BETTER WORKPLACES ON A BUDGET

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RETAINING EMPLOYEES WITHOUT ADDITIONAL SPENDING

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THE CASE FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

In the current job market, employee engagement and retention are among the most important priorities for many organizations. The Great Resignation has led many employees to seek other opportunities and has left organizations scrambling to perform and to keep their remaining personnel. Many exiting employees report receiving major pay increases in their roles with new organizations. In addition, inflation has decreased the buying power of the U.S. dollar, which has placed an even greater emphasis on increasing employee pay.

In fact, improving retention can be quite easy if you can just spend more money on the problem. Whether by simply raising salaries or implementing additional financial bonuses, increasing compensation is a straightforward way to boost retention. Other routes to improving retention might not involve direct payments to employees but still increase the cost of employment significantly. For instance, major improvements in health care benefits might serve to keep your staff in place but at a large financial cost.

These fixes are straightforward but also expensive. **Many organizations have no funds to increase their cost of employment.** In fact, most small companies, nonprofit organizations and organizations in highly competitive fields have few or no additional resources that they can use to help retain their employees. These companies simply have no stockpile of money that they can draw from.

Here is the key question:
How can organizations improve their overall employee experience and increase retention without spending additional money?

Happily, we can report that there are viable answers and ways that these companies can raise employee retention. We have organized this document by common reasons why employees leave their organizations. For each, we recommend effective strategies to use either with or without additional funds.

STEP 1: DETERMINE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S KEY DRIVERS OF TURNOVER

The results of the 2022 Better Workplaces on a Budget survey (https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Pages/Better-Workplaces-on-a-Budget.aspx) show that certain issues tend to drive people away from their organizations. Specifically, most people leave for more money or to improve their career prospects. However, your company probably has its own unique issues, so relying solely on results from across different organizations could lead you astray. Therefore, it is always a good idea to determine where your biggest issues are. This can often be done on a minimal budget using internal resources.

Employee surveys, interviews and focus groups are all common listening techniques for companies to gauge their current employees and find out which issues might be driving people away. Similarly, exit surveys and interviews are common ways to solicit similar information from departing employees.

Of course, your organization can hire external consultants to listen to and survey employees—and this can be money well-spent. For instance, survey consultants typically have norms for comparison that can be very helpful for interpretation. And, external consultants can promise more anonymity than internal information gatherers, which can improve the accuracy of the surveys and interviews. Plus, external specialists often have leading-edge ideas for collecting and interpreting employee feedback. It is up to your organization to determine if these advantages are worth the money spent on consultants.

STEP 2: ADDRESS YOUR ISSUES

After listening to your current and exiting employees to determine which factors are concerning them or even driving them away, you need to determine how to address these issues. Below are some suggestions organized by common reasons for turnover and by whether additional budget is required.

INADEQUATE TOTAL COMPENSATION

The most common reason for increased employee turnover in the SHRM Better Workplaces on a Budget survey is likely no surprise. For as long as exit interviewers have asked, “Why are you leaving us?” the answer “better pay” has been a common reply. However, in pre-pandemic times, most organizations reported feeling that they had reached a sort of equilibrium. In many cases, they felt that their compensation levels were high enough to attract and retain the employees they needed, yet not so high as to put them out of business. The labor market upheaval caused by the pandemic appears to have upset this delicate equilibrium. So, what can employers do?

Without Additional Funds

Provide total rewards statements. Providing a simple, individualized document that lists all the components of total rewards in one place can be valuable for increasing employee understanding. This should include things that employees do not typically think of as “compensation,” such as the company’s contribution to health care costs. Offering information about 401(k) matching, tuition reimbursement and other benefits can help employees take a “total rewards” view versus simply focusing on take-home pay.

Increase transparency in the compensation process. Some organizations have found that communicating how they approach compensation and benefits decisions can alter employees’ perceptions. For example, letting employees know what you do to ensure that your total rewards package—base pay, variable pay, health benefits, life insurance, retirement plan, paid time off, etc.—is at or above market can help.

With Additional Funds

Conduct a total rewards review. Many total rewards consulting firms can help you conduct a review. A typical approach might include surveying your current employees to determine their areas of highest need or to identify which of your existing compensation and benefits programs they value most and least. Firms will often help you “slice and dice” this data by workforce segments (e.g., nonexempt versus exempt, field versus corporate) so you can refine your rewards strategy to fit employee needs.

Consulting firms can also benchmark your company’s practices around wages, bonuses, long- and short-term disability, paid time off, medical insurance and so on against your regional and industry labor market competitors. This analysis can give you a view of what’s most important to your workforce (or workforce segments) and how you stack up against other companies.

Consider “shared capitalism” offerings. Although not in widespread use, nonsalary, group-incentive offerings, such as employee stock ownership plans (ESOP), stock option programs, and profit-sharing plans are successful for some organizations. A 2012 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research concluded that these types of programs, when used in conjunction with high-engagement cultures, can decrease voluntary turnover, increase intent to stay and raise levels of business financial performance.

LACK OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

The CEO who starts a presentation to employees with the equivalent of "I started in the mailroom" is often trying to make the case that the company offers plentiful career opportunities (assuming Dad was not the previous CEO). The opposite—a lack of career development and opportunities—was the No. 2 reason for employee turnover in the Better Workplaces on a Budget survey. Employees who view their jobs as dead ends, without opportunities to develop skills and advance in their current organizations, tend to look elsewhere.

Without Additional Funds

Increase (and communicate about) promotions from within. If employees perceive that all or most of their company's management positions are filled externally, they will soon conclude that they have limited career opportunities. Some companies have (stated or implied) policies that management hires or participants in management training programs should be college graduates. While there are advantages to having a mix of internal and external hires, these programs frequently exclude blue-collar employees who have good management potential. One response is for companies to examine their hiring and promotion policies and determine where there are ways to include current employees. And when internal promotions occur, the company can take the opportunity to publicize them through existing internal communication channels.

Organizations can demonstrate an employee-centric viewpoint by teaching workers new skills for their jobs (upskill) or teaching skills that can be used for different jobs (reskill).

Conduct a career path study. With most human resource management systems (HRMSs), it is possible to look at individuals' career paths and identify the common advancement paths in the company. Determining and publicizing these paths can help current employees to see where there have been opportunities for advancement.

Organizations might consider allocating a certain percentage of promotions or management-trainee program slots for current employees or creating team leader or related positions where nonexempt employees can take on some administrative duties as a precursor to a true supervisory role.

Provide access to online learning. In the SHRM Better Workplaces on a Budget survey, HR professionals saw career development as one area where technology might offer solutions. For example, there are thousands of free online training opportunities for individuals who want to learn and develop without completing a degree or certificate. These range from TED Talks and other free videos to courses offered by prestigious universities. The challenge with there being so much out there is, well, there's so much out there. Employees tend to see free online programs as useful for career advancement, if they are curated by the company. A good, low-budget place to start is creating a list of "approved" online programs sorted by function or department, reviewed by company experts, and connected to the stated qualifications of positions.

Some companies have instituted "So you want to be a manager" training programs in which current leaders talk about the realities of being a manager. Employees who express interest in supervisory or management roles can be offered specific readings, mentoring and free online skills training to help prepare them for management roles.

With Additional Funds

Create career ladders. Career ladders are developmental roles through which an employee can progress at a company. When an employee meets a certain set of criteria, the individual is eligible to move to a higher "rung" on the ladder. There are many individual contributor positions in which incumbents who have more experience provide more value to the organization. Organizations can create different levels or grades to account for this. These levels give employees the opportunity to progress as they achieve experience and/or demonstrate higher levels of expertise. The formal nature of these programs helps show employees how to progress, but they also add costs in the form of more pay raises over time.

A good example of career ladders is the general schedule grading system of the U.S. federal government (https://www.federalpay.org/gs/2022). For instance, an accountant can progress from a GS-5 to a GS-9 by demonstrating enhanced skills and capabilities over the course of several years. To put the grades into perspective, the 2022 pay range for a GS-5 is about $30,000 to $40,000, while the range for a GS-9 is about $47,000 to $61,000. This is about 50% higher pay.

Provide skills training for higher-level jobs. Offering training that helps current employees qualify for positions at higher levels can be a win-win. Current employees will feel more positive about their career prospects if they see a path to becoming qualified for higher-level jobs, and companies can build qualified candidates who already have a connection to and familiarity with the company and its culture.

Offer education or tuition reimbursement benefits. Years ago, HR researchers suggested that spending on company-specific training needed for higher-level jobs could reduce turnover, but they thought that general education benefits (e.g., college tuition reimbursement) would increase turnover. However, updated research findings have shown that funding for both job-specific and general education can **decrease turnover** and keep employees in your organization.

The SHRM 2022 Employee Benefits survey found that about half of companies (48%) offered undergraduate or graduate tuition assistance as a benefit. Examples include Amazon's Career Choice Program, which expanded in 2021 to include associate and bachelor's degrees; Boeing's Career Assistance program, which covers 100% of the cost of STEM degrees; and Chipotle's Cultivate Education program, which pays tuition for more than 75 online programs in business and technology across nine institutions.

LACK OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

“How you gonna keep ‘em down on the farm (after they’ve seen Paree)?” was a song popular in the days following World War I. The theme was that the young U.S. soldiers who had been exposed to the glamour and excitement of Paris during the war would not want to return to their (less attractive) lives “on the farm.” Work-from-home and other accommodations made by employers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic were for some employees the equivalent of that Paris experience. Flexibility in how, when and where workers complete their tasks has become ever more important to their overall work experience and intent to stay with or leave their current employers.

Without Additional Funds

Employ a one-on-one approach. Supervisors can sit down with direct reports to better understand their team members’ needs and desires around flexibility. Together, they can brainstorm alternatives for flexibility. For some, it might mean starting 30 minutes later every few weeks when it’s their turn to carpool and drop off a child at school or taking a long lunch once a week to help in the school’s cafeteria. Others might prefer coming to the office, but working four 10-hour days, while some might want to work from home full time. Managers who are creative and open to nontraditional solutions can go a long way to keep their team members without spending more.

Consider remote work for some workforce segments. In most organizations, it is feasible for at least part of their workforce to work away from the company location. Employees in many of these positions already have access to the required equipment (e.g., laptops, cellphones and home offices), therefore, this change does not require additional budget. However, we do recommend that for jobs requiring remote work, the employer should provide the necessary equipment and infrastructure (see section below: With Additional Funds).

As we heard from many HR professionals, “Flexibility doesn’t mean the same thing to all your employees.”

With Additional Funds

Create functional home offices. For employees whose job responsibilities allow them to work away from the office, the most obvious place to spend money to increase flexibility is on home office arrangements. Paying for such things as high-speed Internet, additional cabling or repeaters to avoid Wi-Fi problems, docking stations for laptops, and multiple large monitors can help to make employees' remote location similar to the company office. This setup should increase productivity as well as health and safety. In addition, having a binary work-from-home or work-at-the-office choice may not address all employees' situations. If working from home on a full-time basis is not feasible, some employees may prefer to work from such locations as local co-working sites.

In a 2022 Deloitte/Fortune survey, CEOs were asked what tactics they believed would be most effective in reducing the Great Resignation. The CEOs' top response—20 points higher than the second-rated tactic—was "allowing more flexibility in work times and locations."

Utilize technology solutions for onsite workers. For those segments of the workforce—including many hospitality, health care and manufacturing jobs—where working remotely is not an option, there may be technology options that can help increase flexibility. Tools are available to facilitate shift swapping, opting into overtime schedules, etc. This is also an area where the workforce changes can be part of the solution. For example, there is a growing segment of the population that doesn't want full-time work. The challenge is how to connect these part-time workers to jobs that they want to perform. Technology platforms can you help you vet and connect with these individuals.

UNSUSTAINABLE WORK EXPECTATIONS

Largely fueled by the workforce shortages that still plague employers, employees in some roles and organizations are faced with unreasonable and overwhelming expectations regarding the time and effort that they are to spend working. Indeed, this was the No. 4 cause of employee turnover in the Better Workplaces on a Budget survey results.

Without Additional Funds

Conduct work reviews. As we hear repeatedly from HR leaders, new activities are often added to managers' and employees' plates, but "nothing is ever taken off." Companies can benefit from conducting work reviews to determine whether lower-value responsibilities can be eliminated or reduced. Can a report be produced quarterly rather than monthly, or is it even needed? Are there "nice to have" tasks that can be stopped?

In the 1980s, Jack Welch famously instructed all GE corporate teams to stop producing all reports for the field. His logic was that the field would demand the ones that were truly valuable to them, and the rest could be eliminated.

Offer gratitude from management. Management can help to 1) communicate that they recognize the unsustainable situation, 2) let employees know what the organization is doing or trying to do to address the situation, and 3) thank them for their efforts and contributions. Also, communication related to how soon there may be "light at the end of the tunnel" can help with retention.

Communicate to your customers. Some short-staffed hospitality organizations have started letting their customers know about the situation and asking them to keep it in mind when interacting with staff. Clients who demand fewer staff to provide the previous level of service and timeliness can become the "straw that breaks the camel's back" and causes employees to leave.

With Additional Funds

Ensure staffing levels are aligned with needs. Many HR professionals have talked about the pandemic's impact on front-line workers, as well as the subsequent workforce shortages causing more overtime. While the answer might sound basic, sometimes the only solution involves filling the vacant positions, even if you are forced to use temporary or multiple part-time hires.

Provide monetary bonuses. Bonuses that recognize increased effort or making it through a particularly tough period are appreciated. While they don't reduce the workload, bonuses can modify perceptions of the fairness of the "inputs versus outputs" of the job.

Utilize technology. A growing number of technology-based tools can greatly reduce or eliminate the need for staff to field inquiries and produce reports. Providing end-users with tools as simple as Excel PivotTables or Power BI can allow them to "slice and dice" data to maximize its value. Sophisticated expert systems and AI-based chatbots can take on many of the first-level inquiries usually handled by call centers or central HR service teams.

UNCARING AND UNINSPIRING LEADERS

Most of us have heard the adage, “Employees don’t leave companies, they leave managers.” Although this was the No. 5 driver of turnover in the Better Workplaces on a Budget survey, it is important that employees feel they are valued and inspired by their leaders.

If you find that this is part of your problem, another adage comes into play: “If you have ineffective leaders, you have to change them, or change them.” Said in another way, your options are to train and coach leaders and managers to be better leaders or to move them out of supervisory roles (or out of the organization altogether).

Without Additional Funds

Communicate expectations for leaders. Having the CEO or other C-suite leaders describe what they expect of all leaders in the organization and how those expectations help the company live its values and achieve its mission can have a large effect.

Manage the weaknesses of the leaders. You can take steps to work around an individual leader’s weaker areas. For instance, if a senior leader is not a gifted communicator, an employee in public relations or internal communications could help ghostwrite e-mails and presentations for the individual.

Modify the performance management process. You might consider adding leadership competencies and “living the company values” to measures on which managers are evaluated in the performance evaluation and feedback process. On a related note, if your organization has a leadership bonus program tied to the achievement of specific criteria, do those criteria include leadership effectiveness? In some cases, adding key performance indicators related to employee survey results or turnover rates might be useful.

With Additional Funds

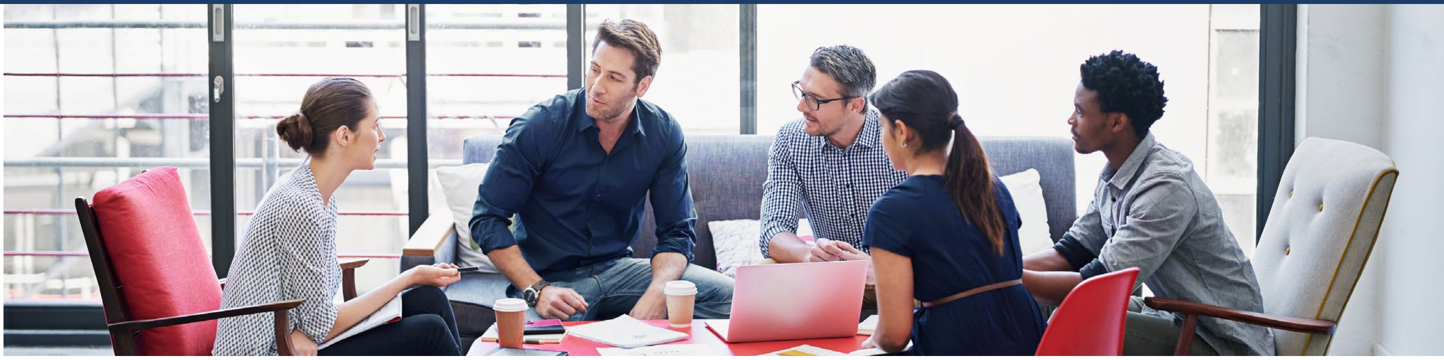
Create custom management-development courses. The most effective solution is likely the deployment of company-specific management training courses. In addition to teaching specific management skills, a custom course can ensure that managers understand why the course is being offered, show how it ties into the values and goals of the organization, and demonstrate how leaders are expected to behave at their organization. These lessons can be emphasized by including senior leaders in the course introduction.

SHRM offers a general training course and certification for people managers. The **SHRM PMQ** (pmq.shrm.org) is a virtual self-paced learning experience that combines interactivity and gamification to engage learners and build solid people management and team leadership skills.

Evaluate and act on ineffective leaders. Effective performance management programs can have value to a company across numerous areas. In the case of uncaring and uninspiring leaders, performance management tools should include stakeholder feedback. Senior leaders should have frank discussions with ineffective leaders to explain that not only their the results but also the way they achieve those results are important.

Provide leadership coaching. For certain individuals, providing a coach can be an effective solution. Many times, the behaviors that have helped individuals be promoted to positions of leadership are no longer the behaviors that will make them effective leaders. In addition, some leaders moved up the ranks in a time when workers' expectations and the labor environment were different from today. For these leaders, working one-on-one with an unbiased outsider who has experience with other senior leaders can be an effective tool for change.

In *The Leadership Pipeline: How to Build the Leadership Powered Company*, Ram Charan and his co-authors argue that each turn in the growth and upward movement of a leader in an organization—from managing oneself to managing others to managing the managers of others, for example—requires different sets of skills and competencies.



UNRELIABLE AND UNSUPPORTIVE PEOPLE AT WORK

Former employees who regret leaving or want to return to their previous employer frequently mention missing their great co-workers. However, we heard from many HR professionals that the sword cuts both ways. Teammates and superiors at work are key factors driving the employee experience, and in some cases, lack of reliability and support from them can cause negative work experiences.

Without Additional Funds

Improve supervisor/manager feedback. In some cases, what we might call "just good management" can resolve issues. Examples are a supervisor/manager talking to the unsupportive or unreliable team member, providing feedback on the behavior and its negative consequences, and listening to understand root causes so that all parties can agree on how to best move forward.

Create a book club. A supervisor or HR practitioner can offer to host an employment-related book club, where team members read books related to teamwork and communication (e.g., *Crucial Conversations*; McGraw Hill, 2021) and discuss what they've learned and how they might apply the principles to be more effective.

With Additional Funds

Offer teamwork and customer service training. While the ideal offering might be a highly interactive, customized course, delivering a generic course focused on improving service for internal and external customers can be a solution. This training can include customer service professionals as well as other team members, especially when the problem stems from interactions between different teams.

Conduct team-building events. Training and interventions where intact teams share behavioral assessments or participate in team-building activities, such as group problem-solving, can help teams work together.

LACK OF MEANINGFUL WORK

Numerous articles on what Millennial and Generation Z applicants look for in an employer have cited areas like corporate social responsibility and the company's mission. Possibly because employees from these generations make up an increasing percentage of the workforce, 40% of the Better Workplaces on a Budget survey respondents agreed that insufficiently meaningful work was a somewhat common or very common reason for turnover. Clearly, at least a segment of employees wants to know that their work matters and wants to care about doing their jobs.

Without Additional Funds

Ask supervisors to "connect the dots." Having a supervisor help employees make the connection between their roles and the mission of the organization can be very beneficial. Call center employees who view their jobs as "taking reservations" may feel their jobs are less meaningful than ones who see their roles as "helping people to go on vacations with their families." This perspective can be part of an employee value proposition that helps to drive employee engagement.

Share customer stories. Rather than having supervisors or executives talk about the mission of the company, it can sometimes be more meaningful to have customers visit and talk to employees about what the company does for them. Another low-budget option would be to have a department collect those stories and write them up in a weekly newsletter or read them at staff meetings.

Increase employee involvement. One way to help employees feel that their work has meaning is to solicit their opinions or involve them in decisions that affect the team's work. These can take the form of structured efforts such as employee involvement teams or can be as simple as leaders taking a more participative management approach to decision-making.

Organizations can increase employee involvement by setting up employee advisory boards. A board could be structured as a formal group with a charter and meetings, or it could simply be a set of employees who act like an online panel, giving input on business-related topics.

With Additional Funds

Enhance corporate communications. Some organizations have created videos that show how each component of the organization contributes to the mission and goals of the organization. These videos can also speak to the value that the company provides for its clients or customers and the larger community.

Evaluate technology or outsource solutions. Some jobs or parts of jobs might be candidates for automation via technology or outsourcing. Consultants can help assess these opportunities. The danger, of course, is that while eliminating mundane work can help employees feel their work is more meaningful, if a technology or outsourcing solution results in redundancies and downsizing, that may not help employee morale.

LACK OF SUPPORT FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

When organizations are unsupportive of employees' physical and mental health, they will likely drive away some of their workforce.

Without Additional Funds

Communicate existing benefits. In many organizations, employees don't become fully aware of their potential benefits until they need to use them. So if the company has an employee assistance program (EAP), or if the health care or disability plans offer mental health benefits or counseling, a timely letter from the CEO or CHRO can help raise awareness. This communication might take the form of a simple note acknowledging the stress that everyone has been under, thanking them for their efforts and reminding them that the organization provides services to assist employees (along with instructions for how to find out about them).

SHRM members have access to the full set of results from the SHRM Employee Benefits Survey. This is one of the longest-running annual research reports covering trends in employee benefits in the United States. Each year, SHRM launches the survey to HR professionals across the country to assess trends in specific employer-offered benefits across multiple categories.

Hold benefits webinars. Many HR professionals have noted that the annual enrollment period can be an effective window for getting benefits messages out. These messages can reinforce that the company cares about employees' physical and mental health and let them know what the company offers. At the same time, you can also provide information on local, state and federal services available.

With Additional Funds

Engage a consulting firm to conduct a benefits review and upgrade. Most consulting firms that specialize in company benefits have data on programs and policies that other organizations use, similar to the information SHRM offers as part of its member benefits. However, some also have useful information regarding the efficacy of different kinds of programs for raising employee satisfaction and health outcomes.

Offer an EAP. If an EAP is not already part of your benefits portfolio, adding one can both help employees' perceptions of how much their employer cares and alleviate their concerns. EAPs can assist with problems such as stress and anxiety, child and elder care needs, marital concerns, and substance misuse. Some also provide assistance for financial, legal or identity theft issues.

NONINCLUSIVE AND UNWELCOMING COMMUNITY

Comedian Groucho Marx, in his letter of resignation to the prestigious Friar's Club, wrote, "I don't want to belong to any club that would accept me as one of its members." Many employees today express the opposite sentiment; "Why would I want to belong to an organization that doesn't want me?" Employees who feel like they don't belong, aren't wanted or aren't accepted as a full member of an organization are more likely to think about leaving. This effect is most often discussed in the context of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) efforts and the impact on members of underrepresented or marginalized groups. However, feeling like one doesn't belong can be a challenge for many types of employees, including nontechnical staff in a high-tech company, employees outside the home country of a multinational company and many new hires.

Without Additional Funds

Ensure warm welcomes. First impressions of the work environment can have a powerful impact on new employees' perceptions of the organization and whether they are welcomed. First-day activities such as having a team welcome breakfast, one-on-one time with supervisors and team members and, if appropriate, communications asking others to welcome the new employee can help. Showing genuine interest in new employees' backgrounds and interests as well as sharing information about current employees' backgrounds can all help make the first impression a positive one.

Leverage new-hire orientation. In some organizations, orientation is primarily a compliance exercise for ensuring employees understand their benefits, sign off on policies, complete I-9 and other forms, and learn system sign-ons. To shift the orientation to be more positive, some organizations have refocused the goal of the exercise to make new employees feel welcomed and to confirm that they've made the right choice in joining the organization.

Assign an onboarding buddy. Many organizations have found success with programs that assign a current employee to help orient and onboard new employees. Similarly, research suggests that one reason employee referrals are successful is the relationship between the referring employee and the new hire. Creating and training a volunteer group of onboarding mentors to help new hires build these same kinds of relationships could be a valuable tactic.

A 2020 study by McKinsey found that about a third of the comments on jobs sites like Indeed and Glassdoor were related to diversity and inclusion issues. While overall sentiments about diversity were more positive (52%) than negative (31%), comments around inclusion were decidedly worse. Only 29% of these comments were positive, while 61% were negative. The authors concluded that these results show the challenge that companies—even those that lead on the diversity front—still face when tackling inclusion.

With Additional Funds

Conduct 30-, 60- and 90-day check-in surveys. Some talent acquisition teams send automated surveys to new employees and their supervisors at regular intervals during the first few months. These short surveys can ask about the hiring and onboarding process, places where the employee's expectations weren't met, and if the employee would like to meet with an employee relations or HR representative. Although surveys can be created without spending additional funds, many organizations choose to utilize survey consulting services for this task.

Leverage traditional employee surveys and data. Analyzing employee survey responses by tenure, race and gender can help spot areas where perceptions of key aspects of the employee experience—pay, career opportunities, supervision, etc.—differ significantly by demographics. Similarly, looking at turnover rates in the same demographic categories can alert the organization to potential underlying issues.

Create a formal DE&I policy and programs. Organizations can engage DE&I consultants to conduct an enterprisewide assessment of the current climate and recommend actions and programs to improve equity and increase all employees' feelings of inclusion and belonging.

METHODOLOGY

To discuss these reasons for turnover and ways that companies have been addressing them, a group of experienced Ph.D.-level SHRM researchers conducted a series of focus groups with senior HR professionals (all with SHRM-SCP certifications). In total, eight focus groups were conducted in July and August 2022, and 46 HR professionals participated.

A follow-up survey of 1,516 HR professionals was completed in August 2022. More information about the survey methods and findings is available in the *Better Workplaces on a Budget* survey report: (https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Pages/Better-Workplaces-on-a-Budget.aspx).

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SHRM members who would like to have further discussions on this topic with experienced HR professionals can contact the SHRM HR Knowledge Advisors. They offer personalized guidance, real-life experience and resources to assist members with HR-related inquiries. This member benefit includes up to 15 inquiries annually.

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