



Now more than ever before, we're counting on our best people to find ways to drive growth in this brutal marketplace. Reaching out to support, sustain, and fully engage top talent is central to our strategy.

Stars are known for their outsized dedication, brainpower, and work ethic.

Caught between clamoring customers and vaporizing value, a CEO understandably might find it hard to focus on talent.

It seems pointless to overcommit to work since the company does not seem to commit to its employees.

For top talent, the four most important motivators are: challenge/stimulation, high-quality colleagues, recognition/respect, and compensation.

If you invest in top talent, the returns will be exponential and lasting.

Money is important but the not the driver for top talent retention.

The loyalty to its people, and vice versa, isn't really there anymore-it's a different animal from what a lot of us were used to. The problem is we're supposed to all be in this together. But at some point, you stop and think: 'Well, maybe we're not.'"

Create a "no-spin" zone:

When leaders don't provide information, even the prized people whose positions seem safe start second-guessing what's going on. The resulting rumor mill

inevitably undermines trust. You must say something because saying nothing is interpreted as meaning something bad.

Think locally and focus on team leaders:

It is the employee's relationship with her immediate manager or team leaders that will determine how long she stays and how productive she is while she is there. Remember, people join companies but leave managers.

In tough times, people skills can be more critical to long-term success than strategic initiatives such as innovation or cost cutting

When people cannot control external factors give them something to control.

Encourage active mentoring because people appreciate the opportunity to shine in front of their peers.

Give employees meaningful nonmonetary rewards:

Star by saying, "Thank you." This can be done in private and in public - both are powerful.

Promote existing wellness benefits. This opportunity can help build resilience and reduce stress in the workplace and at home.

Use time as currency. This can be remote work options, staggered hours, reduced-hour arrangements, and mini-sabbaticals.

Encourage and provide a way for employees to get involved in social causes on company time.

Develop a fair restructuring process:

Make layoffs easier on managers, help employees help themselves, and don't just cut-create.

Hold on to your women:

Establish a rich menu of flexible work arrangements, help women claim and sustain ambition, and to harness altruism.

Show that top leadership cares:

Use various touch points, but nothing can replace actual person-to-person connection and interaction.

Quick ideas: skip-level lunches, encourage affinity networks, create safe environment to vent and ask for advice, add an extra benefit to show your commitment to your employees, and show respect.

Re-create pride, purpose, and direction:

Find the good in the company and flaunt it. Reaffirm the larger vision. Amp up altruism.

Provide an environment where collaboration can occur free of hierarchy and other artificial barriers. Tell them the sky's the limit and there are no boundaries.

P.S. Don't forget yourself:

Whatever you are doing to retain top talent, you should also do for yourself.

Quick ideas: exercise, volunteer your time and serve, nurture your personal networks, recruit a personal board of directors, and step away to restore and reflect.