

THE RESOURCE

Labor & Industrial **INSIGHTS**[®] magazine

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RECRUITING & HIRING NONTRADITIONAL EMPLOYEES



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AND MORE...

Battling BURNOUT

In our latest Client Learning Session, Dr. Shawn Ricks gave a fantastic presentation on Burnout. Titled *'Burnout, Boundaries & Balance: Maintaining Wellness in Uncertain Times'*, it was a timely topic for so many of the hiring managers we work with on a regular basis. And, let's face it, many of our staff members as well. Dr. Ricks highlighted the different mental health/wellness trends - both in and out of the workplace - in the wake of the pandemic. Increased agitation, harder to focus, feeling pulled in multiple directions, being asked to do more with less. Sound familiar? We're living in a state of hyperarousal and hypo-arousal in part due to: the pandemic, social and civil unrest, COVID/pandemic fatigue. We are ALL experiencing and living through trauma.

We covered the 3 Types of Stress: Physical, Chemical & Emotional. In our current state of less time...less resources...less rest, this daily stress can become chronic stress. This stress reduces the immune system, and when our body's defense system for stress is constantly left on throughout the day, it eventually burns out. We were given some helpful tips on determining whether STRESS or BURNOUT is being experienced, and then learned the 5 Stages of Burnout: subtle dissatisfaction, subconscious disregard, conscious numbing, anxious exhaustion, and full-blown trauma.

What are the causes of BURNOUT?

- Workload - load doesn't match capacity
- Perceived lack of control
- Reward - does it match time and effort
- Community - relationships and communication
- Fairness - equitable treatment
- Values mismatch

In order to prevent burnout, creating Boundaries is key. In order to create boundaries - Be clear on your 'WHY', Learn to say "no", Block your calendar, and Limit the amount of access others have to you via email and text. Balance is "an alignment between the use of time and personal and professional goals and priorities—not necessarily equal distribution of time between professional and personal activities, but rather general satisfaction with one's life". (Berry, 2010)

We are at our best when we're balanced in the four main areas: Physical (Health), Mental (Focus), Spiritual (Purpose) & Emotional (Happiness). Dr. Ricks left us with some practical strategies for immediate use in our efforts towards achieving balance.

An important note for organizations: While most companies focus on wellness practices that are individual, it is important to examine and shift the culture of the workplace. If everyone is burnt out, it's time to look at the environment and adjust norms and expectations that may be responsible!

THE RESOURCE

"Walls keep everybody out. Boundaries teach people where the door is"

- Mark Groves



Best Regards,



Kathy Hartung, CEO

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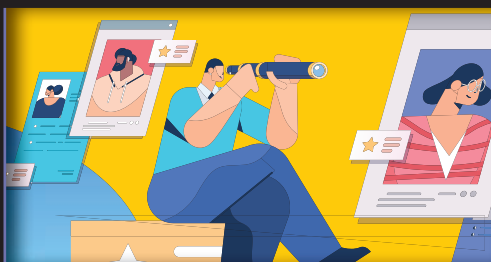
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Labor & Industrial **INSIGHTS**[®]

PUBLISHER & EDITORIAL DIRECTORS

Haley Marketing Group

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Mackenzie Froese

MANAGING EDITOR
Marsha Brofka-Berends

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Danielle Cronquist

Kevin Eikenberry

Marcus Erb

Terri Klass

Alaina Rivas

Team Slice

DESIGN

Matt Coleman

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STRATEGIES
FOR RETAINING
EMPLOYEES
& IMPROVING
COMPANY
CULTURE

BY ALAINA RIVAS



As organizations struggle to deal with the Great Resignation, the thirst for business growth has led some of them to engage in talent poaching and to offer massive incentives for employees to leave their current employers. Those employers must be doing something right if their competition sees value in their workers, but now they need to step up their game to keep those good employees around. Retaining top-performing staff is certainly a much better business strategy than trying to convince them to come back after they've left: not only does it keep top talent on board, but it also saves the time and money involved in backfilling roles. Fortunately, there are some tried-and-true strategies companies can use to help cultivate and retain a thriving workforce.

First, learn to recognize complacency. A company with long-term employees that is not experiencing as much growth as it would expect based on its resources should be asking its leadership team some tough questions: "How has our organization improved lately?" and "When was our last real success?" If the answers to these questions point too much to the past, the organization not only has a problem with hitting its goals but also has a workplace culture that has accepted these flatlining results. When team members are okay with the company's progress (or lack thereof), that's a problem. When team members have been loyal to the company in the past, their willingness to accept the company's progress (or lack thereof) puts employers in a tough spot when those employers care deeply about both honoring loyal employees' contributions and maximizing the organization's potential.

With the right approach, though, organizations don't have to sacrifice loyalty for performance. By implementing some (or all) of the following 13 creative strategies, companies can increase their ability to grow and retain great employees.

1 BRING IN NEW HIRES.

When a company has open roles or needs to expand its team, bringing in external hires is one way to "reset" the organization, especially when those outsiders bring new ideas that can help motivate current staff. The key to getting existing employees and new employees to gel together as a team is to honor each group's unique perspectives.

- Set aside ample time for everyone to get to know each other on a personal level.
- Acknowledge the successes of the existing team.
- Empower the new hires.
- Encourage existing employees to be open to the new hires' suggestions.

To make this transition most successful, though, companies also need a separate plan for improving employee engagement among any poorly performing long-term employees.

2 GIVE TEAM MEMBERS A CHANCE TO GROW.

Helping longstanding current employees shift into learning mode and restart their personal growth process is one of the best ways to get them excited to stay at a company—and back into a position where they can help the business grow.

- Provide personal development opportunities (such as attending a conference or networking with people in similar roles at other organizations).
- Offer skills assessments to generate excitement about developing their strengths further or picking up new skills.
- Create formal opportunities for them to try out new roles or responsibilities within the company.
- Identify tenured employees who have maintained a growth mindset while staying invested in themselves and the organization over their many years there, and inspire others to follow their example by publicly recognizing their contributions.

3 CREATE PERFORMANCE PLANS FOR THE BEST EMPLOYEES.

A company's competitors are interested in luring away only its top performers: the employees who want to be challenged and who often exceed expectations. Organizations can have better luck keeping those employees by finding ways to measure their performance. Performance reviews can shed light on where employees are going above and beyond (and where their weaknesses lie), but be sure to look past money and numbers, too, to see who is trying to excel. These measurements make it possible to set goals and expectations—metrics that are especially helpful in the onboarding process for new employees and give all employees clear direction and ensure that their work stays on track.

4 PROVIDE MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.

High performers want to expand their skill sets. Companies should provide viable methods for employees to expand their knowledge and gain experience.

- Appoint mentors to guide both new

and current employees, so they have someone to learn from and to go to with questions.

- Give employees opportunities to lead projects.
- Encourage employees to attend classes, webinars, and professional development conventions.

5 OFFER FLEXIBILITY IN THE WORKPLACE.

Employees are human: they have kids, doctor's appointments, and countless other non-work-related commitments and interests. Flexible schedules and support for a healthy work-life balance can increase employee retention. Similarly, a policy that allows for some degree of remote work not only gives employees a break from the office but also saves them time and gas money. This simple "perk," which has become increasingly desired (and even expected) in the wake of the pandemic, can make an employer more attractive to employees—and incentivize them to stay.

6 PAY MORE COMPETITIVE SALARIES.

A company can gain an edge by keeping tabs on the competition via job websites such as Glassdoor or LinkedIn that make it possible to find out how other organizations compare when it comes to compensation, benefits, and workplace culture. By using this information to evaluate their own offerings, then adjusting them to meet or exceed top competitors' salaries and benefits, companies can increase their chances of retaining and attracting top talent.

7 START EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION INITIATIVES.

One of the easiest ways to keep employees happy is to let them know that their accomplishments are being noticed.

- Take note of employees' achievements or yearly anniversaries.
- Don't wait for annual performance reviews: offer recognition as soon as it's merited.
- Consider asking employees how they like to be rewarded. Some may be looking for just a pat on the back, and an occasional, simple form of recognition (such as "Great work!") could be all that's needed to keep them motivated.

8 OFFER PERKS AND INCENTIVE-BASED BONUSES.

Employees often respond favorably to performance-based incentives that give them opportunities to earn more money. (After all, who doesn't want a bigger paycheck?) Companies don't have to find this extra income in their budgets because the employees will bring it in themselves. Outside of healthcare insurance, organizations can also attract employees by offering them a wider variety of benefits, investments (such as stock options), and 401(k) retirement plans.

9 PROVIDE WORKPLACE AMENITIES.

Inexpensive niceties, such as free coffee, water, and snacks, can go a long way toward making employees happy and productive. Companies should also ensure that their employees have comfortable work environments; the ability to communicate with their co-workers easily; and any tools, equipment, software, and other resources that could make their jobs easier.

10 PROVIDE CAREER GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES.

Some employers see offering job title changes as a cost-efficient way to retain employees and boost morale. But that approach doesn't have long-term effectiveness unless those job title changes come with career growth paths and increasing responsibility. Knowing that there is more for them to accomplish and other roles to aspire to can increase employee engagement, which can help reduce turnover and improve job satisfaction.

11 USE NONCOMPETE AGREEMENTS SPARINGLY.

No matter how happy a company's workers are, some of them will eventually leave. When employees have regular access to sensitive information and their departures could lead to damaging consequences, a noncompete agreement can be a good way to protect the company. The effectiveness of these types of contracts varies from state to state, however, and some states are considering outlawing them altogether. When its employees don't have access to vital information, a noncompete agreement could open a company up to potential problems. Such agreements could also push away potential talent who might

see them as too limiting. And because most noncompete agreements have time constraints that eventually expire, companies that use them must also consider the costs involved with pursuing lawsuits against former employees.

12 WELCOME FEEDBACK.

Not all employers take advantage of exit interviews, even though these conversations can be the best opportunity to receive raw, honest evaluations from departing employees. Asking an employee why they are leaving may reveal why they found the competition more appealing—and how to prevent the departure of further employees. Survey existing employees about their jobs, too, and ensure that they will not suffer any negative consequences for offering their feedback. Make it clear that the organization is genuinely interested in their experiences, feelings, and judgments.

13 DON'T BURN BRIDGES.

Although it's easy to be bitter about an employee's exit, it's more productive to make their departure a positive experience. (No organization wants its disgruntled ex-employees to spread their negativity among current team members or potential candidates.) Focus on their contributions to the company and on the goals they've met, and encourage them to keep in touch after they're gone. There's always a chance that they could return to the company one day!

FINAL THOUGHTS

Because a high employee turnover rate can be detrimental to any business, companies must continually evaluate (and adjust as needed) their employee experience if they want to thrive in today's especially competitive job market. Organizations need to consider providing employees with more of the working conditions and perks they seek, such as learning opportunities, flexible schedules, and a stronger focus on overall employee satisfaction. By placing the emphasis on its most important resource—its people—a company can attract more top talent and improve its retention. ■

Alaina Rivas is the managing director of support services at Insperity. Her focus on recruitment talent identification, recruitment advertising, marketing, and branding methods enables her to find the best talent using the latest recruitment strategies, talent attraction methods, and technologies.

6 TIPS FOR BECOMING AN INFLUENTIAL LEADER

BY TERRI KLASS



Imagine a scenario in which a team is struggling with a project because the information they need to complete it is not coming in as quickly as they expected.

As they debate whether (and how) to approach the client about moving up the deadline, some team members favor handing an incomplete document over to the client. The team leader, however, is certain that the best course of action is to wait just a few more days for all the data to be available so the team can present the client with a complete deliverable. They keep trying to convince the rest of the team to extend the deadline but don't get any support for this position. In the end, the deadline is not moved forward, and the client is extremely upset with what the team presents. If only the

leader had been able to influence the rest of the team to make a different decision.

The topic of influence often comes up in leadership programs and coaching. Although leaders may be strong technicians and extremely capable of carrying out their job responsibilities, they can also feel that they are not as influential as they would like. The inability to persuade others to support their ideas and suggestions can be frustrating and can throw off any leader's confidence level. By keeping six key strategies in mind, however, leaders can increase their influence.

Focus on Relationship Building

Every influential leader understands that being able to convince team members or bosses to embrace their ideas begins with cultivating meaningful and trusting relationships. A leader who doesn't show care and

concern for their team cannot expect to persuade that team to sign on to their strategies. Additionally, effective leaders also network widely and cultivate relationships with people from different teams and areas.

Develop Credibility

Influential leaders demonstrate their credibility by being dependable and following through with what they say they will do. Credible leaders listen to their team members to understand what they are really saying, and they never use “bait and switch” tactics to achieve their own goals. They are also trustworthy, so others can count on them to always be honest and tell the truth—even when it’s hard to hear.

Craft a Clear and Compelling Message

Influential leaders use descriptive language to express themselves with both clarity and energy. By presenting a compelling message that makes the case for why a certain choice is being suggested, they can persuade others to support their decision—and share their excitement.

Be Inclusive and Approachable

Influential leaders reach out to include input from many different demographic groups and thought leaders. When a discussion or a project includes many different (and sometimes opposing) perspectives and opinions, leading with openness and inclusivity can help prevent it from going awry. Influential leaders promote an open dialogue by welcoming feedback, even if it is critical. They also value their team members and treat them with respect, and they cultivate environments in which everyone feels safe to speak up.

Inspire Others

Influential leaders inspire others by presenting an exciting vision that team members and bosses want to support. These leaders understand what’s important to others, including their pain points and what information they need to choose their courses of action. An upbeat, positive disposition and a well-thought-out plan provide the foundation for an inspirational approach.

Value Appreciation and Recognition

Lastly, influential leaders are grateful for all of their colleagues’ hard work and input. They publicly demonstrate how much they appreciate others’ dedication, and they make sure people get credit for their contributions. (For example, they might offer to put something in writing in someone’s file for an accomplishment that was difficult to attain.) Leaders who become known as advocates for others will see their influence grow.

Being a leader doesn’t mean sitting in a position of authority and telling other people what to do. Rather, being a leader means earning a position of influence through persuasion, appreciation, and communication. Leaders who actively work to develop their skills in these areas will increase their influence—and their effectiveness. ■

Terri Klaas is a highly sought-after leadership skills facilitator, trainer, coach, and speaker who helps organizations develop influential leaders and retain their experienced talent. She can be reached at www.terriklassconsulting.com.



RECRUITING & HIRING NONTRADITIONAL EMPLOYEES

The upheaval of the last couple of years has changed how companies work—and now it's changing how they hire. Many employers and HR managers are being forced to make adjustments to how they recruit, train, and retain new people while the skilled-labor shortage continues. And as the world recovers from the economic setback caused by the pandemic, many companies are taking a look at alternative routes to help them get back on track. One possible solution is to hire nontraditional employees.

What Is a Nontraditional Employee?

A nontraditional employee is someone whom employers would usually either overlook or exclude to fill a role. There isn't a precise definition for this category, but some typical examples of nontraditional employees include workers who lack desired occupational requirements (such as a related degree, direct experience, or job-specific certifications) and candidates who lack employment experience or who have criminal records or gaps in their employment history.

(Note that nontraditional employees are distinct from nontraditional occupations, which are defined by the U.S. Department of Labor as occupations in which individuals from one gender make up less than 25 percent of the individuals employed in that occupation. Examples of people in nontraditional occupations include women working in welding, criminal justice, or engineering; and men working in nursing or early childhood education.)

Why Organizations Shouldn't Exclude Nontraditional Employees

When employers add degree requirements to job descriptions for positions that haven't previously required degrees (and haven't changed in responsibilities), they're effectively shutting out a large segment of the labor force simply because those people lack a degree. Add to that the fact that a significant number of Americans have felony convictions,¹ there's a potentially huge labor force that employers just aren't considering.

Employers need to find creative ways to

expand the workforce by looking for workers who aren't already participating in the labor market. Also referred to as "hidden workers" and STARs ("skilled through alternative routes"), many nontraditional employees may very well have the needed skills or potential to do the job but no way to show it. It's up to employers to recognize those skills and find people with the right potential—by changing how they recruit and hire.

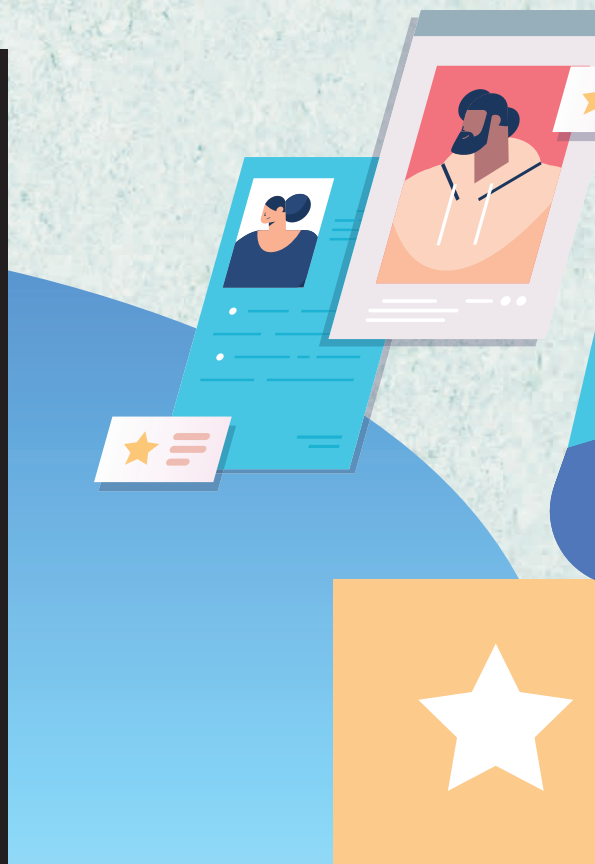
In addition to enabling companies to expand their workforce and rebound from COVID-19–caused losses, hiring nontraditional employees brings other strategic advantages and benefits.

Problem-solving skills. Many nontraditional employees learned their skills on the job, online, or somewhere other than a four-year university. That alternative education often comes with alternative perspectives to problem solving.

Diverse perspectives. Employees from nontraditional backgrounds bring to the table different ideas and perspectives that can help their teams make better and more informed decisions.

Soft skills. A candidate with a gap in their resume or an alternative education may still possess plenty of soft skills needed for the job.

For example, people from industries such as nursing and teaching or service industry workers such as waiters and bartenders may





not have graduated in certain targeted fields but may have, in their work, developed excellent communication, organization, teamwork, and leadership skills.

Hiring candidates with diverse backgrounds and experience opens up an organization's talent pool to people who can help the company be more resilient, creative, and agile. They can often approach a stubborn problem with a fresh perspective and can energize and complement teams in unique ways.

Finding and Hiring Hidden Talent

When companies replace their one-size-fits-all hiring practices with a more targeted, skills-based approach, they open up paths to the untapped and oft-forgotten labor pool of hidden workers. Implementing a few key strategies can help organizations broaden their scope and have more success in their efforts to find and hire nontraditional employees.

Update the employer brand. To attract new types of employees, a company may need to adopt new values. This doesn't necessarily mean completely overhauling them. But updating its brand to make it clear that nontraditional employees are welcome may help an organization entice more candidates to apply there.

Promote inclusivity. It isn't always apparent to a potential employee what a company's culture is like (especially if that person is coming from

a different industry). But when an organization issues clear and well-defined statements about its embrace of inclusivity, that can go a long way toward helping people of all backgrounds feel more welcome there. Proactively crafting the employee experience in this way can pay off in improved recruitment.

Create Fewer Barriers. Nontraditional employees are sometimes hidden simply because employers don't know where to find them. Each type of hidden worker has a variety of barriers (such as a criminal history or the lack of a degree) preventing them from matching an employer's profile of a "viable" candidate.

Think Differently About Sourcing Candidates

Recruiting and hiring nontraditional employees may force HR teams and management to think

differently about how and where they source candidates. The rewards of considering several different types of long-term unemployed and discouraged workers (such as veterans, caregivers, formerly incarcerated people, immigrants, refugees, and those who have recovered from substance abuse) can be worth the effort—especially in this difficult hiring market. For many companies, having a hiring strategy that includes nontraditional workers could double as a recovery plan to make up for job losses suffered due to the pandemic and the Great Resignation. It also opens up opportunities for people who desperately need them and, with the introduction of fresh perspectives, can expand an organization's problem-solving capabilities. ■

Danielle Cronquist is a copywriter for BambooHR, where she focuses on creating content that gives people the tools and knowledge they need to do great work and create great workplaces.





THE TRUE COST OF BAD MANAGERS

BY KEVIN EIKENBERRY

NEARLY EVERYONE HAS HAD AN EXPERIENCE WITH A BAD MANAGER OR LEADER. AND THERE IS AN EXCELLENT CHANCE THAT ANY ORGANIZATION IS HARBORING ONE (OR MORE!) OF THEM NOW. BAD MANAGERS ABOUND—BUT AT WHAT PRICE TO THEIR COMPANIES?

THE COSTS

The number one reason people voluntarily leave a job is their boss. As the old saying goes, “People don’t leave jobs—they leave managers.” When employees have poor relationships with their immediate supervisors, worker disengagement increases, and that disengagement extracts a heavy toll on a company’s bottom line, to the tune of “\$960 billion to \$1.2 trillion in lost productivity a year” to U.S. organizations alone.¹



There are other costs associated with bad managers. Even if some of them can’t be directly tracked by the finance department, they still have real impact. And it doesn’t take much imagination to see how each can lead to real dollar costs.

Reduced productivity. Productivity typically tracks engagement. But when employees have a bad boss, they may be less focused on the work, take more sick days, and generally be more lax about their job responsibilities.

Increased healthcare costs. In addition to resulting in more employee sick days on the books, having bad managers around can also lead to an increase in stress-related healthcare costs.

Poor decisions. If a manager makes decisions with little or no input from team members, they may be missing valuable perspectives. In that situation, even a brilliant manager may make poor decisions or get less commitment and buy-in from the team that’s expected to implement them.

No decisions. Sometimes bad bosses make no decisions or take no action on issues brought to them. This approach may lead to missed opportunities and broken trust.

These are just a few of the many possible consequences of having a bad manager on board. Ultimately, most of the negative outcomes likely boil down to one or more of the big three: increased turnover, reduced engagement, and decreased productivity.

A COST-REDUCTION PLAN

Many organizations see employees as the cause of (and solution to) organizational problems. But offering employee assistance programs, job flexibility, great facilities, or even top-quartile pay aren’t enough to improve worker engagement. Companies that want to reduce the cost of bad managers need to find better managers.

There are three major ways to improve the overall skill and effectiveness of an organization’s leaders:

- Fire and replace
- Implement better selection and hiring processes
- Develop the managers already in place

The most egregious examples of bad managers might warrant immediate replacement or reassignment. However, simply replacing one bad boss with another doesn’t really improve anything (but does further lower the morale and hope of the team). A company can work on its hiring and selection practices (for both internal and external candidates), but that solution doesn’t give much immediate help.

The single best way to reduce the cost of bad managers is to help them develop into good managers. That happens with feedback, coaching, and training. Unfortunately, many organizations reduced their focus and investment in leadership development during the pandemic, and the turbulence of the past couple of years has made the job of a manager even more complex and challenging. The mix of a harder role with less support is a recipe for more bad bosses.

It is time to look carefully at the managers’ skills and results and provide them with the support they need to grow and improve. Doing this will not only cut operating costs but also lead to positive impacts that ripple through organizations and yield additional benefits. ■

Kevin Eikenberry is the chief potential officer of the Kevin Eikenberry Group, a leadership and learning consulting company that has been helping organizations, teams, and individuals reach their potential since 1993. His specialties include leadership, teams and teamwork, organizational culture, facilitating change, and organizational learning. He can be reached at info@kevineikenberry.com.

1. Ken Royal. 2019. “Heard of the U.S. Quit Rate? Win the War for Talent Now.” Gallup website, July 12, www.gallup.com/workplace/260564/heard-quit-rate-win-war-talent.aspx.

HOW LISTENING IMPROVES SAFETY

BY TEAM SLICE

Many safety managers tend to focus heavily on getting safety equipment, training, and protocols in place. Although health and safety control measures are necessary components of a safe workplace, their effectiveness may be diminished if employees don't follow them. After all, PPE that isn't worn, training that isn't learned, and protocols that aren't followed help no one and yield weak results. One very effective way to improve the worker participation needed to create a safer environment is to prioritize listening to employees.

Listening Increases Engagement

Unfortunately, employees often don't take active roles in workplace safety largely because they feel that their input isn't valued. When workplace safety managers and leaders employ only one-way communication (talking and telling—but never asking and listening), that can foster an environment of disengagement. To create a culture of engagement and buy-in, leadership must be open to hearing workers' concerns and suggestions. When leadership actually listens, employees feel valued and begin viewing themselves as active contributors to the safety solution—and therefore tend to become champions for its implementation.

Listening Leads to Clearer Insights

There is no substitute for experience, and this is especially true when it comes to workplace safety. Whether a company is building a training program or creating a safety equipment list, listening to worker input can help its leadership gain valuable insights and fill gaps that might have been otherwise

missed. Because they are actively and regularly using the relevant tools and machinery, workers tend to understand better than anyone else where near misses happen. By taking the time to listen to their thoughts and comments, safety leaders may be able to better identify—and address—areas of distraction, fatigue, and overall safety concern.

Listening Improves Reporting

If an employee doesn't believe that their voice matters to management, they may shy away from using that voice to mention possible hazards, discuss questionable activities, or even report safety incidents. This reluctance to speak up can lead to underreporting, especially for near misses and minor accidents that don't require any major medical attention. Conversely, workers who are well-trained, who are engaged in the safety of the company, and who are accustomed to being listened to by their safety managers will be much more likely to speak up when they see something amiss. By developing a culture that includes listening, safety managers can increase their overall reporting accuracy and even be alerted to potential hazards in time to keep them from becoming reported incidents.



When leadership actually listens, employees feel valued and begin viewing themselves as active contributors to the safety solution.



Listening Creates Healthier Teams

Teamwork is an important part of preventing accidents and promoting safety. When people work together and view themselves as a cohesive unit, they tend to watch out for and protect one another more diligently. Listening is vital for building healthy workplace relationships and promoting teamwork. When managers actively take steps to become effective listeners, they foster conversation and position workers to feel more like confident team players and less like passive bystanders. Listening creates a healthy space in which a team can share its struggles, acknowledge its ideas and feedback, and celebrate its victories. As teams become stronger over time, they help foster a culture that genuinely cares about everyone's health and safety.



A Powerful Tool

Workplace safety requires a multifaceted approach in order to be successfully implemented. A safety program that incorporates listening has the potential to achieve several key goals:

- Create opportunities for shared learning and community involvement
- Reduce the number of false assumptions and miscommunications
- Encourage accurate incident reporting and accident dialogue
- Promote engagement, candor, openness, and empathy
- Build workplace relationships and strengthen teams

Although listening alone won't solve every problem or prevent every accident from happening, it is a powerful tool that should be utilized as part of an overall safety program. ■

Slice Inc. manufactures an advanced safety blade system and ergonomically designed tools that have helped businesses in over 100 countries reduce workplace hazards and keep workers safe. For more information, visit sliceproducts.com.



THE 5 DIMENSIONS OF EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

BY MARCUS ERB

Office gyms and meditation breaks are nice, but employee well-being is much more complex than physical fitness and mindfulness. To better understand trends in the average worker's day-to-day experiences of well-being and their workplace, Great Place to Work partnered with researchers at Johns Hopkins University in a study that surveyed over 14,000 people from 37 countries and revealed the five key workplace elements that promote a climate of positive employee well-being.

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT. When employees have good mental and emotional support—the feelings and experiences that build and sustain positive mental energy—they are more likely to have what psychologists call a positive (or optimistic) attribution style. Positive attribution can build optimism, energy, hope, and confidence in people. Positive mental energy can greatly influence an individual's outlook and perception of their surroundings or workplace. An individual who experiences strong mental and emotional support can better manage workplace stress and anxiety.

SENSE OF PURPOSE. A sense of purpose at work results from experiencing fulfillment, meaning, and progress. A strong sense of purpose has been linked to higher resilience and more favorable views of employers and can be fostered by aligning an individual's role with the organization's mission or identifying tasks as critical.

PERSONAL SUPPORT. Working with others (especially managers) who create a safe, trusting, and respectful atmosphere can be an important predictor of employee well-being. Employees with high levels of workplace flexibility and job control, as well as the resources to accomplish their goals, have evidence of personal

support. Managers can also demonstrate support through employee development and career growth opportunities.

FINANCIAL HEALTH. When employees lack adequate financial resources, anxiety and fear can affect their outlook. Although some might argue that people are never satisfied with their compensation, it is important that employees earn enough to feel financially stable and capable of living freely. Because financial dissatisfaction can also arise when there is inequity in a workplace's compensation practices, equal pay and promotion practices are also critical.

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS. Supportive and caring social relationships with co-workers and leaders can be associated with lower stress levels. An environment of equity and inclusion is also necessary to foster psychological safety and teamwork, which in turn create a sense of belonging.

There is a growing urgency for the business world to address employee well-being because of its impact on the workplace. By taking steps to improve these five key areas, companies can build healthier work environments and improve their employee retention. ■

Marcus Erb is the vice president of data science and innovation at Great Place to Work. A resourceful and collaborative analytics leader, he has a passion for turning data into actionable insights for executives building high-performing workplaces.

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Affordable Expertise to solve your People Problems - So you can get on with Business. We offer a full suite of customized solutions to meet your organization's specific needs. Helping individuals & teams elevate performance and achieve excellent results.

PAYROLL & ACCOUNTING

We'll take care of the back office so you can focus on growing a successful business.

We work to determine your needs & customize our services. Whether you're a new or established business, outsourcing may be the right decision to reduce overhead, increase productivity, and ensure compliance.

CORE Assessment™

Start at the CORE and maximize your employee ROI.

The CORE is a single tool; a groundbreaking assessment that allows you to hire smarter, create dynamic teams, develop leaders, and create a culture of top performers.

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