Attract To Retain:
UNDERSTANDING THE FACTORS OF RETENTION TO HELP CREATE AN EFFECTIVE RETENTION PLAN IN SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Marisela Aguina
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Instructor: Marco Tavanti
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to explore the factors that impact retention rates in social service organizations to achieve their mission, positively and negatively.

- Nonprofits have higher annual employee turnover than government businesses; 3.1 percent compared to 2.7 percent in the business sector.
- The average employee exit costs 33% of their annual salary.
- 2-3 months of services loss per client.
- Employees that don't feel recognized when they do great work are almost 2x as likely to be job hunting.
Research Questions

RQ 1: Why do social services organizations have such high turnover rates?

RQ 2: What Strategies are nonprofit leaders using in order to retain their employees longer?

RQ 3: Are nonprofits fostering an environment that breeds high performance, retention and engagement?
METHODS AND APPROACHES


- Expert Interviews: Executive Director, Program Director, 3 Former employees, 3 Tenured employees, 4 New current employees.
“Extra work does not mean leadership opportunities.”

“Organizations need to practice what they preach.”

“The safety of employees should always come first.”

“We need to be trained well in order to feel safe in the field.”
IMPLICATIONS

“Getting the Right People on the Bus

Employees want to engage in causes they care about. They do not want to be involved in an organization that has something to hide.

Management Transparency

“Organizations need to create a safe work environment where employees are well trained to protect themselves in the field.”

Employee Safety

Leaders seeking to increase retention rates should incorporate meaningful and challenging development plans with training in all staff functions.

Staff Development Plan

In order to build a positive environment, it is important that “retention strategies do not come from a top down mentality but instead from a bottom up”

Building a Positive Environment

“ If we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus, then we’ll figure out how to take it someplace great.” - Jim Collins

Retention
1. Getting the Right People on the Bus

“Look, I don’t really know where we should take this bus. But I know this much: If we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus, then we’ll figure out how to take it someplace great.”
— Jim Collins
RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES

2. Staff Development plan - leaders seeking to increase retention rates should incorporate meaningful and challenging development programs such as training in all staff functions.
RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES

3. Building a Positive Environment - Reinforce a positive culture by nurturing an attitude of mission based work and respect.
4. Management Transparency - Employers want to see leaders and managers adapting transparency in everything they do.
RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES

5. Employee Safety - Employees described this as another factor of turnover, claiming the importance of supporting employee safety and not just numbers and deadlines.
REFERENCES


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