like employee engagement and satisfaction. When it’s the difference between retaining or losing great talent, what excuse is there to not take advantage of these tools?” Harris insisted.

Among those tools: periodic surveys to monitor levels of employee satisfaction and to highlight areas that need attention. Also important – regular one-on-one interaction between managers and employees, according to Harris.

“Regular meetings act as a way for employees and their managers to get on the same page about issues so they can be openly and honestly addressed. They also serve to create a more

human connection between the employee and the organization, which can help make them want to stay,” Harris stated.

## **Dealing with Departures**

By the time a worker has submitted a resignation, the forces propelling him or her out the door have been in motion for weeks, months or even years. In most cases, counteroffers are not advisable, according to Cox.

“If you aren’t willing to make a complete change to what was making them unhappy then they will be gone in six months anyway. I encouraged two of my employees to take the positions they were interested in and I let them know that they could return if they didn’t like their decision. That was a better approach for our organization. I would only do that for star performers,” she stated.

Manning agreed, emphasizing that while exit interviews are important, they should not be used as a last gasp effort to retain a departing worker. Instead, companies should focus on creating an atmosphere where employees feel free to voice their concerns before they think about leaving

“Have ongoing conversations (with workers) about why they (workers) should stay. Employees will come to you before they take the call (about a new job offer),” Manning explained.