

# 7 Perks the Best Employees Crave (and They're All Completely Free)

There's a difference between attracting the best and keeping them around. Here are 7 ways to do both.



The war for top talent is fiercer than ever.

It goes without saying that you need a great compensation and benefits package to attract quality employees. But every day, headhunters and rival companies are working hard to lure your best people away.

Which raises the question: What are you doing to keep them around?

If you're serious about retaining your best employees, make sure you're giving them the following:

## 1. Consistent and meaningful communication.

Every healthy relationship begins with good communication.

In a series of recent studies, research organization Gallup concluded:

- Employees whose managers hold regular meetings with them are almost three times as likely to be engaged.
- Managers who use a combination of face-to-face, phone, and electronic communication are the most successful in engaging employees.

- Engaged employees report that when attempting to contact their manager, he or she returns their calls or messages within 24 hours.

Additionally, Gallup's research found employees value communication from their managers about "what happens in their lives outside of work."

All of this contributes to feeling the manager or team lead is invested in him or her as a real person.

## **2. Sincere commendation.**

Praise. Giving credit where credit is due. Telling someone: "Job well done." Whatever you want to call it, people need it--and they respond to it. Don't mistake my point: I never encourage flattery, or praise just for the sake of praising. (Anyone can see through superficial compliments and a lack of authenticity.)

But each of your people is talented in different ways. It's your job to see those talents, and to bring out the best in them.

## **3. Flexibility.**

From offering the opportunity to work remotely to making a selection of tools available to do the job, flexibility in the workplace is a major advantage for employees.

Employers expect their people to be flexible, so why wouldn't they return the favor?

## **4. Transparency.**

If you want to push your best people out the door, a lack of transparency is one of the quickest ways to do it. There's nothing worse than feeling leaders are keeping secrets when it comes to the direction of the company or the way it operates.

In contrast, great company leaders maintain a clear vision and open access to the details that affect their people.

## **5. New challenges.**

It's easy to keep giving the best employees the exact same assignments and tasks, because they're so darn good at them.

The problem is, you risk boring those employees and encouraging stagnation. If you neglect their need to be challenged long enough, they'll look to satisfy it somewhere else.

## **6. Freedom.**

In a model workplace, individuals feel a certain degree of freedom: They're free to explore new ideas, to experiment, and to develop (and adapt) their own working style.

Of course, good team leads maintain interest in their people's work, and offer helpful advice when appropriate. By resisting the urge to micromanage every decision, your people will be more than willing to hear what you have to say.

## **7. Opportunities to grow.**

The best business leaders all share a remarkable skill: the ability to make those around them better.

That's why the best employees don't mind hearing constructive criticism--especially when it's delivered with emotional intelligence.

Additionally, they need options: Not everyone wants to follow the same road, so providing a variety of career paths to follow within the company gives your people the chance to find their way.

## **Parting thoughts.**

I've consulted for various companies throughout the years, and it's amazing how few of them get this right.

Yes, an attractive salary will get talent through the door. But if you want them to stick around, make sure to give them what they naturally crave.