

Innovative Strategies to Improve Recruiting and Retention

Recruiting and Retention are a Top Business Priority

Recruiting and retention are evergreen challenges for businesses across all industries, especially with our current post-pandemic workplace shifts and The Great Resignation.

47% of HR professionals told SHRM that employee retention was their top talent challenge, followed closely by recruiting qualified talent (36%). Retention is also an expensive challenge—employee turnover costs businesses approximately \$680 billion annually.

Remember That Recruiting and Retention are Inextricably Linked

It's important to remember that recruitment and retention are interlinked—increasing employee retention reduces the need for recruitment, and having a strong recruitment process increases retention—and they should be strategized together.

Don't make the mistake of focusing on one or the other and thinking it will solve your challenges. **Recruitment and retention are two sides of the same coin.**

Retention Starts With Recruiting



Retention efforts should start during the recruiting process. Retention has a lot to do with ensuring job candidates feel like their values and professional goals align with the organization they're working at. 40% of U.S. employees who left jobs last year did so within six months of starting their positions, which means that the reality of the job and company probably didn't match what was sold to them during recruiting.

Building consistency in the recruitment process is vital. You want consistent

messaging, consistent experiences, consistency in technology use, and presentation of company values. It's also important that this consistency represents the actual realities of your job, not what you'd like the organization to be—if there are things that are a work in process, be honest about it!

One of the worst things organizations can do is take the “warm body” approach—finding anyone to fill a position just so it's filled will inevitably lead to more turnover, which costs your organization time and money.

Building your ideal candidate persona is a great way to ensure you're looking for the right candidate, not just the first person that says yes.

We build customer personas. Why not candidate personas?

Building candidate personas for your most important roles is one strategy that can apply to recruiting and retention. It helps streamline and strengthen your recruiting, netting best-fit candidates you'll be more likely to retain.

This guide will cover several innovative strategies that work in tandem to boost both your recruiting and retention.

Innovative Recruiting and Retention Strategies That Could Benefit Any Company

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Encourage a Culture of Inclusion

Cornell University has [gathered together several studies](#) that show a correlation between levels of inclusivity at organizations and reduced turnover. Remember, while closely related, diversity and inclusion are different. Inclusive workplaces allow and encourage individuals to be who they are, celebrate unique talents and differences, and help everyone feel appreciated and supported. You're not asking people to fit into an inclusive workplace but instead asking how they can use their unique qualities and experiences to help propel the organization forward.

Recruitment Recommendation: Turn Culture Fit Into Culture Add

Culture fit interviews had a moment in the sun a couple of years ago but have since been sunsetted. Culture fit asks individuals to fit a mold, which can end up stifling some of their talents.

Still, the basis of the culture fit had some merit. Employee values and work styles must align with your company. Instead of doing culture fit, do a culture add. See what potential candidates can bring to your organization, and ensure that while they don't have to fit into any boxes, their missions and values align with your organization.

Retention Recommendation: Embrace a Culture of Transparency

Transparency is simply being open and honest with others, even if it's hard news to break. You can foster transparency in the workplace by creating clear communication channels, having weekly all-team updates, sharing wins and mistakes, being upfront about losses or struggles, and setting strong ground rules, so expectations are clear.

According to [Slack's Future of Work Study](#), 80% of today's workers want insights into how decisions are made at their organization. Transparency can improve morale and engagement and lower job-related stress, boosting productivity, revenue, and retention.

Have Strong Onboarding

Quality onboarding might be one of the best ways to guarantee strong retention. When there's no onboarding process, there's [higher turnover](#) and lower productivity. Set up new hires for success from the start. Onboarding should give employees insights into what their role will require, how the company functions, shared values and processes, and provide a roadmap to success in timely increments.

Recruitment Recommendations: Start Onboarding During Recruiting

Show job candidates that you're invested in their success from the get-go and have onboarding discussions be part of your interview process. Ask them how they learn best, what resources they feel would make them successful, and what training would help them master new responsibilities.

Let job candidates know what the onboarding process looks like, and lay out what you'll expect them to know by what dates, but leave room for input and ensure the discussion is collaborative. If a candidate says, for example, that they may need an extra week to master your project management system, that's not necessarily bad.

Retention Recommendations: Gather Feedback on Onboarding

Your onboarding process is important, and who best to help ensure it's as strong as it can be than those who've gone through it? Actively encourage those who go through your onboarding to provide feedback. Provide them surveys, polls, questionnaires, and even focus groups or group discussions afterward. Remember to be open to feedback! What could've been done differently? What worked? What didn't? What additional resources would employees have wanted?

Be More Flexible

Today's workers value flexibility. A [Slack survey](#) found that:

- 76% of employees want flexibility in *where* they work.
- 93% of employees want flexibility on *when* they work.
- 56% of workers will seek new job opportunities that promote *flexibility*.
- 21% of employees will leave a position that *isn't flexible enough*.
- *Flexibility is second only in compensation* in the factors leading people to change jobs.

As evidenced from that data, flexibility doesn't necessarily mean one thing, but one thing is for sure: the days of rigid workplace regiments are over.

Recruiting Recommendation: Showcase Flexibility in the Interview Process

Show through your recruiting process that you're a flexible workplace. You can do this by:

- Allowing job candidates to self-schedule interviews.
- Working with candidates to accommodate their schedules.
- Giving candidates a choice between video, phone, or in-person interviews.
- Talking about flexibility as a workplace value during interviews and asking candidates what it looks like for them.

Retention Recommendation: Embrace Flexibility Where You Can

Some workplaces and positions are much more conducive to flexible schedules than others, and not everyone will be able to offer a build-your-own-schedule or work-from-anywhere approach. However, offer flexibility where you can, even if that means being creative. Can start and stop times be flexible? What about lunch breaks? PTO? Find areas you can add flexibility and work to build that into your organization's ethos.

Executives want to work in the office full time. And employees don't.

There's a discrepancy between the flexibility expectations of executives and employees. You may need to amend your expectations to boost your recruiting and retention.



Of executives currently working remotely want to return to fully in-office work



Of non-executives currently working remotely want to return to fully in-office work

75%

Of executives currently working remotely want to come back three to five days a week

Only

34%

Of employees agree

Source: Future Forum Pulse, conducted July 28 to August 10, 2021. Number of respondents = 10,569. Sample sizes by country: USA (5,339), Australia (1,060), France (1,049), Germany (1,050), Japan (1,047), and the UK (1,024).

Adopt a Strength-Based Approach

Deloitte found [42% of employees](#) seeking new work didn't feel their company was maximizing their abilities and skills. Adopting a strength-based approach to work (and thus, recruiting and retention) is a way for employees to feel seen and valued and bring their strongest skill sets to the workplace.

A strength-based approach is exactly what it sounds like: focusing on individuals' strengths and talents vs. their struggles and mistakes.

Recruitment Recommendation: Flip the Way You Approach Interviews

Strength-based interviewing focuses on inherent talents and motivators over competencies or incompetencies. It's "what can you offer" vs. "what can't you do." Strength-based interviewing is inclusive, not exclusive. It gives you a much more holistic view of job candidates and can help widen your pool of qualified candidates.

With strength-based interviewing, remember that the goal is a conversation, not an interrogation.

Retention Recommendation: Nurture Your Internal Talent

Gallup found that 58% of job seekers listed "the ability to do what they do best" as necessary for their next job. Don't wait for them to look for a next job! Keep your employees around by helping employees figure out what they do best, nurture those skills, and give them a path to grow, whether that growth is upwards or laterally.

Furthermore, LinkedIn Learning's [Workplace Learning Report](#) found that employees at companies with high internal mobility (that hire/promote from within) typically stay almost twice as long as employees at companies with low internal mobility (and employees who move into new roles internally are also 3.5 times more likely to be engaged).

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Don't Take Talent for Granted

According to Gallup, [65% of people feel underappreciated](#) at their job, which is concerning since 66% of employees say they'd consider quitting if they felt underappreciated. A big mistake many organizations make is taking the talent they have for granted. Ensuring people feel appreciated and seen as more than just a cog in the wheel is important in strengthening your recruiting process and ensuring talent stays at your organization.

Recruitment Recommendation: Be Considerate of Job Candidates' Time

You don't want to take the time and resources of a job candidate for granted. Go out of your way to ensure your process has few barriers, doesn't take excessive amounts of time, and takes into consideration that many, if not all of your job candidates, have other things going on in their lives and thus cannot stop what they're doing and make everything about this interview, even if they want the job.

Retention Recommendation: Provide Your Employees With Value

In today's hiring climate, you must treat employees like customers to retain them. Savvy employers realize it's not just how much work you can get out of them but how much value you're providing your employees that will help them stick around.

There are plenty of ways to add value to an employee's life, but compensation is big. [Pew research](#) found that workers who switched jobs this past year reaped more financial benefits than those who stayed with their employers.

Job switchers saw a 10% salary increase, while the median worker who stayed at their job from April 2021 to March 2022 saw earnings fall by 1.7% after accounting for inflation. We understand that you might not have the budget to give everyone raises, but don't monetarily reward new hires to the detriment of loyal employees.

Utilize Recruiting Technology

Applicant tracking systems (ATS) are recruiting software used to streamline, automate, and strengthen the hiring process. An ATS can quicken the hiring process, designate workflows, and take the stress of organizing and communicating to job applicants off your plate. Data shows that adopting an ATS [will improve your hiring process](#).

Recruitment Recommendation: Use Technology to Send Meaningful Communication

30% of job seekers rated responsiveness as most important to their job-candidate experience, yet 77% of job candidates receive no communication from an organization after applying for an open position. The automation an ATS provides ensures that you can consistently and efficiently communicate with every job candidate, so they feel seen, even if they aren't moving forward in the hiring process. Ensure the tone of your communication aligns with your employer brand, and while automation is the key here to saving you time, don't do a copy-and-paste job. Spend time crafting the messages you send—we recommend even going so far as to personalize messaging for each position/department.

Retention Recommendation: Define Your Ideal Candidate

78.3% of ATS users said it improved the quality of candidates they hire. If the candidate you hire is right for the position, there's a higher likelihood they'll stick around. One of the biggest benefits of recruiting software is that it can screen candidates so that you're only interviewing those who align with your ideal candidate personas. You want to be strategic and deliberate with the parameters you set. Before you start using your recruiting technology, reevaluate what makes an ideal candidate, so you're not arbitrarily screening candidates based on accepted recruiting "best practices" but rather the specific attributes and qualities that match your roles.

Conclusion

Some innovative strategies companies can use to improve recruiting, and retention include:

- **Encourage a Culture of Inclusion**
- **Have a Strong Onboarding Process**
- **Be Flexible**
- **Adopt a Strength-based approach**
- **Don't Take Talent for Granted**

Recruiting and retention are intrinsically linked. They must be planned for as a unit and not separately to work successfully in tandem for forward-thinking businesses.