

12 WAYS TO KEEP YOUR BEST EMPLOYEES FROM BOLTING

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TIPSHEET: “12 WAYS TO KEEP YOUR BEST EMPLOYEES FROM BOLTING”

(Finding talent is hard. Losing it is hard to take. Avoid that altogether with these 12 overtures.)

THE WAR FOR TALENT is upon us.

Labor economists predict there will be [more jobs than people](#) by 2018. [Millennials](#), now the [largest work cohort](#), are less likely than prior generations to stay put.

Competition and effort required to [retain](#) the best employees is fierce.

And watching your superstars go elsewhere sucks.

Do these 12 things to make them stay:

1. MAKE THEIR CONTINUED GROWTH A PRIORITY

Think back to when you were the most unfulfilled at work. It was likely when you weren't [learning](#) and growing--when you thought, "Am I wasting my time here?"

You never want your stars in this state.

Regularly review their work plan with them. Take a personal interest in their [personal growth](#).

2. GIVE THEM THE BEST FEEDBACK THEY'VE EVER GOTTEN

High-powered performers tend to be hungry for feedback. Be remembered years later for your thoughtful, pivotal feedback.

Establish a Personal Board of Directors for your star--a panel of co-observers to calibrate your point of view. Then deliver the feedback with specificity and sincerity.



3. PUT EMPOWERMENT IN OVERDRIVE

A report in the [Journal of Personality and Social Psychology](#) indicates that the number one contributor to happiness is not money, popularity, or even a good sex life.

It's autonomy. We all want autonomy.

But high-achievers *crave* autonomy.

It's taken as a sign of trust. It's freedom. It's intoxicating. It's a must.

However, it takes work to give away work. So carefully plan how you'll give more autonomy and invest the time to do so in a way that sets them up for success.

4. DEFAULT TO GIVING THEM MORE RESPONSIBILITY AND SCOPE

The best employees often leave because they want more challenge. And the half-life of what keeps stars feeling challenged is shorter than most.

So upgrade their responsibilities early and often (ensuring they blossom vs. burn out).

5. TELL THEM HOW VALUED THEY ARE-- OFTEN

You'll never hear people complaining that they're receiving too much recognition. And interestingly enough, the best workers who get the most praise are often the most insecure--it's what drives them to perform (so don't assume they're over-recognized).

6. FIND OUT WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO THEM, AND PROVIDE IT

It may be more important that you asked them what's important than actually giving it to them.

When it comes to money, it may be tough to deliver what they want. But know that research shows [60 percent of the most meaningful recognition is free](#). People are looking for meaning, not things.

7. HAVE A MARKETING PLAN FOR THEM

Career advancement can be especially important to your superstars.

Like with a brand, get them the exposure and "brand impressions" they need--especially in crucible moments. Know their exact contributions so you can talk them up in talent reviews. Ensure key stakeholders see them in action.

Put your plan on paper and share it--without creating unrealistic expectations.

8. GIVE THEM HIGH VISIBILITY ASSIGNMENTS

Stars want to shine.

Assignments with high visibility help them build high-riser skill sets like presentation chops, grace under pressure, and ability to influence.



It doesn't hurt their career advancement opportunities either.

9. DRIVE ACCOUNTABILITY, BUILD THE BENCH, AND ADDRESS THE PROBLEM CHILDREN

Championship teams don't win with one star. It takes a combined effort of talented people, each accountable for their role. And they don't suffer weak links.

Nor should you.

Upgrade the talent level around your stars. Attend to the dead weight. Nothing frustrates your best employees more than when underperformers go unaddressed.

And stars will embrace the accountability push, because they know they'll deliver.

10. KEEP AN EYE ON THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR BOSS (IF IT ISN'T YOU)

You've heard that people most often quit their manager. It's no different with superstars. I'm not saying undermine the boss's authority--just check in occasionally on that critical [boss/employee partnership](#).

11. MAXIMIZE THE MEANING IN THEIR WORK

Help them articulate the profound "why" of their work--the higher order *purpose* behind it.

Help them articulate their profound "what"--the *legacy* they want to leave behind in their role that will make them look back and say, "I did that. That simply would not have happened were it not for me."

[Meaning](#) is the motivator of our times, so help maximize theirs.

12. ALWAYS HAVE THEIR BEST INTEREST AT HEART, AND SHOW IT

Care about them as a person. Even if they're leaving, show your [genuine](#) excitement for what's next. People talk after they leave a job--build your reputation for always putting the person first.

Your rock stars can reward you with their loyalty. It's not impossible--it just takes being intentional.

