



Building a magnetic culture

The ultimate retention strategy



By Frank Allen



Introduction

Retention has always been a puzzle that HR professionals and directors have found difficult to solve. And that's before we begin to talk about recent events such as Covid and the current cost of living crisis. Difficult because there are so many facets to keeping hold of employees. Just how does HR go about navigating the choppy waters of retention with so many external influences that drive an employee to seek new pastures?

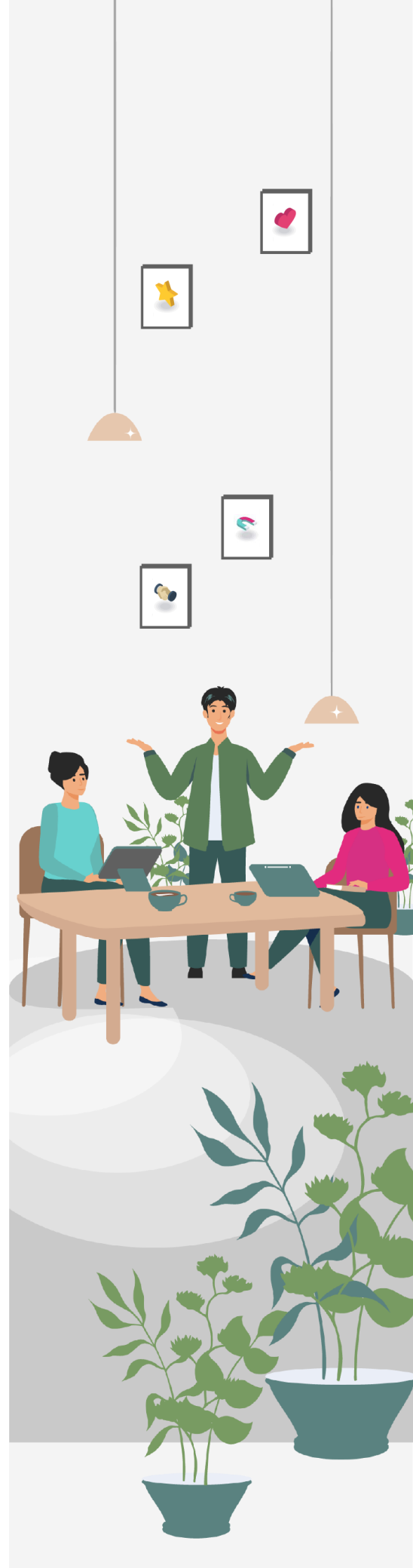
While most companies will have some sort of retention strategy in place, how effective that is, only the employee turnover stats will tell. In the current climate, where external influences are driving people to look for more money, a better work-life balance, and benefits that matter, we know that retention is getting increasingly difficult.

So, what's the strategy we're proposing? It's a simple one. It's all about building a magnetic culture. There's no wizardry involved, there's no new methodology at play. Instead, it's a simple three-step process that will help you retain your current employees, as well as improving your recruitment for top talent.

It's simple because simple always works. If a process is too complicated, it won't get started. So, with simplicity in mind, here's what we'll develop in this guide:

- **Step one: The art of listening**
- **Step two: Fostering employee contentment**
- **Step three: Wellbeing as a foundation**

By unravelling the mystique behind employee retention, we'll illustrate that at the heart of building a magnetic culture is *people who are treated like people*.



The importance of retention

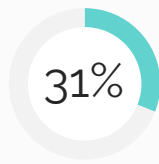
Retention has always been important to businesses. If you're losing employees, it's not good for productivity and, therefore, not good for business. Indeed, according to Oxford Economics, the average cost of turnover per employee (earning £25,000 a year or more) is £30,614. And while that figure on its own may not strike fear into the hearts of hiring managers, what if that figure doubled, tripled or quadrupled? Suddenly costs begin to soar.

The knock-on effects of employee turnover aren't just monetary either. Businesses must acknowledge the effects of excessive employee turnover on employee morale as well.

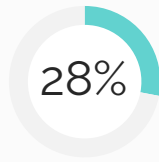
Here are some other effects associated with excessive exiting:

- Loss in business productivity
- Loss in engagement from existing employees
- Loss in time and money spent on employee replacement and training
- Loss in business through learning errors

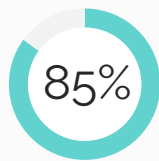
Retention statistics that tell a tale:



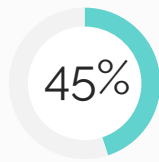
31% of employees quit their jobs within the first six months
Bamboo HR



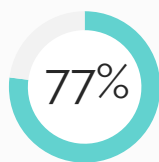
Only 28% of employees feel connected to their company's mission
Harvard Business Review



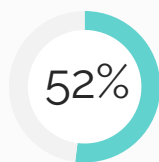
85% of employees are actively disengaged at work
Gallup



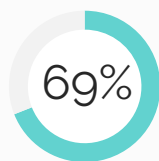
45% of employees are currently looking for a position with better pay to mitigate the current cost of living crisis
Jobvite



77% of employees have experienced burnout from excessive work hours with 42% quitting for that reason
Deloitte



52% of employees said that flexible work policies will impact whether they stay at their current organisation
Gartner



69% of employees that have experienced a solid onboarding process will stay at a company longer
SHRM

Building a magnetic culture The first step

The art of listening

Definitions of listening



To listen, is to take notice of what someone says to you so that you follow their advice or believe them.

Oxford dictionary

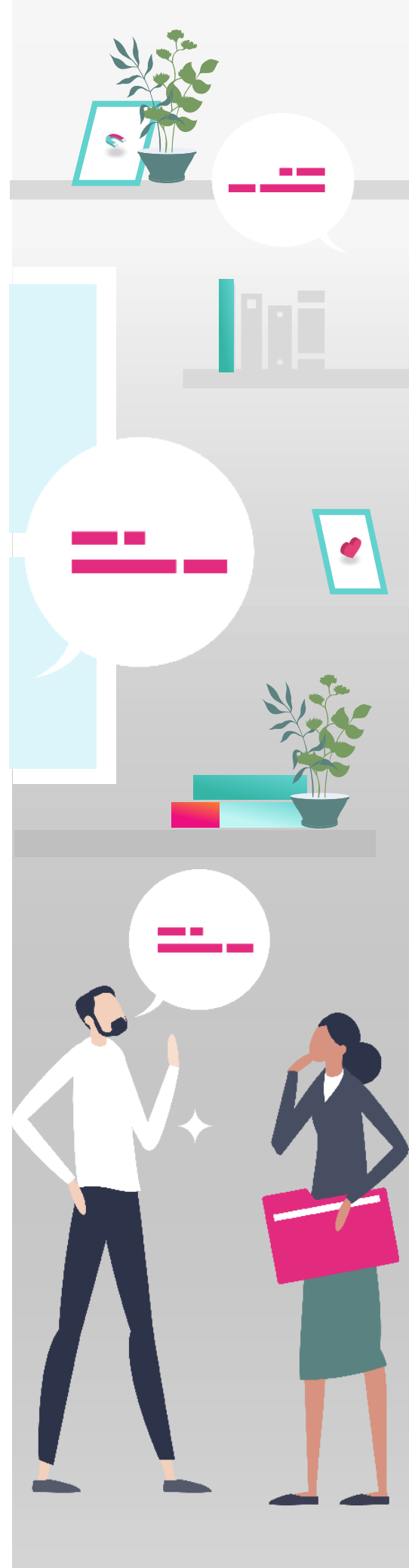
In a world where the art of listening is quickly disappearing, HR must rediscover this vital component of successful communication if it's to successfully navigate the challenges posed by the ongoing cost of living crisis.

We all have a deep desire to be listened to and to be understood. And nowhere is this more prevalent than in the workplace. To be heard is intrinsically human, and as such, this sits at the very heart of employee retention. Indeed, for employees to have valid input is a crucial part of building up your magnetic culture.

Listening leads to engagement, and engagement leads to productivity. Productivity leads to business success, and business success leads to high employee morale.

Highly engaged teams show 21% greater profitability – Gallup

Honing listening skills in the workplace can bring multiple benefits. Together with improving employee retention, the art of listening will forge a workplace where employees are listened to, and consequently listen to others, establishing a better, stronger team, and giving rise to increased innovation.



Building relationships

There is a world of difference between listening and hearing. Often, when we 'listen', we hear without truly following the conversation. Normally, this is because we're too busy internally dialoguing rather than focusing on what the speaker is saying. Other times we're daydreaming, letting the 'noise' of the speaker wash over us. Often, we've got pre-conceived bias against the speaker, or the subject matter they're talking about, and have taken the decision to stop listening altogether.

However, in the workplace, it's necessary that we listen to employees, and that employees listen to each other. It's how relationships are built. When relationships are formed, productivity flourishes.

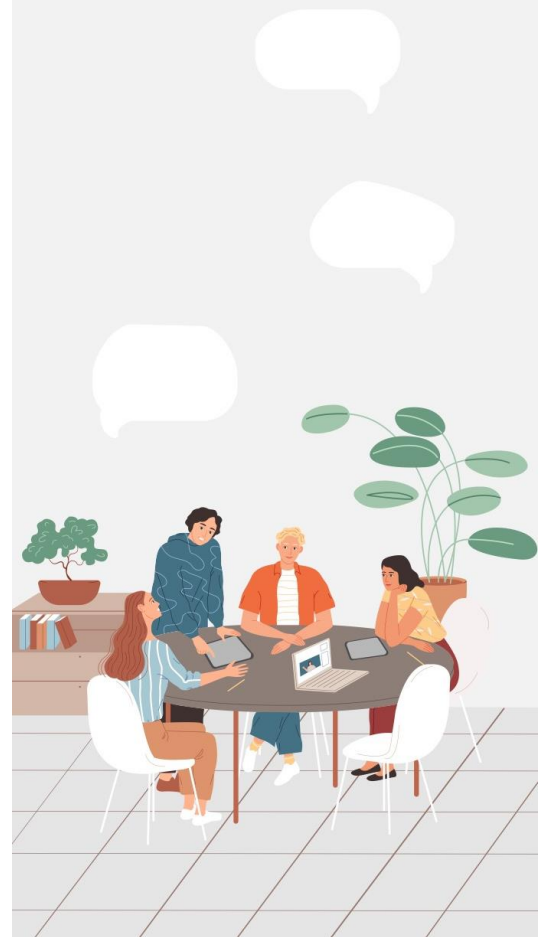
In a manager/employee relationship, this is vital.

Performance conversations rather than performance reviews?

Performance reviews have a 'checklist' air about them. Has the employee met all the required criteria? How have they performed? Have they excelled?

HR professionals will be well versed in the yearly performance reviews, but what if these were turned on their head and became performance conversations?

If it is a magnetic culture that you want to build, then the way that management 'check-in' with employees should be through frequent conversations, or one-to-ones. In these conversations, goals can be discussed, opinions sought, feedback given, and leadership improved.



Implement employee feedback

Listening to and implementing employee feedback is the keystone to building a magnetic work culture. Taking regular pulse surveys, EVP (Employee Value Proposition) evaluations, and people insights throughout the year will help you better understand the problems and issues your people are facing. Not every suggestion will be actionable, but there will be a slew of sensible and insightful ones. Follow these up, and you'll help to build trust and credibility; two things that are essential in mitigating excessive turnover and building a magnetic workplace culture.

Questions to consider

1. When was the last time you took a pulse survey?
2. What is your EVP?
3. What is your company's mission, and what are its vision and values?
4. Do you hire people who match the above?
5. How well does your company deal with conflict?
6. Do you encourage people to be themselves?
7. Does your culture foster and encourage openness and transparency?



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I remind myself every morning: Nothing I say this day will teach me anything. So, if I'm going to learn, I must do it by listening.

Larry King



Building a magnetic culture
The second step

Fostering employee contentment

Definitions of contentment

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A feeling of happiness or satisfaction.
Oxford dictionary

The etymology of contentment finds its home in the French word *contentement*, which can be traced back to around 1590, and carries with it a clear meaning:

'That happiness which consists in being satisfied with present conditions.'

In the world around us, there is seemingly little cause for contentment. The rising cost of living, inflation, economic and political uncertainty...the list could go on. All the more important then, that companies seek to bring this sense of contentment to the workplace. And let's face it, we spend so much of our time in the office, isn't it natural to want to create an atmosphere where people enjoy coming to work?

In this section, we'll delve into ways you can build a unique culture that puts people contentment at the heart of everything it does.



94% of employees would stay at a company longer if it invested in their careers

LinkedIn Insights

There are numerous ways you can go about fostering employee contentment to create an enviable culture and one that people won't want to leave. Our suggestions in this section will help with candidate attraction too.

Creating a sense of belonging

Show that you care

Despite progress in D&I over the years, it's a fact that many employees still feel like outsiders. While feeling like an outsider can be painful on a personal level, it also has wider implications. For example, it can undermine focus and performance on a company level too. Instead, your workplace should be a place where everyone is noticed, valued, and respected.

Champion inclusion

Employee contentment often goes hand in hand with inclusion. Inclusion makes people feel wanted, valued, and respected. And one way to achieve this is to engage in positive feedback, valuing what each person brings to the company and celebrating it in team meetings. Invest in growth and development and allow your employees to input their ideas into building a more inclusive workplace.

Promote workplace collaboration

We've already discussed the importance of collaboration in the workplace and the necessity for workplace collaborative spaces. But don't forget the virtual space. With hybrid working fast becoming the norm, utilise the tech that's out there to help engage remote and hybrid workers. Bringing people together on a regular basis isn't simply good for productivity, it's good for workplace happiness too.



Empowering your employees

Advocate career progression

With many employees looking outside of their organisation for promotion or a better salary, it's essential that your business is intentional about employee development and career progression. If you're not, employee contentment will be forever out of your grasp. Alternatively, if you openly advocate career development, and practice what you preach, then you're well on the way to fostering employee contentment. Good employers don't just offer great jobs, they provide whole career paths too.

Here's our building blocks for employee contentment:

- Personal development plans
- Regular progression conversations
- Learning and development opportunities
- Internal promotion opportunities

Delegate to develop

This is one of the core aspects of fostering contentment. Nothing will engage an employee more than delegating responsibilities. The very fact that you've communicated that they're ready and up for the challenge will build trust – another critical component of employee contentment. Delegation is also about relinquishing control. Once you've delegated, step back and let them do it their way – you may learn something too.

Provide the right resources

It's surprising how often a lack of resources is cited as a reason people leave for another job. It sounds simplistic, but are you sure your people have the right resources to achieve in their roles? Or do they have to make do and mend?



Supplying the right tools and resources for people to 'get the job done' will do wonders for your workplace. Not only that, but it will encourage people to go above and beyond for your business too. One resource that's often overlooked, of course, is you. If you're a manager, you're a resource for your people. So, make sure you're available, especially as a sounding board for ideas.

Accept new ideas

How does a company develop and grow? It's on the back of new ideas. There is immense talent in your ranks. Sadly, at many companies, this talent isn't tapped into, let alone encouraged. To turn this on its head, can your company find ways to include employees in decision-making, demonstrating that they have a significant role in guiding the success of your company? This approach can open the door to the kind of pioneering and exciting ideas that contribute to company growth and success. And who wouldn't want to be part of that?

Recognition

It goes without saying that a show of appreciation for a job well done makes it highly likely that that person will go above and beyond again. It also makes them feel valued. Encourage line managers to proactively prioritise communicating genuine and authentic recognition as part of their BAU activity.



Questions to consider

When you consider that in a recent Gallup poll **85%** of the global workforce are disengaged, perhaps it's wise to consider the following:

1. How important is employee engagement to your business?
2. Do you consider there to be a clear link between contentment and productivity?
3. How do you encourage career progression in your organisation?
4. Have you a good track record of hiring from within?
5. Do you utilise employee advocates in your recruitment?
6. Would you apply for a job at your company?

Building a magnetic culture
The third step

Wellbeing as a foundation

Definitions of Wellbeing

A feeling of happiness or satisfaction.

With reference to a person or community: the state of being healthy, happy, or prosperous; physical, psychological, or moral welfare.

Oxford dictionary

Employee wellbeing has been understood to be a key component of retention strategy for a long time. However, it's the one component that's often shunted down the list of workplace culture measurables. Why is that? Well, the simple answer is that employee wellbeing is much more than something that's confined to the workplace. When we talk about wellbeing in conjunction with building a magnetic culture, it's not just confined to physical fitness or our emotional state. What we mean is the holistic approach to wellbeing. From an HR point of view, this means the inclusion of career, social, financial, physical, mental and community wellbeing.

In short, wellbeing is vital to cultivating a magnetic culture. Without wellbeing as a foundation, everything suffers. Including productivity.



61% of employees that are not thriving at work are more likely to experience burnout often or always

Gallup

Employee wellbeing comes in many guises. It's not a one size fits all. In fact, it's far from it. Indeed, to nurture a magnetic culture, consideration must be given to each of these foundational aspects of wellbeing.

Good health

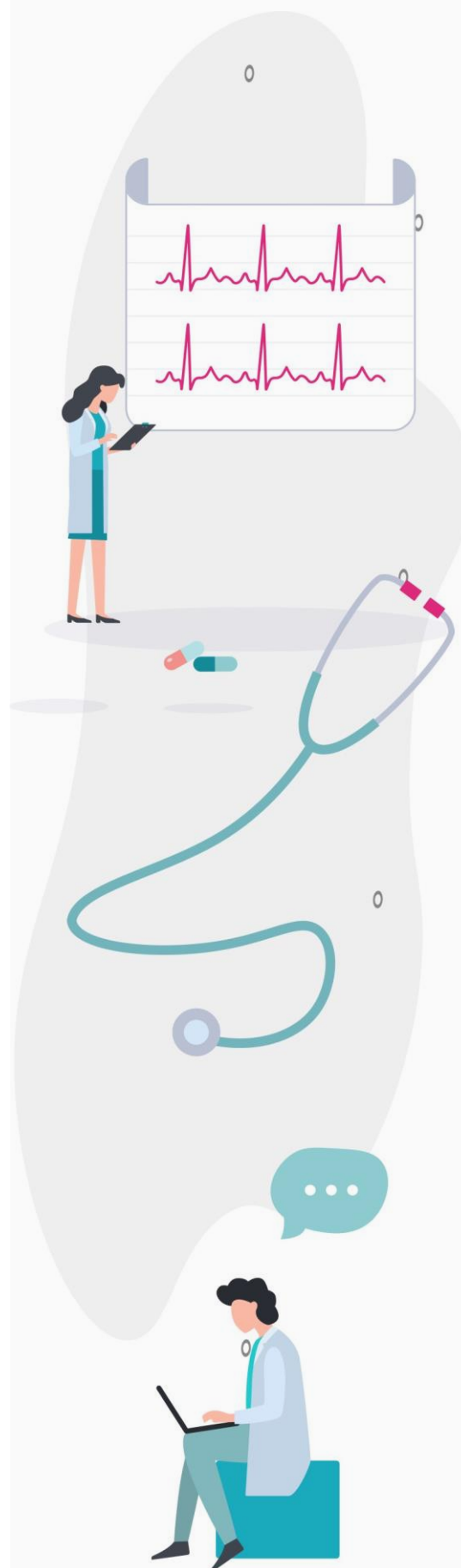
Physical health

Physical health is a core foundational aspect of wellbeing and fundamental to a healthy work-life balance. Vital to establishing a holistic wellbeing strategy, physical health encompasses more than just physical exercise, but includes lifestyle behaviour choices too, and is synonymous with a balanced state of body and mind. But physical wellbeing isn't something that can be rolled out carte-blanche. Instead, as an organisation, consider creating a social team that will help develop a plethora of staff activities based on employee preference. In conjunction, consider regular employee workshops that offer advice and guidance on work-life balance. If you don't offer occupational health support and employee assistance programs in-house, consider employing external agencies to help you manage this facet of physical wellbeing.

Mental health

According to CIPD, mental health issues can affect one in four people during their working lives. Indeed, when you consider that 77% of us have experienced burnout at some point in our current roles, it's easy to see why poor mental health is the root cause behind long-term absence.

When Forbes cite poor management as a key reason for candidate turnover, the importance on developing management to understand how to 'manage' becomes ever-more crucial. Good managers can spot the early signs of mental health issues. And armed with the knowledge of how to respond they can help mitigate excessive workplace stress.



Work-life balance

Working environment

Once upon a time the working environments and unique benefits offered at businesses like Google and Facebook seemed other worldly. Not so much anymore. Unique benefits, ergonomically designed offices, open and inclusive cultures, and visions and values that resonate with employees are now becoming the expected standard. Ultimately an employee will stick by an employer who understands that there is more to life than work.

Flexible working

According to Reed, 30% of employers who have recruited since the covid pandemic say that advertising roles as 'open to flexible working' are among their most effective recruitment methods. And with 24% of employees stating they'd quit if flexible working were taken away, you can rest assured, flexible working is one of the most effective means to retain your people too. Whether you opt for a hybrid working model, a fully flexible, work-anywhere approach, or full-on remote, this is a wellbeing strategy that ticks a very popular work-life balance box.

Pay and reward

Building and developing a magnetic culture will depend a lot on how you treat your employees financially. Because let's face it, even if your employees love their job, the primary reason they work for your business is to keep a roof over their heads and food on their table. With the rising cost of living, more employees are looking for improved financial remuneration. And the more turnover there is in a business, as we've discussed, the bigger the drop in productivity and crucially, morale. If your business can offer its employees fair and transparent financial packages, providing benefits that are wanted, not only will productivity increase, but your culture will be lauded too.



Workplace relationships

Mutual respect

This crosses swords with 'the art of listening' section we discussed earlier. However, it's so important, it's worth mentioning again. The biggest respect we can pay to another person is to listen to them. Building a magnetic culture is built around encouraging your people to be the best version of themselves, and people fulfil that when they're heard, respected, and supported.



The power of relationships

Workplace relationships are essential to wellbeing. They're essential to employee resilience too. If you have a workplace that fosters collaborative working, you'll have a culture that's unbreakable. Because through collaboration comes positive relationships, and through positive relationships comes wellbeing. Even when people do eventually leave, your magnetic culture will recruit compatible people who'll plug the void beautifully. Life isn't about work, it's about relationships.



Growth journey

Learning and development support

We've all heard the very old, and very shrewd adage - 'you're never too old to learn something new.' A business that locks its people into silos is a business that deprives itself of progress. Instead, building a magnetic workplace culture is based on commitment to your employees. How you invest in them will determine your overall success and innovation too. This means the success of your people should be encouraged and enabled by the business. To do this, engagement is key. Ask your employees how they want to develop? How do they want to go about it? What journey do they want to undertake with you? When you have the answers, support the direction by collaborating on individual personal development plans.



Here's some further workplace considerations:

1. Encourage collaborative environments where both younger and older employees can learn from each other
2. Introduce mentoring programs
3. Bridge skills gaps with effective training
4. Offer further development programs
5. Promote from within

Don't forget that the stronger the foundation, the higher and more elaborate the building can be.

Positively creative

Employees who are encouraged to impart their ideas are satisfied employees. Especially when those ideas are implemented. Encouraging creativity, where everyone's opinions are valid, creates contentment, it creates belonging and will manifest in your people's self-worth. Let's not forget that in the 21st century, we wouldn't be where we are now without the genius and creativity of Michelangelo, Einstein, Marie Curie, Newton, and Galileo, to name but a few. Your people aren't automatons. They're so much more than that.

Financial balance

Financial support

According to CIPD, just 11% of companies focus on financial wellbeing as part of their overall HR and wellbeing strategy. That's astounding. Even outside of a universal cost of living crisis, financial distress of any kind can have a huge impact on wellbeing. It's worth noting, of course, that monetary issues and hardships are very personal, so it's imperative HR seeks to normalise conversations about money. Using internal communications is a good place to start conversations about money and a great means to signpost to support agencies.



A generic financial wellbeing strategy could include the following:

1. The availability of hardship loans
2. Earned wage access
3. Benefits that help reduce living costs
4. Self-help webinars and training sessions
5. Debt counselling services

Don't forget to engage with your people using insights tools, since understanding their concerns goes halfway to solving the problem. Involving your people in developing a financial wellbeing strategy will make for solid wellbeing foundations.

Looking after the future

Future financial planning can come in many guises, and it's not just employees who are near retirement age that will thank you for looking ahead. Indeed, in research undertaken by Jobsite, 82% of employees agreed that pensions were more important than performance-related bonuses and private medical insurance, the offer of a good pension reminds us all that we work to live, not live to work. Consideration, therefore, should also be given to pre-retirement courses as an added facet of your financial wellbeing strategy. Likewise, phased retirement plans are also well worth initiating and will resonate with employees, young and old alike.

Questions to consider

1. Does your business take a holistic approach to wellbeing?
2. Does your strategy cover physical and mental wellbeing as a joint issue?
3. Is your wellbeing strategy clearly signposted and accessible to everyone?
4. Can you train managers to recognise early signs of poor mental health?
5. Do you engage with your people to better understand their present concerns?
6. Would you update your strategy based on employee feedback?



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When you put people first and then surround them with processes and disciplines that recognise their efforts, performance will soar.

David C. Novak.

**Founder and CEO
of oGoLead**

Building a magnetic culture And finally...

Giving exit interviews their due

Increasing your magnetic attraction using exit interviews

In business circles, exit interviews can carry an unwarranted reputation. And it's not often a good one.

However, if they're conducted properly, they can provide your business with insights that can help improve and magnetise your culture.

Here are some immediate benefits you could extrapolate from an exit interview done well:

1. Understand why a person is leaving and the cause. Is it salary? Benefits? Culture? Or just a fresh start?
2. What parts of your culture would they change? Implement the feedback (if appropriate).
3. What areas can you better support your existing employees.
4. Are certain departments/roles more prone to turnover? If so, you can put processes in place to prevent this haemorrhage.
5. Find out what EVP benefits mattered, and what didn't, to feed into your next employee engagement survey.

Don't, whatever you do, burn your bridges with exiting employees. Treat them well, and they'll be ambassadors for your magnetic culture. And always remember, just because the grass may appear greener, it doesn't always mean it is. Exit interviews can go a long way in persuading the same person to return to the fold further down the line – older, wiser, and more experienced. You never know where a career will take a person.

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Employees who have a positive exit experience are 2.9 times more likely to recommend your organisation to others than those who have negative or neutral experiences.

Gallup



In conclusion

To possess an effective retention strategy, it's necessary for your business to build out its culture. And a great way to do that is by following the three simple steps we've developed in this guide.

Possessing a magnetic culture shouldn't be a pipedream. If you're serious about your business, you should be serious about your people. Look after them, and they'll look after you. And as we've discussed in detail, the beating heart of your magnetic culture is your people. How you treat them will determine how your culture is perceived by those inside your company, and those outside.

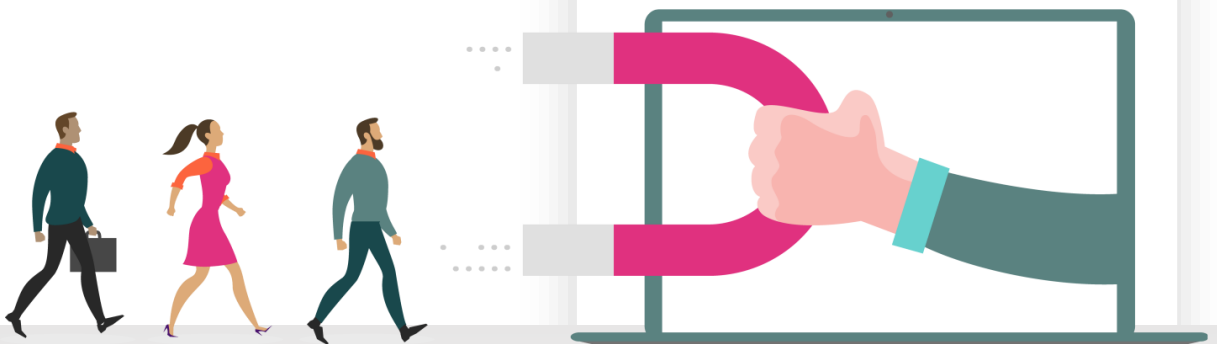
Retention depends on satisfaction. Successful recruitment depends on reputation. You can't have one without the other. Companies with low turnover, great retention rates and who regularly onboard top talent will have a magnetic culture. And you'll know who they are because you'll have heard of them.



More importantly, they'll have developed their magnetic culture by following these three simple steps:

- **Step one: The art of listening**
- **Step two: Fostering employee contentment**
- **Step three: Wellbeing as a foundation**

Trust us, simplicity always works.



Talos Engage

Ready to start building your magnetic culture? Talos360 has the perfect tool to help.



Talos Engage will help you with...



EVP insights

Assess what's important to your employees, allowing you to make sound investment in the benefits your staff will love.



Pulse surveys

New findings can create further questions! Use this short and fast survey to drill down on a particular burning issue.



Engagement

Find out how engaged your employees are in the business as well as what it takes to motivate and fulfil staff further.



Cost savings

Save money on turnover costs, productivity, candidate attraction and your employee benefits budget.



Onboarding

Gain insights from new starters regarding your onboarding process and company culture.



Communication

Celebrate your findings with your workforce by communicating the positive changes their feedback has enabled.



Exit interviews

Find out the real reasons people leave your company, helping you plan your future talent management process.



Interaction

Interactive game format makes it easy for employees to complete the survey, helping to increase response rates.



Wellbeing

Identify areas in which the company can further support employees' mental health and wellbeing.



Insights and metrics

Easily break down your data into several useful segments to get the best information for your goals.

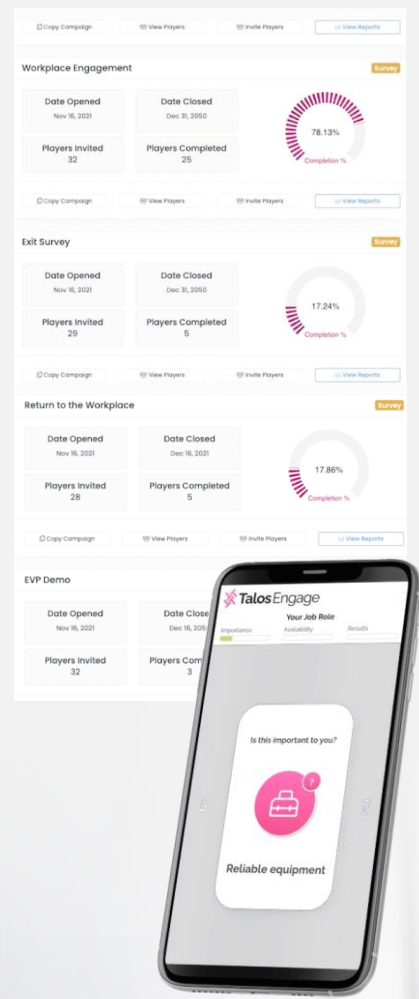
Talos Engage helps you to build a magnetic culture based on your employee needs...

- Know and understand your Employee Value Proposition.
- Increase staff engagement for a happier, healthier, more fulfilled workforce.
- Improve the onboarding process for new starters.
- Increase employee productivity, improving efficiency and innovation.
- Decrease employee turnover.
- Enhance your financial performance by engaging your staff.
- Reduce recruitment need and save on onboarding costs.
- Quickly identify skills gaps with real-time data.
- Improve your employer brand and promote a stronger company culture.
- Create brand ambassadors, who will actively advocate your brand.
- Support and promote continuous improvement.

If you'd like us to help you build an enviable workplace culture that will boast low turnover, possess great retention rates, and regularly onboard top talent, click on the button below. Let's keep the conversation going...

Find out more about Talos Engage today

[Find out more](#)



About Talos360

Talos360 was founded in 2009 with the vision of helping businesses find a better way to attract, recruit and retain the best talent. Now working with over 700+ companies across all industries, we help them to attract, manage and engage the best talent in their sector.

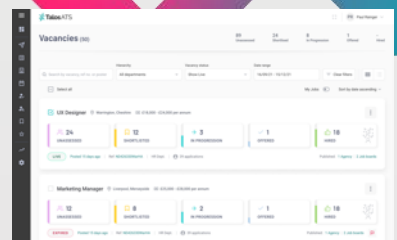
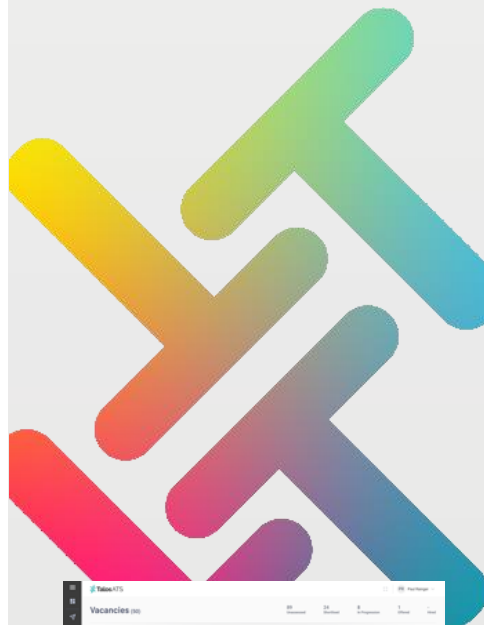
With our three core products, Talos ATS, Talos Engage, and Talos Assist, our proposition now covers every touchpoint of the talent journey, including research and insight, employer branding and EVP, candidate attraction, candidate management, candidate experience, video interviewing and remote recruitment. With this market-leading, award-winning people tech, we can save HR professionals time and money as we continue developing, enhancing, and expanding our proprietary tech.



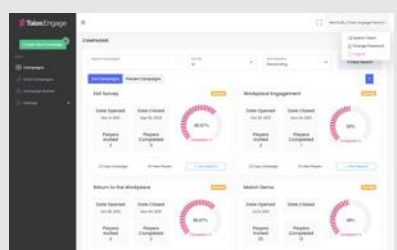
If you would like any information regarding your recruitment process, please contact us. call **01744 812612** or email hello@talos360.co.uk

Contact Us

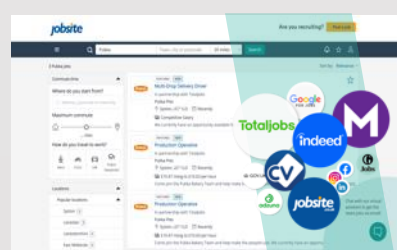
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