

WORK CENTRAL AB

Employee Retention

Practical Strategies to Keep Your Best People

A Career Resource from Work Central AB

Employee Retention Strategies

Replacing an employee is expensive - in recruiting costs, lost productivity, and training time. This guide covers practical, research-backed strategies for keeping strong employees engaged and committed across Central Alberta workplaces.

1. Understanding Why Employees Leave

- Lack of growth or advancement opportunities is consistently one of the top reasons employees seek new roles.
- Inadequate compensation relative to the local market, particularly as regional wages shift with demand.
- Poor management relationships - employees frequently leave managers, not just companies or roles.
- Limited flexibility, particularly for employees balancing family or caregiving responsibilities.

2. Competitive Compensation and Benefits

- Regularly benchmark wages against current Central Alberta market rates for comparable roles, not just national averages.
- Consider the full compensation package - health benefits, retirement contributions, and paid time off all factor into retention, not just base salary.
- Be transparent about how pay increases and promotions are decided, reducing uncertainty and perceived unfairness.

3. Growth and Development Opportunities

- Offer clear paths for advancement, even in smaller organizations where formal promotion ladders may be limited.
- Support professional development through training, certifications, or tuition support - see our Wage Subsidies & Grants guide for funding options like the Canada-Alberta Productivity Grant.
- Provide regular, constructive feedback rather than relying solely on annual performance reviews.

4. Building a Positive Workplace Culture

Retention-Focused Culture Practices

- Recognize and celebrate employee contributions regularly, not only during formal review cycles.
- Foster open communication, including channels for employees to raise concerns without fear of retaliation.
- Offer reasonable flexibility where the role allows - remote or hybrid options, flexible scheduling, or compressed workweeks.
- Invest in strong, well-trained managers, since manager quality is one of the strongest predictors of employee retention.

5. Conducting Meaningful Exit Interviews

When employees do leave, exit interviews offer valuable insight into recurring issues. Ask specific, open-ended questions about their experience, and look for patterns across multiple departures rather than treating each exit as an isolated event.

6. Frequently Asked Questions

Common Questions

What's the biggest driver of retention? Manager quality consistently ranks among the strongest predictors - employees often stay for a good manager even when other conditions aren't perfect.

How often should we review compensation? At least annually, and more often in fast-moving sectors or during periods of regional wage growth.

Are stay interviews useful, not just exit interviews? Yes - periodically asking current employees what would make them consider leaving can surface issues before they lead to a resignation.

Employee Retention Checklist

- ✓ Benchmarked compensation against current regional market rates
- ✓ Provided clear paths for growth and development
- ✓ Trained managers on strong people-management practices
- ✓ Established regular feedback and recognition practices
- ✓ Conducted and reviewed exit interviews for recurring themes

Build Your Team With Work Central AB

See our Hiring Best Practices and Workforce Planning guides for more on building a stable, engaged team. Visit [**workcentralab.ca/employers**](https://workcentralab.ca/employers).