

# Closing The Revolving Door

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Why do your best employees really leave you?

Whether you realize it or not, your personal and professional success is intrinsically tied to the quality of employees in your organization. With today's economy, many companies are finding that their best employees are leaving for greener pastures. Separation Surveys, often conducted by HR when an employee leaves a company, report that the most common reasons given by employees for leaving are: more money; better opportunity; personal reasons.

This usually leaves managers in the organization with a built in excuse for losing key employees; because they just "can't compete with those companies that pay more".

Oddly enough, study after study show a disparity between the results of Separation Surveys and what employees say after they are gone. The most frequently quoted study on the subject of employee retention is from the book "First Break All The Rules" by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman. Their research, backed by a Gallup Poll of 80,000 top performing managers and more than 1 million employees, indicated that, given reasonable wages, money actually was far down the list of items that motivated most employees. The 2005 Hudson Employment Index again reinforces the conclusion that there is much more to an employee's decision to look for another job than the issue of money. (Why Employees Walk: [Retention Initiatives Report](#))

Why is there such a difference between what is reported from Separation Surveys and what employees report in independent surveys? Because most employees are not entirely honest as to why they are leaving the current job. When interviewed by HR, they would rather give a more mundane response for why they are leaving (like money) than a more honest and controversial response like, "I just didn't feel appreciated," "I wasn't clear on what my role was," or even "My boss was a jerk." While these answers are more honest, they may come across as subjective, vindictive or even weak. Hence, the stock answer, "It's a better opportunity."

Does that mean that money is never a factor in an employee leaving? Of course not. Money plays a critical role in these circumstances:

1. The increase in pay is significant (25% or more)
2. The employees' current salary is so low that they cannot make ends meet
3. The employee knows that others around them are making significantly more than they are, even though the work is comparable

And, of course, there are a handful of people who are motivated solely by money and will always leave for even a modest increase in pay. There are probably far fewer of these people than you might expect. And, in general, individuals like this never make

great employees because their loyalty is only to themselves and never to the team or the company.

So if money is not the most significant contributor to employee turnover, what is?

In survey after survey the results are consistent. Employees are looking beyond their paycheck to items that reinforce their self worth, such as:

1. To know what is expected of them at work.
2. To be encouraged by their boss and co- workers to do their best.
3. To know their opinions are valued.
4. To have the opportunity to learn and grow.

While these items sound simple and basic, it is amazing how many employees believe these needs are not being met. And, since the only opinion that counts is theirs, we would be wise to understand what our employees want and need to be successful.

Understanding and providing what employees really value is much less expensive than the cost associated with constantly training new employees. Reducing your turnover can have a positive impact on your bottom line through both reduced training costs and improved customer service.

Do your employees believe they are valued? Do they know what is expected of them at work? Do they have the opportunity to learn and grow? Now is the perfect time to evaluate your organization and determine what it will take to reduce your turnover.

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An engaged and energized workforce leads to higher productivity, reduced costs, improved customer service, and increased profitability. Employee engagement happens when your Corporate Culture, Leadership Style, and Employee Expectations are in synch.

The Fusion Program from ECI Learning Systems is designed to align these 3 concepts in your organization – engaging your employees and creating positive energy that will propel your company to new heights.

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