

# Retaining your best employees

**In today's competitive job market, it can be challenging to retain talented and reliable employees. With more opportunities available, it's easier for your best workers to change jobs and companies, and take other employees with them. Personnel changes can be costly, disruptive and can affect customer confidence in your business.**

Empowering employees to make decisions and providing them with the tools they need to do their jobs can help you build an engaged, motivated workforce. After all, once you find the right people to fill positions at your company, you want them to thrive along with your business. Below are some strategies for reducing employee turnover.

## **Start with the right approach.**

Before you hire, set up an effective screening process to ensure potential employees' ambitions match your company goals. Once you've chosen the best candidates to join your company, give them clear job descriptions. Establishing a defined set of expectations, a way to measure their progress and rewards for meeting goals will help your new employees excel right from the start.

## **Provide a flexible working environment.**

Then, provide these new employees with the right tools for the job so they can take initiative in making decisions and solving problems quickly anytime, anywhere. For instance, whether they are working offsite or between offices, your employees can use mobile technologies such as Business IP Voice service from Bell, combined with a laptop or a range of handheld devices to keep in touch with your company, customers and suppliers. Your employees can also use Business Internet Unplugged service from Bell to access the Internet when they're working in a temporary location\*.

A flexible work environment can also attract and keep top employees. Flextime hours or teleworking can help them adapt to meet job challenges, balance personal and business demands, or work from a more convenient location. For example, products such as Audio Conferencing from Bell can help you meet with staff by phone no matter where they are located.

## **Build internal relationships.**

Regular communication is key to any good business relationship. Set up an open door policy to establish a two-way conversation with your employees and check in on their job satisfaction. Giving employees a voice can offer you a fresh perspective on the way your business is run. Ask for their input on improving business processes, and provide a means to resolve any problems they experience on the job.

## **Provide on-the-job training.**

Talk with your employees about their career goals and how to reach them. You can provide training in a traditional classroom setting or, make it available via online e-learning modules. Employees can then complete their training at their convenience. You can provide these online courses through your business Web site or interactive training using a manager, trainer or peer-to-peer instruction with a collaborative site such as Bell Hosted Windows® SharePoint services. You may also wish to subsidize external training courses for certification or career advancement skills.

Providing good leadership training for your managers can also have a real impact on your business. Many people leave companies due to dissatisfaction with their managers, rather than with their jobs.

**Share company success and learn from challenges.**

Publicly acknowledging employee contributions to your business through email posts and town hall meetings can help your staff feel valued and appreciated. You may also wish to consider providing more tangible benefits such as company shares, matching RRSP and charitable contributions.

When an employee does leave, conducting an exit interview can help you learn more about how you can change business processes, team dynamics or other aspects of your company to improve employee retention in the future. Listening to departing employees' concerns may help them leave on a more positive note and encourage them to return at a later date.

To learn more about available employee retention technologies such as Business Internet Unplugged, visit [bell.ca](http://bell.ca).

For other start-up articles, visit our Start-up resource centre at [bell.ca/startup](http://bell.ca/startup).

