



University of Phoenix
Workforce Solutions



Engagement: A Prescription for Retention

How Employee Engagement Can
Lead to Retention in Healthcare

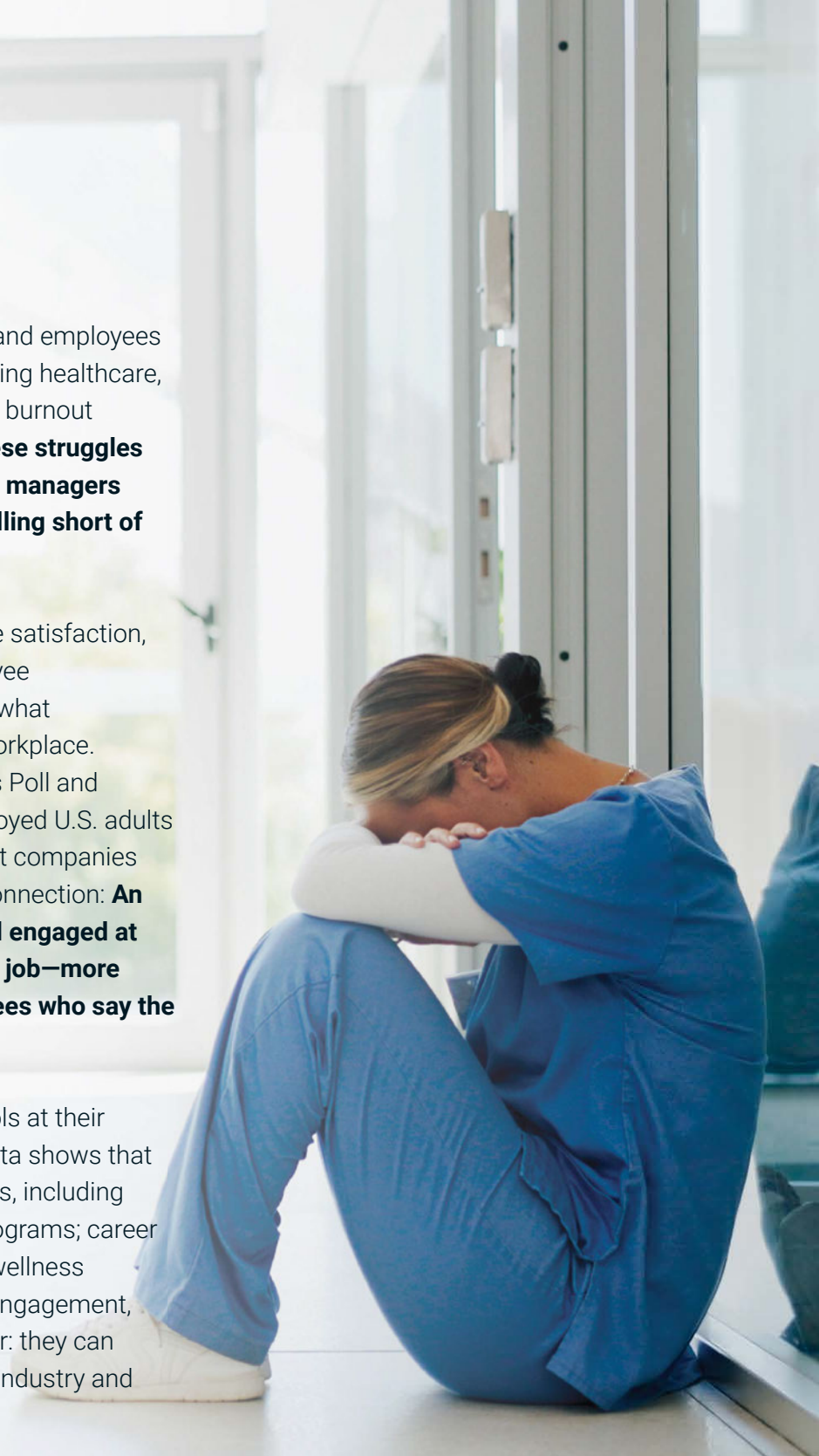
Executive Summary

Turnover continues to frustrate managers and employees alike, taking its toll in every industry—including healthcare, where employees continue to struggle with burnout and difficulty engaging with their work. **These struggles may explain why 68% of Human Resource managers in healthcare grade their companies as falling short of employee retention goals.**

To better understand what drives employee satisfaction, University of Phoenix conducted its Employee Engagement Survey, capturing insights on what employees need to stay satisfied in their workplace. This survey—conducted through The Harris Poll and comprising questions asked of 1,195 employed U.S. adults and 610 U.S. adult HR managers working at companies with 10,000+ employees—revealed a key connection: **An overwhelming 96% of employees who feel engaged at work also report being satisfied with their job—more than triple the 26% of unengaged employees who say the same.**

Fortunately, managers have a variety of tools at their disposal—in fact, University of Phoenix's data shows that employees are open to a variety of solutions, including employee recognition; work-life balance programs; career development and training; and health and wellness programs. In fact, if HR can help increase engagement, they may do more than just reduce turnover: they can contribute to reshaping perceptions of the industry and improving workforce satisfaction.¹

¹Castrillon, Caroline "5 Ways Companies Can Reduce Employee Turnover." Forbes.com, November 24, 2024. Accessed November 15th 2024.



Burnout and Engagement: Healthcare's Double Burden

Across all industries, employees' top reasons for turnover include low pay (31%) and burnout (28%). However, burnout is especially severe in healthcare, with 20% of HR managers listing it as a top reason for turnover—double the rate seen by finance (8%) and manufacturing (10%).

The emphasis on burnout in healthcare mirrors another important distinction among HR managers: 20% of HR managers in healthcare cite decreased turnover as a top-three outcome of increased employee engagement, significantly higher than their counterparts in other industries.

Fortunately, **more than half of HR managers in healthcare (52%) predict their companies' prioritization of employee engagement and retention will be a top priority in the next 12 months—and perhaps most importantly, 45% of these managers will institute new strategies to increase employee engagement and retention.**

This focus reflects an overwhelming consensus: **97% of HR managers—including 97% of those in healthcare—believe an employee engagement strategy is important to their organization's success.**

The challenge now lies in how these strategies are implemented and whether HR can embrace innovative, nontraditional solutions to meet employee needs.



97%

of healthcare HR managers believe
an employee engagement strategy is
important to their organization's success.

Upskilling and Career Pathways in Healthcare

While healthcare leaders are committed to improving engagement there are some solutions being overlooked. Just 38% of HR managers in healthcare offer training/career development opportunities as part of their engagement strategy, and even fewer (29%) offer upskilling opportunities or resources. This is despite the fact that 22% of employees in all industries cite a lack advancement opportunities as a top reason for turnover.

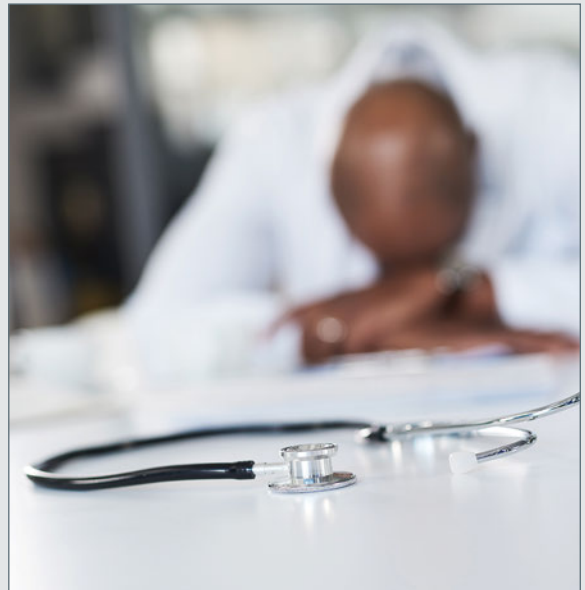
Upskilling presents a promising opportunity for the industry to engage healthcare professionals and equip them with the clinical and technical skills needed to adapt. Nearly half of healthcare HR managers (49%) cite a lack of skilled employees as a barrier to achieving business goals, and 47% recognize the growing importance of emerging technologies.

Addressing these gaps through training programs can boost employee confidence, satisfaction, and retention.

Spotlight: Preventing Burnout

Burnout continues to challenge HR managers—including healthcare, where **41% of HR managers cite poor work-life balance as a top reason for employee turnover.**

Perhaps as a result, employees are asking for management to provide solutions: **38% believe work-life balance programs would be one of the most beneficial employee retention strategies** their company could implement, and 34% value health and wellness initiatives.



In fact, HR managers see these as more than just potential solutions: They are part of their basic responsibilities as employers.

According to HR Managers in Healthcare:

64%

recognize employees expect their company to support learning and career development through **UPSKILLING**.

41%

recognize employees expect their company to support learning and career development through **RESKILLING**.

37%

of employers are expected to provide tuition assistance and reimbursement.

In an industry where skills and talent are hard to come by—and in turn, deeply valuable—employees and employers alike understand that continuing to learn and bring new skills into the workplace is the only way to ensure the healthcare industry can engage and retain the skilled workers it needs.

Indeed, **95% of HR managers in healthcare agree that continuous learning and development programs** are critical for employee engagement—marking this as a key investment in their industry's future.

The Future: How Engagement Can Enhance Hiring and Productivity

Employers' emphasis on continual skills development can mean more engagement—which in turn can mean major gains in the workplace. Among HR managers in healthcare, the top three outcomes when employees are engaged at work include:

54%

higher quality of work

44%

higher job satisfaction

36%

higher levels of
innovation and creativity

Managers also point to improved productivity (35%) and increased productivity (31%) as additional benefits.

Spotlight: Embracing Diversity in All

Diversity encompasses not only cultural and ethnic diversity, but also career diversity, including varied professional backgrounds and roles. Among employees, 14% cite a lack of diversity as a top reason for employee turnover at their company, including 21% of those ages 18 to 34. Yet, only 26% of HR managers in healthcare currently offer employee resource groups (ERGs) or affinity groups—despite 91% of all HR managers who do offer these groups rate them as effective.

By embracing personalized strategies and inclusive initiatives, healthcare HR leaders can foster engagement across diverse employee groups. Among employees, **79% agree that personalized retention strategies are essential for keeping diverse teams engaged**, making this a critical area for investment.



Improved engagement also means an easier time hiring. **More than 4 in 5 employees (84%) agree that having a strong engagement or retention strategy is crucial** for future applicants seeking a new workplace—pointing to a strong draw for candidates who may be eyeing a job opening in healthcare, or any other industry. Employees are even singling out strategies they see as particularly effective: 44% cite employee recognition as a retention strategy that would most benefit employees at their company—the most of all programs cited.

Given how much employees emphasize being seen as individuals with unique needs, the appeal of these recognition programs becomes eminently clear: it recognizes not just an employee's talents and contributions, but the individual who provides them. Recognition programs might be seen as a culmination of engagement, an end result of other programs and efforts coming together—but HR managers might reimagine these programs as crucial first steps in reinventing their engagement approaches.¹

Conclusion

As HR managers consider how to close the skills gap in their workforce, every positive outcome—from retention to upskilling to hiring to productivity—is downstream of engagement, highlighting that it not just a metric for success: it is potentially one of the most important ways a company can future-proof itself and find the best possible talent for every position. Healthcare offers not just a unique insight into the importance of engagement, but a crucial opportunity for redefining how businesses promote engagement with their staff.

Doing so offers more than just means to overcome barriers. As HR managers emphasize engagement and its importance for every business outcome, it becomes a powerful tool—and crucial opportunity—to reinvent how employers and employees alike benefit from a workplace that recognizes how employee engagement can build bridges between colleagues, and between the present age and the next era of healthcare and every industry.

¹Castrillon, Caroline "5 Ways Companies Can Reduce Employee Turnover." Forbes.com, November 24, 2024. Accessed November 15th 2024.

About the Research

The HR manager survey was conducted online in the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of University of Phoenix among 610 US adults aged 25+ who are employed full-time at an organization with 10,000+ employees, has a title of manager/supervisor or higher, has a job function in human resources or learning and development, and works in one of the following industries: Financial Services, Health Care, or Manufacturing. Data are weighted where necessary by employee-size categories within industry to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

The employee survey was conducted online within the United States between September 17-19, 2024, among 1,195 employees (adults aged 18+ who are employed full-time or part-time). Data were weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, household income, and political party affiliation, to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in The Harris Poll surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For these studies, the sample data is accurate to within ± 4.1 percentage points for the HR managers and ± 2.5 percentage points for the employees using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

About University of Phoenix Workforce Solutions

University of Phoenix Workforce Solutions helps organizations address critical skills gaps, engage workforces, and support talent agility. Workforce Solutions provides adaptable skills solutions, including shared education savings, to enable continuous skill building and a Professional Development Skills Center to help motivate and engage employees. Backed by decades of experience in online adult learning, Workforce Solutions leverages adaptable skills solutions to help unleash the full skills potential of an organization to meet the demands of the changing workplace. This includes support and services to build a skills-centric foundation and support employee success.

Learn more at phoenix.edu/workforce-solutions.



University of Phoenix
Workforce Solutions

phoenix.edu/workforce-solutions