



A HOLISTIC WHITE PAPER:

The 5 Ws of Employee Retention in 2021



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

A Focus on Retention

The Click team has been talking to HR leaders across the country and around the globe for the last 18 months. We've asked the hard questions about employee retention and received honest, transparent answers.

We've heard from veteran and novice HR leaders alike who are justifiably shaken by [The Great Resignation](#). It's a real phenomenon that's unfurling before their very eyes right now: employees quitting their job in droves.

Whether it's a barista making a double mocha latte at the local coffee shop or a business analyst determining the requirements for a large-scale enterprise project, skyrocketing turnover rates are a serious, expensive problem for employers.

This white paper presents a holistic new lens on how [employee retention](#) was impacted in 2021 and how organizations can prepare for the coming months, 2022 and beyond. We'll address why it's critical today and needs top rank on your priority list. Our panel of experts also offers realistic tactics for your organization to consider as we make our way through this volatile time.

This fact-packed white paper is meant to tackle the concept of retention, why it needs to be a top priority and what to do about it:

- Who it impacts
- What employees want most
- When employee turnover occurs
- Where turnover is happening
- Why employees are leaving
- **SPECIAL BONUS:** How to win the war on talent, today and in the future

FEATURING:

Excerpts from the Experts



Jess Von Bank

Head of Marketing

Global Community Leader | Digital Transformation | Now of Work at Leapgen

A Community Leader for the Now of Work, a global response and initiative powered by Leapgen. Important channels include the Now of Work community, the world's largest community of HR, technology, data and analytics and workforce experience practitioners, solution providers and consultants.



Michelle Graham

Head of Marketing

Click Boarding, LLC

Michelle's role extends far beyond the (virtual) office walls of Click Boarding's marketing department. In addition to managing her team, Michelle regularly collaborates with internal and external stakeholders to develop strategic initiatives that produce optimal engagement and ROI for the organization. Michelle loves the Human Resources industry, especially when it comes to motivating other managers and team leaders.



Danielle Balow

Director, Consulting Practice

Click Boarding, LLC

Meet Click's consultant, Danielle. In her unique role, Danielle evaluates client goals and collaborates with them to present solutions that meet their needs both today and tomorrow. She works with them long-term, from implementation through their entire journey to ensure immediate and ongoing success by offering continued improvement opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

A Focus on Retention

As HR practitioners, each of us bore first hand witness to a worldwide crisis that relentlessly tipped the world on its ear. And nearly everyone felt the pain, on multiple levels. As such, a host of unforeseen impacts and domino-effect consequences have developed – and continue to develop – almost daily. The most threatening? Employee turnover, at records never seen or experienced before...in history.

To the best of their ability, workers are dealing with and managing so much in this new remote world:

- employee safety
- organizational safety protocols
- technology demands
- remote working processes
- cultural impacts
- team dynamics



Employees have never had to balance as much as they have to right now. And it's taken a toll.

While each of these are significant hurdles to overcome, they've all had an adverse and damaging effect on employee retention. As a result, retaining employees has quickly become an enormous problem that employers are having difficulty solving. If you care about your balanced scorecard, you need to address retention, head on, immediately.

Employers are trying

As organizations go to great lengths to react on the fly and showcase their corporate value proposition in this new environment, their efforts are falling short. It's just not enough to keep their employees from walking. Employee turnover has become a global risk, particularly in the staffing, hospitality, retail and food industries.

It's clear that now is a pivotal moment for people leaders. HR has felt the overwhelming burden these past 18 months, and they realize it's time to act. But you can't try to improve for the future until you appreciate how we've arrived where we are today. After all, these demanding times are new for all of us.



Don't underestimate the threat... or the opportunity

Retaining employees has always been an ongoing challenge. But it's never been more critical or vital to a company's bottom line than at this very moment. The situation is real, not rhetoric.

HR professionals and organizational leaders have been given an unparalleled opportunity to step up and get employee retention right. Because if you don't do something about this looming problem in the very near future, the simple fact is that you'll fall behind. And eventually, your best people will walk.

Why? Because your employees are exhausted. They've been put through the wringer, day after day, month after month - for an extended period of time, and it's wreaked havoc on their lives. They have had enough.

Instead of the simple day-to-day choices we used to make, workers today are making life choices, based on their experiences, their future outlook and how they were treated by employers throughout the pervasive threat and consequences of the pandemic.

Borrowing the 5W1H principle from our journalist friends, we're going to break down the ins and outs of employee retention and engagement as they exist today. We'll provide pragmatic, real-world advice and thought leadership from the experts at Click Boarding and renowned HR evangelist, Jess Von Bank, plus ample statistics and data to support the information provided.

Let's get started.

SECTION 1: The WHO

Regardless of title, industry or working model, the resounding answer to who was influenced by the pandemic is simple: everyone. Not a single person was immune to the layers of COVID-19's impact. Although burnout tops the list of novel virus casualties, there's much more to the story.

As [McKinsey recently put it](#), the pandemic presented a double threat: "to lives and livelihoods." HR evangelist and speaker at our recent BTN Roundtable, [Jess Von Bank](#) contends it's why people are quitting their jobs en masse. "People have been saying, 'Oh, I've been sitting on this for a whole year' and are ready to move on to a new job," Von Bank stated.

The latest numbers are bleak

In fact, a recent [Bankrate August Jobseeker Survey](#) indicates that up to 55% of the U.S. workforce is "likely to look for a new job in the next 12 months." It doesn't matter if you're in a high-turnover industry like retail or construction, a salaried IT employee or a business analyst in a corporate role.



Your employees are exhausted. They've been put through the wringer, day after day, month after month - for an extended period of time, and it's wreaked havoc on their lives. They have had enough.

Click's Head of Marketing, Michelle Graham, put it best: "During The Great Resignation, the color of your collar is completely irrelevant. Period." She underscores that it doesn't matter if you're a highly skilled knowledge worker or an hourly front-line service worker; workers are not happy.

Graham knows what she's talking about. [CNBC reports](#) "the number of people who quit their jobs in June make up 69% of total separations (also includes layoffs, firings and retirement)." The article claims the industries hit worst were "professional and business services, durable goods manufacturing and state/local government (excluding education)."



During The Great Resignation, the color of your collar is completely irrelevant.

Morphing working models

Throughout the pandemic, organizations large and small had to discover how to react to the changing models of work. Today, there are three primary modalities at play:

- fully remote
- hybrid (more on that in a bit)
- in-office

"Regardless of industry or working model, The Great Resignation is affecting all employers and employee types. Essentially, we're all at risk, and it's time for us to step up."

Michelle Graham

Head of Marketing | Click Boarding

THE WHO: Continued...

Because employee expectations are at a historic all-time high, all three models are being directly impacted. Obviously, each model has its own implications, but the risk is being undeniably felt across the board. Workers are walking, regardless of the working model. All working models are under scrutiny, and no one model can be wholly effective on its own.

Working model preferences by generation

Aside from the type of employer and employee, we must also ask if the age or experience level impacts the desire to flee. At the risk of stereotyping or oversimplifying, there are common trends and strong factors by generation. But the fact of the matter is that all working models are under question, and no one model can be effective on its own. No, you haven't just re-read the previous paragraph.

Pertaining to the four working generations at large, there are distinct employee expectations by segment. In addition, each generation has reacted differently to the changing workforce throughout the past year and a half.



1 Baby Boomers [1955-1964]

- Hold the most social capital (this ain't their first rodeo)
- Transitioned to remote work most successfully
- Least affected financially by the pandemic
- Accelerated a readiness to retire

2 Gen X [1965-1980]


- Financially the most stressed segment
- Simultaneous struggle of caring for children & aging parents
- The best prepared to cope with social distancing & isolation
- Worries the most about contracting the coronavirus

3 Millennials/Gen Y [1981-1996]

- Most focused on what their work/life balance looks like
- Feel burned by the responsibilities and risks of the pandemic
- Less connected to coworkers and friends
- Continue to struggle with productivity at work

4 Gen Z [1997 - 2012]

- Prefer fully in-person work & fear being left behind by remote
- Most ethnically and socially diverse segment of entire workforce
- Seek employers who care about core values, purpose and transparency
- Want an employer who cares about social issues & philanthropy



The Great Resignation has affected each generational segment differently.

As the research reflects, the pandemic and its long-ranging effects are generation-agnostic. No one was impervious to the life-altering challenges and struggles from this lingering global event.

Role changes during COVID-19

Tenure & functions

Similar to the generational divide among workers, there are also key considerations by seniority and responsibility levels within an organization. Generally speaking, there are overlaps between the two. Beyond the new work models that developed organically during COVID, the roles and functions of people leaders were transformed as well.

Across the board, not a single role or experience level was exempt from the pandemic's path...





Entry-level employees don't know where to go for help. They're seeking mentorship & guidance.



Entry-level & early career

Disconnected and disheveled

- Trying their best to develop new skills and abilities while they learn everything at Mach speed
- Regularly putting in extra-long hours which destroys creativity and contributes to burnout
- Confused, frustrated and desperate for leadership, they're seeking mentors for guidance
- Vocal about their frustrations and discontent

Seniors & leads

Focused on personal bottom line

- Seasoned pros often focused on individual contributions; the most autonomous and least impacted of the four experience levels
- Typically long-time subject matter experts within their respective area and within the culture of the company
- Age within this segment can span across generations with varying personal career goals and motivation
- Had to adapt during COVID-19 but not to the degree that it was counterproductive

Hiring & mid-level managers

Hardest hit (pummelled, in fact)

- Working tirelessly to support the team's wellbeing but sacrificing their own wellbeing in order to fix the problem for senior management
- Doing their best to be productive members of the organization as they try to solve the problems from above and fix the problems from below
- Feeling like the organization as a whole has left them out to dry without the necessary support to be effective, successful or efficient
- Grappling with endless change at work and compounding their stress with having to care for children and/or aging parents
- Navigating through the pandemic without structure, solid processes or systems in place during absolute chaos

It's no wonder managers are at the end of their rope!

Managers have taken on the weight of employee troubles amidst the pandemic.





C-suite & executives

Removed from the real reality

- Often detached from the day-to-day employee struggles, particularly those experienced most by middle managers
- Consumed with business matters as a leader and focused on the all-encompassing goal of protecting the company's livelihood and future
- Isolated from the everyday struggles of employees and managers; without this context, they can't appreciate what managers have faced almost daily during COVID:
 - Dealing with an employee who unexpectedly breaks down on a Zoom call because he or she is unable to deal with the stress
 - Managing home daycare and/or home school while working from home and managing a team
 - Scrambling for ways to maintain team morale, employee engagement and productivity
 - Sadly, the list goes on and on
- Many executives simply don't get it, because they're removed from the day-in, day-out realities and struggles of their employees

C-level struggles adopting a remote working model

Over the past several months, we've heard a great deal of pushback from top executives who prefer the traditional "old ways" of working. Some are reluctant to embrace a remote working model or they oppose the concept altogether. Since they haven't been dealing with the same problems as middle managers and HR, they can't appreciate the flexibility that's so urgently needed right now.

Distrustful that a remote model could be a viable solution to the long-term employee retention problem, the C-suite is often the hardest to convince that change is needed. And it's needed desperately.

Change must come from the top

The truth of the matter is that employee retention hasn't been a problem for executives to solve; they're too removed from the day-to-day. Instead, middle managers were left to navigate this great unknown alone, and the problem has fallen onto them to resolve.



DEEP DIVE: Manager Burnout

Don't think manager burnout is a problem? Think again. Managers – particularly middle management – continue to suffer as the pandemic wanes on.



66%

Suffer from burnout
Digiday

76%

Are overwhelmed
Digiday

59%

Feel overworked
EBN

72%

Felt more pressure to deliver
EBN

59%

Are working longer hours
BenefitsPro

84%

Are internalizing fault for
employee burnout
BenefitsPro

SECTION 2:

The WHERE

Where is employee retention important?

The answer to this question is two-fold:

Location: where in the world

Literally speaking, retention is critical everywhere around the world. It's far-reaching and all-consuming. Of course, there are ramifications by location, but ultimately, it's a trend that's presenting itself across the board. According to SHRM.org, "retention of quality employees is a **global issue.**"

Moreover, the BBC recently polled top executives in their global Worklife study. From Melinda Gates to Zoom Founder, Eric Yuan to MIT Executive Director Elisabeth Reynolds, Associate Professor Reetika Khera at IIT, Delhi and many others, the themes are consistent. Regardless of location, employee retention continues to be a problem worldwide.

Right now, everyone's scrambling to figure out the best solution for their organization (or shall we say organization, as the case may be!). But retention is a global issue. It is not unique by nation or culture, by region or country, politics or religion.



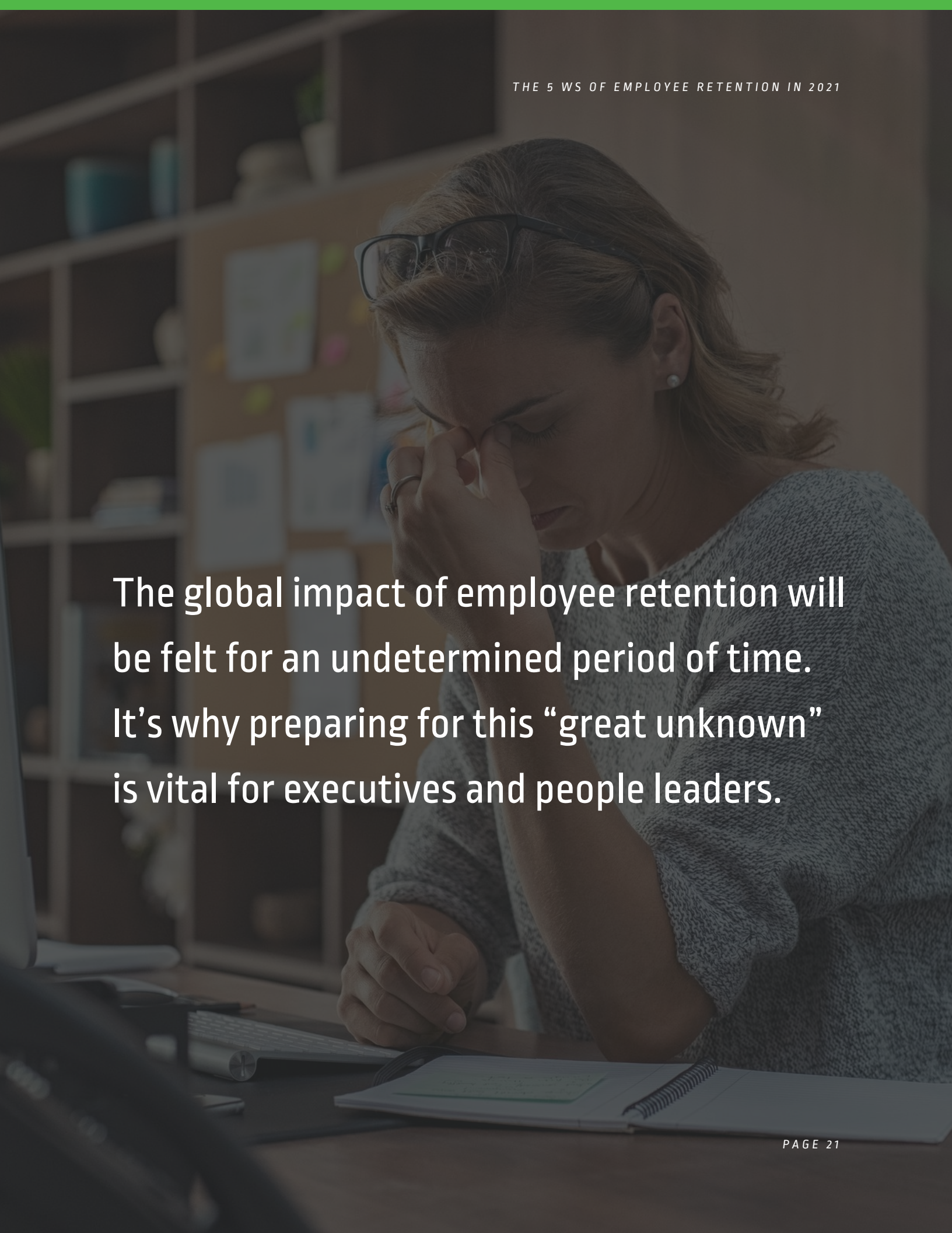
Retaining your employees is a human issue. Quite dramatically, the ugly rigors of the pandemic have actually bonded us in humanity, and we're reacting to that as humans. We're reevaluating what we **want** and what we **need** from an employer. They're done playing it by the book. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. We'll get to that shortly.

Over the last six to eight months, we've attended our share of top HR-related virtual events. We'll be the first to tell you that we've seen the data firsthand and heard from leading executives at top enterprise organizations in and out of the United States. The global impact of employee retention will be felt for an undetermined period of time. It's why preparing for this "great unknown" is vital for executives and people leaders.

A new double threat emerges

According to a [poll from ComPsych](#), a behavioral health provider, the Delta variant is now employees' most pressing concern about returning to work. When asked what their biggest worry is:

- 50% - employees cited the rapidly spreading COVID-19 strand and getting sick from it
- 33% - feeling overwhelmed at the thought of changes to family routines
- 10% - child care challenges and difficulty finding care options
- 3% - pet care challenges
- 3% - having to relocate back to the office after moving during the pandemic



The global impact of employee retention will be felt for an undetermined period of time. It's why preparing for this “great unknown” is vital for executives and people leaders.

THE WHERE: Continued...

Function: where in the business

Figuratively speaking, employee retention can be felt within every corner of the building and across all functions of the business, regardless of location. For example, when the U.S. was opening things up earlier this summer, our neighbors to the north in Canada were still stuck in COVID lockdown.

Now, we know all industries, models, roles and seniority levels felt the pinch. But what about functions?

Essentially, it's the same story throughout the entire business. Marketing is tired of writing pandemic response messages. Operations team members have bent backwards to ensure the group can function as normally as possible. IT has been working 24/7 to help remote workers with technology challenges.

The moral of the story is that no function or role within your organization is immune to the effects of this Great Resignation.



But what about HR?

Now, we're very aware that all industries, models, roles and seniority levels had to acclimate to the disruption, confusion and frustration of the pandemic. But what about HR? It's hard to put into words all that became expected of HR amidst this pandemic. One study concluded that 90% of HR employees have experienced increased stress levels during the last year.

Think about it: no other organizational role or function was as dramatically affected by COVID-19 than Human Resources. Without hesitation or question, HR immediately rose to the occasion. They took on a role to solve, to caretake, to mentor, to train, to get regulated or compliant. And what happened? A staggering 71% of HR professionals said last year was "the most stressful year of their career."

We hear you, and you're not alone

At Click, we've been on enough round tables and forums to recognize that HR is definitely not alright. The pressures have been excessive and extreme. In most cases, the above-and-beyond actions were neither acknowledged or rewarded. So while your HR team may be trying to retain employees, they themselves are giving serious thought to those lush, greener pastures.



The pressures felt by HR have reached new heights over the last 18+ months.

SECTION 3:

The WHAT


What changed about employee retention?

Retention didn't change throughout the pandemic. It completely metamorphosed, escalating to levels which we've never before experienced. An overwhelming deluge in people's expectations, goals and actions redirected the power from the hands of the employer to those of the employee. It's been a seismic shift from where we once were, and the changes haven't stopped coming at us yet.

But at Click, we've witnessed very strong patterns in what's changed among the employee base. Further, these observations have been validated extensively by field research, industry data, conversations we're having with HR executives and even human-level chats with friends in everyday life.

The root causes

Each person has had their own set of unique reactions to world and life events throughout COVID. Whether it's picking your kids up from daycare, at your favorite pub catching up with old friends or at spin class trying to break a sweat, it's dominated conversations in every setting.



Retention has become a topic of conversation in all walks of life, well outside an office setting.

The three key themes we've seen emerge include:

1 Employees want flexibility

The pandemic changed people's lives in ways we never imagined. Because the concept of "work/life balance" was shattered last March, people not only want flexibility; they need it. And they need it like never before.

Employees need a new working dynamic that supports their life. The current one was established in a whole different era, when men worked and women stayed at home. The phrase, "That was then, this is now" seems appropriate.

The justification seems as uncomplicated as it gets. Yet as mentioned earlier, some Goliath brands won't accept the fact that life and work have both been forever altered. Even with proven efficiency and productivity in the remote model, these same brands refuse to relent, despite the numbers being heavily stacked against them:

- 77% of remote workers say they're more productive when working from home.
- Stanford polled 16,000 remote employees to find their performance increased by 13% when working from home.
- 74% of employees say having a remote work option would make them less likely to leave.



A Tip from Jess:

Make room for socialization and connection between colleagues.



We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to redefine success, and along with it, the way we work and live. People are waking up to the value of living lives that allow them to connect with themselves and nurture their well-being and resilience. They're waking up from the collective delusion that burnout is the price we have to pay for success.

Jess Von Bank
Head of Marketing | Leapgen



Flexible Flexibility

Obviously, there's a lot more to flexibility than working from home. It can mean working 6 a.m. - 3 p.m. Or working a few hours in the morning and finishing up later in the afternoon. Or working four 10-hour days. Or even working from a coffee shop. Whatever the equation looks like to you, flexibility is effectively getting the work done in the manner most conducive to your schedule.

It's also about completing your work in the way that keeps you most rejuvenated, passionate and ready to bring your "A" game since your needs have been met. It's when you can actually bring your best self to work.

Providing flexibility in this still-confusing environment is hugely important. Employee expectations have evolved exponentially, so offering a work schedule that's at the employee's discretion is a stellar way to separate yourself from the pack in the mounting war on talent!

Burned by burnout

Jess Von Bank broached a related touchy topic at our [BTN Roundtable](#), "As management, we successfully figured out how to be super productive in the middle of a pandemic. But we burned out our rock stars. Now those people feel totally betrayed and refuse to return to a terrible job."



THE WHAT: Continued...

The bottom line for your bottom line

Look, in the spirit of radical candor, think of it this way: if your company hasn't figured it out by now, you may as well call it a day.

What we find particularly intriguing is that big brands with solid reputations, extreme credibility and long-time public respect are taking a hard stance on this matter. It's our belief that this will hurt them in the long run. In fact, experts assert the WFH trend is here for the duration, citing a 5% increase in overall U.S. employee productivity.

To put it bluntly, we would not take that bet.



**A Tip from
Michelle:**

It's time you
embraced a
hybrid model.
And fast.

2 Employees are empowered

As horrible as the pandemic was and continues to be, it's forced us to slow down and take stock of our lives, figure out what's important and what's been reprioritized. Von Bank could not have put it more accurately or eloquently:

"We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to redefine success, and along with it, the way we work and live. People are waking up to the value of living lives that allow them to connect with themselves and nurture their well-being and resilience. They're waking up from the collective delusion that burnout is the price we have to pay for success. Companies that realize this will be less likely to be capsized by the great wave of resignations. Those that don't may be in for a not-so-great awakening."

So the ball is in the court of the employee. They're standing up and owning it, actually vocalizing what they want. Most importantly, they're looking for actions based on their expectations and the demands they've set.

Workers want work that matters, to be empowered by the work they do. They seek greater meaning, far beyond the products a company sells or the impact those products may have on the world. Now more than ever, employees care about the values of an organization, what they stand for and social implications that may exist. They question what a company is doing to create change in the world and make a real difference. They want to know that their employer maintains values that align with their own cares and concerns.

And if their demands aren't being met? Get ready to hear "Sayonara" ... minus a second thought.

94% of executives and **88%** of employees believe a distinct workplace culture is important to business success.

Deloitte

3 Employees aren't afraid to walk

Of the three root causes, this is the most concerning for employers. Why? Because the good ol' days of lifelong employee loyalty began deteriorating years ago. Add a generous helping of global pandemic to the mix, and employee loyalty has all but evaporated. Poof! Gone.

In June alone, the revolving doors of employee turnover saw more than 164,000 employees bid farewell, leaving their employer in the billowing dust of The Great Resignation. During this time, an almost unbelievable 60% of employees have even been compelled to change careers altogether.

Others are returning to the hallowed halls of education, intent to beef up their existing skills or gaining new aptitudes. Sadly, a great many of these folks have all but given up hope with the 9-to-5 grind. With a refreshing sense of empowerment, these employees will no longer accept an insufficient working model that neither supports nor encourages growth or development.



A Tip from Danielle:

Discover why your employees stay and transform that into today's reality.



The problem is there's no single recipe, there's your recipe and figuring out your recipe is the challenge. You can take notes from other recipes, but there is no standard recipe. We have personalized work forever.

Jess Von Bank

Head of Marketing | Leapgen

Long story short...

In summary, what's changed most about employee retention over the past year and a half is who holds the power. Think of 2021 as being the Year of the Employee.

Losing employees during this unstable time is treacherous. But losing those top-performing rock stars is even more harrowing for business leaders, because they're the lifeblood of the organization. They're the centrifugal force that drives growth, innovation and revenue...and they are not afraid to leave you or your bottom line.

As soon as employers can accept that very real fact, they'll be on their way to retaining rockstar employees and making changes that create an actual difference in work culture.



SECTION 4:

The WHY

Why has employee retention become an enormous problem?

The reason workers have seemingly turned against employers in the Great Resignation is simple. But to understand the reason, it's vital to grasp how the culmination of multiple variables triggered this perfect storm of a mass exodus of employees. Once upon a time...

It all began with a global pandemic.

Not a single person was prepared when the novel coronavirus infiltrated our lives back in February 2020. The initial impact was shocking, swift and immense. It caused suffering for everyone, on three distinct and basic human levels:

1 Health

To date, there have been a staggering 4.6 million deaths from COVID-19. Further, the sheer expanse of secondary COVID casualties – mental health and well-being issues – continues to be mind boggling.



COVID recovery is happening, but employees aren't responding as expected.

2 Finances

Regardless of your fiscal station in life, COVID's economic pinch was, and continues to be, painful. And it's felt everywhere. On the employment scene, that pinch quickly became a gaping open wound. Employees were unexpectedly laid off or furloughed for undetermined periods of time. Others felt the ravages of the pandemic, compliments of a blindsided salary cut or temporary compensation reduction. Consequently, discretionary income took a blow.

Additionally, workers began questioning their salaries in earnest and whether or not they felt properly compensated for their contributions (this is where the good part starts). Employees began advocating for themselves and their worth, asking management to show them the hard dollars and not just paltry empty promises. They simply refused to settle any longer.

3 Safety

Both extreme disruptors by nature, social unrest and cultural differences plagued employees across the world. According to SHRM.org, the pandemic was the catalyst that caused "tremendous social and political tumult that most employees had not seen in their lifetimes. Many of those employees brought their resulting fear, anxiety and anger to the workplace, and it was their managers who sometimes had to handle the fallout."



Employees are redefining what they want and what success looks like to them.



All of a sudden, the way we managed our lives was flipped upside down. It was combined chaos: reimagining our home lives, adding work to our home life mix and doing it in an environment that wasn't set up to support us but still demanded much of the same output from us. And in response, we grinded ourselves into the ground. If we weren't already beaten to a pulp, the pandemic finished the job.

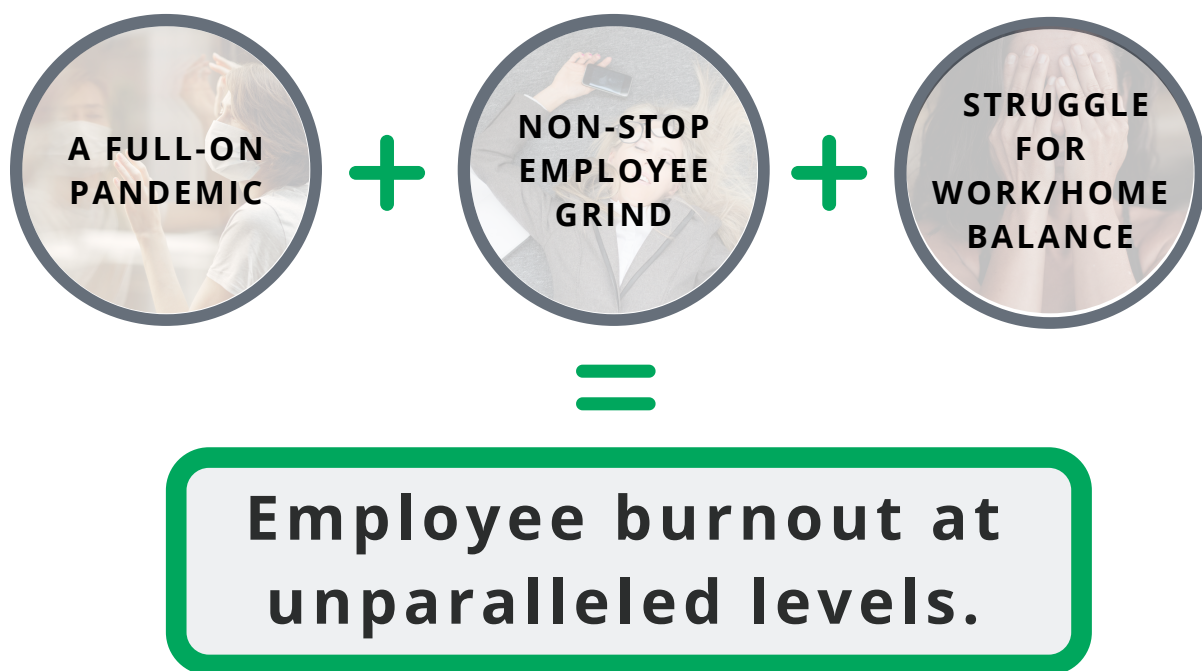
Michelle Graham

Head of Marketing | Click Boarding

The results of this dreadful trifecta? Massive struggles from employees of every age, race and region. They're grappling with a daily onslaught of emotions, socioeconomic circumstances and/or mental health issues, all manufactured by the pandemic. These conditions weighed heavily on their minds, bringing forth a deluge of questions, internal reflection and a whole new host of employee expectations for employers.

Which was followed by a complete loss of work-life balance.

When the virus first hit, many employers were forced to adopt a remote working model out of necessity. Since the majority of employees didn't work from home regularly, they were vulnerable and ill-prepared. As the lines between professionalism and a personal life slowly began to erode, employees found it increasingly harder to maintain a healthy work-life balance. The equation inevitably went like this:



THE WHY: Continued...

Never before had employees been so encumbered by multiple hardships simultaneously. And it showed. Everyday tasks transformed into nearly impossible feats almost overnight: taking the kids to daycare, driving kids to school, working out at the gym or going to the grocery store.

Click's Head of Marketing, [Michelle Graham](#), sums it up accurately: "All of a sudden, the way we managed our lives was flipped upside down. It was combined chaos: reimagining our home lives, adding work to our home life mix and doing it in an environment that wasn't set up to support us but still demanded much of the same output from us. And in response, we grinded ourselves into the ground. If we weren't already beaten to a pulp, the pandemic finished the job."

Although some employers were successful in transitioning employees to remote work, many were not. Workers were in a state of panic while leadership expectations remained "business as usual."



Then...the Great Awakening began to happen.

And what an awakening it was! Workers frantically needed help and guidance when the coronavirus began. After a year of insufficient efforts, miscommunication and lack of support, employees are finally waking up.

Graham substantiates the phenomenon. "People literally snapped out of the autopilot-hamster-wheel mode they'd been grinding away at for months, without questioning a thing. Now, all of these factors are at play, and The Great Resignation alarm has awoken us from a deep sleep to realize our employees expect more and deserve more," the leader asserted.

But even before COVID, Graham firmly contends employee burnout was a critical problem. "We were in an epidemic of burnout, long before the pandemic started. But what this global event did was give us time – ample time – to think about what we really value and the place that work has in our lives."

As hinted at in the "What" section of this eBook, the honest reactions in this employee awakening are crystal clear. They're empowered now, and as such, their demands have skyrocketed for the following reasons.

DEEP DIVE:

New Employee Dynamics



LACK OF FLEXIBILITY

Nine out of 10 employees want flexibility when it comes to where and when they work. In fact, 77% of remote workers say they're more productive working from home.



LACK OF WELLBEING

If an employee's life improved during remote work, they're highly unwilling to go back to the tedium of a desk job. But, they need a balance to maintain their mental health.



MENTAL FATIGUE AND BURNOUT

Working excessive hours while trying to balance the many other facets of life has become too much. Manager and employee burnout levels are at all-time highs.



BAD BOSSES

Employers who treated their workers poorly during the pandemic are reaping the seemingly just reward of skyrocketing turnover and related expenses.

We were in an epidemic of burnout, long before the pandemic started. But what this global event did was give us time – ample time – to think about what we really value and the place that work has in our lives.

Michelle Graham
Head of Marketing | Click Boarding

THE WHY: Continued...

Not that a takeaway is needed here, but the long and short of it is that employees have HAD it. They are **done**.

Not to beat a dead horse here, but workers have reached their tipping point. The only difference now is that they refuse to settle any longer. Period. They are too burnt out, jaded, frustrated, angry...insert your own negative adjective here.

Awoken from the status quo slumber, empowered employees are now feeling more prepared to take control of their careers. They're eager to be happy again and strive for holistic wellbeing, life contentment, direction, fulfillment, validation...all of it! Employees want their work to be important, valuable and meaningful, much more than the standard 9 - 5. That aging precept is quickly being replaced with demands for more, demands for better.



And the time of The Reckoning soon was upon us.

A bit dramatic, yes. But lest ye lose sight of the real point: the time of reckoning is now. The pandemic happened. Burnout happened. The work-life balance debacle happened. Leaders and management, you're accountable now.

The Great Resignation is real, and it's happening far and wide, in every corner of the world. As members of management, it's time to act, to commit to the long haul of recovery and rebuild what work used to be and what work must be in the future.

Why? Because at this very instant, your employees are redefining what their version of "success" looks like, and you had better get yourself in the game. This "turnover tsunami" isn't about employees burning out or being unhappy. It's about a remarkable change of heart and head around what work ought to be. As Graham puts it, "instead of chasing an antidote to burnout, we need to incorporate wellbeing and recharging practices into our work (and home) life to truly be successful."



COVID made us slow down and think: what's important to me in life? Where are my priorities?

"Employees everywhere are raising their voices for change. We hear it everyday from HR executives across industries. Across the board, the plight of the employee has simply become too much."

Danielle Balow

Director | Click Consulting Practice

SECTION 5: The WHEN²



The answer to both of these questions is simple but extremely urgent: **NOW**.

To most leaders, The Reckoning phase may sound frightening and frankly, overwhelming. That's because it is frightening and overwhelming. There seems to be too many questions and not enough answers.

Here's where you, the reader, can feel really lucky that you downloaded this free resource. Click Boarding is here to help.

But first things first

Most importantly, please realize that you're missing the silver lining in the dark, looming cloud of employee retention! This is actually **a rare opportunity** for both leaders and organizations. It's your chance for a do-over, **at scale.**

How? In two **paramount** ways:

- By redefining who you are as a business
- By engineering new and creative ways to fulfill employee wants, needs and demands in today's world of growing, evolving complexity

Let's put things into perspective, shall we? The chapter we're all living through at this very moment has never happened before...ever...in history. This is a fleeting – and golden – moment that employers have to entirely revolutionize the employee experience for their workers. As it exists today, the working model our forefathers established generations ago **is no longer operational**. In other words, it's entirely out of date, doesn't function worth a damn anymore and needs to be replaced with a working model that, well, WORKS. Why is this so important? Because 64% of HR executives surveyed confirmed employee experience is now a higher priority for their organization now, post-pandemic.



Redefining yourself is a challenge but a huge opportunity to compete with the best!

To effectively weather The Great Resignation storm, executives and HR leaders must revisit these outdated, obsolete relics. Together, they need a collaborative, rejuvenated approach that accommodates and supports employees.

Just a passing fancy? Really?!

Of course, there are certain demands or dynamics that have been cultivated over the past 18 months. It's almost comical to think that some industry experts deem these merely a fad, trend or flash in the pan that will eventually fade away over time. Others contend The Great Resignation will be short-lived, with a timely return to our old ways ... of thinking and of working.

But the overarching fact remains: the wants and needs of your employees have evolved throughout the course of the pandemic. Their new standards of wants and needs have changed and now equates with their happiness. Accordingly, your goal of reducing employee turnover cannot and will not be achieved without the careful consideration, adoption and practice of their new requirements.



The younger generations entering the workforce now have built-in expectations. They expect a better outlook, because they were raised in a different time, a time when work isn't the most important thing in life. The pandemic has impacted this group. However, their expectations were already at a different level, and the pandemic only heightened this.

Michelle Graham
Head of Marketing | Click Boarding

Time is of the essence

When it comes to retaining your employees in this abnormal world we now call “the new normal,” there’s a sad certitude about the situation. But the more time employers waste talking about the retention elephant in the room and not doing anything to fix the problem, the bigger that elephant is going to get. Without any action behind those big words, the retention elephant could grow to proportions that catastrophically harm your organization in the long run.


It isn’t the first time it’s been mentioned in this eBook that employers need to act on the ballooning threat and damaging effects of high employee churn. But it’s equally as important to convey the level of **urgency** in which this change must happen. We feel it’s critical to the growth and development of every business.

The antiquated approaches of leaders living with a yesteryear mindset will no longer offer a viable solution. Click’s Head of Marketing, Michelle Graham, says change is imminent, not only for the employees who are struggling and raising their hands but for society at large. “It’s our aspirations of who we want to be as humanity,” she said.

Ready...set...go ALREADY!

Despite the fact that we’re still in the throes of a pandemic, leaders need to commence planning and orchestration straightaway. They need to give hard thought to how work will continue to evolve in the coming weeks, months and years, because it’s imperative that things change. Think about it: the entire mentality of work has shifted around us. Employers must embrace and lean firmly into that change in order to adapt. If they fail to do so or decide to “wait it out” during the Great Resignation, the further behind they’ll fall. And you don’t want to have to make up for lost time in *this* game.

As addressed earlier, there's good reason for serious concern over escalating employee retention. The far-reaching economic repercussions alone are stupefying! But the truly alarming fact is that the problem of retaining your employees is here..today...now. And it's about to become even more of a problem in the not-so-distant future, ladies and gentlemen. Employees will begin advancing down their own unique career paths, following their professional trajectory and migrating to organizations where their expectations **are** heard by leaders and executives.



There are five generations in today's workforce. And you must step up to meet the needs of all.

The generational divide, times five

Apart from living through a global pandemic riddled with extreme health concerns, social unrest and economic hardships, we've got five – count 'em – five different generations constituting today's workforce. In addition to heightened expectations, this generational divide will demand an enormous degree of complexity, because it needs to be addressed, based on the individual needs of diverse employee groups.

Graham says it's worth noting that younger generations are entering the workforce with these expectations already built in, regardless of the coronavirus. "They expect a better outlook, because they were raised in a different time, a time when work isn't the most important

thing in life. The pandemic has impacted this group. However, their expectations were already at a different level, and the pandemic only heightened this,” she explained.

The digital transformation

As we learned last November at our [#BORNdigital webinar with industry guru, Dion Hinchcliffe](#), COVID was the catalyst that sparked the re-imagining of the employee experience (EX) at scale, or the “digital transformation.”

Hinchcliffe emphasized how transforming EX demands a “focus on culture, physical environments and technological infrastructure.” But leaders also need to understand that the possibilities are endless! “Management has to lean into it and seize the moment, because the digital transformation is here,” Graham stated. “Leverage the technology and build an ecosystem to engage and support your workforce that works for them today.”

If your organization wants to be positioned with the ability to deliver best-in-class employee experiences, Graham stresses the need for leaders to take a hard look at your complete employee journey.

Click [Boarding is here to tell you how!](#)



SECTION 6: The HOW

Your exclusive bonus

What makes this eBook the definitive guide on employee retention in 2021 and beyond? Outside of examining the long list of pandemic-induced problems with retaining top talent, we're equipping you with our exclusive list of tactical takeaways to realistically implement at your organization.

So far, we've analyzed the WHO, WHERE, WHAT, WHY and WHEN fundamentals of how organizations large and small were impacted by the explosive fallout of COVID. As Leapgen's Head of Marketing Jess Von Bank contends, "there's no single recipe for fixing the problem of retention. There's your recipe, and figuring out that recipe is the challenge. You can take notes from other recipes, but there is no standard recipe. We must have personalized work forever."

Michelle Graham extends further the analogy. "The HOW is different for every company. Like many recipes, there's still a standard methodology of doing things or best practices to follow." Once executives and leaders scrutinize existing processes and develop new, more pandemic-resistant approaches to retain employees, the tides will surely turn.



**A Tip from
Michelle:**

Ask your employees what they want. It's as simple as that.

The time to act is running out

As Gallup summed up in an article last month, “The truth is: This isn't just a pay issue. It's a burnout, stress and quality of life issue. Employers must ultimately address the root causes of burnout in their organization if they want to have any chance at retaining a talented workforce in the years to come.”

We'll examine tangible, real-world changes you can make within the company **today** to reverse the impact of the Turnover Tsunami **tomorrow**. The complex topic of retention is a top-of-mind, in-your-face conundrum. As such, we've broken down our top TO DO items, complete with helpful suggestions and tips to make it unique and impactful at your business.

HOW can we turn the employee retention crisis around?

The problem of retaining employees encompasses everyone at your organization, not just your leaders in HR and the C-suite. That's why it's essential to engage employees from across the business when defining and rolling out new retention strategies and initiatives. Ask for their feedback and should you use the feedback, recognize the employee for their contribution.



HOW can we win the war on talent?

For your business to win the war on talent now, in 2022 and beyond, you need a strategy – or as we’ll cover shortly – a recipe. This recipe requires more than a single approach or “ingredient,” and leaders will likely need to iterate multiple times. Be transparent with employees and let them know you’re working hard to find a solution that’s best for **them**.



YOUR STARTER RECIPE: 10 Tangible Steps



Embrace a hybrid model



Promote an employee-first model



Define your company’s WHY



Diversity, inclusion & belonging



Consider asynchronous work



Revisit pay & compensation packages



Commit to transparency



Forge long-term careers



Provide consistent feedback



Focus on retention from Day 0 on



STEP 1: Embrace a hybrid model

Unbeknownst to us, the world was to change forever in March 2020. The novel coronavirus struck with a vengeance, forcing companies to pivot hard. For many, a remote working model was the only option for unmitigated survival, but thankfully, it wasn't the first rodeo for many employees. Conclusively, COVID made remote working more normal than it's ever been. In fact, 87% of large companies with 10,000 or more employees say they will adopt hybrid work, and 86% of small business employees want to work remotely at least part of the time.

On the flip side, Duke University Professor Dan Ariely asserts the social aspect of humans will eventually allow workers to see the benefits of returning to the office. "People don't understand how much they miss other people," Ariely says. "But I think when people go back to work, we will remember." As Jess Von Bank stated in our Retention Roundtable, people want to return to the office for social connection and to see their friends.

While there are many benefits to both in-office and remote work, a hybrid model combines the best of both worlds for the optimal choice. At the end of the work day, the where of work doesn't really matter. Fundamentally what does matter is what your employees want. And they desperately want flexibility.



If you need to remain in person, provide context. Share the benefits, even if it's not all roses.



Jared Spataro, Microsoft's Modern Work Division Corporate Vice President, says “the great reshuffle, and the digitization of work as we know it, represents a change to the modern labor force that we haven’t witnessed since the end of World War II.” The author says employees have made it clear:

Flexibility will become a permanent foundation of the future of work — and business leaders who stand against this tide not only risk losing their talent, but also their stake in the economy of the future.

NBC News

Action Item:

First and foremost — and especially now — make promoting a work/life balance and productivity **top priorities**. If employees are happier working from home and equally productive, embrace it. With the proper tools and tech, Quantum Workplace reports “productivity and engagement is highest among remote and hybrid employees” at a whopping 77%! With adequate tools and infrastructure to support the shift, you’ll create a tech ecosystem that promotes collaboration and productivity from a distance.



STEP 2: Define your company's WHY

Your employees want to know **why** you chose the working model you did during the pandemic. They want to know how you arrived at the decision and the reasons they're being asked to adopt a new working model. As stewards of your brand, you must clearly define the rationale behind your "why." It becomes exponentially more impactful for employees to hear when you can tie in data or metrics to support the decision.

Transparency and honesty go a long way when you're able to explain and simplify the "why." Employees value leaders with integrity and will not only respect your approach but also your authenticity.

For businesses, offices or site locations that are open to the public and require in-person staff, let employees know why you've chosen to remain open. Regularly promote the benefits related to the decision and how it aligns with the company's mission or core values.

Action Item:

Make employees want to work for you by promoting the unique or exceptional details about your business. What does your company do that no one else does or that's particularly irresistible to candidates? Once you've established these value propositions, assemble your most passionate internal brand fans to help spread the word!

Michelle Graham also recommends carrying that identity into today's dynamic to evolve and meet the needs of today's workforce. She suggests asking the hard questions. "How can your corporate identity shine through in today's environment? How will you need to adapt to get there? What makes your employees proud to be associated with your company?" If you don't like the answers, Graham says it's "time to take a hard look in the mirror and determine what needs to change."



STEP 3: Consider asynchronous work

What is asynchronous work anyway? Global talent firm [remote.com](https://www.remote.com) defines asynchronous work as a way to organize the order in which tasks are executed in the pipeline of work. It allows you to fine-tune work, so that pressure is even, tasks are completed swiftly and you stay nimble.”

Empower employees with an asynchronous model, and you enable them to bring their best selves to work. This approach offers teams and workers the authority to schedule and organize the work week in a way that’s most effective for them. Along with the async approach, Michelle Graham recommends department-wide days off for a two-fold benefit: tackling burnout while providing a “refresh” for workers.

Action Item:

Introduce flexible working schedules when possible. Granted, not all functions or departments can operate virtually, so find other benefits your employees value. “Instead of a dreary conference room with no windows, try a non-traditional working environment,” Graham proposed. Meet at a local coffee shop for a fun, different vibe that could potentially produce the next big idea!

A Tip from Danielle:

Consider department-wide days off for a mandatory refresh.

	10 MONDAY	11 TUESDAY	12 WEDNESDAY	13 THURSDAY
7 AM				
8 AM	Answer emails			
9 AM	Weekly team meeting Conference room	New business oppor. Sales Office		
10 AM	Work safety updates		Work on Project II	Validate PR process
11 AM	Prepare sales meet.	Weekly call with sub. Phone Call		
12 PM				
1 PM	Sales meeting Web conference		Meet with recruiter HR Office	Prepare SF Show
2 PM				
3 PM	Weekly check eng. Engineering Lab			Lean Training Training Center
4 PM				
5 PM	Call IT support	Review Proposal Sales Office		
6 PM				
7 PM				
8 PM				
9 PM				
10 PM				

Try a non-traditional working environment. Meet at a local coffee shop for a fun, different vibe that could potentially produce the next big idea! As long as your employees can do their job there, trust them to work where it's most productive for them. You're not in the business of babysitting, so don't start now. Besides, it's a slippery slope I don't think anyone wants to be on. We're all adults. Trust your employees.

Michelle Graham

Head of Marketing | Click Boarding

Collaborate outside the office at a nearby park. “As long as your employees can do their job there, trust them,” Graham comments pragmatically. “You’re not in the business of babysitting, so don’t start now. Besides, it’s a slippery slope I don’t think anyone wants to be on. We’re all adults. Trust your employees,” she advises.



STEP 4: Commit to transparency

Executive openness and accountability go a long way, particularly now. If leaders want employee loyalty during the Great Covid Job Churn, they must first cultivate employee trust. Because trust and transparency go hand in hand, make communications with your workers frequent, open and honest.

Graham spotlights the transformational shift in employee sentiment. “In its most positive form, employees now care about a company’s core values, purpose, honesty and transparency more





than ever. This is another rare opportunity to further connect with employees: bring them along in your growth journey!" A transparency strategy leverages the dramatic shift in employee sentiment to connect workers with the company's bottom line.

Taking a line from one of our favorite HR aficionados, Jess Von Bank: "The best medicine is complete transparency."

Action Item:

Graham was particularly passionate about this strategy. "Let your team know, often, that it's absolutely okay to be vulnerable. Trust me; they'll appreciate this breath of fresh air more than you probably realize." She says try explaining where you're at, where you know you're falling short and how you want to improve. Then ask them to join you in your mission. "By inviting them to actively engage in building new experiences, their needs will be met today and tomorrow."



Be flexible, because our world has changed overnight. Honesty must accompany change of this caliber.

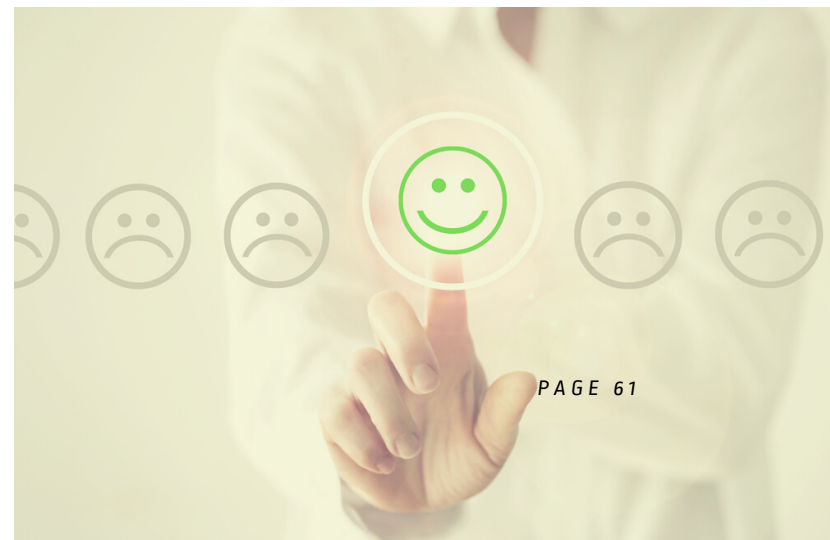


STEP 5: Provide consistent feedback

Even before the pandemic, employees craved feedback from managers and top-level executives. It comes as no surprise an astounding 96% of employees surveyed worldwide in May 2021 said they value regular feedback from their manager.

Another unexpected statistic from the survey: 83% of employees greatly value feedback from their managers, **regardless if it's positive or negative**. Employees just want to improve and get better, which is why management feedback is crucial right now! Take full advantage of this opportune time and create a culture where feedback is not only appreciated, it's strongly encouraged. Graham suggests building feedback loops that go both ways for constructive feedback, from the top down and the bottom up.

The more honesty involved in delivering routine feedback to your employees, the stronger the working relationship will be. If you haven't already heard of the concept, you'd be surprised at the effectiveness: Radical Candor (TM). The relatively new management philosophy is about "Caring Personally while Challenging Directly," providing "guidance and feedback that's both kind and clear, specific and sincere." Radical Candor aims to move "command and control" to "successful collaboration," and although it's not easy, "telling people what to do doesn't work."





Action Item:

At the risk of sounding redundant, ask your employees for feedback, **early in their tenure and often**. Once received, be certain to share engagement survey data with managers. Graham says she cannot reinforce this strongly enough: “Year one is critical! Once you understand what your employees want, you need to act on it.” She says the very worst thing management can do is ask for feedback or input and do nothing with the information.



STEP 6: Promote an employee-first model

Is winning the war on talent in today’s world even possible? Yes, it is. Of course, it’s no small undertaking, but it’s definitely possible. Graham asserts the single most effective measure would be implementing a work model that puts the employee first.

Revisit the fundamentals of your brand: the mission, vision and core values. Ask yourself whether they put the employee or the leader first. Do the tenets of your brand support an employee-centric work environment? If they do not, it’s time they did. In this traditionally unfamiliar, unsettling job market, you drastically increase your odds of



winning the talent race by making your organization more employee-friendly, forward thinking and altogether more appealing than the competition. Then actively promote your realigned brand to attract new talent.

The truth of the matter is when it comes to tech and knowledge workers, the competition is ferocious for these highly sought after unicorns, rockstars and superstars. "It's about time employers bend to the needs of the employee, and not the other way around," Graham remarked. "We literally have to turn the tables; that's the labor market we're in at the moment."

Action Item:

This one's particularly important. Determine how you can personalize work for your employees and make each employee's experience the best for them. Graham recommends considering the segments or groups that compose your org's employee base. "Think about how to strategically unite your employees, based upon similar wants, circumstances and preferences. Be careful not to overgeneralize or standardize your segmented groups." She emphasizes flexibility is key when configuring these groups, based on specific criteria. "It's why a globally local model is the answer, one with the ability to deploy strategic workflows based on distinct parameters. Create unique lanes of employee experiences, all with a single goal in mind." Graham asserts the best strategy for leaders is to "meet your employees where they are and how they want."

If you had any disadvantage as an employee pre-pandemic, it likely **doubled** in the midst of COVID.





STEP 7: Diversity, inclusion & belonging

To fully embrace the new world of work, [SHRM.org](https://www.shrm.org) says leaders must learn how to manage the business and human sides of the company...simultaneously. “Diversity, inclusion and belonging must coexist to create a culture where employees feel they can be authentic and are supported. Biases and stereotypes at work must be challenged. When diversity, inclusion and belonging are frequently discussed, they become a shared language and commitment to all within an organization.”

To complement this counsel, Graham suggests designing work with empathy. “First, you need to ask. Then listen. Then act. Provide timely follow-through. Show care for your employee base and have their backs,” the leader advised. “Lean into your new hires! Even if it seems foreign, they will define the future of work as the most culturally diverse, educated generation in the workforce today.”

Jess Von Bank agrees. “If you can build work with trust, communication and empathy, you’ll win by keeping people inspired **and** loyal. Nothing has to be perfect; employees just need to know that you're working on these things. Reinforce that you haven't lost sight of the end goal.”

By developing meaningful connections, all groups in a company can succeed and thrive, regardless of setbacks or limitations. Why? Von Bank explains that “because all are equipped with **equal advantage** in a diverse, inclusive workplace. Inclusion is a much bigger conversation than diversity. We should allow everyone who can and wants to show up to work to contribute the most value they can, along with what the business specifically needs from them,” she declared.

Finally, technology inequities need to be considered: is the process to access information the same for all employees? Can employees access the tools they need to complete their job? Does the company provide the appropriate accommodations that allow everyone to participate? Von Bank says that's inclusion too. "It's overcoming disadvantages so that everyone is able to contribute."

Action Item:

To be successful, particularly during The Great Resignation, leaders must invest in a process that's accessible, intuitive and configurable. Graham says that in order to be effective, this process must "be deployed at scale by segments, groupings or cohorts within each department or company division." She tells leaders to ask themselves three integral questions:

1. Does your company's existing infrastructure adequately support employees in this brave new world of work?
2. Are you providing the necessary support for leaders to satisfy the demands of their teams?
3. Are there methods in place to enable and empower your employees?

If the answer is "no" to any of these questions, it's clear what executives need to do... **ACT**.



A Tip from Jess:

Make all talent pools viable for you. This could be your competitive edge!

SC

Access

lock



STEP 8: Revisit pay & compensation packages

Gallup research found in late August that although many companies are trying to entice employees with increased salaries or stay bonuses, the cold, hard cash simply isn't cutting it. It's especially true for employees with one foot already out the door.

Clearly, money isn't the top driver for employees intent on jumping ship. Therefore, employers have to get creative and engineer fresh solutions to convince existing employees the benefits of staying. Graham supports revisiting your holistic compensation package to offer benefits that employees will actually use and appreciate throughout their tenure. She offers these tips:

- Ensure you're valuing employees in the right ways
- Provide the financial security employees are seeking
- Resolve pay equity issues at scale
- Personalize employee benefits with preferences and unique options
- Determine if the mix of salary and benefits support employee wellness

Daily pay and co-employment are becoming commonplace. Think of what you could do with a workforce like that!


OUT OF OFFICE
GONE
ON VACATION!

Action Item:

As HR professionals, we understand that money isn't the driving force to keep workers from leaving during The Great Resignation, so get innovative. Determine how employees value salary over other employee benefits like PTO, health insurance or 401(k). Then revisit your compensation and benefits plans as necessary.

"Implement holistic benefits that care for the employee as a whole and as a human," Graham says. "Round out your packages to actually address the integrated health and wellbeing of employees, beyond their pocket strings. Remember: this is much bigger than their wallet."

Graham recommends providing employees with critical resources for the human issues of HR: wellness, diversity and equal opportunity. She advocates the creation of more diverse benefits packages, based on individual preferences. "Provide employees with the chance to be involved in meaningful projects; in the community, through philanthropy or internal affinity groups with a focus on population sub-cultures," the Head of Marketing suggests.

A woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a white blazer and a pinstriped skirt, is speaking to a group of people. She is gesturing with her right hand. The background is blurred, showing other people in a meeting setting.

"Look at the most disadvantaged segments of the labor force first. If they were more harshly impacted by the pandemic, those are the things to look at when redesigning or readdressing employee experiences. Make those talent pools viable for you as a massive competitive edge and one way to reapproach the talent market now."

Jess Von Bank
Head of Marketing | Leapgen



STEP 9: Forge long-term careers

As noted by corporate HR authority [Josh Bersin](#), hiring outside employees can cost companies up to six times as much as hiring from their own talent pool. But when organizations leverage [internal mobility](#) as a strategic hiring practice, the typical new employee expenses are nearly eliminated.

Jess Von Bank maintains if you can socialize mobility within your organization and recruit from the inside first, it's significantly less expensive in the long run. "We always think about looking OUTSIDE company walls for talent; we forget we may already have people INSIDE the organization to do the job." She adds that internal mobility also:

- contributes to more easily filling open positions
- accelerates an employee's productivity
- removes the cost of recruiting a new hire

"When you empower workers to own their skills, keep an eye open for opportunities, navigate the path and find support along the way, people really do want to stay for the long haul," Von Bank confirmed. "Internal mobility is your #1 employee retention tool, but you must first create

A Tip from Jess:

Get skin in the game to understand what's competitive in the open market.



visibility, pathways and scaling opportunities.” The popular HR evangelist says the skills employees have are dynamic and change over time. “How you tap into your workforce based on the skills they deliver is how you build agility into your organization.” Von Bank encourages leaders to integrate a skills inventory into existing HR systems as a critical path to retaining talent.

Von Bank says instant messaging apps are important, because they keep people engaged from afar. It’s that connection that helps repair employee churn. The HR guru says it’s why you need an intentional internal mobility strategy that contributes to your retention efforts.

“People will be motivated to stay, grow and learn within your walls.”

Action Item:

Within the HR industry, we know employee retention begins with onboarding but must continue throughout the life of the employee. In fact, with a great onboarding experience, workers are 69% more likely to remain at a company for three years. So make engagements at key milestones during an employee’s tenure not only intentional but inspiring. “It goes well beyond onboarding into employee transitions, promotions, departmental shifts, you name it,” Graham asserts. “Focus on development and training to support lateral moves. Employees will see the benefits of a long-term career within the company,” she said.

Graham encourages formal or informal mentorship opportunities to connect new employees to senior leaders within the company. The contact with management provides new hires with invaluable guidance and counsel from senior leaders. Additionally, she recommends trying a reverse-mentorship structure to ensure communication is reciprocal. “Leaders can learn a great deal from newcomers, and this allows for personal connections across all levels for immersive culture engrainment.



STEP 10: Focus on retention from Day 0 on

Want your new hires to stick around for a while? Then you'd better be prepared to tell your story at every turn, starting the moment your candidate says "Yes." And Von Bank says we need to do a better job improving our storytelling skills in talent acquisition, onboarding and the entire HR gamut. "Storytelling is actually so simple and straightforward, plus people easily identify with a good story. Think about it...it's just the journey from here to there," she said with profound simplicity.

Once you have your story's narrative mapped out, you can start to reinforce the story and the message. "It's the employee journey that's the really exciting part," Von Bank exclaimed. "It's what gets new hires interested and engaged."

Danielle Balow, Director of Click's Consulting Practice, provides her expertise: "Define what it is that makes your organization unique, and embrace it when building out ideal employee experiences. From the start, you'll attract talent that appreciates your values. As a result, they'll find belonging and true fit into your culture. Ultimately, it's a win-win. It's how you showcase what you are good at."



A Tip from Danielle:

Help your
employees bring
their best selves
to work.



Action Item:

It's no exaggeration to say practically every employee and employer has suffered the effects of burnout over the past year and a half. "Energy depletion or exhaustion, distance or cynicism to one's job and reduced professional efficacy" is how the World Health Organization officially defined "burnout" for the first time in 2019. Then along came COVID in early 2020, and the vast majority of us began to experience these symptoms en masse.

So how can managers attack pandemic-related employee burnout head on? In August, Gallup offered three vital actions for reducing burnout and maintaining engagement **from the employees' perspective:**

- **Focus me.** Work with me to establish mutual expectations and priorities.
- **Free me** from unnecessary stress. Help me get the resources I need and remove barriers for me.
- **Help me** feel valued and supported. Ask my opinion, recognize my contribution and genuinely care about me.



Regardless of position, each individual has a personal obligation to ensure team members remain with the organization. Therefore, retention is everyone's responsibility. Talent retention takes tools and technology, but it also takes time and true intent. With these, success can be achieved when leaders make a coordinated, concerted effort on their:

- **People** - Change must affect everyone's role and must be a cross-company commitment.
- **Process** - Develop seamless workflows to match intent with follow-through for a higher degree of accountability.
- **Technology** - With the Digital Transformation upon us, your tech stack must hit the mark as your business evolves, today and tomorrow. Implement solutions that increase efficiency and automation, allowing you to put your people first.

Finally, make a promise to your people that directly reflects your commitment to fixing this very serious problem. "Host an all-company town hall meeting. Feature company leaders and their individual strategies for tackling both the big problems and the small," Graham advises.

- Host regular status meetings with employees to address your progress or deficiencies together, as a unified team.
- Don't forget to celebrate the wins! These are integral to maintaining positivity and high engagement.
- A carefully engineered roadmap enables progress tracking for every initiative.

Ultimately, it's time to put your employees and your organization on the road to better experiences.

And so that's how you compete. I'm telling you, the employer who takes care of their people right now wins, end of story. We're done. Everybody can go do something.

Jess Von Bank
Head of Marketing | Leapgen

IN CLOSING: **Consider Click**

Put your HOW plan into play today, not tomorrow.
Constructive, cogent takeaways for HR leaders

Now that you understand the five Ws of employee retention in 2021, you know how real the issues are. The problems and exorbitant costs associated with retaining your best employees during The Great Resignation aren't going away anytime soon. Without quick, strategic action, you could potentially lose the retention game altogether.

The HR experts at [SHRM.org](https://www.shrm.org) state the obvious benefits of urgently addressing the situation. "A comprehensive employee retention program can play a vital role in both attracting and retaining key employees, as well as in reducing turnover and its related costs. All of these contribute to an organization's productivity and overall business performance."



To achieve these goals amidst rampant employee turnover, it's time to adopt the tools and technology that will move your organization forward. Instead of the physical crutches to depend upon, you have to design creative, engaging experiences through a remote or hybrid working model. Whichever modality you choose, ensure it's digital, intuitive, user friendly and convenient. If it's not, you'll fall short. FAST.

Click Boarding is equipped with the data, intel and science to effectively engage talent as they enter the company. With immediate and continuous engagement opportunities, you can ignite new hire productivity, instill higher performance and relish restored retention. We've said it before, and we'll say it again: it all starts with onboarding long before the employee's first day, and as we've witnessed, it never truly ends.

Creating exceptional experiences across the entire employee journey is our mission at Click. We're committed to providing the most simple and empowering way for HR to deliver modern experiences that exceed employee expectations, maintain superior compliance and help everyone – HR included – reach their true potential.

Your employees deserve efficient, authentic and reliable engagements, starting at onboarding and continuing throughout their entire lifecycle. While leaning into the challenges from The Great Resignation has been difficult, your employee journey experience doesn't have to be!

We're here as your consultant to help you automate the process and delight your employees. When you're ready to focus on people and let the process run itself, we're only a click away.



www.clickboarding.com

@clickboardingHR

© Click Boarding™ is a trademarked company. 2021 Click Boarding LLC. All Rights Reserved.