



**Notes Template for Moderators - 2018 Business Round Tables**  
**Committing to Continuous Improvement**  
**Nashville, Tennessee; Friday, November 2, 2018, 3:20 to 4:45 PM**

Table No. (1 to 13):   7   Topic: Employee Retention and Satisfaction

Moderators: Tom Blackburn and Mark Gray

Number of participants at 1st session:  15  Number of participants at 2nd session:  11 

Insert an abstract of the topic here.

Our round table will explore what it takes to retain employees. Our profession is in an all-out “talent war” with other private firms and public entities. Our ability to retain key employees is vital to our success. We know that every successful firm is unique, with a “special sauce” that we must package and sell to employees and clients. We will explore what our participating firms’ “special sauce” might be, and how to highlight it so employees are excited to work for us.

Briefly summarize the ten things from the discussion that were of most interest. This might include points discussed, concerns expressed, lessons learned, advice given, solutions offered, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic. Expand the boxes as needed.

1	A common message among our table attendees was to get staff involved and feel like they are part of a work family. Senior management should get to know junior staff. Young or new staff like feeling like they are recognized.
2	Most common time to lose staff seemed to be consistently between 3 and 7 years of employment, even within firms that implemented at least some of the ideas presented during each session. Conclusion – no singular magic sauce!
3	So why do they leave? Most commonly is the don’t like immediate supervisor. Some simply lose interest in the industry. During strong economic times some will leave for the carrot that is offered. Others leave because a path for their growth and advancement was not defined.
4	Social activities were a frequent suggestion, such as company provided lunch via food truck periodically, gym memberships, in-house recreation such as ping pong, pool, etc..., flex-time, home office and spot bonuses.
5	Offering in-house training, supporting pursuit of various certifications, licenses, etc..., reimbursement of tuition for graduate or undergraduate course work.
6	A unique example provided by one attendee referenced a program they established called “ask me anything”. The event is a 1-hour video call where either CEO, CTO, COO, CFO answer questions posed by employees on the spot. Has been robustly accepted by employees.

7	Have employees participate in training – not just receive training. Suggestions included having new or young staff prepare a group training session for their coworkers. Another example was a firm that rotates training responsibilities between offices to keep all involved.
8	Firm sizes represented at the sessions included 5 with 50 or fewer employees, 6 between 50 and 300, 3 between 300 and 1,000 and 2 with more than 1,000. Not all attendees provided employee numbers.
9	Improved benefits. Hired, or improved HR staff that resulted in increased communication and better benefits packages.
10	Suggestions were made that senior staff can do better job of setting better examples. Don't speak negatively about the company. Invert management style – bottom up vs top down. Adopt "How can I help?" attitude.

Summarize the three most important items from the discussion that should be shared with GBA members:

1	Communication and allowing employees to become engaged and involved was a consistent thread. Social activities were commonly used to generate these comfort areas for staff.
2	There is no secret sauce. You just have to be willing to try something different. If results are not what you hoped for, try something else, but don't go back to something you already know wasn't working.
3	Show employees a path – not everyone wants to be a leader or an owner, so talk to them to find out what they want and help them plan how to get there. Be sure to circle back and track the progress, as well as adjust the path as needed.