

# Q2 Update

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## Paying Attention to Retention

You have likely started to see a shift in headlines. No longer focused on what we have *been through*, the new emphasis is on what is *to come*. Though it is impossible to predict the future, it certainly seems reasonable that the forecast could be correct: a mass employee exodus is coming. How can you stop it?

And do you want to?

If the thought is that turnover is a natural evolution of the workforce, it is true. But as a leader, it is important to remain on the *driving* end of those decisions, not the *receiving*. Creating an environment in which nobody would ever want to leave might sound impossible but falling a few feet short of that goal is better than never striving to achieve it at all. Imagine if you had a rock-solid team of "A" Players, and a line out the door of more wanting to join. Imagine what the future could hold if your highest potentials never went to your competition, they only joined from them. Would those scenarios allow you to achieve more and (perhaps more important) enjoy more?

So yes, it is fair to say that paying attention to retention is more essential than ever, knowing what is likely to come.

### What Matters

Inc.com recently published an article that states a jaw-dropping 52% of employees plan to leave their jobs this year. Their research found:

- 71% more employees are more disengaged in 2021 than they were at the beginning of 2020, and 66% of employees said they would be more engaged at work if their employer improved company culture.
- 46% of employees feel less connected to their company or colleagues since the start of the pandemic; most employees blame a lack of communication (26%) or lack of effort to make remote employees feel connected (25%).
- Research found one in four employees (25%) reported work-life balance as the reason they would search for a new job.

What do we deduce from this? What kind of culture will inspire and retain the best? How can employees get involved and feel part of something bigger than themselves? What is the right balance of virtual and in-person interactions? These are just a few of endless questions that should be asked within the senior leadership of an organization. Consider though, that the answers are not found at the top. What matters to *people* is not the key to retention. What matters to the *person* is.

It is time to stop theorizing.

It is time to start asking.

### Servant Leadership

If you had to name the names of your most important clients, who would immediately come to mind? If the answer is anyone other than the names of your employees, it is likely time for a paradigm shift. Your people are your most valued asset, and they should feel as though you are dedicated to serving them the same way you do your external ones. Authenticity is paramount; to a certain extent, Zig Ziglar's famous quote that "*you will get all you want in life, if you help enough other people get what they want*" is commonly mistaken.

If the reason you want something from others is because it will benefit you, that is inauthentic behavior that few will trust. If your intent is to genuinely serve those around you, you have begun to create a relationship of authenticity. Work on asking purposeful questions and perfecting your active listening skills and share responses and professional recommendations that are rooted in the intention of *servicing* those you lead. If you truly believe in what you say and the intent behind why you are saying it, others will as well.

*"Listen with the intent to understand, not the intent to reply."*

– Stephen Covey

### Inquiring Minds

As it relates to professional purpose and fulfillment, there are two critical elements that are highly intertwined but distinctly different: the *responsibilities* and the *relationships*. Retention cannot happen without constant care and feeding around both.

The responsibilities:

- What is going well? What wins are you experiencing?
- What challenges are you facing? What do you need help with? What is making your job harder than it needs to be?
- How are you feeling about the work itself that you are doing? How would you describe your morale?
- What have you not been involved with yet, that you would like to be? (types of projects, clients, meetings, responsibilities)
- Do any of our processes seem inefficient? How can we fix them?
- Wave a wand – what would you love to fix or change about our department? Leadership? Team? Company? Commute? Hours?
- Envision you a year from now. How is that person different than today, and what do we need to do to take perpetual steps to prepare you for that progression?

The relationships:

- On a scale of 1-100, how confident are you that you are in the right place, doing the right things, with the right people? What can be done to move us higher up on the scale?
- What is a 7 that could be a 10? Every company does things well, but what is good that you believe you could help make even better?
- Who do you work with (me included) frustrates you, and why?
- How can I be better for you as a leader? What should I be doing more of? What should I be doing less of?
- What can I do to help make you more successful?
- If you were ever to be open to an opportunity outside of our organization, what would it look like and how can we create that here together?

Confidential surveys are good for disclosing issues that people do not feel comfortable sharing. But confidential surveys do not lead to retention; candid conversations do.

### It's Who You Know®

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—Traci Cetraro