



## **Why are our employees leaving? And how do we keep them?**

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**QUESTION:** Over the previous six months, we have lost five employees. For a company our size, that is a lot. While one departure was welcomed, the other four were surprise resignations. This is causing extreme stress as we try to maintain a full client schedule while trying to fill big holes in staffing. I'm not sure why we've lost so many of our team. What should I do to address this issue?

**ANSWER:** What you are experiencing is staff attrition, which is when employees choose to leave their positions voluntarily. This can dramatically impact your company's experience and knowledge base and leaves you in a hard spot for trying to serve clients while also filling open positions. Attrition is also expensive for your business. The time it takes to hire and train someone costs money and takes staff away from fulfilling their own job responsibilities. And if you have to fill the same positions over and over again, you can see how it would add up.

There are many potential causes of attrition, and it would be good for you to investigate these more, especially since you lost several staff in a short period of time. My first question is, do you have any information that helps you understand the reasons why staff have left? Did they share any information with you and/or did you conduct an exit interview? Sometimes, employees will be honest with you and other times they will not. While feedback from the departing employees is helpful, it may not be the sole source of information to help you prevent more staff from leaving.

Let's review some common causes of attrition, including ways you can better understand which of these may be the issue at your company.

### **Low or inadequate compensation and benefits**

Competitive salaries and benefits packages, including perks like flexible schedules, can be a key factor in retaining good employees. You could research the salaries and benefits of other companies in your area using your own connections or an external HR consultant and data, to determine if you need to adjust.

### **High workloads and/or work/life imbalance**

You likely have a sense if this might be the cause. Are staff regularly asked to work over their scheduled hours? Are you attempting to fit in too many clients, resulting in everyone running behind? You could ask the staff for their thoughts and feedback regarding their workload and see if they have any ideas for efficiency in your processes. Or, in the short term, you may just need to schedule more appropriately for the staff that you have.

### **Ineffective management practices**

Many employees who resign from their positions cite issues with their direct manager as a primary reason for their departure. Lack of communication, ineffective leadership approaches, including lack of recognition and appreciation, can all contribute to an employee's daily work experience – either good or

bad. Take an honest look at the management styles of yourself and your team and get feedback from trusted employees.

**Lack of career development opportunities**

No matter where they are in their career path, most employees are looking for opportunities to learn and grow. This may be a new skill, formal certifications, or even a promotion. Are these opportunities available at your company? Do you have processes for talking with employees about their career goals so that you can do what is possible to help them pursue them?

Recognizing and addressing employee attrition is crucial for the long-term success and stability of any organization. By identifying the root causes and taking proactive steps to address them, your business can slow the current staff exodus and work towards an environment where employees want to remain for the long-term.