

## 9 STEPS TO RETAINING EMPLOYEES

**B**y the end of 2021, the labor shortage had reached epic proportions with an estimated 10.7 million unfilled jobs. Everywhere I went, businesses were displaying “hiring” signs, and restaurants and other businesses had reduced their hours because they didn’t have enough employees to take care of their customers.

Thinking about this situation, I’d like to share 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’s nothing more frustrating than tackling a project without the tools and know-how to complete it successfully. If you train your employees on customer service, you’ll be showing them that you value them enough to invest the time and money to ensure that they can succeed. Just be sure that your training is consistent and continuous, if your aim is to let them know that you’re serious, and if you want to make a real impact on employee retention.
- 2. Listen to them.** When your employees feel that they have no input into what you’re asking them to do and how they’re required to do it, they’ll 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 more enjoyable. Ask what their goals are within the company, and what you can do to help them achieve those goals.
- 3. Respect them.** We’ve all had bosses who lost their temper, berated their employees in front of others, and disrespected them in other ways. If you must have a conversation with an employee who isn’t doing particularly well, do it behind closed doors, and do it respectfully. Employees need to feel loved, valued, and appreciated every single day.
- 4. Praise them.** When you praise an employee, do it publicly – if only because it will serve as a motivator for your other employees. Be specific and sincere. Praise them in a timely manner, and do it often – if you wait six months, the praise will lose its flavor. Be sincere and specific.
- 5. Recognize them.** We all like to be recognized for doing a job well. Unfortunately, too many business owners fail to recognize their employees unless they make a mistake. Try to catch your employees doing a good job, and thank them for it. My friend

Steve is an accountant who recently left his latest job after just 45 days. Why? At 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. Even if you pay your employees extremely well, they will under-perform if you fail to motivate them – and they’ll eventually leave.
- 7. Coach them.** Become a coach and be a nurturer. In sports, the coaching staff must bring the team members together to perform at their highest level. Even so, you must get your employees working together as a team to achieve the goals you set for them.
- 8. Be flexible.** When the epidemic hit in 2020, many companies had to allow their employees to work from home. Those employees proved that they could be just as productive (if not more so) as they had been at the office. You might talk with employees who’re having a hard time finding daycare or facing other serious issues, and who would like to work at least part time from home. You would do well to help them deal with those issues.
- 9. Conduct exit interviews with employees who leave.** Why? Because they’ll give you insights about what went wrong. While most employees will tell you they’re leaving because they can make more money elsewhere, most of them are leaving for other reasons. If they’re willing to share their true reasons with you, it will give you and your supervisory staff a valuable opportunity to decide how you’ll adjust your attitudes and behaviors to do a better job of retaining your employees.

For more information on John Tschohl and the Service Quality Institute, visit [www.customer-service.com](http://www.customer-service.com).

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*John Tschohl is the founder and president of the Service Quality Institute, the leader in customer service with operations in more than 40 countries, and one of the world’s foremost authorities on all aspects of customer service. He recently released his latest book, Relentless, and is the author of Coaching For Success, a training program that teaches how to coach and motivate employees. His monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge at [www.customer-service.com](http://www.customer-service.com).*

