

9 steps to retaining employees



John Tsochl ♦ Restaurateur and founder of BellyMelly

By the end of 2021, the labor shortage had reached epic proportions, with an estimated 10.7 million unfilled jobs. Everywhere I went, businesses displayed signs saying they were hiring. Restaurants and other businesses reduced their hours of operations because they didn't have enough employees to take care of their customers.

Considering this situation, I want to share with you some steps you can take to retain your current employees and attract new ones.

- 1. Train them.** Give your employees what they need to do their jobs. There is nothing more frustrating than tackling a project when you don't have what's necessary to successfully complete it. When you train your employees on customer service, you are showing them you value them by investing the time and money to ensure they will be successful. That training must be consistent and continuous in order to make an impact.
- 2. Listen to them.** When employees feel they have no input into what they do and how they are required to do it, they become discouraged. Ask them for feedback and be open and honest in responding to their

concerns. Ask what you can do to make their jobs easier and, as a result, make them more enjoyable. Ask what their goals are within the company—and what you can do to help them achieve those goals.

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- 3. Respect them.** We've all, at one time in our lives, had bosses who lost their tempers, berated employees in front of others, or disrespected employees in other ways. If you must have a conversation with an employee who is not doing well, do it behind closed doors and do it respectfully. Employees need to feel loved, valued, and appreciated every day.
- 4. Praise them.** When you praise an employee, do it publicly; it will serve

as a motivator for other employees. Be specific and sincere. Do it in a timely manner, and do it often. If you wait six months, that praise loses its thunder. Be sincere and specific.

- 5. Recognize them.** We all like to be recognized for doing a job well. Unfortunately, many employees are recognized only when they make mistakes. Try to catch employees who are doing a good job and thank them for it. My friend, Steve, is an accountant and recently left his job after just 45 days. Why? During his performance review he received only negative comments—even though he had performed well enough to uncover embezzlement in the company.
- 6. Motivate them.** Money can definitely be a motivator—but it's usually short lived. You can pay your employees extremely well, but if you don't motivate them they will underperform and, eventually, they will leave you.
- 7. Coach them.** Become a coach, a nurturer. Just as athletic coaches must bring team members together to perform at their highest levels, you must bring your employees together and get them to work as a team to achieve

the goals you have set for them.

- 8. Be flexible.** When the epidemic hit in 2020, many companies had to allow employees to work from their homes. Those employees proved that they could be just as—if not more—productive as they would have been in the office. Now you might be faced with employees who are having difficulty finding daycare or are facing other issues and would like to work at least part time from their homes. You would do well to make accommodations to help them deal with those issues.
- 9. Conduct exit interviews with employees who leave your company.** Why? Because they will give you insight about what went wrong. While most employees will tell you they are leaving because they can make more money somewhere else, most are leaving for other reasons. When they share those reasons with you, you will have the opportunity to evaluate them and determine how you and others in supervisory positions can adjust your own attitudes and behaviors and help you retain employees. 

By: John Tsochl and the Service Quality Institute www.customer-service.com.

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