



CAHRC
Canadian Agricultural
Human Resource Council



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en agriculture

CASE STUDIES



CASE STUDY #1: Becoming an Employer of Choice

Nortera, a large vegetable processor with 13 operations and 3,000 employees, has become an employer of choice in both Canada and the United States. Over a 25-year history, they have responded to challenges by creating a strong company culture anchored by a strong leadership team with stable, grassroots values and a commitment to employee satisfaction, success and well-being.

A notable example of their strength is the STAY program. In response to a recorded 17 per cent turnover rate in one of their departments, they built an employee feedback system in order to get to the root of this challenge. This program involves a series of interviews with both new and long-term employees where feedback is collected on the employee experience. It should be made clear that this differs from performance appraisal or evaluation. Performance management conversations happen at a different time. The STAY interview is a scheduled, open, two-way conversation between each employee and their supervisor. For new employees, the interviews

occur at two weeks, six weeks, 12 weeks and 16 weeks and are used a tool to retain new employees.

There are five questions that are asked in the STAY interview:

1. What do you enjoy about working here?
2. What do you learn from working here?
3. When was the last time you thought about leaving us and what prompted that?
4. Why do you stay here?
5. What can I do to make your work experience better?

The outcomes of these interviews are recorded and inform all kinds of activities within the operation including: the establishment of an outdoor non-smoking area, hosting team meetings at a different time of the day (beginning vs end of shift) and providing freezer jackets and tuques during cold temperatures. Notably, turnover was reduced to 5 per cent.

In addition to the STAY program, Nortera has found other creative ways to listen to their employees.



For instance, supervisors are encouraged to have a true “open door policy” where leaders are accessible and employees are encouraged to share concerns or suggestions. Similarly, they have implemented a stop-start-continue program where employees are regularly asked what they want the company to stop, start and continue doing. They have also launched an online tool called Office Vibe, where employees are prompted by email every two weeks to report on relationships with managers, relationships with co-workers, recognition, satisfaction, personal growth, ambassadorship, alignment, feedback and wellness. The answers are anonymous, although the employee can choose to identify themselves. It has an astounding participation rate of 66 per cent! The benefits are that managers receive a snapshot of how their employees are feeling, co-workers can send “good vibes” to colleagues, and all employees have an opportunity to feel heard. The key to the success of this program is that there is follow-up on the answers and a sincere effort to address concerns or ideas that are raised through the survey. Some of that follow-up may even come directly from the CEO!

Through open communication with employees and responsiveness to employee feedback, Nortera has created a culture that withstands labour shortages, is competitive with other sectors where pay might be higher, and has earned a reputation as an employer of choice. Their employees talk about the operation with great pride, espousing the core values of the company, namely environmental sustainability and healthy living through plant-based diets.

In reflecting on their success in responding to challenging labour markets, one leader noted, “Maybe the shortage has hurt some companies, but it has made us better... We have become solution-based thinkers because we didn’t have a choice.” This shift in mindset and perspective has made a big difference in their ability to retain

workers. Some employees have gone as far as to call Nortera a “mystical” place to work. What have they done to earn this reputation and to become an employer of choice? See Table 1 for some concrete examples of their strategies.

Perhaps the biggest learning from Nortera is that their strong, positive culture is not an accident. It is purposeful and is the outcome of intentional programs and practices targeted at the employee experience. Here are the key learnings from this case study:

- Be intentional and thoughtful about programs or practices that will lead to a positive culture;
- Look at data on turnover and understand why people are leaving;
- Seek employee feedback and make changes based on that feedback;
- Foster and create a culture of pride amongst your employees;
- Invest in the community;
- Over-hire to deal with absenteeism and prevent burnout;
- Be flexible with your policies and practices – be open to making changes to accommodate your employees;
- Don’t underestimate the importance of working conditions, and invest in improvements;
- Look at the industry labour shortage from a different perspective – focus on how it can make your organization better and be solution based.



Table 1. Examples of programs that support Nortera’s culture

<p>Wages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They acknowledge that you have to pay general labour almost as much as skilled labour, but they also recognize that they can’t compete with automotive salaries.• Focus on building a workplace where people want to be.• Invested in creating a transparent pay system with strong pay equity.
<p>Working conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focused on positive, safe and inclusive workplaces.• Investment in pleasant break areas, improving facilities, paving the parking lot, providing picnic areas and providing healthier alternatives for lunch.• Investment in automated equipment to improve the experience of their employees, specifically with respect to the physicality of work.
<p>Recognition through events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequent, yet simple events such as barbeques and holiday parties to support the culture of pride at Nortera.
<p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over-hire by 8-13%; employ more staff than they need to prevent burnout and fill gaps when absenteeism occurs.• Ensure hiring practices are fair and effective; careful interview questions that allow the selection of people who fit with their unique culture and organizational values.
<p>Employee development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-paced training and development informed by a competency based approach.• Employees have the opportunity to move quickly through a series of levels; progress is recognized with pay raises.• The program has allowed them to cross train, resulting in efficiencies. For example, they are now able to run each shift with 18 people versus 24 people three years ago. The money saved goes to increased wages!
<p>Encouraging a culture of pride and helping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In line with their value of caring for people, Nortera also quietly and humbly invests in the community, whether it’s in foodbanks, children’s camps, inner-city schools, just to name a few, which further contributes to the sense of pride among employees.
<p>Responsive work arrangement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexibility out of necessity! In response to employee demand, they have developed flexible and innovative policies and practices, because they don’t have a choice if they want to attract and retain talent.• Example: A site was having difficulty with weekend skilled trades so they hired two workers who work solely on the weekend (two 12-hour shifts for which they paid time and a half). These positions are now attractive to some individuals who can get 36 hours of pay in two days.



Key Takeaways From This Case Study

- Employers like Nortera who have been successful in attracting and retaining workers have recognized that the labour shortage/ crisis has been the impetus for change and have realized that innovative practices are needed to become an employer of choice. Examples of these innovative practices include investing in inclusive workplaces, more flexible shifts/hours, pleasant break areas, providing lunch, holiday parties, picnic/ lunch areas, recognition programs, referral programs, etc.
- Be mindful of the importance of fairness, because it is very important to motivate your employees. Employees can be motivated by three types of fairness. First, they can be motivated by distributive fairness, which means feeling they are paid fairly relative to others. Second, they can be motivated by interactional fairness, which means feeling they are treated with respect. The most important type of fairness when it comes to motivation is procedural fairness. Do your employees feel that HOW you make decisions is fair? It's not the outcome of the decision that is important, it's the procedures that you used to make the decisions. Ask yourself whether each decision is made using a procedure that is representative of how your employees would want you to make the decision. One way to ensure that you are using this strategy as your guide is to give employees voice into your processes. Another way to ensure procedural fairness is to apply the same procedure when making a decision consistently, to all employees. Also, ensure that your employees

feel comfortable coming to you if they don't think a decision is fair, without a fear of you judging or punishing them. Lastly, you need to be transparent and communicate HOW you are making decisions so your employees can see that you are being fair. Procedural fairness is extremely important in order to have motivated employees, and Nortera has excelled in this regard!

- Nortera has clearly demonstrated that Participative Leadership (involving employees in decision making and asking for their input) can be very effective! But we need to remember that you need to alter your leadership style depending on many factors. Different people are motivated by different leadership styles and different situations





require different leadership styles. There is not one best leadership style. Leaders can be directive (they simply tell their employees what to do), participative (they involve their employees in decision making and seek input), encouraging/supportive (they provide resources, support and feedback) or achievement oriented (focus on setting and achieve goals). Which one of these styles is best depends on who you are leading and what motivates them, their position, your strengths as a leader, and the culture, structure and strategy of the operation. Which leadership style is best? It depends! The participative style has worked very well for Nortera!

- Employers, like Nortera, who have been successful at attracting and retaining their employees spend time listening to them. If employees feel they have a voice, they will be more motivated. Successful employers ask their employees for input, criticisms and suggestions for improvements, and then follow up with either changes to the workplace to address any concerns, or an explanation as to why the changes are not possible.
- Employees can be committed in different ways, and Nortera has created a great deal of affective commitment within their employees (meaning they stay because they want to and because they simply feel positively about the company). Alternatively, and not desired, you can have employees who have continuance commitment, which means they will stay because they have to (maybe they don't have another opportunity to go to), or they could stay because they have normative commitment, meaning they stay because they feel like they should stay. We don't want employees to have either normative or

continuance commitment. All of Nortera's intentional practices and initiatives towards developing a positive workplace culture have resulted in high affective commitment and pride amongst their employees.

- Like Nortera, perform “start-stop-continues” with your employees. Ask them what you as a manager can stop, start and continue doing to improve their job. Just asking for their opinion will increase their motivation, and it often leads to conversations about things that can easily be improved upon. You can also reverse the exercise and also do “stop-start-continues” for employees in the same exercise. Use the opportunity to tell them what you would like them to stop, start and continue doing. This has worked well for Nortera by giving their employees a voice, which increases motivation and commitment!





CASE STUDY #2: Creating a Culture of Community

The labour crisis facing the Agri-food sector is perhaps the industry's biggest challenge and is not going to go away anytime soon. Operations in this sector have a reputation for difficult working conditions, making it challenging to attract and retain workers. A recent survey of businesses in the sector found that retention is at its worst in the first few weeks of employment. According to this study, there is a retention rate of 50 per cent for entry-level employees within the first month of employment and a 25 per cent average turnover rate beyond the first month. The research also showed that 67 per cent of employers report that they lose entry-level employees because the job was not what they expected with respect to working conditions. Employees are largely lost to other sectors such as fast food, where employees receive the same pay but with better working conditions. Given the increases in minimum wage, the fact that the individuals in the labour pool have

other employment options and there are limited margins to offer higher wages within this sector, employers cannot attract workers based on pay. In fact, 65 per cent of employers reported that they are losing entry-level employees because they find better pay elsewhere. If organizations in the sector want to attract and retain workers, they need to make significant and intentional investments to become employers of choice, meaning that employers need to create operations where people want to work. This is of particular importance given that word of mouth and referral from current employees are by far the most common methods of recruitment. Therefore, it is even more important to invest in practices to improve the workplace culture to become an employer of choice.

In a recent study, respondents in the Agri-food sector were asked to provide three words



to describe the workplace culture of their organization. The word cloud below represents these responses (the larger the word, the more frequently it was used):



It is no surprise that in the Agri-food sector, workplace cultures are described as family-oriented, positive, inclusive, supportive and friendly given that the majority of these operations are in rural communities with strong values. Those that have been successful at becoming an employer of choice have excelled at creating a culture of community. Employers can do this by creating engagement within the organization, or externally with the surrounding community. Investment in the local community has been shown to increase engagement and create a positive workplace culture. However, recent research has shown that only 10 per cent of employers make this investment! There is a huge opportunity to not only make a difference in the surrounding town, but also to engage employees by instilling values and differentiating the employee experience.

Some organizations exemplify community engagement by investing in several initiatives that bridge a relationship between the company and the community. As a result, some operations have taken a role in community economic development. In a few cases, the operations have become the main economic driver of the towns in which they operate and have provided significant economic investment in the form of housing, playgrounds and sporting facilities. Other organizations show their commitment to their community by quietly donating to local community organizations (e.g., hospitals, sports organizations), encouraging their employees to volunteer in the communities in which they live, participating in parades, and holding cultural events aimed at building community among their Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) and



the local communities. All of these initiatives create a feeling of community among employees, which leads to increased engagement and commitment.

In addition to being a strong community partner, there are many examples from organizations that make an intentional effort to create a culture of community within the workplace.

- With respect to onboarding new employees, specifically TFWs, some employers spend a significant amount of time orienting new employees and equipping them with everything that is available in the community. Most employers also use job shadowing and ensure the new worker spends time with the direct manager or supervisor.
- To retain employees, several organizations check in with their employees quite often and listen to what they can do to make improvements. This can be a formal program with regular increments between check ins for new employees (e.g., after one week, two weeks, one month, two months, etc.) or informally for longer-term workers. In fact, 55 per cent of employers periodically check in with their entry-level employees and 58 per cent check in with their skilled employees. They ask their employees for input, concerns, and suggestions for improvements, and then follow up with either changes to the workplace or an explanation as to why the changes are not possible.
- Recent research also showed that most operations invest in keeping their employees engaged through social

events, training and development opportunities, financial bonuses and small, fun initiatives to create a workplace culture of family and inclusion. Examples of these initiatives include contests, prizes, draws, and food trucks, community initiatives (e.g., parades, cultural festivals) and discounted meat orders.

- Employers of choice go out of their way to build a culture of community for their TFWs, both among the TFWs and between domestic workers and TFWs.

Key Takeaways From This Case Study

- Working conditions play a major role in the difficulty in attracting and retaining workers. Operations with challenging working conditions must invest more in practices directed towards attracting and retaining their workers to compensate. For these operations, intentional programs to improve workplace culture are essential for low turnover.
- Given that most entry-level workers quit because the job was not as expected (i.e., working conditions), and that this turnover is most likely to happen in the first month, ensuring organizations provide a realistic job preview (RJP) is very important. A RJP is process whereby perspective employees receive a realistic description of what the working conditions are actually like so that new employees have appropriate expectations. Some organizations even



- prepare videos and bring the employee to the workplace prior to hiring them to make it as realistic as possible.
- Organizations successful at retaining workers live by their organizational values. Spend time deciding what values you want to guide your operation. Be careful yet deliberate about your priorities. These priorities then need to flow down through all parts of your organization, namely leadership, business strategy, and employment policies.
 - Understand that culture matters! Culture sets the tone for how people treat one another and consequently signals to prospective employees what is valued within the organization. Culture can attract or discourage employees from seeking employment with your organization.
 - Monitor and evaluate culture. For culture to be successful, it needs to be more than a plaque on a wall or words shared by leaders. Organizations should continuously evaluate their company culture to ensure that it is aligned with the intentions set by top management. Regular cultural audits where employees have input into their experience within the firm will help leaders ensure that their collective vision is on track.
 - Employers of choice invest in small, fun initiatives to create a workplace culture of family and inclusion. Examples of these initiatives include contests, prizes, draws, food trucks, community initiatives (parades, sports, etc.) and cultural festivals.

- Investing in your community can instill feelings of affective commitment, meaning that your employees are more likely to stay because they feel positively about where they work and have pride in their organization.
- Employers who have been successful at attracting and retaining their employees spend time listening to them. If employees feel they have a voice, they will be more motivated. Successful employers ask their employees for input, criticisms and suggestions for improvements and then follow up with either changes to the workplace to address any concerns, or an explanation as to why the changes are not possible.





CASE STUDY #3: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion From a Temporary Foreign Worker Lens

Recent research has shown that 67 per cent of employers surveyed find it is ‘very difficult’ to recruit domestic employees. In addition, respondents indicated an average rate of voluntary turnover among domestic employees of 10 per cent in the last six months with some reporting rates as high as 45 per cent. Many operations have turned to recruiting Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) to address the labour challenge.

In this case study, we examine methods used by employers to retain, motivate and engage TFWs. Many of these efforts are strategic in nature, strategies to become an employer of choice. What makes all of these initiatives truly remarkable is that they are intentional efforts towards improving equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within the Canadian workforce. These organizations have worked hard to make their workplace an inclusive place to work, where the TFWs and domestic workers are treated equally

while acknowledging and celebrating cultural differences.

There are some exciting examples of operations going above and beyond to attract and retain employees arriving in Canada through the TFW program through both intentional practices that engage employees, improving their overall experience in Canada, and others that support pathways to immigration. The following are notable examples:

- Exceeding requirements with respect to sourcing and providing housing. Some organizations offer a choice in the type of housing available to TFWs so that the worker can choose what suits their situation best (e.g., condos, large family homes, etc.). Another organization has renovated a nursing home so that the



workers can stay together and form their own community-like environment.

- Intentionally promoting workplace values around inclusion to ensure that their TFWs are considered an extension of their work family and treat all employees domestic and foreign, according to the same labour standards and practices.
- Sending managers to the host countries to recruit and select TFWs to ensure fit with the organization's needs and workplace culture.
- Creating an environment that celebrates cultural differences and traditions through events and initiatives both in the workplace and in the community (e.g., food trucks, ethnic grocery stores and cultural heritage festivals).
- Investing in an extensive onboarding process where new employees learn about the company as well as their local community and Canada. In addition, there are relatively small things they do to help to onboard new employees. For example, some operations provide furniture for new homes, carpooling options to get to work, support in navigating the driver's license process, as well as assistance with obtaining a SIN and health card and setting up Canadian banking services. A notable example about how to support the adjustment of TFWs to Canada comes from the Western Agriculture Labour Initiative (WALI). WALI is developing a unique pilot onboarding initiative for Mexican TFWs whereby they are offering training in the host country on what to expect when they arrive in Canada. This is to reduce unmet expectations amongst

TFWs and to create a smoother transition into their work in Canada. Any efforts to ensure that workers' expectations are accurate and in line with the standards of employment will help employees adjust and remain satisfied. Not only will this support transition to the work, but it will ensure that the new worker has everything that they need to be successful in the role.

- Some organizations recognize that TFWs can become an important source of labour at the end of their contract and offer support for pathways to immigration (e.g., support for housing, employment opportunities for family members, and assistance in completing immigration paperwork and navigating the process). Creating an inclusive culture that celebrates equity and diversity will increase the likelihood that TFWs will want to stay with your organization if they transition to permanent residency.

In summary, creating a welcoming and inclusive culture is a sound investment. When employees who arrive in Canada as foreign workers are made to feel part of the work family through support of life and family, as well as cultural celebration, everyone wins.

Key Takeaways From This Case Study.

- Employers of choice go out of their way to build a culture of community for their TFWs, both a community among the TFWs and also a community between domestic workers and TFWs.



- Set a culture for both domestic workers and TFWs that includes every employee and creates a positive, inclusive workplace culture. For employers in Canada, there is great opportunity in drawing from the diversity within this country. In order to reap this benefit, operations need to ensure that they are places that are welcoming of all employees and value broad ranging contributions.
- Treat all employees, domestic and foreign, fairly and with respect. How your domestic employees perceive how you treat your TFWs will increase their own motivation. Treating everyone consistently and fairly will improve the workplace culture of inclusion and increase motivation for all employees.
- Intentionally celebrate the cultural differences amongst all of your employees, perhaps through social events or food trucks, for example.
- Be creative about helping your TFWs to transition to permanent residency (if this is a strategic direction for your operation). While ensuring you are also following all regulations, think creatively about ways you can support their pathway to immigration.
- Dedicate resources within your organization to finding and attracting the right TFWs and supporting them through their onboarding process and during their time in Canada. A small investment can go a long way in fostering both their well-being and feelings of inclusion, and it is the right thing to do.
- Invest the time in onboarding your TFWs. Make a plan and checklist of items you will include throughout the onboarding process. If appropriate, set your TFWs up with a mentor within your operation. Ensure this mentor is someone who you value as an employee, as it is quite likely this new TFW will model the behaviours of their mentor. In addition, investing in onboarding increases self-efficacy, which is a worker's belief that they can do the job. It's different from self-esteem, which is an overall belief about yourself. Self-efficacy is job-specific and predicts job performance and productivity.





CASE STUDY #4: Challenges to Attracting and Retaining Domestic Workers

There is a great deal of evidence of the labour challenges within the Canadian agricultural sector and the Food and Beverage Manufacturing/Processing sectors. CAHRC recently funded a research study that included both interviews and focus groups and a quantitative survey to understand turnover. Overall, respondents indicated an average rate of voluntary turnover of 10 per cent in the last six months, with some reporting rates as high as 45 per cent. Involuntary turnover was between 1 per cent and 5 per cent leading to an overall turnover rate of between 8 per cent and 15 per cent among respondents with a few outliers at a 25 per cent overall rate of turnover. For both entry and skilled employees, 67 per cent indicated that it is very difficult to recruit domestic employees. With respect to hiring entry-level employees, there is a reported retention rate of 50 per cent of employees hired within their first month of employment and a 25 per cent average turnover rate beyond the first month. 58 per cent

of respondents reported being ‘concerned’ or ‘very concerned’ about employee turnover. This is very different than the findings for skilled employees, where respondents reported very low turnover rates, losing an average of close to 0 per cent in the first month and between 0 and 25 per cent after that. Sixteen per cent were ‘not at all concerned’ about turnover, 29 per cent were ‘somewhat concerned,’ 29 per cent were ‘concerned,’ and 26 per cent were ‘very concerned.’

The interviews/focus groups provided context around the causes of turnover and what innovative employers were strategically doing to retain their employees. The labour shortages and challenges were evident and consistent across the Agricultural, Meat Processing and Food and Beverage Processing/Manufacturing sectors. However, anecdotally, it appeared through the interviews/focus groups that the causes were different. In Primary Agriculture and Meat



Processing, the challenging working conditions seemed to play the largest role in attracting and retaining employees, which was not necessarily the case with the Food and Beverage Processing/ Manufacturing sectors, which face the same competitive labour market as other industries. When working conditions play a major role in the difficulty in attracting and retaining workers, those operations must invest more in practices directed towards attracting and retaining their workers to compensate. For those operations, intentional programs to improve workplace culture are essential for lower levels of turnover. Examples of these innovative practices include investing in inclusive workplaces, more flexible shifts/hours, pleasant break areas, providing lunch, holiday parties, picnic/lunch areas, recognition programs and referral programs. Given that the research showed that for both entry-level and skilled employees, word of mouth and referral from current employees are by far the most popular methods of recruitment, these types of initiatives go a long way.

The research showed that working conditions play a major role in the difficulty in attracting and retaining workers. Specifically, the survey showed that 67 per cent of employers report that they lose entry-level employees because the job was not what they expected with respect to working conditions. In addition, the interviews/ focus groups, for the most part, suggested that organizations are losing workers to other sectors (e.g., fast food) where they can receive the same pay with better working conditions. The survey reinforced this with 65 per cent of employers reporting that they are losing entry-level employees because they find better pay. Given the increases in minimum wage, the fact that the labour pool can work at places like Amazon, Starbucks or McDonalds and there are limited margins to offer higher wages within this

sector, employers cannot attract workers based on pay. Therefore, it is even more important to invest in practices to improve the workplace culture to compensate. Some operations invest in small, fun initiatives to create a workplace culture of community and inclusion. Examples of these initiatives include contests, prize draws, food trucks, community initiatives (e.g., parades, sports), meat orders and cultural festivals.

What was clear from the interviews/focus groups was that employers who have been successful in attracting and retaining their workers have made very intentional efforts to invest in practices to increase the culture within their workplace. For example, they have invested significantly in the onboarding of their employees. Specifically, there were several examples of employers who spend time interviewing or checking in with their employees at several points in time after the initial hire (one week, two weeks, after one month, etc.) to ensure worker satisfaction and to check on areas of possible improvement. This has resulted in a significant reduction in turnover for these employers. The biggest challenge with retention is within the first month or so. If employers can get over the initial hump, then they are likely to retain the employee. The interviews/focus groups showed that the biggest challenge with retention is within the first month or so. The survey showed that there is a reported retention rate of 50 per cent of entry-level employees hired within their first month of employment and a 25 per cent average turnover rate beyond the first month. An interesting distinction in the survey was that there was an average of close to 0 per cent in the first month, and between 0 and 25 per cent after that for skilled employees. From an onboarding perspective, the research showed that for both skilled and entry-level employees, most employers use job shadowing and spending time



with the manager or supervisor. In addition, employers who have been successful at attracting and retaining their employees spend time listening to them. They ask their employees for input, criticisms and suggestions for improvements, and then follow up with either changes to the workplace to address any concerns or an explanation as to why the changes are not possible. The qualitative research also showed that employers who have been successful at attracting and retaining their employees spend time listening to them. In the interviews/focus groups, there were several examples of employers who spend time interviewing or checking in with their employees at several points in time after the initial hire (one week, two weeks, after one month, etc.) to ensure worker satisfaction and to check on areas of possible improvement. This was reinforced with the survey with 55 per cent of employers periodically checking in with their entry-level employees and 58 per cent checking in with their skilled employees.

Most notably, from the interviews/focus groups, it was found that employers who have been successful in attracting and retaining workers have recognized that the labour shortage/crisis has been the impetus for change and have realized that innovative practices are needed to become an employer of choice. They have made intentional efforts to attract and retain workers, and that have paid off with lower turnover.

Key Takeaways From This Case Study

- Invest the time in onboarding your new employees. Make a plan and checklist of items you will include throughout the onboarding process. If appropriate, set

your new employee up with a mentor within your operation. Ensure this mentor is someone who you value as an employee, as it is quite likely this new employee will model the behaviours of their mentor.

- Conduct interviews or check-ins with your new employees regularly (perhaps after the first week, every two weeks after that for a few months). Try to understand what they like and dislike about the job and make changes where necessary to reduce turnover. Create a culture where new employees feel like they can speak up if they aren't happy about something and come to you with any concerns.
- Provide a realistic job preview when you are hiring them so that you don't have unmet expectations. When you are going through the selection process, or even early on during the employment relationship, be open and transparent about what the job entails (the good and the bad)! If employees know what they are walking into, it will reduce turnover and increase motivation!
- Remember that new employees can be committed in different ways. They can have continuance commitment, which means they will stay because they have to (maybe they don't have another opportunity to go to), or they could stay because they have normative commitment, meaning they stay because they feel like they should stay. We don't want employees to have either normative or continuance commitment. We want employees who have affective commitment, meaning they stay because



they want to and because they simply feel positively about the organization. A strong onboarding program with a mentor, a realistic job preview and time spent on socializing them into the company will result in higher affective commitment!

- Understand that culture matters! Culture sets the tone for how people treat one another and consequently signals to perspective employees what is valued within the organization. Culture can attract or discourage employees from seeking employment with the firm. Decide what values you want to guide your operation. Be careful yet deliberate

about your priorities. These priorities then need to flow down through all parts of your organization, leadership, business strategy, and employment policies. Ensure that setting the tone for the organization starts at the top. Leaders need to ‘walk the walk.’ Culture is determined from the very top, both is statement about vision and strategy and through behaviour from top management. Leaders need to represent the cultural values they hope to set.

- Invest in attracting the right people, a dedicated onboarding program, and intentional initiatives to engage and retain your employees!





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