

# HR Insights

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## Attraction and Retention Challenges Amid COVID-19

Attracting and retaining talent is often a top priority for HR departments. Given the effect the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the job market, one might imagine this task is easier than ever. Unfortunately, that's far from the truth.

While there may be more candidates than usual, attracting quality talent and retaining top performers still remains a struggle, worsened by COVID-19 and its effects on the workplace.

This article shares some tips for attracting and retaining workers amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Expand Hiring Pools

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how quickly teams can adapt, with some workplaces shifting entirely to telework. After months of remote-working success, many workplaces have said they will allow telework permanently even after the pandemic subsides. That's because of the numerous advantages of remote work.

For one, these individuals won't take up office space, saving room for others who need it. Additionally, this flexibility allows recruiters to expand hiring pools to anywhere with an internet connection. This can be a great benefit for employers that haven't had luck finding quality talent near them.

### Adapt the Workplace Layout

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, many workers are concerned about their health and well-being while at work. By addressing these concerns, employers can

bring peace of mind to employees and, in turn, attract workers who may have held reservations about their safety.

Employers can do this by adapting their workplaces to focus on worker health. This includes mandating social distancing, moving desks around, holding virtual meetings exclusively, allowing flex scheduling and offering telecommuting. At the end of the day, workplaces that demonstrate concern for employees will be the ones where individuals actually want to work. Conversely, if employees are forced to choose between their safety and their jobs, employers shouldn't expect good retention.

### Provide Meaningful Benefits

The pandemic has affected everyone in significant, yet unique, ways. While all employees may be struggling in some way, their situations aren't the same. Employers can help lift up their workers by offering meaningful employee benefits.

Robust health care offerings may seem like an obvious one-size-fits-all solution, but sometimes voluntary benefits are actually what employees need. These include caregiving assistance, financial counseling, increased paid time off and other nontraditional perks. There are many low-cost options available and, better yet, employees can choose their benefits a la carte to meet their individual needs.



## Support Well-being

Employees are going through a lot right now, and many are suffering from poor mental health. This includes feeling depressed, lonely, anxious or any other negative emotion—feelings that may be compounded if employees are working in isolation. And the fact that employees are holding onto negative feelings isn't terribly surprising, given the devastating impacts of COVID-19.

Now is the time for employers to show employees and potential recruits that they're willing to invest in their well-being. Potential options include comprehensive employee assistance programs, one-on-one counseling, therapy sessions and stress-reducing activities. Solutions don't need to break the bank, either. Something as small as a weekly outdoor activity, virtual chitchat meeting or group excursion could be enough to lift employees out of their funk.

## Look Internally for Talent

If an employer is struggling to fill an important role with an outside candidate, it could be that they're looking in the wrong place. Many organizations are now focusing on upskilling current employees and retraining them for more important positions. This can be significant for a few reasons.

Firstly, outside candidates would need to be trained anyway, so upskilling a current employee wouldn't be any more burdensome. Since they're already familiar with the workplace and its operations, it may even be easier.

Secondly, many recruiting teams are expecting big slashes to their budgets in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, shuffling around current employees could help save the bottom line.

Thirdly, promoting employees from within the organization shows that an employer is willing to invest in their career growth. This sentiment can go a long way in retaining top talent.

## Conclusion

There are many creative ways employers can attract and retain quality workers. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, even small gestures can go a long way to distinguish an organization from others in its industry.

Reach out today to learn more about these and other workplace strategies.