

Don't Count on High Unemployment to Increase Employee Retention

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Companies seeking to retain their employees when the recovery begins should start by addressing three key areas of dissatisfaction.

A new Harris survey released today shows that two-thirds (66%) of American workers are not currently satisfied with their compensation. Additionally, 78% are not satisfied with their company's overall retention efforts and 76% are not satisfied about future career growth opportunities at their company.

The survey American Workplace Insights Survey, conducted for Adecco Group North America, indicates that workers continue to look for other jobs even with rising unemployment. According to survey findings, companies seeking to retain their employees when the recovery begins should start by addressing three key areas of dissatisfaction: compensation, career growth paths and retention efforts.

Other key findings of the survey included:

Relationships are strained: Almost half (48%) of workers are not satisfied with the relationship they have with their boss and the majority (59%) of workers are not satisfied with the level of support they receive from their colleagues.

Company vision and leadership is lacking: The majority of workers (77%) are not satisfied with the strategy and vision of the company and its leadership.

Retirement contributions: 68% of workers are not satisfied with their company's contribution to their retirement plans.

"As Labor Day approaches and we move closer to an economic recovery, employees and managers should remember that career development is a mutual responsibility, particularly for companies looking to reduce an exodus of top talent," said Bernadette Kenny, chief career officer, Adecco Group North America. "What workers are telling us is that even during a recession, just having a job does not equate to job satisfaction. Employers need to be conscious of the concerns their staff is managing through on a daily basis and proactively come up with the appropriate solutions to improve retention and reduce the current and future high cost of turnover."

Tips for employers to reduce feelings of dissatisfaction among their staff:

Make retention efforts more visible: Behind the scenes, managers may be doing what they can to retain their employees, but staff won't feel valued if these efforts aren't visible to them. Retention efforts begin through mutual dialogue and building trust. Managers should engage their employees in the realities of the business challenges to foster employees' understanding of the market and competition.

Reward and provide reason: If increasing compensation due to the current economic climate is not possible, look to reward employees through an awards program or team contest. Improving morale just by recognizing good work can help ease compensation complaints. As the survey found, dollars and cents are not the only way to improve satisfaction so be sure your putting in the extra effort where extra investment is not available. In addition, employees benefit greatly by understanding the reasons behind lower compensation and how these short term adjustments will help them and the company in the long run.

Communicate growth path for employees: Managers should map out a growth plan for employees and communicate it to their teams. Employees will then understand that managers are invested in their future and they'll be more confident in investing their time and career with the organization.

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