



Helping Organizations Define and Develop Top Talent

## Retention Tips

- Focus initially on the executive group. They need to be retention champions to truly implement a cultural change.
- Present a retention business case to the executive team. Show the numbers; reflect the true values in revenues, costs, and productivity; and attach results to the bottom line.
- Make retention mandatory. Devise measures to keep managers accountable, then reward them for success.
- Design retention as an OD intervention. It's important to not only deliver training, but also to explore new ways to learn. Integrate retention into a cultural process.
- Use exit interviews. Share that information with managers, show them why people leave, and educate them on the power they have to keep talent.
- Conduct routine sensing interviews. Know your at-risk talent, make asking a routine part of managers' job, and never stop asking what matters most.
- Focus on the histories and culture of acquired employees. Blend company cultures, respect past experiences, and integrate those who were drafted with the enlisted employees.
- View recruiting as ongoing and proactive. Look at specific employee groups, cultural groups, or management groups. Ensure stability.
- Keep track of employment trends. Look at your talent pool and succession plan. Who will you develop to replace the star performers?
- Treat your people like VIPs—very individual people. One size doesn't fit all.
- Leverage the strengths of current team members. Find new opportunities, but don't forget what has been successful in the past and use that as the foundation for a retention plan for the future.

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- **Develop individual retention plans. That's especially important for top talent. The plans should emphasize development, work challenge, and life work balance.**
- **Provide clear development plans and learning opportunities. That means not only formal training, but also mentoring programs. Empower employees to seek development opportunities.**
- **Stay connected with previous employees. You can learn from them and present a retention environment that might bring them back into the fold.**
- **Plan challenges for knowledge-based people. They are the technical gurus that keep your business on the competitive edge, so plan and assign their next projects long before they reach the end of their current assignments. Give them challenging experiences to keep them engaged and help them learn.**
- **Communicate goals, strategies, and successes. Ongoing communication about retention reinforces the value that the company places on its pool of talent.**
- **Maintain a warrior spirit towards retention. Keep it at the top of your corporate initiative list because your talent is a key element of your success. Don't let the assumption that "there are plenty of people out there" let you take your eye off the ball. --TD January 2002**

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