

Retail: How to Keep Employees in a High Turnover Industry

10 Tips to Get You Started Today



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The Facts - Why You Should Care

Employees leave and employees come, right? Sure, but that's a very expensive mindset. In many ways. It's both about the time and money you spend onboarding and getting a new hire up to speed, but if the employee leaves in anger or sadness due to maybe a poor work culture, then you also gain an employer branding issue. Meaning, that you might have to spend even more time attracting yet another hire, because people will not work for a company with a bad reputation.

These are just some of the reasons why you should care about keeping your employees: Money and reputation. Of course, there is a lot more to it. It's also about doing the right thing and taking good care of your employees, which will be rewarding in many ways. But before we dig into the tips that can make you that great employer your employees will not leave, then let's take a look at some of the facts and stats about the retail industry, that are good to have in mind, when improving your retaining strategy:

- The average turnover rate in the Retail industry in the US is 60% ([National Retail Federation](#))
- This high rate is costly. 230 million days in lost productivity and astonishing \$19 billion in costs like hiring and training ([Human Resources Today](#)).
- The retail industry is expected to grow, and it's estimated that global retail sales will bring in **\$26.7 trillion in 2022**. So, it's important to retain the talent to keep growing as a company too.



TIP 1:

Suit the Role to the Right Person

First up is the hiring process. It might seem like common sense that you of course should hire the right person for the job. But sometimes time pressure can get in the way of just that, and then common sense get right out of the window. So, breathe, and be sure the check up on: Does the candidate seem eager to start? Have the right social skills and track record from similar jobs? And good references?

Be sure to check all the boxes before hiring someone right away. If you hire the wrong candidate, who's not really into the retail industry, but just needs a job, then you will probably soon look at either low performance or a resignation from that just-hired person. And then you can start over once again.



TIP 2:

The Great Pre – and Onboarding

Having a first day where you don't know what to do, where to be, and who to meet is not fun for anyone. That's why a proper preboarding and onboarding process must be in order, when you have hired a new employee.

- Be sure to have everything planned and organized. Send out information about where to be at what time, and who to meet. If your employee needs a uniform, it can also be a good idea to have a fitting before the first day, so, the right uniform is ready, when the employee starts. Remember to check in with the calendar as well, maybe you have something coming up where you and the rest of the organization have to work in a higher pace, for example, due to an upcoming Christmas shopping season.
- Remember to send a digital **preboarding** no later than 2 weeks before the first day of the new employee. A digital preboarding taps into the excitement a new hire has about starting in a new

role, and it's a good idea to include: an introduction to company history, values, and mission. But also, a fun video with introductions to the team members to drum up that excited feeling.

- Training is essential before jumping straight to the tasks. A mix of a digital introduction to the tasks and practical training on the floor is great practice during the onboarding process and boosts time to performance.

See the full list of tips for the onboarding process in the retail industry in **the onboarding guide**.



Do you want to gain more inspiration on the onboarding process? See how 7-Eleven onboard their new hires right here.



TIP 3: Training Fit for the Audience

Yes, we have already mentioned the necessary training in the onboarding phase. But it is, of course, important to continuously train and develop your employees in your retail company to keep them up to date with, for example, new products, new processes & strategies, and compliance stuff like **GDPR**. Furthermore, it is a good idea to invest in customer service training like **conflict management** – and **sales training** to both give a kick to the employee engagement because of some effective training that gives them new skills they can use, but also because it can create a greater revenue for the overall business.



Learn how McDonald's got their own learning universe where the employees, for example, fight bacteria in a digital setting and learn about proper hygiene and stopping food contamination at the same time.



Here's a big BUT. You need to make engaging training that the employees will actually complete. We don't need that 'Aw-just-another-boring-training-module-we-need-to-get-through'-mindset. Think about your audience. What type of learning and training do they prefer? Would it be a possibility to play along with more gamification and interactive learning? These types of learning content keep the employees on their toes. They cannot just click their way through the content without engaging. And it is more fun too. Especially, if you use adaptive, gamified learning, where the content is suited for the one learner, where they can pick their own character and find their own way through the learning content. Without skipping essential knowledge.

Investing in more learning and development in any industry is generally a good idea, if you want to keep your employees longer. 94 % of all employees say they would stay with an employer longer, if they had invested in their learning and development, according to LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report.

TIP 4: Rewards & Recognition



Nobody likes to be criticized all the time. They also want recognition and rewards for their hard work. In the retail industry it's no exception. In fact, recognition is often more wanted than wellness benefits, for example. The job can also be rewarding, when you sent off a smiling customer, who has experienced a great service. But customers can also be not so thankful, and that's why it's important that the manager to the employees is thankful instead – and shows it. It's about the simple steps like just saying: "I recognize that you give a great customer service. That's really appreciated." Or "Thanks for staying 10 more minutes".

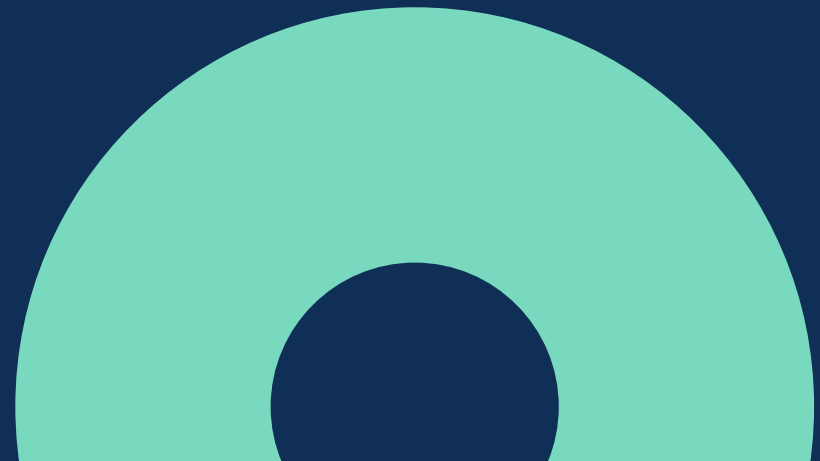
You can also set up goals to achieve, for example, generating more sales on specific items, and reward the employees doing the best with monetary bonuses or other prizes like gift certificates or the like. You probably also know about the concept: "Employee of the Month". There's a reason to that. That's also about recognizing the most valued employees. And they will recognize it in return by staying with your company longer.

TIP 5:

Visible Career Paths – Internal Mobility & Growth

These days we talk a lot about **reskilling** and lateral career movement. Both because these can be blockers to **the great resignation**, but also, because they can be essential to prevent people from losing their jobs to **automation**. The concepts are about moving into another role and trying out something different. This, of course, needs new skills. And when you earn new skills to take on a new role internally, it's called reskilling.

In the retail industry, if you make the internal career paths visible for everyone to know in what role you can advance into another role, or maybe do a jump into another department – it creates a motivation to stay. Managers should be aware of the wants of their employees (more about that in tip 8) and recognize the skills of an employee that also could be appreciated in another role or department. This is a friendly reminder of tip 4 (rewards & recognition), because this is yet another way of showing appreciation and rewarding an employee, with the career acceleration they want.



TIP 6: More Flexible Scheduling

Work-life balance. That's something we all want to have just right. That's the same for employees working in the retail industry. However, that can sometimes be tough, when shops, for example, have specific opening hours that must be covered. But that doesn't mean that it's impossible to find the right work-life balance, that will make retail employees more likely to stay at your company.

If you make it easy for the employees to change shifts with their co-workers with for example a workforce management platform like **Planday**, **SameSystem**, **Tamigo**, and **Quinyx**, then it's also easier for them to find their own way to their individual work-life balance. When you hire a new employee, you should also be responsive to their preferred working hours. Maybe someone wants to work the classic 9 to 5 schedule, but someone else might prefer working evenings or weekends. Make it as flexible as possible and make the right compromise to keep your employees happy without having too many open shifts that are hard to get covered.





TIP 7:

Social Time and a Healthy Workplace

It's nice to get along with your co-workers when you are at the job. Telling a little story, smiling, and laughing at an internal joke. But it's also nice to spend time with your co-workers outside of work, having a nice meal together or doing teambuilding activities, that make your team perform better together - even at work too. Examples of social time and teambuilding activities can be:

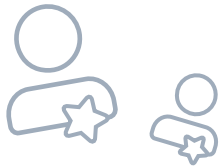
- **Quizzes and Kahoots w. prizes**
- **A cocktail course**
- **Escape Room**
- **Yoga class**
- **Running Club**
- **Boardgame Night**
- **Silent Disco**
- **Book Club**

Some of these activities are sportier as well, because it's also a good idea to show the employees that there's a positive attitude towards

healthy activities like exercise to keep employees healthy and happy too. Remember, in retail it's not only about setting up sports clubs for your employees to join to stay healthy. You should also invest in the right footwear, if they stand up a lot to prevent injuries. This also goes if they are in a work environment with temperature shifts. Here, they also need warm clothes, so they won't as easy catch colds. Keep your employees safe and healthy.

However, if we move back to the social time, it can sometimes be hard to schedule in the retail industry due to long opening hours for the company. This does not mean that you should not be eager to do it, when you see the right time that could fit departments or the entire organization. Or you can also plan to shut down the business for one day to give your employees a great experience that will elevate the mood a spirit. It might sound expensive, but it can be even more expensive to not do it, if your employees need that social break, that might make them stay with you longer.

Furthermore, it's a good idea to create a fun space where the employees can have their breaks. Have boardgames on the shelves, a gaming console, or the like, so the employees can interact with each other during their breaks – also with people from other departments – to create greater connections across the company.



TIP 8: Managers with the Right Mindsets

We have already touched upon it a bit. But managers are key to retain employees in the retail industry. Rewards and recognitions are important, but in this tip, we will also talk about manager mindsets.

A popular term these years is ‘stay-conversations’. These are important conversations for the managers to have with all their employees to get the knowledge about what does it take to make the employees stay with you. It can be something like the tips we have already mentioned: flexible scheduling, more social time, getting more learning and development to grow into another role or to be better at the current one, or it can be a completely different thing.

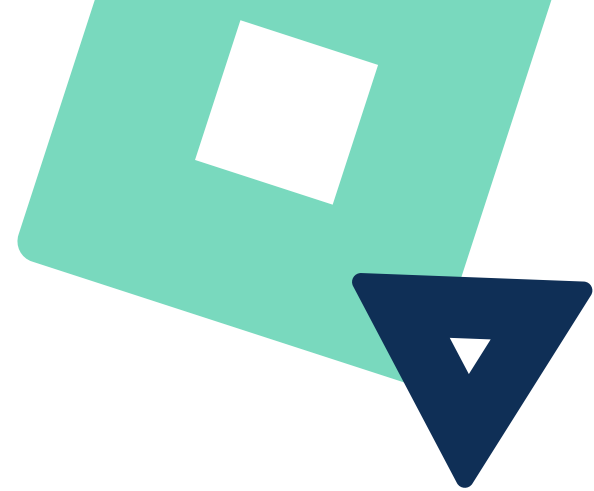
Managers must have a curious mindset and ask simple questions about **employees’ wellbeing** and their wants and needs. And then managers should listen and take action.

TIP 9: **Give Employees Influence and Inspire Innovation**

It's not like you should shut down your department of research and development. But giving employees more influence and the possibility to spark new life into processes or new actions will definitely give a little innovation boost both to the company and the employees themselves. It is meaningful for the employees to be part of the development of the company. And that's why it also will give them greater motivation to stay. In general, meaningful work is about a person's feelings towards their work as being worth their time, effort, and commitment. If you create that meaningfulness for the individual employee, then why wouldn't they stay?

Here, we come back to the managers, because this is also a simple question, they can ask their employees ongoingly: "What is meaningful for you at work?" It can be, like we just mentioned, being part of the

innovative process and being an integral part of the entire company, but it can also be something completely different. It can be giving customers a great experience with a lovely service, or it can be being part of charity work that relates to the company. Maybe if your company is in the food and beverage part of the retail industry, it could be donating leftovers to homeless people, where just that employee is part of that process. Something where you contribute to a better world in a smaller, but still important, scale.



TIP 10: Offboarding

Goodbye and maybe see you later? There's nothing like a proper farewell, if your employee plans to leave your company. In this process, it is important, that you learn why they quit and improve. You need to make a proper offboarding. This is often a step in the **employee journey** that people do not consider as much. Because, well, now the employee has decided to leave, then why spend more time and resources on this person? And that is a shame, because an off offboarding (no pun intended) can have devastating consequences for your company's reputation.

Remember, rumours spread fast. And if an employee has had a bad experience with your company, it can prevent others from applying, when you have open positions. And then you lose the opportunity to get the right talent on board. So, first of all, when an employee leaves, you need to send them off well. Have a gathering of people in the company close to the employee, where you maybe eat cake or something different that the specific employee would like.

You will also need to do a proper evaluation with the employee about, why they chose to leave. You can do it face-to-face, but also digitally, maybe in your **learning platform**, if it has an easy evaluation feature you can use. The evaluation is key for you as an employer to improve yourself going forward and prevent future resignations.

Furthermore, it is a good idea to create an alumni network for employees who leave. Because who knows? Maybe one day a relevant position in your company comes up, and an employee return to you once again. Now, richer with experiences and ideas that can benefit your company too.

Read more about the **great offboarding in this free ebook**.

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