

Title: 7 ways to retain staff and boost productivity

Workforce pressure is one of the key issues facing most sectors. In order for any business to function, there needs to be enough staff to handle the workload – and they need to be engaged enough to add value.

If you're battling a high staff turnover, you're probably also dealing with decreased morale and productivity across the rest of your employees as they're lumbered with extra work. In this sense, retention and productivity go hand in hand – investing time in your retention strategies is not only good for morale but good for business.

Try these 7 steps to improve employee retention:

1. Perfect your recruitment practices

Unfortunately, there's no fool-proof way of *guaranteeing* that new employees will become long-serving members of your team – but you can improve your chances by strengthening your recruitment approach. Reflecting on situations where it hasn't worked out will help you to identify what attributes are essential to succeeding in the role long-term, and you can use this to inform the questions you ask next time around.

Despite the pressures of replacing staff quickly and not wanting to lose candidates to your competitors, you should refrain from giving candidates unrealistic expectations, as this will only lead to disappointment for both parties later down the line.

2. Recognise the value of inductions

Ask yourself whether staff are leaving because they feel overwhelmed, unsupported or not part of the team. If so, providing a well-structured induction programme that properly welcomes new recruits into the team, gives them a clear overview of the business, and provides the training they need to succeed in their role, can be key to job satisfaction.

3. Provide regular feedback

Above all, employees want to feel valued, and a lack of feedback can be demoralising and reduce productivity. Giving praise where it's due and celebrating employees' successes will promote positivity and a sense of achievement. This is particularly important if employees are shouldering additional work due to staff leaving, as appreciating their efforts can reduce the chances of further resignations.

4. Implement measures to deal with long-term sickness

Long-term sickness can be a real burden on any business, and the consequences can go beyond being an employee down. For other employees, shouldering the workload of their colleagues can take its toll, and in some cases push them out the door too.

Dealing with long-term sickness absence by employing temporary workers or paying staff overtime may be your immediate response, but it's only a temporary solution. It is therefore important to have procedures in place to manage long-term sickness so that the situation doesn't drag on for longer than necessary, and either facilitates a return to work or follows the appropriate process for terminating their employment on grounds of medical capability if this is the only option.

5. Reflect on your management practices and culture

Self-reflection is a difficult but often necessary task, and taking an introspective look at your management practices and culture can be key to understanding a high staff turnover. Ask yourself:

- Are grievances being taken seriously?
- Do employees feel supported if problems arise?
- Are steps being taken to reduce stress?

This may help you identify key areas for improvement, which can allow you to address the factors driving employees to resign. Exit interviews can also be a useful tool for shedding light on problem areas.

6. Review your pay and benefits

Do you know how your pay structure matches up against the industry average? [According to one survey](#), 55% of employers have increased salaries to improve staff retention. While you will obviously need to be realistic about what is viable for your business, perks don't have to break the bank; you could also consider whether you could offer free parking, treats or discounts, all of which could help you prevent losing staff to competitors.

7. Consider career progression opportunities

For many employees, career progression opportunities count for a lot. Ask yourself:

- Are people being promoted from within?
- Are you giving people the tools, resources and opportunities to progress?
- Do employees understand their career pathways?
- Are you investing in training and development?

Not only can these measures improve retention, but working towards a clear goal can be an effective way of enhancing productivity.

Remember, retention strategies shouldn't just be fire-fighting tools – they should be implemented as part of your process to prevent a high staff turnover before it becomes an issue.

Need support?

For advice on this topic, contact NIVO's preferred partner on 0845 226 8393. Alternatively, contact Ben Delaney on BenDelaney@elliswhittam.com.