WORKSTEP

eBook: 5 Critical Steps to Retain Your Hourly Workforce

Workforce Retention:
More Than Just Monetary Incentive

The Turnover Tsunami, Great Resignation, Big Quit, whatever you call it, supply chain workers continue to leave their jobs in droves. With turnover rates at an all-time high, supply chain employers are left picking up the pieces and often find themselves scrambling with improvised retention strategies in the hopes that something will stick. But to retain workers successfully, it's important to get to the root of why they're leaving in the first place.

On average, Americans spend more than one-third of their lives at work. So it's no surprise that workplace satisfaction has a strong influence on overall happiness and sense of self-worth. Since the onset of Covid-19, we've all felt some level of uncertainty, which has led many to reassess their values and ambitions, and thus their job and career.

Supply Chain Workers are Fed Up

Deemed essential, supply chain workers have been burning the candle at both ends amid concerns about safety, health, scheduling and sometimes inadequate training, all while juggling personal and familial obligations in the middle of a pandemic. Many find themselves teetering on the edge of burnout, wondering if they should move to a different company or even quit the industry altogether due to minimal growth opportunities, a feeling that they can be easily replaced, and an overall lack of fulfillment.

Naturally, companies have responded to unprecedented turnover by incentivizing hiring, but a competitive landscape unlike any in recent memory has empowered job seekers to demand even higher wages and ever-increasing benefits. And hiring is only part of the solution.

Perception Shift: Supply Chain Work *is* a Career Path

Companies must position supply chain work as more than "just a job." Workers are more sophisticated than ever, with increasing financial demands and nuanced personal objectives.

The most successful companies recognize the value of offering their employees a career-oriented employment track by implementing a solid employee lifecycle management model that focuses not only on sourcing and screening, but onboarding, training, and retaining talent.

An employee-centric approach should prioritize worker engagement, retention, and growth while concentrating on key milestones throughout the employee journey

By creating a company culture that better aligns with employee expectations, you will foster an environment where workers find fulfillment and want to spend their time.

Here are five critical steps that will help you transition to a retention-forward model.

1. Give Frontline Workers a Voice

Our analysis shows that the number one reason for turnover is lack of career growth, followed by job expectations, safety, orientation, coaching, and feedback.

Pay ranks number seven.

Most of us would have assumed pay would rank much higher. But when you give workers a voice and engage directly, commonly established beliefs can reveal themselves as misconceptions, enabling you to better retain your workforce by giving them what they actually need instead of what you assumed they needed.

It's crucial to check in with all workers across all locations at key milestones along their employment journey. In fact, 89% of supply chain workers are more likely to stay at a company if they feel heard or if their company encourages and listens to feedback.

But regular one-on-one in-person meetings are inefficient and not practical on scale, so how do you maintain consistent contact in a sustainable manner with our frontline workers?

Today's advanced technological solutions allow you to communicate with your workers on an automated cadence using avenues already familiar and second nature to all of us, such as email and text messaging.

Since frontline workers spend so much time on their feet during the day, tailor your survey delivery in a way that will appeal to them. Short, easily answerable questions via phone or email will find much greater success than long-winded, one-off surveys that require sitting in front of a computer.

Look for an engagement platform that allows you to select from predetermined questions in an employee's preferred language and will automatically schedule them to be sent out in an easy-to-answer format at key milestones. You should then be able to view and analyze feedback in real-time.

> **Supply chain workforce trends suggest that the number one reason for turnover is lack of career growth.**

2. Leverage Feedback to Understand and Prevent Turnover

Data is useless if not used to affect change or support existing procedures. Every level of leadership across your organization should have ready access to the check-in data that pertain to their particular department, and they should be empowered to create their own questionnaires that are most relevant to their domain within the organization.

Real-time insights should highlight employees looking for a raise or promotion, those with concerns about health and safety, or those who do not see the workforce as diverse or inclusive.

Feedback should be tied to employment outcomes so hiring managers can correlate responses with exit events to determine which concerns are impacting your turnover.

But even more important than understanding turnover is preventing turnover, so look for a solution that provides real-time alerts for the most time-sensitive issues so they can be addressed proactively, in real-time and the employee can be retained within the organization.

3. Assess Performance and Drive Organizational Change

Use employee feedback to determine what's working and what isn't. If workers in one warehouse location are more satisfied than in another, find out why. Compare retention data by department and location to uncover which parts of your organization are outperforming. Encourage those leaders to share best practices across the organization to create a ripple effect that increases worker satisfaction throughout your organization.

Senior leadership should have the ability to create action plans for regional managers, share leadership reports, and track progress and ROI in real-time.

Create an atmosphere that makes leaders excited about improving workplace satisfaction in their department. Praise them for accomplishments along the way, offer incentives for improvement, and make it known to them that you appreciate their feedback too.

4. Invigorate Company Culture and Brand Reputation

It can be easy to say that organizations should improve their company culture, but what does that actually mean in concrete terms?

The reality is that it's different for every organization and you have to understand what your specific employees want before you can create an environment that fosters those needs.

Your employer brand is just as important as your consumer brand.

Do your employees feel respected, satisfied, motivated and well cared for?

Do they love their job?

Are they proud of where they work?

You have to ask them, and then act on the feedback.

By giving your employees a voice and taking action to improve their work environment, you will in turn improve onboarding and productivity while breeding teamwork and a sense of belonging.

And when they like where they work, they will share this enthusiasm. Just as you hope to turn your customers into ambassadors of your brand, so too should you look to your employees as ambassadors of your organization. Your employer brand is just as important as your consumer brand.
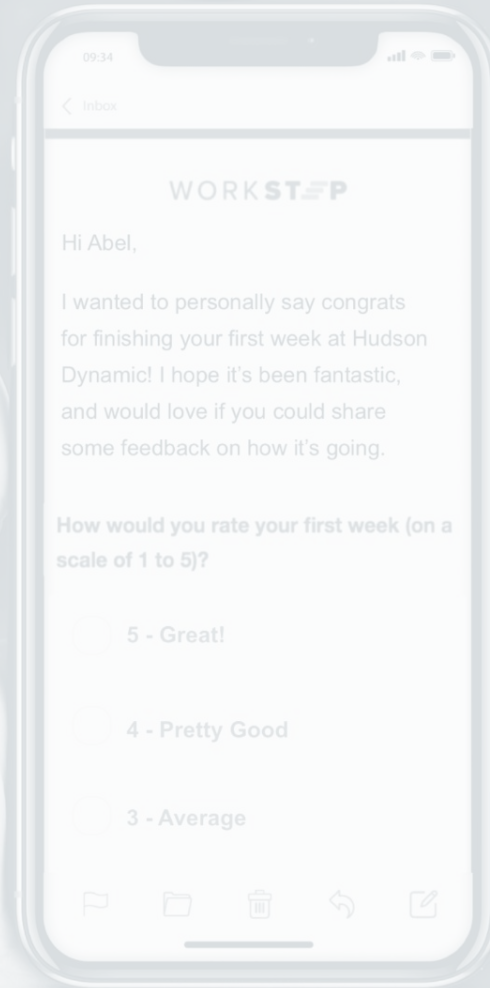
Source: cnbc.com

5. Embrace new technology

We've outlined a number of key steps you can take to improve retention and they all rely on an embrace of new technologies, because unless you have an army of available surveyors ready to poll employees (if you did, you probably wouldn't be reading this eBook), you're going to need some help.

Implementing new technological infrastructure can seem daunting, but the reality is that your competitors are modernizing their procedures regardless of whether you join them or not. Fortunately, best-in-class providers make implementation easy and provide turn-key solutions that will make your IT team sing.

With today's engagement platforms, you don't need a large support staff, regardless of whether your workers are in the same location, spread out amongst multiple facilities, speak a different language, or have minimal time to provide feedback.

Look for a provider that allows you to select from existing questions, or easily create your own. You should be able to use pre-defined schedules and customize as needed. Real-time alerts and analytics should be a given because you can't afford to react to employee turnover. You need technology that empowers you to proactively retain your workforce.

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Hi Abel,

I wanted to personally say congrats for finishing your first week at Hudson Dynamic! I hope it's been fantastic, and would love if you could share some feedback on how it's going.

How would you rate your first week (on a scale of 1 to 5)?

☐ 5 - Great!

☐ 4 - Pretty Good

☐ 3 - Average

If You Listen, They Will Come - and Stay

Creating a retention strategy is not easy but battling turnover is much harder. Modern technology can take the stress out of employee engagement.

By giving your frontline workers a voice, sharing feedback across your organization, encouraging change, improving your company culture and embracing technology, you will see drastic improvements in employee satisfaction. And higher satisfaction means less chance of quitting, incentive hopping, and burning out.

An effective retention solution will directly result in:

- **Reduced costs and increased revenue**
- **Improved culture and morale boost**
- **More skilled, satisfied employees**
- **Recruitment and training efficiency**
- **Better employee and customer experiences**

Enlist WorkStep RETAIN as Part of Your Retention Strategy

WorkStep's RETAIN platform helps you increase employee retention with real-time, actionable feedback and insights from your frontline.

- Automatically engage frontline workers via text and email throughout key milestones along their employment journey using our pre-populated and custom check-ins

- Use employee feedback to track the health of your frontline workforce in real-time

- Identify top turnover drivers and recommendations for improvement

- Benchmark satisfaction and retention across your company and against industry peers

- Understand how company actions and initiatives impact job satisfaction and retention

Learn more at workstep.com
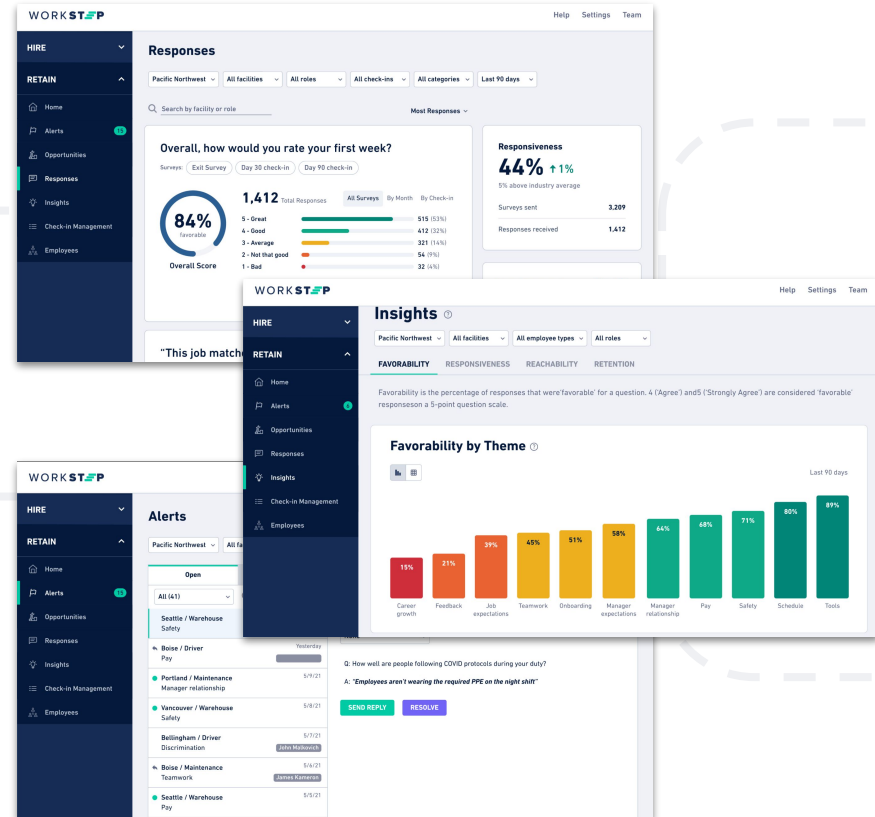
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Helping supply chain companies hire and retain their frontline workforce

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