



Revolutionizing Retention: 7 Employee Engagement Practices

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EMPLOYEE RETENTION

The business world has forever been changed by the events of the COVID-19 pandemic. Working from home started as a necessary stopgap to thwart the spread of COVID-19. Now, employees and employers have settled into new routines they trust. Productivity is up. Companies have discovered massive cost-savings from remote work. Reduced business travel is supporting sustainability. We now know how to serve clients and customers in-person, from six feet away and digitally, from any location.

Remote work is here to stay. Employees have ample choice about where and how to work. What does that mean for the resiliency of businesses defining a new normal for workforce management? If you're a human resources or business leader, here are seven innovative employee engagement practices designed to retain "work-from-home" employees.

ONE: Support Employees' Whole Life


It's no longer just about performance at work. More than ever, working from home muddies the line between work tasks and raising children or caring for other family members. To show that you see, understand, and value remote employees, leaders must be prepared to support the physical, mental and financial health of your workforce – wherever they work.

As [Gartner's Brian Kropp](#) puts it, "If we help employees support their personal lives more effectively, not only do they have better lives, but they perform at a higher

level as well." Employees who feel supported and productive are the ones who stay.

TWO: Ensure Career Paths for All Employees

In young families with two working parents and in single-parent households, it's overwhelmingly the women who have taken charge of children displaced from daycare or school settings during the pandemic. Many have stepped back from full-time work to fill the gap, temporarily reducing their income and stepping off traditional career tracks. Smart employers



will take a long view of where these employees fit in.

Be sure you have viable, appealing [career paths](#) that are visible to all employees. Create a realistic framework for success with your part-time and work-from-home workers. Stay in touch to provide the support they need and to show that you value their contributions now. Hold them accountable, too, to preserve the dignity of professional contribution and growth, even if their career progression is slowed for this season.

THREE: Adopt Flexibility of Time (not Just Location)

Workplace flexibility used to mean the ability to work from home. One thing 2020 taught us is the need for a flexible schedule too. Consider making flexible shifts and weekend schedules longer-term options for employees.

Especially for employees who work from home, the ability to work a split shift – before and after the school day, for example – can mean the difference between being able to work full time, part-time, or not at all. Employers that support workers and monitor productivity beyond a 9-to-5 workday will likely retain more employees and access a broader talent pool for new recruits.

FOUR: Take a Stand

There are many factors affecting employee retention. Increasingly, employees expect their employer to lean into the social debates of the day, speaking up and taking a stand on things like diversity, equity, inclusion, or global sustainability. [Forbes contributor Joan Michelson](#) succinctly

7 Innovative Employee Retention Practices:

1. Support Employees' Whole Life
 2. Ensure Career Paths for All Employees
 3. Adopt Flexibility of Time (not Just Location)
 4. Take a Stand
 5. Offer Meaningful Opportunities to Grow
 6. Hire and Promote for Skills (not Academic Credentials)
 7. Reach for Unique Ties That Unite
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states: “Today more than ever, retention relies on aligning values, transparency and measurable social responsibility.”

Her examples of corporate leaders stepping up provide models for the rest of us to do the right thing: General Motors CEO pivoting assembly plants to make ventilators; Coca Cola pulling social media advertising due to hate speech and misinformation on social channels. Your employees – remote and on-site workers – are watching to see if you stand for the things they care about the most.

FIVE: Offer Meaningful Opportunities to Grow

One of the top reasons people change jobs is career progression. If you’re wondering how to keep remote employees engaged, be sure you’re offering meaningful opportunities to grow within your company.

Adapt your learning and development program to embrace ALL workers, even remote. Be sure your web-based courses, instructor-led courses, and on-the-job training are accessible virtually – and tracked for all learners in a learning management system such as Avilar’s [WebMentor LMS™](#). On-the-job training, mentorships, and leadership development

programs can help professionals develop the skills they need for advancement.

SIX: Hire and Promote for Skills (not Academic Credentials)

Freelancer Vickie An penned a recent [article for Inc. Magazine](#) showing that the rising costs of college and changing economic conditions are pushing more people to seek alternative educational experiences. She predicts, “As more workers opt for alternative forms of training, the future of talent management will crucially rely on identifying talented workers among the more than 50 percent of the U.S. workforce who don’t have a college degree.”

As you revisit your employee retention strategies, look for ways to identify, recruit, and develop the people with the skills (not academic credentials) that your organization needs to thrive. By routinely utilizing skills assessments and a competency-based approach to performance and engagement, you instantly start to reduce the impact of biases such as education, race, and place of work as factors for success.



SEVEN: Reach for Unique Ties That Unite

The best employee engagement and retention practices are those that uniquely reinforce a business culture that celebrates and unites employees, wherever they are and wherever they work. Here are some examples:

Zappos

Zappos co-workers nominating one another for \$50 monthly bonuses.

Cincinnati Children's Hospital

Cincinnati Children's Hospital listening, really listening, to employees to discover clues to retention.

Solstice Mobile

Chicago's Solstice Mobile promoting between 5% and 10% of their staff every quarter – with an average corresponding salary bump of 14%.

REI Co-op

REI's employee-selected Anderson Award, bestowed annually upon the employee that "lives REI's core values and embodies the co-op spirit."

Whatever your employee retention strategy, revisit it at least once a year. As 2020 taught us, a lot can change in a year. By staying current with salaries, workforce trends, learning and development best practices, and your company's goals, you'll keep your employees better connected and committed to working for you.

For more innovative employee retention strategies that use a competency-based approach, [contact us](#) to find out how Avilar's [WebMentor Skills™](#) can keep your remote workers and management aligned for the long term.





About Avilar

Avilar – The Competency Company™ is a leader in workforce development and planning with web-based competency management and learning solutions for corporations, government, and non-profit organizations. In 1997, Avilar pioneered its award-winning WebMentor™ product line and has built itself on the basis of superior customer service and highly adaptable product design.

Avilar consultants are recognized as industry thought leaders and have decades of experience in implementation and analysis. Let Avilar help you transform your organization from ordinary to extraordinary.

