



How Support Systems Contribute to Increased Retention in the Workplace

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Introduction

Employee turnover remains an issue for employers. Employers experience problems attracting and retaining key employees for various reasons. Employer turnover causes problems such as increased costs to the organization and low morale among employees (Li & Fox, 2023; McCartney et al., 2022). Additionally, employee turnover can impact the profitability of the organization. Marquardt et al. (2022) posited that the relationship between the employee and the employer is a determinant of whether the employee leaves the organization or stays. A negative relationship between the employee and employer could lead to an increased employee turnover rate.

Understanding what methods contribute to increased retention is vital to the success of an organization. An area of focus is employee support systems within the workplace. Employers could increase retention in the workplace by embracing support systems. Support systems include employer resource programs, networking, coaching, and mentoring. The purpose of this white paper is to explore support systems that could lead to increased employee retention. Based on the Career Optimism Report for 2023, the following research questions were developed:

1. How do support systems contribute to employee retention?
2. What impact does a mentorship have on the mentor and mentee?

Index Sample

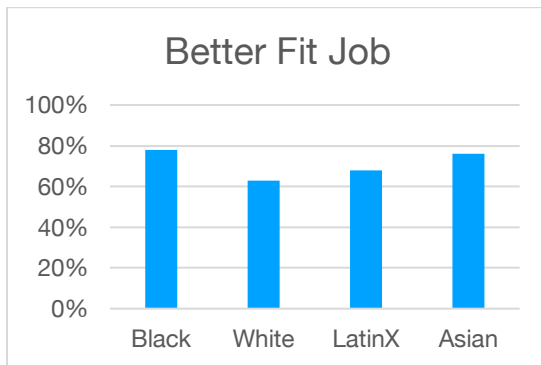
In 2023, University of Phoenix conducted a survey regarding American workers' optimism about their careers. The University of Phoenix Career Institute® 2023 Career Optimism Index® contained insights from employees and employers regarding workplace trends and challenges. The survey contained responses from a total workforce of 5000 adults ages 18 and older. Additionally, 500 employers responded to the survey questions. The sample contains

approximately 300 adults from the top 20 designated market areas (DMAs). The 20 DMAs included: Miami, Phoenix, San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose, New York City, Los Angeles, Washington, Tampa, Denver, Chicago, Houston, Seattle, Orlando, Philadelphia, Boston, Detroit, Cleveland, Dallas, Atlanta, Minneapolis, and Sacramento.

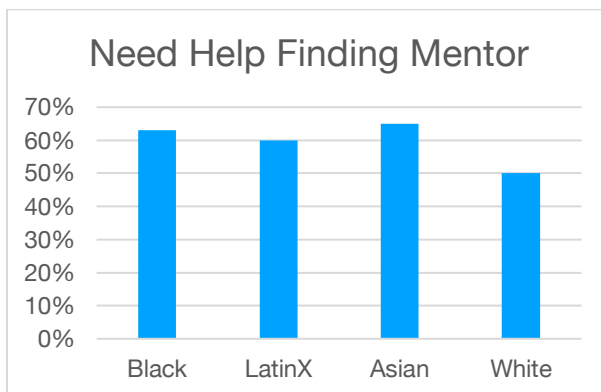
Issues Employees Face

Since the pandemic occurred, employers have experienced a decrease in employee retention. Employees have experienced mental health issues, burnout, and decreased satisfaction with their current employer. Some employees did not want to return to the office after working from home. Additionally, the increased inflation rates have caused many individuals to experience financial insecurity. According to the Career Institute (2023), approximately 59% of employees stated that they are not satisfied with the amount of money they currently make, which is a 34% increase from the previous year.

In addition to burnout and lack of satisfaction with pay, some employees do not believe they are working for the right organization. Around 38% of employees stated they do not have the ability to advance in their careers and 16% stated they do not have access to the required resources (Career Institute, 2023). Approximately 66% of the employees believe there is a better job out there for them. Table A shows the percentage of employees by race who believe there is a better fit job for them. As shown in the table, more Black and Asian workers believe there is a better job out there for them (Career Institute, 2023).

Table A*Better Fit Job for Employees*

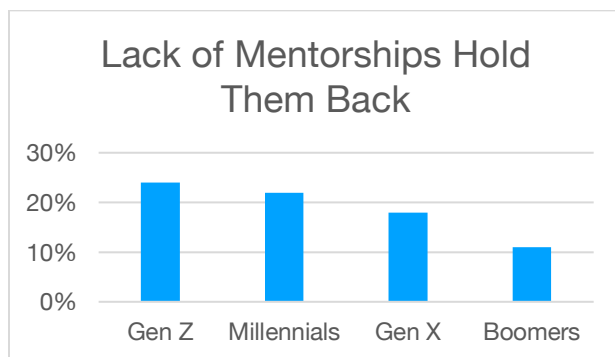
According to the Career Institute (2023), around 40% of employees do not see a clear path for advancing in their career. Approximately 56% of employees do not have a mentor. Of those employees, 68% of the employees without a mentor are baby boomers. Employees may complete a mentorship program if they have help finding a mentor. According to the Career Institute (2023), approximately 54% of the employees surveyed stated that they need help finding a mentor or an advocate. Table B shows the breakdown by ethnic background. According to the results, 63% of Asians and 60% of Blacks stated they need help finding a mentor.

Table B*Percentage of Employees Who Need Help Finding Mentors*

Approximately 80% of employees who have mentors believe they are progressing well and at the right place in their careers; however, only 56% of employees without mentors feel the same way (Career Institute, 2023). The results of the survey also showed that some employees believe that not having mentorships in their careers holds them back from excelling in their fields. Table C contains the breakdown in responses by generation. According to the results, more employees in Generation Z believe that not having mentorships available holds them back from advancing in their careers (Career Institute, 2023).

Table C

Lack of Mentorships Hold Them Back



A disparity exists between employer and employee views on mentorships. According to the Career Institute (2023), approximately 70% of employers stated their organization offers or will offer a mentorship program soon whereas only 43% of employees have that same view. Additionally, 43% of employees stated they do not have a career advocate whereas only 17% of employers stated employees in their organization do not have a career advocate (Career, 2023).

Using Support Systems to Increase Retention

Two support systems used to increase employee retention are coaching and mentorships. Coaching is a type of support system used in some organizations to increase employee retention. A coach provides guidance to an individual on goals and helps them reach their full potential.

Coaching is like mentoring; however, coaching is more nondirective in nature. The coach will pose reflective questions and raise awareness to the individual. The coach will also provide feedback when necessary. A coach will help the employee improve job performance while helping to enhance capabilities for future roles (Koskinen & Anderson, 2023). In some cases, the employee's manager will serve as the coach. As a coach, the manager must provide clear boundaries for the coaching relationship; the coach should easily shift between the role of leader and coach (Dixey, 2015). With a coaching relationship, the manager must take the time to build rapport and gain trust with the employee. Turner and McCarthy (2015) found that mutual trust and respect are crucial for establishing a positive coaching relationship. Managers as coaches should possess certain characteristics: authentic, honest, supportive, and open (Dixey, 2015).

For the coaching relationship to work, the employee should also have certain characteristics. Coachability is a mandatory requirement for coaching relationships. Coachability means that the employee has a growth mindset and is willing to accept advice from the coach. The employee should eagerly accept feedback and work on making changes noted by the coach. Additionally, the employee's age, self-awareness, personality, and learning style play a role in the coaching experience (Dawber, 2019).

The second type of support system used to increase employee retention is mentorships. Kram (1985) defined a mentoring relationship as a dyadic relationship between a more experienced individual (mentor) and a less experienced individual (mentee). The mentor serves as a coach or a role model to the mentee, and helps the mentee navigate through his/her career. Mentorship quality is defined as a measure of a reciprocal exchange, relationship effectiveness, and level of satisfaction between a mentee and the mentor (Allen & Eby, 2003).

Mentors and mentees both gain benefits from a mentorship program. The mentee may feel a sense of satisfaction in the career. According to the Career Institute (2023), approximately 93% of employees with a mentor feel confident about their career and 90% of employees also feel enthusiastic about their careers. Additionally, the mentorship could lead to a promotion which leads to an increase in salaries. The mentor will have a greater impact on the organization and the organization could perceive the mentor as creative and innovative. Mentees and mentors have an interdependent relationship in the mentorship. The mentor can increase interpersonal skills such as active listening, problem-solving, effective communication (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Lankau & Scandura, 2002; Liu et al., 2009).

In a quantitative research study, it was found that a positive correlation exists between coaching and mentoring programs and employee performance (Ramesh, 2015). Additionally, Morena et al. (2018) found that mentoring programs have a positive impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Mittal and Upamannyu (2017) found a negative relationship exist between mentoring and organizational commitment; however, a positive relationship exists between mentoring and organizational performance.

Organizations experience positive results for several reasons. First, organizations benefit from the mentees gaining an increase in human capital. Next, mentees gain more clarity on their career goals and pathways. A positive relationship exists between mentorship and job performance, career success, and job satisfaction (Eby et al., 2008; Ghosh & Reio, 2013; Lentz & Allen, 2009; Liu et al., 2009). Harter et al. (2006) posited mentoring affects the employee's behavior and attitude which impacts engagement contributing to a successful organization. The employee is more engaged in the organization by committing to the work, the organization, and

the profession. Employees can meet their personal goals and the goals of the organization by participating in mentorships (Higgins, 2000; Irving 2003).

Conclusion

Employee retention may remain an issue for employers for several years. Some employees face burnout, experience a decrease in morale, or believe that they do not have the needed support to excel and advance in their careers. Employers can increase employee retention by increasing the support systems available to employees. A coach helps an employee see his/her full potential and provides guidance on how the employee can accomplish goals. A mentor also helps the employee achieve goals but may involve a reciprocal relationship between the mentor and the mentee. The use of coaching and mentoring helps increase employee performance while helping the organization accomplish goals.

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