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# LABOUR NEWS

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## EMPLOYEE RETENTION

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# HOW TO RETAIN GREAT EMPLOYEES:

## THE POWER OF THE LION SHEET AND UNDERSTANDING YOUR A, B AND C PLAYERS



### *DID YOU KNOW?*

Did you know that money is not the number one reason employees stay with a company?

While fair pay remains important, research consistently shows that employees are more likely to remain with an organisation when they feel valued, respected, supported, and heard by their leaders and colleagues. Recognition, meaningful work, positive workplace relationships, and supportive leadership often have a greater impact on retention than salary alone.

Creating a positive workplace culture does not happen overnight. It is built through daily interactions, strong leadership, open communication, and genuine appreciation for the people who help drive the business forward.

This month, we focus on practical ways leaders and teams can strengthen employee relationships and improve retention.

# THE GOLDEN RULE OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION

**"EMPLOYEES MAY FORGET WHAT YOU SAID, BUT THEY WILL NEVER FORGET HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL."**

People stay where they feel respected, appreciated, and supported. While salary and benefits matter, workplace culture and leadership often play the biggest role in whether employees remain committed to an organisation.

The company's goals and vision should be clear, and leaders should focus on understanding the different types of employees within their teams.

By identifying your A, B and C players, you can better support, develop, and retain valuable employees.



## RETENTION STARTS WITH:

- TRUST
- COMMUNICATION
- RECOGNITION
- FAIRNESS
- GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES
- EMPATHY



## UNDERSTANDING YOUR A, B AND C PLAYERS

One of the most effective ways to improve employee retention is to understand the different types of employees within your team and manage them accordingly.

Not every employee contributes in the same way, and not every employee requires the same level of support. Successful leaders focus on retaining A Players, developing B Players, and helping C Players improve through coaching and accountability.

### THE A, B, C, D PLAYER FRAMEWORK (VISUAL/MATRIX)

This framework categorizes employees based on the inseparable nature of what (KPIs) and how (CABs)

| Player Type                                 | Performance (What/KPIs)  | Behaviour (How/CABs)                                            | Alignment Status                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A-Player</b>                             | High Results             | High Alignment/Modeling CABs                                    | Fully Aligned: Rewards and promotion should target A-Players.                                         |
| <b>B-Player</b>                             | Solid Results            | Consistent Alignment/Modeling CABs                              | Strong Contributor: Needs development to reach A-Player status.                                       |
| <b>C-Player</b>                             | Low/Inconsistent Results | Solid Alignment/Modeling CABs                                   | Underperformer: Needs coaching and Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) focusing on skills/results.     |
| <b>D-Player (The "Brilliant Jerk" Trap)</b> | High Results/Performance | <b>Low/Corrosive Behaviour</b> (Actively violates CABs/Culture) | <b>Misaligned Risk:</b> Must be addressed because tolerating this behaviour defines the true culture. |

## ★ A PLAYERS (TOP PERFORMERS):

A Players consistently exceed expectations, take initiative, and drive improvement.

**Focus:** Retain, recognise, challenge, and reward them. These employees often have opportunities elsewhere, so it is important to keep them engaged and appreciated.

## 🔧 B PLAYERS (STEADY CONTRIBUTORS):

B Players are dependable team members who form the backbone of the business. They consistently deliver and contribute to team stability.

**Focus:** Develop, mentor, and encourage growth. With the right support, many B Players can become future A Players.

## 📉 C PLAYERS (UNDERPERFORMERS):

C Players struggle to consistently meet expectations and often require additional support and guidance.

**Focus:** Coach, set clear expectations, provide feedback, and address performance concerns early.

## RETENTION DO'S & RETENTION DON'TS:

### DO'S

#### **DO COMMUNICATE OPENLY**

Regular communication builds trust and keeps employees informed, engaged, and connected.

#### **DO RECOGNISE EFFORT**

Employees who feel appreciated are more motivated and committed to their work.

#### **DO INVEST IN EMPLOYEE GROWTH**

Training, mentorship, and development opportunities show employees that the company is invested in their future.

#### **DO CREATE A POSITIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE**

Respect, teamwork, and inclusion encourage stronger relationships and higher morale.

#### **DO SUPPORT WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

Employees perform at their best when their well-being is prioritised.

#### **DO ADDRESS ISSUES QUICKLY**

Promptly resolving concerns shows employees they are valued, heard, and supported.

### DON'TS

#### **DON'T ONLY COMMUNICATE WHEN THERE'S A PROBLEM**

Employees should hear from leadership regularly—not only during difficult conversations.

#### **DON'T IGNORE FEEDBACK**

Employees want to know their opinions matter and that concerns are taken seriously.

#### **DON'T MICROMANAGE**

Trust employees to do their jobs effectively and provide support where needed.

#### **DON'T SHOW FAVOURITISM**

Consistency and fairness are essential for maintaining trust within teams.

#### **DON'T OVERLOOK BURNOUT**

Exhausted employees are more likely to disengage and eventually leave the organisation.



## THE LION SHEET:

### A SIMPLE TOOL FOR EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Many employees leave because they feel disconnected from their manager, unheard, or unsupported.

The LION Sheet is a concise weekly report completed by employees and reviewed by their manager, who provides feedback each week. It creates a structured framework for communicating achievements, highlighting concerns, identifying opportunities, and setting goals.

This process helps ensure that issues are addressed promptly, employee contributions are recognised, and ongoing growth and development are actively supported.

### L.I.O.N STANDS FOR:

#### **L – LAST WEEK**

Review the previous week's top five goals, achievements, performance, and key learnings.

#### **I – ISSUES**

Discuss any current challenges, obstacles, or concerns and work together on practical solutions.

#### **O – OPPORTUNITIES**

Identify opportunities for improvement, development, innovation, cost savings, or growth.

#### **N – NEXT WEEK**

Set clear top 5 priorities, goals, and commitments for the upcoming week.



## WHY THE LION SHEET WORKS

### REGULAR LION DISCUSSIONS HELP EMPLOYEES FEEL:

✓ Heard



✓ Supported



✓ Recognised



✓ Connected to company goals



✓ Valued as individuals



When employees know their manager is invested in their success, engagement increases and retention naturally improves.



## REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE:

### HOW COSTCO RETAINS EMPLOYEES

Retail giant Costco Wholesale is widely recognised for its exceptional employee retention rates in an industry often known for high staff turnover. If Costco's success can be attributed to one core principle, it is this: the company treats employees as an investment rather than a cost.

This employee-first philosophy influences everything Costco does. Competitive pay is only one part of the equation. The company also invests in employee development, promotion-from-within opportunities, training, predictable scheduling, strong benefits, respectful leadership, and a workplace culture where employees feel valued and supported. Rather than focusing solely on reducing labour costs, Costco prioritises building a loyal, capable workforce and creating long-term careers rather than just jobs.

Because employees are viewed as a long-term asset, Costco provides clear career paths, recognises performance, and offers opportunities for growth and advancement. The company's pay, benefits, culture, and internal promotion practices are all expressions of this underlying belief that when employees are well cared for, business success follows. The results are striking.

While the average turnover rate in the retail industry hovers around 60%, Costco's turnover rate is estimated to be just 6% to 8% for employees with more than one year of service. This remarkable difference demonstrates how a philosophy of investing in people—supported by strong leadership, employee engagement, and a positive workplace culture—can significantly improve employee retention and organisational performance.

## THE LESSON?

Employees are more likely to stay when they feel respected, appreciated, and given opportunities to grow. Retention is not just about compensation—it's about creating a workplace where people want to build a long-term career.

Costco's success demonstrates that when businesses invest in their people, employees are more likely to remain committed, engaged, and productive over the long term.

## LEADERSHIP QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Train people well enough so they can leave. Treat them well enough so they don't want to."

— **Richard Branson**

## QUICK RETENTION TIPS FOR MANAGERS

- ✓ Listen more than you speak
- ✓ Celebrate progress, not just perfection
  - ✓ Address concerns early
- ✓ Encourage teamwork and collaboration
  - ✓ Create opportunities for growth
- ✓ Lead with empathy and consistency
- ✓ Use the LION Sheet to stay connected with your team
- ✓ Know your A, B and C Players and manage them accordingly
- ✓ Ask open-ended questions: who? what? when? where? why? how?

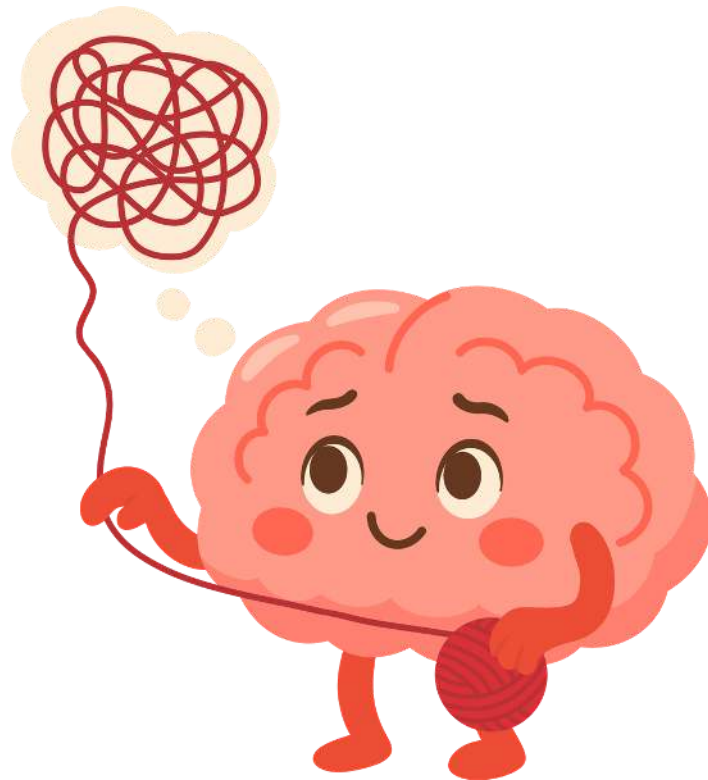
## FINAL THOUGHT

Retention is not built through policies alone—it is built through everyday interactions.

Employees remember how leaders communicate, how problems are handled, and whether their efforts are appreciated.

The workplaces that retain great people are the ones where employees feel respected, supported, and valued every day.

When businesses invest in people, people invest back into the business.







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**Our Strategic Partnership**

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## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: PROMO DISTRIBUTORS

In today's competitive business environment, brand visibility is more important than ever. Quality promotional products help businesses stay top of mind, strengthen client relationships, and create lasting brand recognition.

Promo Distributors understands the power of effective branding and offers a wide range of promotional and corporate merchandise solutions tailored to meet the unique needs of businesses across South Africa. Whether it's corporate gifts, branded apparel, event merchandise, or marketing materials, their team is committed to helping businesses make a memorable impression.

We have had the pleasure of working with Jacolien and the Promo Distributors team on numerous occasions and have consistently experienced exceptional service, attention to detail, and reliable delivery. Their ability to understand a client's brand and recommend impactful promotional solutions sets them apart in the industry.

If you're looking to elevate your brand presence, reward clients or employees, or create professional marketing merchandise, Promo Distributors is a trusted partner dedicated to helping your business stand out.



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