THE EMPLOYER PLAYBOOK
How to Attract and Retain Employees

GRACE COLLEGE ONLINE
As a manager or owner of a corporation, one of your top priorities is finding, obtaining, and keeping talent. And while the task seems simple, if you’ve been in business for any time at all, you know the naivete in that thinking.

Keeping hardworking employees and obtaining new ones is vital to a company’s success. So what causes employees to stick around? How do you cultivate trust and loyalty among current workers? And what factors do people consider when applying to new jobs? We’d like to share the results of our findings with you to help you attract the kind of employees you’re looking for and keep them for many years to come. Here are ten simple ways to help recruit and retain talent.

**Build Your Company’s Network**
Networking is often talked about at the individual level, but it’s important for companies as well. You’re never going to attract talent if the talent doesn’t know you exist. Take some practical steps to increase your company’s community profile. According to Forbes, it’s important to be active on social media, host in-person and virtual events, and make sure you always have a representative at job fairs and other networking functions in your community. These initiatives will bring a new pool of applicants through your hiring pipeline.

**Show Respect**
While it may seem like a no-brainer, respect is a key piece in creating a positive work culture. If an employee feels disrespected, they will not feel valued. And a lack of worth will lead to quick burnout. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce notes that respect plays a role not only in retention but also in recruiting. Sometimes an initial interview is all it takes for an employee to sniff out a boss that doesn’t respect the thoughts and feelings of others.

**Offer Competitive Compensation and Benefits**
One of the first impressions you make after the interview is when you make an applicant an offer. Employees expect to receive proper monetary compensation and good benefits. There are plenty of resources, like Glassdoor, Comparably, and PayScale, available to employers today which allow them to research the average salary for the position they apply for. It’s important to do some competitor research to find out what you need to compensate before posting the job. And if you can, give employees above-average salaries so that they are motivated to stay with the company.

Studies show that benefits are equally important. Employees want generous time off so that they can relax and rejuvenate, and they expect their benefits to increase the longer they stay with the company.

**Provide Flexibility**
Flexibility has become especially important because of the COVID-19 pandemic. NBC News reports that many employees value the ability to work remotely or at least have the option to work from home when their personal life calls for it. The Washington Post adds that employees also want flexibility with their schedule. Instead of a rigid 8-5 calendar, they want to be able to set times that work best for them. If this is something you’re able to negotiate for employees, let them know at the off-set. It will be a significant factor to be considered as they select a job.

**Cast a Vision of Purpose**
Flexibility isn’t the only workplace value that emerged from the pandemic. According to a recent survey by McKinsey & Co., nearly two-thirds of US-based employees we surveyed said that COVID-19 has caused them to reflect on their purpose in life. And nearly half said that they are reconsidering the kind of work they do because of the pandemic. Now, we know that you can’t necessarily change the work itself. And let’s face it, there’s not a clear line between purpose and data analytics. But what you can do is leverage company resources to effect greater change. Connect to give-back opportunities or invest a percentage of your profits into your local community. It’s important for you to be able to cast a vision to your employees that your work is a part of a bigger picture and a greater purpose.

**Express Appreciation**
Employees want to know that their employer appreciates the work they do. Both the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Harvard Business Review point out that employees want more than just monetary appreciation. Employees appreciate handwritten notes, gear with the company’s logo on it, public recognition, and similar demonstrations of appreciation. These gestures of appreciation may seem small, but when less than half (45 percent) of employees actually feel appreciated at work according to a Peldon Rose survey, these gestures go a long way.
Increase Responsibility and Freedom
Over time, you should be looking for opportunities to give your employees more responsibility. By doing so, the Harvard Business Review states, you show employees that you trust them and value their work. It’s important to start small and slowly add more tasks and projects to their plate. This will prevent overloading. Remember, we want the responsibility to come as a blessing, not a curse.

The US Chamber states that as you increase their responsibility, it’s equally important to increase their freedom. Extra tasks will be unwelcomed if they are matched with micromanagement and harsh critique. But if you allow employees to lead and manage in new ways, your employees will have a greater stake in the company, and they just might think twice when another job opportunity arises.

Invite Feedback
Employees want to have a say in the company. Plain and simple. In a study conducted by John Izzo, author of the book, Stepping Up: How Taking Responsibility Changes Everything, he found that 64% of the 675 professional workers in the U.S. and Canada who were polled said that “leaders making decisions without seeking input” was the biggest problem in the workplace today. Give your employees the freedom to speak their mind and share how they think the company can improve.

Cultivate a Strong Culture
Having a strong company culture has many benefits, but one of the most important is retention. According to Forbes, when people feel like they belong to an organization, they’re more likely to stick around for the long term. So how do you go about cultivating culture? The U.S. Chamber of Commerce recommends that employers define their company culture and values based on the company brand. Create a culture of positivity and accountability by implementing traditions, rhythms, and team-building initiatives that your office staff can count on and look forward to.

Invest in Their Personal Growth
Both the Harvard Business Review and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce recommend that companies invest in employee development. Nothing says, “We are thankful for your work and value you as a person” like helping an employee accomplish personal and professional growth. One of the best ways to do so is education assistance. The skills and knowledge your employees gain from the degree will only help your organization. Not to mention, a study by Cornell University found when people participated in formal educational programs, they tended to make better decisions and express greater rationality, especially where it concerned economic assessments.

IN A BUSINESS WIRE STUDY, IT WAS FOUND THAT:

- 84% of those in education assistance programs say access to a tuition assistance program was important in their decision to join the company.
- 8/10 say tuition assistance makes them more likely to stay with their employer, regardless of any policy requiring them to stay.
- Front-runner companies like Apple, Best Buy, Bank of America, Chick-fil-A, Chipotle, Deloitte, Ford, Papa John’s, Starbucks, Target, and Walmart have taken the research studies at their word and implemented education assistance programs in recent years, making them desired destinations for employees across the U.S. Your company can be the next on the list.
Learn more about education assistance programs.

At Grace, we offer a number of associate, bachelor’s, and master’s online programs in a variety of fields such as business, nonprofit management, psychology, ministry, and more.

Our admissions counselors would love to talk to you more about partnering with Grace.

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