

# WORKFORCE RETENTION

Columbus Chamber of Commerce Thought Leadership Series

## Should I Stay or Should I Go?

By Kelly Fuller, Workforce Director  
Columbus Chamber of Commerce



In the day-to-day operations of leading a successful business, it can be easy to lose focus on the retention of our most valuable asset: our workforce - the people who create our products, provide our services and bring customers to our door. Without a commitment to creating retention strategies, a business can find itself losing key contributors. Turnover can be very costly, often equal to twice an associate's salary, and it can be time-consuming to recoup production, efficiencies and corporate knowledge when an employee departs. How can today's business leaders create a workplace where people feel connected and valued? We will take a deeper look at lessons learned over a year like no other.

## VOLUME 2

### TOPICS TO EXPECT IN FUTURE VOLUMES?

COMMUNICATION  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
FLEXIBLE WORK

### CONNECT WITH US TODAY

REACH OUT TO KELLY FULLER  
TODAY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AT  
THE COLUMBUS CHAMBER.

[KELLYFULLER@COLUMBUS.ORG](mailto:KELLYFULLER@COLUMBUS.ORG)



We know that people leave jobs for a multitude of reasons. They may find themselves dissatisfied with the role, or possibly not as it was described in their recruitment and onboarding. Perhaps, a negative experience with a co-worker, client or supervisor has made them feel compelled to seek employment elsewhere. Employees with highly coveted skill sets may seek employment with companies that offer higher pay, benefits and growth potential.



It is a gross understatement to say that the last 12 months have proved challenging to everyone. However, during this time, we have also been presented opportunities for evaluation of all aspects of our work. Many of us asked ourselves: “are we being honest about the work?”; “where/when/how can the work be done?”; “what support for our team is required to achieve the workplace goals?”. All of these questions unearth many of the sentiments an employee experiences as they are determining whether they will stay or leave an organization.



The Chamber presents a quarterly educational event called The Experience Series, dedicated to the workforce issues that are most important to our members. Recently, we convened a panel of experts to speak on engagement and retention during our March 24th event Building Loyalty and Reducing Turnover. I was joined by Sarah Cygan, Chief Experience Officer, Ologie; Ashley Futrell, Attorney at Law, Shumaker; Kathy Polster, Total Rewards Associate Manager, Accenture.



# Supporting the Team

A key to retention is quite simply honoring the very human need to belong.

When we feel truly included and valued, we are eager to participate and contribute our ideas and talents. How can business leaders promote a workplace that fosters inclusivity and celebrates diversity?

Creating policies designed to attract a more diverse workforce is only the beginning. Recruiting and hiring a more diverse talent pool does not necessarily mean we have a workplace culture that is inclusive and creates a sense of belonging.

When an employee feels that they have to suppress or hide who they are while at work, your turnover rates can suffer.

Our words matter - so ensure that your company documentation is updated and equitable. Strengthen your anti-discrimination policy.

A recent Harvard Review survey found that 75% of respondents felt that superficial policies and language were insufficient to truly institute real change. They believed that leadership commitment and strengthening anti-discriminatory policies were a critical step to inclusion in the workplace.

When employees feel included and safe, they are more likely to express their ideas and provide input, and your company can actively encourage and will benefit from diverse viewpoints.

“Belonging is critical, and it doesn’t matter if your company is large or small. You can create a culture where people feel valued by not asking them to leave what makes them different at the door. Welcome their ideas and incorporate those ideas into your mission and your work.”

**ASHLEY FUTRELL, SHUMAKER & LOOP**

“Being an ally can mean being more than a mentor. You can be a champion for someone. Visibly being supportive is key, but so is carrying on the conversation on their behalf. Send an email to leadership alerting them of the great work someone has done.

Advocate for them, even when they aren't around. It can mean so much”.

**ASHLEY FUTRELL, SHUMAKER & LOOP**

Be aware of unconscious bias in the hiring and promotion of associates. It is very common for people to want to associate with others who think as they do and who share common interests and beliefs. This is known as affinity bias. While similarities shouldn't automatically disqualify a candidate, they should never be the deciding factor either. During the hiring process, separate the kinship you feel from the attributes required by the job. It is also a good idea to involve others in your workplace throughout the hiring process, who may have different views and perspectives.

Creating allies and supporting allyship can also be an important part of your workplace retention strategy. Healthy workplaces support allyship by actively promoting and advancing a culture of inclusion through intentional and conscious advocacy for others. So, who can be an ally? In reality, anyone who can empathize with another without having shared their life experience can be an ally and supporter of a coworker. Speaking up when we see an injustice, giving proper attribution to our team members, including everyone in the assignment of work, and championing those who are often marginalized in the workplace all foster a stronger workplace culture.

## Contact Kelly Fuller Today

*Kelly Fuller, Workforce Director  
Columbus Chamber of Commerce*

Reach out to Kelly today to discuss the workforce development efforts of the Columbus Chamber of Commerce.

**KELLYFULLER@COLUMBUS.ORG**

