



Quick Quits: Stemming the Turnover Tide for New Hires

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New hires come to an organization fully charged – they are excited about their new adventure and are filled with energy and potential. By effectively tapping into that energy, knowledge and wisdom right from the start, an organization can maximize the new hire’s potential, extend the handshake and fuel that energy well past the beginning of a new hire’s employment cycle.

Where Have All the New Hires Gone?

While recruitment continues to be one of the most costly human resource processes, its longer-term effectiveness is being eroded by unacceptable attrition rates, especially within the first year of the recruit’s tenure. Hiring continues to be among the most important tasks managers have today – however, it doesn’t stop with the job offer. Today re-recruiting your best people is as critical as hiring them in the first place.

Often new hires leave too early for an organization to enjoy a return on their “recruiting” investment. And if they stay awhile, are they operating at their maximum productivity levels? Are they engaged? Are they loyal and committed to the organization? Have they simply “checked in” or are they “tuned in” and “turned on” as well?

Research continues to demonstrate how critical the relationship between manager and new hire is to retention, performance, employee and ultimately, customer satisfaction. To increase retention and build loyalty and commitment during that critical first year, clearly one of the best places to start is by building the relationship between new hires and their managers.

Unleashing the Energy

Improving first year retention, decreasing time to productivity, and building loyalty and commitment is directly related to how quickly managers can develop high-quality relationships with their new hires. Managers can unleash the energy of their new hires by engaging them in a series of structured, powerful conversations over the course of the critical first few weeks and months of employment. By focusing compelling conversations on six sources of power: Relationship, Focus, Passion, Challenge, Balance, and Intention -- they can connect early and foster a more productive, motivated and committed workforce.

Power from Relationship

There is perhaps no greater predictor of retention and engagement than the quality of the relationship new hires can establish with their managers and colleagues. The closer these bonds, the more new hires trust management and the organization, the more they feel cared for and valued as human beings, the greater their focus, commitment, productivity, and satisfaction. Employees and managers must talk, and get to know each other well. New employees must find new friends among their colleagues.

“Relationship” Questions a Manager Might Ask:

- ✓ Why did you decide to take this job? So far, what have you observed that leads you to believe that you've made the right choice? What have you observed or experienced that might lead you to question that choice?
- ✓ What will it take to keep you here? What kinds of experiences and opportunities will you need to have to stay interested and involved?
- ✓ How are you getting along with your other team members? Who are you most enjoying working with? What works about those relationships?

Power from Passion

People are more passionate about their work (and lives) when they're able to use their talents and skills to work on tasks and projects that interest them in environments that are consistent with the ways they prefer to work. Managers need to inventory and recognize their new hires' skills, honor their interests, and find ways to allow them to leverage their strengths.

“Passion” Questions a Manager Might Ask:

- ✓ Which of your talents are likely to be most valuable in this work? How could you use your talents more on this job?
- ✓ What interests you most about the work so far? What other interests would you like to explore further? How might you do that in the framework of this job?
- ✓ How well do you feel you fit here? What might help you feel you fit better? What works about those relationships?

Power from Challenge

People get excited about their jobs (and stay excited) when they have the opportunity to learn and grow in ways that have meaning for them. Managers need to become better talent scouts, and recognize potential when they see it. They need to provide opportunities for continued development. They need to learn from mistakes rather than punish them.

“Challenge” Questions a Manager Might Ask:

- ✓ What do you find most challenging about the job?
- ✓ How does your skills set match what we're asking from you?
- ✓ Which areas of your work offer the greatest potential for further growth? How might you take advantage of those?

Power from Focus

People are more committed to their organizations when they understand what the organization is trying to achieve, and how they can personally contribute to those outcomes. Managers have to help new hires learn to navigate the organization, understand its purpose, mission, and objectives, and appreciate how their efforts serve those goals.

“Focus” Questions a Manager Might Ask:

- ✓ Can you describe what we're trying to accomplish and how that fits in with the larger company goals?
- ✓ How do you personally contribute to what we're trying to achieve here?
- ✓ Who are our key customers and what do they expect from us?

Power from Balance

Employees' lives extend well beyond the doors of the office or plant. They have families, friends, lovers, and children to care for. They have finances to manage and households to maintain. They want to stay vibrant and healthy. They want to play and have time for themselves. This is true of all the generations at work today. Managers must make room for new hires' and their whole lives.

“Balance” Questions a Manager Might Ask:

- ✓ What do you do for fun?
- ✓ What other challenges are you facing right now in your life that might impact your work?
- ✓ What interests do you have but find yourself unable to pursue here? How might you pursue those elsewhere?

Power from Intention

Managers and their new hires together must follow through on what they learn from these conversations to earn the commitment and loyalty they both want: What new skills will the employee develop the first year, and how? What new areas will they explore, and how? What relationships are going to be important to establish, and how will that happen? How will the manager or new employee flex to make the relationship work best? What results will the new employee take responsibility for, and how will he/she be rewarded? What support will the manager provide? Yes, it takes more than talk—new employees will need to see tangible progress and results.

“Intention” Questions a Manager Might Ask:

- ✓ What goals do you want to accomplish on this job?
- ✓ What actions can you take to pursue those goals?
- ✓ How could your colleagues or I help?

And, Exactly, What’s In It for Me?

These series of conversations require a significant expenditure of time and energy on the part of managers and their new hires. It might also require additional training or coaching for managers to enable them to conduct these conversations successfully. So what does the organization get in return? Here are a few of the bottom line results you can expect:

- **Improved First Year Retention Rates.** Engaging new employees early on in shaping their jobs, designing their development, and building important relationships can be expected to decrease first year attrition rates.
- **Decreased Time to Productivity.** Encouraging managers to be clearer and more explicit about what exactly is going to be expected, and providing a forum in which to discuss how well new employees are learning their responsibilities can be expected to decrease the time required for new hires to get “up to speed.” They will contribute more, and do so more rapidly.
- **Reduced Recruiting Costs.** Convincing new employees early on that they made the right choice by joining your organization can be expected to result in an increase in the number of potential recruits identified through referrals from recent hires. Some organizations have succeeded in attracting as many as 70 percent of their new hires from recent hire referrals, reducing recruiting costs significantly.
- **Increased Productivity.** Making it possible for people to do what they do best, allowing them to pursue their interests, and building meaningful relationships with the whole person can be expected to lead to higher productivity, increased customer satisfaction, and enhanced profitability.
- **Brand Development.** The more your organization becomes known as an organization that cares about its employees and their development, the more you become known as a great place to work, the more easily you attract the best and the brightest.

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About the Authors



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Beverly Kaye's name is recognized internationally as one of the most invested, knowledgeable and practical professionals in career development, talent retention and mentoring.

Her ground-breaking career development, talent retention and mentoring programs have been implemented by Fortune 500 organizations world-wide.

The scores of products she has designed are produced by her Scranton, PA based organization, Career Systems International.



strategies (A-Z) that any manager can implement today.

Bev has spent years researching corporate strategies for developing, retaining and engaging knowledge workers. Her book, *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay*, (Berrett-Koehler, 1999), co-authored with Sharon Jordan-Evans, has sold over 250,000 copies, is printed in 14 languages and has reached Wall Street Journal and Amazon best seller status. *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em* provides 26 simple