

WORKFORCE RETENTION

Columbus Chamber of Commerce Thought Leadership Series

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

By Kelly Fuller, Workforce Director
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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 1

TOPICS TO EXPECT IN FUTURE VOLUMES?

TEAM SUPPORT
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FLEXIBLE WORK

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AT
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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.

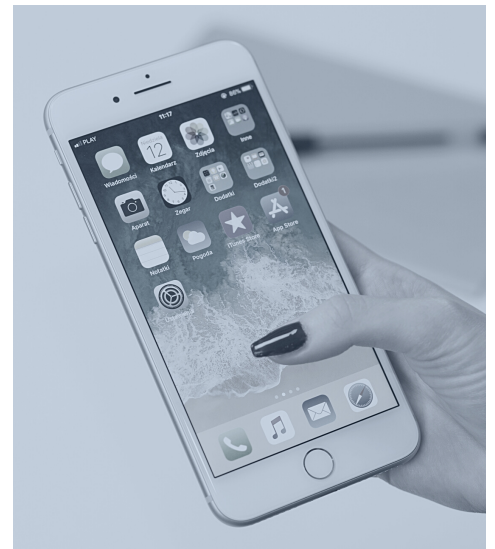
Getting the Work Done

As so many of us moved to remote work, juggling professional and personal spaces in our lives began to blur. What had been the family dining room table was surrendered over to laptops, printers and heaps of “to do” lists.

The novelty of chatting with a team member or client over a device also morphed over the last year into “Zoom burnout”, defined by the World Health Organization as: “a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.” Three symptoms can help you recognize Zoom burnout: “feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism related to one’s job, and reduced professional efficacy.”

Some companies are presenting an incredible benefit to their workers by providing space and guidance to navigate the “chronic workplace stress” brought on by too much screen time and lack of definitive boundaries between work and personal time.

Encourage your team to take frequent breaks from sitting in front of screens by using the 20/20/20 Rule. The rule states that for every 20 minutes spent looking at a screen, you take a 20-second break, move around, and look at something 20 feet away, which relaxes the eye muscles for 20 seconds and gives your brain a much-needed respite.



Providing training on the importance of mental health and how to recognize and combat stress can be another way to support and uplift your team. Letting your workforce know that you are committed to their well-being should be an integral part of your retention strategy. People tend to stay where they feel valued, and the converse of that is true.

Chamber member, Accenture, utilizes [Thriving Mind/Thriving Global](#), a behavior-change tech company launched by Ariana Huffington in 2016. The platform was designed to change the way we work and live by not accepting that burnout is the price we must pay for success.

“We acknowledge burnout and don’t want employees working 24/7, even though the access is there. Accenture is using Thriving Mind/Thriving Global to provide resources on mental health and wellness. Additionally, we are training on emotional intelligence. Microsoft Teams has great training on collaboration and team building. Don’t assume that everyone has adapted well to remote working. Many still have the need to feel connected.”

KATHY POLSTER, ACCENTURE

Overscheduling was an issue for many before the pandemic, and with the “ease” of virtually slipping from one meeting to another, we can fall into the trap of overcommitting ourselves and our time. Recognizing that overwork and burnout can cause employees to seek opportunities elsewhere, companies are making changes to how and when the work happens. Consider instituting an office policy of no internal meetings on Fridays. Use those days to catch up on the work of the week or reading, planning for the coming week, or possibly some R and R to recharge and refresh.

Contact Kelly Fuller Today

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

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