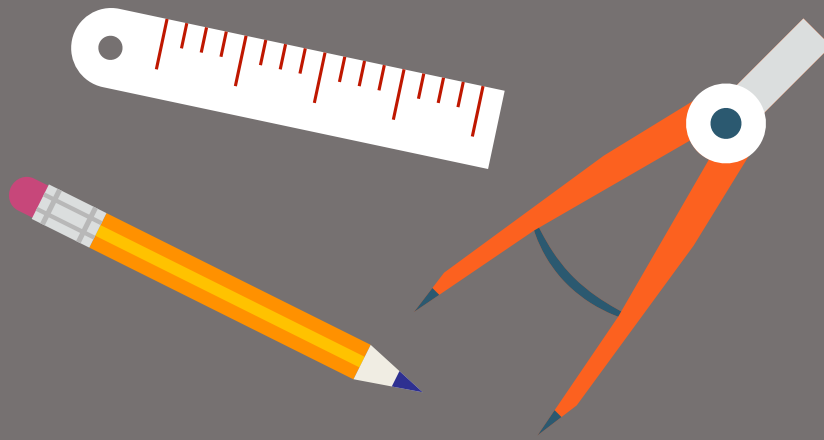


# 10 Simple Things You Can Do Each Day to Boost Retention



PRACTICAL TOOLS

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In well-managed organizations, retention is a long-term strategic goal. It cannot be achieved overnight with quick fixes.

It's an ongoing re-examination that starts with the hiring process and continues throughout the whole period an employee stays with the organization making valuable contributions. Hopefully that's a long time.

But there are simple, daily things that all managers and supervisors can do to boost retention of good employees and prevent unwanted turnover.

While these things are easy to do, they do require discipline to do them consistently for maximum effect.

# Here are 10 to get you started:

## 1. Say good morning

It's such a simple thing, and it may sound kind of corny, but at least it's an opportunity for managers to acknowledge each and every member of his or her team and make them feel not only noticed, but also wanted.

It's a simple way of saying that you're glad they're there and gives you a chance to connect. People tend to stay where they feel wanted and appreciated.

## 2. Say good evening

Just like it's a good idea to welcome employees at the start of the workday, it's just as important to wave goodbye at the end of the workday. Wish the members of your team a pleasant evening (for those working normal daytime business-hour shifts – the times of the day can, of course, be modified for evening and midnight shifts). It doesn't matter if you're leaving for the day and some employees may still be working, or if they're leaving and you're still there finishing up work. Make an effort to wish each person a pleasant evening (or weekend, as the case may be).

The same rationale applies: It makes people feel noticed. It also gives them a chance to bring up any special problems encountered during the day or shift. People who feel more connected to their supervisor do tend to stay longer on the job.

### 3. Find something nice to say about people's work

All managers would do well to remind themselves that in one-on-one communication with employees, they should give at least as much praise as they hand out criticism. The job of a supervisor often involves correcting mistakes – it's the nature of the job. But that's why it's so important to praise them, too, and not take acceptable performance for granted.

Praise is always more effective when it's specific. So don't just say: "Good job!" Make it more specific: "You really did an excellent job on the XYZ account. The customer called to thank us." Again, people stay where they're appreciated.

### 4. Keep work areas neat and tidy

This may seem trivial, but people don't want to come to work in a pigsty.

Keeping the work area neat and tidy is a sign of respect for the employees – and people will stay longer where they're respected. This requires the cooperation of all employees, so you may have to strong-arm the slob on your staff into cleaning up their cubicles or desks.

### 5. Be visible

Don't lock yourself in your office all day, and try not to fill your entire day with meetings. People want to see their supervisors person among them. It gives them a sense of security to know that the boss is there, keeping an eye on things.

Many effective supervisors may not have an MBA from a prestigious university, but they do a lot of MBWA (Management By Walking Around). Once again, people tend to stay where they feel connected.

## 6. Be available

Of course, managers need to close the door of their offices once in a while for a private conversation. And there may be those occasions where you need to lock yourself in to finish that report due for upper management. But keep those to a minimum. The rest of the time, try to keep that door open and be available for interruptions.

Your staff needs to feel you're approachable, and an open-door policy is the best way to convey that message.

People tend to stay longer where they feel the boss is there to listen to them.

## 7. Present a professional image

Being an effective manager and maintaining high standards for performance is all about modeling the ideal behavior yourself and setting a good example.

Dress codes have been relaxed in many workplaces, but if you want your employees to come work dressed professionally, start by doing so yourself.

Again, it's all a matter of respect for one's co-workers, and people stay where they feel respected.

## 8. Share something about how the company's doing

Make an effort to share a piece of company news every day.

People desperately want to know how their organization is doing. It helps them put what they do in a bigger context and gives them a sense of purpose.

If you don't fill their thirst for information with some credible news about what's happening, the rumor mill will probably soon fill the vacuum with idle chatter or rumors that tend to be only negative.

People will stay longer at workplaces where they believe they know what's going on – and how they fit in.

## 9. Give update on any special project

If any special project is ongoing, make a daily effort to update employees on how it's going – whether interim deadlines are being met, or if there are any pitfalls to watch for in the coming hours or days.

Again, such updates fill the need for employees to feel “in the know” and will maintain the momentum for going forward. Seeing that managers think enough of them to keep them updated is an important factor in people's decision-making whether they will stay or try their luck elsewhere.

## 10. Make sure you acknowledge birthdays or special events in employees' lives

It's easy enough to keep a list of your employees' birthdays at hand and make sure everyone gets recognized with a small celebration and maybe a cake or a healthy snack.

But there are other important milestones or occasions in people's lives that you might want to pay some attention to.

An employee coming back from an illness or accident needs to be welcomed back and asked if he or she needs anything special to help speed their recovery.

The birth of a child is worthy of some attention, as are many other life events.

Whatever it is, if important personal occasions are marked in the office, the workplace becomes more like family for the employees – and people seldom leave their families.