

HOW TO RETAIN EMPLOYEES



Finding great employees is the key to your organisation's success. Your recruitment strategy should focus not just on how to find great employees, but also how to keep them. Here are some ways your organisation can improve employee satisfaction, reduce turnover, and help create a more resilient care and support workforce.

INVEST IN YOUR ONBOARDING

Starting a new job can be daunting. The support that new employees receive can make a big difference, with the first four to twelve weeks being particularly critical. This may be especially so for people who have switched careers or are reentering the workforce.

Keep this in mind when designing your induction program or onboarding process, and provide as much clarity and direction as possible at this time.

Care and support work can be highly varied, and it's important to set expectations early on. Consider implementing a mentor or buddy system where new employees are paired with existing staff and have the opportunity to shadow them as they work with clients. This will help them understand the environment and what the role looks like on a day-to-day basis.

If you're looking to improve the way you onboard new employees, your current staff are your best source of information. Check in with individual team members as they settle in and ask them to reflect on their onboarding experience. Did they have the support they needed? Did they have a clear understanding of their role? What did they find helpful or unhelpful? Their feedback will help you to optimise your onboarding process for future employees.

INVEST IN YOUR EMPLOYEES

One of the most common reasons people leave jobs is because of a lack of investment in their professional growth and development. Employees need to feel valued and supported. Recognition through staff awards, social events and other small gestures can all contribute to an employee's sense of satisfaction and belonging within their workplace.

Any organisation that is focused on retention should make training and development a priority. Ensure you have a budget in place for training and communicate with team members on what their development will look like over the next year. You can also promote opportunities for professional development across the sector through internal communications, such as staff newsletters.

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There are a number of formal and informal training resources available for care and support workers. Informal training includes on-the-job training, peer-to-peer coaching and self-study, for example researching and reading articles. Formal training is available from a range of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) across Australia, such as JobTrainer, and there are also government programs that can provide further assistance. Learn more about training resources for care and support workers on the Boosting the Local Care Workforce (BLCW) Program website.

OPTIMISE YOUR WORKFORCE

An optimisation strategy is a helpful tool that organisations can use to effectively support and retain their employees.

This is essentially a plan that outlines how an organisation will grow, improve and achieve success. A key aspect of workforce optimisation is how leaders and managers plan to support their staff. In this regard, the strategy can cover everything from training and development opportunities to culture initiatives and other workplace benefits.

Optimisation strategies are most effective at engaging and retaining staff when they are underpinned by Individual Development Plans (IDPs). An IDP should map out each employee's role, responsibilities and objectives, and outline how the organisation will support them in working towards their career goals.

An optimisation strategy can also speak to alternative methods of attracting and retaining staff. For example, traineeships are a great way for care and support employers to provide workers with on-the-job training as well as a formal education. Offering flexible working arrangements, in the form of different working hours or the option to pursue casual or permanent positions, is another way the care and support sector can retain talent and optimise its workforce.

CREATE A GREAT WORKPLACE CULTURE

To help retain staff, leaders and managers must be genuinely invested in their staff and proactively work to shape a positive culture. The markers of great leadership are openness, transparency and availability. Have honest conversations with your employees on an ongoing basis. Support your staff in setting actionable goals and ensure you have systems in place to track their progress.

Work together to identify relevant training or development opportunities that align with their career aspirations. If your organisation is looking to improve culture and retention, start by seeking feedback from your existing employees. Staff surveys are a valuable tool for collecting information that will help you to understand what you're doing well, areas you need to work on, and new opportunities. Ask open-ended questions and encourage your staff to share their honest thoughts.

For additional support in attracting and retaining employees, including tools and resources for employers in the care and support sector, visit careandsupportjobs.gov.au/employers



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