

How-To Tell When an Employee Is About to Leave



Employees at every level are the backbone of any successful company or organization. Without quality people on your team productivity suffers, profits go down and the morale of everyone involved can sink to dangerously low levels. In a day and age where everyone is always on the lookout for a better opportunity and loyalty isn't what it used to be, employee turnover is a real concern. Not only are your best employees a tremendous asset, losing them and onboarding someone new can be prohibitively expensive. That's why now more than ever it's important to recognize the signs when a valuable employee is about leave.

Less Active in Meetings

Employees that are engaged are quick to share ideas and ask questions. If you notice that someone continuously shows up to meetings just to go through the mandatory motions, it might be a sign that they are less engaged and on their way out. Even if there is just something going on at home or with a family member, you should take note of this withdrawn behavior and at the very least ask if there is anything you can do to help.

Increased Absences

When a particular employee first started maybe they never called in sick or took extra time off. Now, all of sudden they either consistently show up late and leave early or simply don't show up at all. This is a red flag that you need to address right away as it's a clear sign that something is going on you aren't aware of.

No Longer Willing to Commit to Long-Term Projects

If you notice an employee is no longer willing to commit to long-term goals or assignments, it's likely a sign that they want to finish what work they have left and jump ship. It might even be the case that these types of assignments interfere with the start date of a new job. In this case, there might not be much you can do.

Starts Taking More Personal Calls

If you notice someone frequently excusing themselves from meetings or stepping into the hall to take personal calls something is definitely off. They could be dealing with a family emergency or talking with a prospective employer. While you can't make any assumptions, it's a good idea to check in with this person to make sure everything is alright.

Didn't Receive the Raise or Promotion They Were Expecting

When someone expects to move up in a company and it doesn't happen, it's only natural for them to become less enthused with the work they do day in and day out. At this point, there's a high likelihood that they might begin looking for employment elsewhere. If you value this employee enough to keep them around, you'll probably have to provide some incentive for them to stay.

Major Life Event

Major life events like getting married, a sick family member, giving birth or a spouse finding a new job can change someone's reality in a heartbeat. When these sorts of events happen, they may change how an individual feels about their current employment situation. In some cases, there might be not much you can do but if the person is a critical asset you might want to make them an offer they can't refuse. It's up to you to make that call.

Friends Are Leaving

If someone has been at a company for any length of time, they have likely bonded with their colleagues and become friends. Not only do these people enjoy working together, they might even share hobbies outside of the office. If someone experiences a mass exodus of their friends leaving, they might be more inclined to leave too. In some cases, if an employee leaves, they may even recruit their colleagues to follow suit.

Difficult Relationships With Other Employees

Numerous studies have proven that happiness is more important in the workplace than salary. A major key to happiness is an individual's relationship with others. If friction exists between even just two employees, especially employees that work closely together, it may prove too much for them to take and they might quit. In order to prevent this from happening it's a good idea to regularly check in with everyone on your team to make sure everything is on the up-and-up.

You Just Know

As someone in a position of [leadership](#), you've had to develop the skills of reading people and trusting your intuition. From time to time you might get the sneaking suspicion that all is not well with a certain employee. The majority of the time you're probably right. When this happens, you're best to address the situation upfront instead of waiting and continuing to wonder. By being proactive you place yourself in a position to address whatever the problem may be and your chances of retaining the employee are much greater.

It's unfortunate that days of loyal relationships between employees and the organizations they work for have largely diminished, but such is the reality in which we live. While this is a two-way street, employees are always going to look out for themselves first and foremost. If you want to lessen the amount of turnover you experience and save yourself the headache and cost of constantly having to hire new people, take note of some of the signs above. By doing so, you'll quickly find that your employees see you in a favorable light and will have

much less of an incentive to look for work elsewhere.

If you are at the point of needing to hire a new employee or looking for a new job, contact me, Jeff King, for [recruiting in the Bay Area](#). I work with the [pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device industries](#).