

Training is the Time to Sow the Seeds of Employee Retention

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Here are two examples of training programs for new retail salespeople at different companies. Which company do you think is doing a better job?

Company A

On their first day of training, new retail salespeople receive training manuals that explain how the company would like them to sell, upsell by referring customers to new products, sell product warranties and coverage plans, refer customers to managers to overcome resistance, and other activities. It's a modern, well-designed training program that incorporates videos, games, simulations and other engaging features. At the end of training, the new employees understand company procedures and are motivated to start working.

Company B

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terms. Training for new hires at this company also teaches skills and procedures. During training, however, each new hire also has a 20-minute meeting with the sales manager. In that meeting, the manager welcomes and congratulates each new employee and then helps them create a personal development plan so that they understand exactly what steps they should follow if they want to become a store manager or assistant manager in two to three years. Then the trainee rejoins the rest of the class.

Six months after training is completed, many of the new salespeople at Company A are already starting to think about leaving the company. They state that their work is repetitive and their jobs are a dead end. At Company B, however, the salespeople are still thrilled to be working there.

That's the impact one thoughtful addition to training can make. According to the Society for Human Resource Management's (SHRM) 2016 Employee Satisfaction and Engagement Study, 40 percent of all employees see their companies' commitment to professional development as "very important," and 48 percent see communication between employees and senior management as "very important."

If you can add four or five extras like that 20-minute meeting to your training programs, you can dramatically improve retention.

Here are some that I recommend based on their past success.

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terms. Work individually with each employee to create a personal development plan.

Do it as early as you can, during training and onboarding. (I would even recommend talking about career development when you are interviewing job applicants, since it offers a strong incentive for them to join the company.) When new hire training is over, follow up at regular intervals in the following months, review and set goals, and keep employees on track toward advancement.

Enrich your training with videos and stories.

If you can have a senior executive or successful manager visit your training class to say, “Four years ago, I was sitting right where you are today,” you will sow the seeds of retention. You can also use videos that showcase the success stories of your employees, tell your company story, and profile your company leaders and history. Find ways to tell your new hires that they don’t just work for you; they now belong to an organization.

During training for all employees - both old and new - invite ideas about high-level issues.

What do employees think are the most important trends in your industry? How up-to-date is your company? Are your competitors offering products or services that are better than yours? In short,

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terms. acknowledge what they say, you gain fresh insights. Perhaps even more importantly, you demonstrate that they have a strong future with you, because you listen.

Provide training that enhances the value of your employees.

Some companies believe that if they train their employees on the latest technologies and skills, it will only encourage them to leave. I disagree. What's the point of having under-trained employees, even if they stay with your company for years? It's better to provide great training and offer meaningful incentives for completing it. That way, you build a workforce that is both highly skilled **and** loyal.

Talk about your brand and brand promise during training.

What does your company stand for? How is that idea reflected in your products, company history and way of doing business? Talking about your brand during training is much more than a pep talk. It shows employee that they belong to something important and valuable. That sense of purpose and shared enterprise goes a long way toward convincing employees that your company is worth partnering with in the years to come.

It's Time to Train to Retain

SHRM studies find that 45 percent of all employees are planning to

check for jobs outside their organization next year. You can turn that situation around. In my experience, training makes all the difference. **Acknowledge**

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#Engagement

#new hire training

#onboarding

#retention

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