

Love the ones you're with

ENHANCE YOUR STAFF TENURE BY ENGAGING WITH EXISTING EMPLOYEES.

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(i) Ironically, while companies pay painstaking attention to recruiting people, scant attention is often paid to retaining current employees.

Given the global war for talent, it is imperative that staff retention strategies are in place at every level within the organisation. It is arguably even more important to ensure that these are in place, in the case of "star performers".

As part of their staff retention strategy, employers need to ensure that their employees are loyal and happy and that their remuneration is market-related. Ideally, line managers should hold monthly one-on-one, personalised conversations with their employees to ascertain "where they are at". These conversations are about "me, my job, my future and my role".

Continuous feedback should be provided so that employees know that they are adding value to their

organisations. If this is not the case, focus areas should be identified and short time frames scheduled for the next one-on-one conversation. Listening posts or barometers, such as the Deloitte's Best Company To Work For Survey are very useful in assessing the organisational climate and in determining employee sentiment and loyalty. Feedback from such surveys should be used to narrow gaps within the organisation.

Independent climate assessments should also be conducted, preferably bi-annually. These assessments provide valuable feedback as to whether management is perceived to "walk the talk" in terms of organisational values. They also provide an opportunity to review remuneration, training and development, career opportunities and performance management processes.

Undoubtedly, one of the most compelling reasons for conducting surveys is the fact that managers are required to manage different generations within the workplace. The challenge for management is that each generation has different workplace requirements, and different requirements in terms of how they need to be managed. There is a common misconception that employees leave organisations because they are dissatisfied with their remuneration. Exit interviews indicate, however, that this is not necessarily the case. Employees often leave because they dislike their boss, or their boss's management style.

An annual leadership index is very useful for addressing the latter. Senior management should assess the values and the leadership styles of their line managers on an ongoing basis. Where necessary, strategies should be implemented to address gaps. Closing the gaps should form part of the line manager's performance management review.

Changing a manager's leadership style can potentially create a more favorable workplace environment which, in turn, may translate into better staff retention.

A scorecard process is very useful for assessing both line managers and employees who report to line managers. Individuals should score themselves. The respective manager should assess their direct reports. Scores should be compared and differences discussed. Actions should be minuted for the next meeting.

The employer and the employee should enter into a psychological contract at the interview stage. Instead of merely focusing on work-relation outputs, prospective employees should be afforded an opportunity to spell out their workplace expectations. Conversations should extend beyond salary, work hours, leave and benefits. They should also include issues such as whether the employee sees the position as a means to an end, or whether the employee sees the position as a career move.

It is important to obtain absolute clarity upfront in terms of where the employee is adding value to the organisation and where the employer is adding value to the employee's goals. In the interest of ensuring staff retention, alignment is critical. Areas such as an employee's desire to travel and a desire for training can easily be addressed and, if satisfied, can play a critical role in staff retention. It is important to recognise, however, that there is inevitably a saturation point for learning and a point of diminishing returns for both parties. Generational theory indicates that Generation X and Y will not retire with your organisation. Nowadays the optimal tenure in any position is three to five years. At this juncture, it is necessary to either revise the role or add to the job challenge. *(HRJ)*