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5 Radical Solutions for HR teams to Thrive in the Great Resignation

According to a [Paychex survey](#),¹ ninety-eight percent of HR leaders say their role has transformed in the last two years. Businesses thrive on the concept that change is the only constant; the willingness to change makes economies grow.

The [punctuated equilibrium model](#)² demonstrates that radical change occurs when a crisis, like COVID-19, acts as catalysis and disrupts the status quo. The results are a deep shake-up of beliefs, systems, institutions, and rapid sweeping changes to promote growth.

The Great Resignation indicates that some industries hold on to old beliefs that no longer serve their businesses. According to the latest [Gallup poll](#),³ nearly half of all employees consider leaving their current employer. It's time to shake things up by changing old beliefs and systems to attract qualified candidates who want to be long-term associates. Here are five solutions HR teams can use to thrive in the Great Resignation.

ONE: Reskill, Upskill, and Multi Skill

Chief economists predict the staffing crisis may last another year. The right candidate may not show up tomorrow, but they may already be in your employ today. Retaining employees can affect the future of a company. No matter the size, every company can build a plan for reskilling and upskilling.

Upskilling gives businesses an option during staff shortages. Retraining current employees may be more cost-effective than recruiting new hires.

Upskilling can boost employee retention by showing employees you're willing to invest in them. A new hire may not make it through a 90-day assessment while current employees have a track record of loyalty.

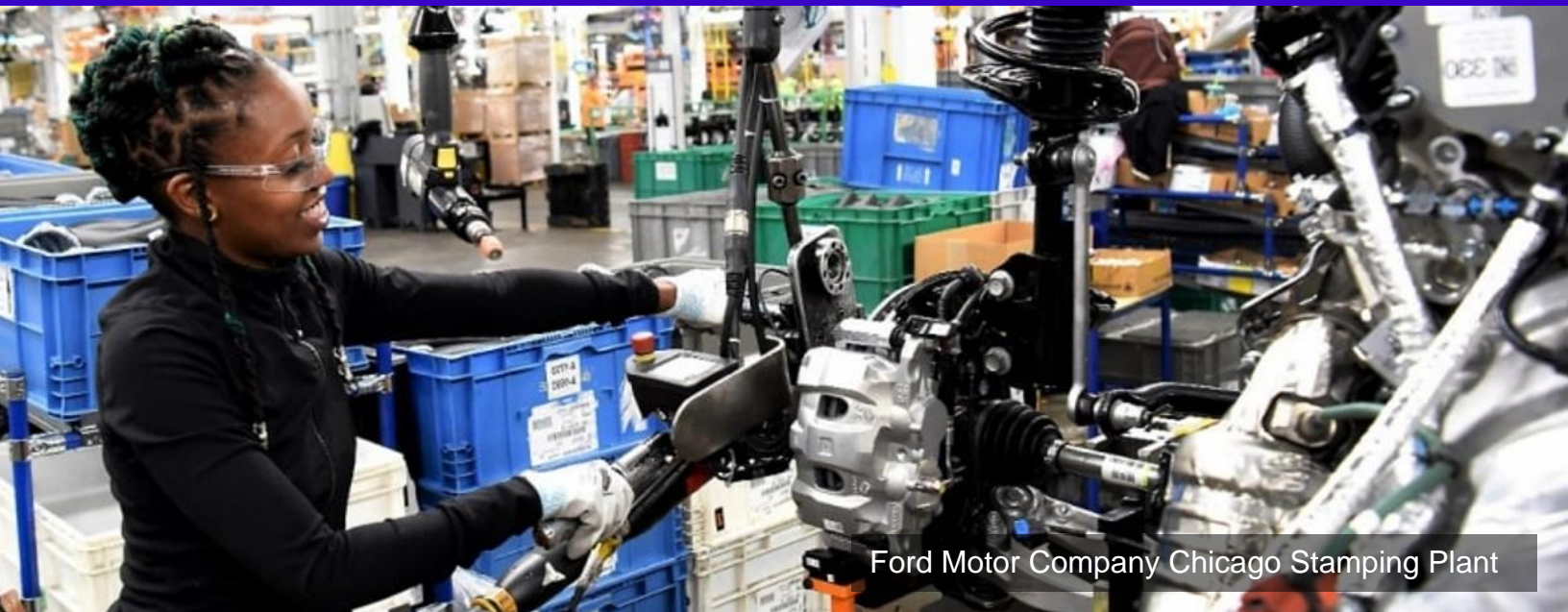
Upskilling can increase racial equity. Learning new skills can give inexperienced and low-paid workers a chance for career advancement. Employees can improve their skills and gain a better position within their current company. This strategy can increase equity and employee retention.

The staffing shortage shines a light on skill gaps in the workforce. Many employees fear losing their jobs because they don't know how to perform them well. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that 1.4 million workers may lose their jobs as their current skills become obsolete.

Reskilling can provide job security for employees and allow companies to hold on to an employee instead of going through the costly process of hiring a new worker.

Instead of searching the market for viable candidates – **create them**. Reskilling allows businesses to design a workforce tailored to their company's culture.

[Reskilling] is no longer a trend but a [survival strategy](#) that fuels or sustains a company's growth.



The multi-skill work model can eliminate downtime and loss of revenue. On assembly lines, teams use different machines on a monthly rotation, keeping their knowledge current and skills sharp. If one team member is absent, someone else can immediately take their place. Generalized skills are essential in staff shortages. This model can work well in a team-based organization.

Many HR professionals deploy training programs to help their companies expand employment opportunities. According to a Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) report, 52% of employers offer upskilling so employees can perform new tasks. HR managers may be resistant because they have so much on their plate, they cannot endure another task.

Most human resources departments have been in an uphill battle for the past year and a half combating a crisis but still coming up short. For HR teams, this is an opportunity for an achievable win. In this ongoing battle, everyone could use an obtainable victory. Internal retraining and promoting boost morale. Reskilling is a smart strategy and proactive tactic to handle shortages.

Two: Rules are made to be broken – set different standards

A corporation can set job qualifications that make it challenging, if not impossible, to find qualified candidates for positions. Human resources and job [candidates question the need for a college education to hold specific jobs.](#)⁴ Statistics show:

- 80% of employers want candidates with work experience
- 75% of employers think schools do not prepare students for the workforce
- 66% of HR managers will hire experience over academics

Bobbi Gutierrez, a corporate recruiter from Troy, MI, said she has entry-level positions that pay \$15 - \$18, and the company requires a bachelor's degree. I have not found any candidates with a 4-year degree willing to work for \$15 - \$18 an hour.

Companies have employees with decades of experience that aren't promoted because they do not have a formal education. Jeremey Wright said, "I have ten years of experience in my job, but I can't get promoted because I don't have a degree. To add insult to injury, I'm expected to train a new manager with zero experience."

Promoting employees within a company has many advantages. It reduces training costs, motivates employees to perform at higher standards, and shows workers they have opportunities to move past an entry-level position.

There is a mixture of talent at a recruiter's fingertips. Still, recruiters waste human resources on passive candidates, i.e., experienced candidates who have not expressed interest in leaving their current employer. According to the Harvard Business Review, this recruitment practice has an 11% success rate. If candidates with a degree are essential, the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)⁵ reports 3.7% of unemployed people have college degrees.

Only 17.9% of workers with disabilities were employed in 2020. Workers with disabilities are less likely to hold management positions. [Ten percent of workers with disabilities are self-employed](#),⁶ so they may possess valuable skills and be an asset to companies looking for experienced labor.





Adding diversity to your company can increase profitability. According to a [McKinsey & Company Report](#),⁷ companies with assertive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) standards can outperform companies with low diversity by 48%. A LinkedIn survey reveals 78% of job seekers look for DEI info on a company's page before applying for a job.

Changing job qualifications gives your company access to more viable candidates. It may be the solution you need to find employees to fill shortages quickly.

THREE: Make employee retention your top priority

An HR professional can use a strategy of "nurture first, and recruit second." While the Big Quit seems stressful, it has revealed your most valuable ally – the enthusiastic stayers. They are loyal employees that show up daily and love their jobs. In this time of the Great Resignation, dedicated employees still exist. Some experts believe they may be the key to ending the great resignation.

Give them a reason to stay

We live in a unique time, with five generations in the workforce. In the past, rewarding a worker with a gold watch for decades of service was acceptable; today's workforce is looking for something more.

The modern workforce demands a genuine relationship with their employers. They need communication, direction, growth, and reward. Offering new hires thousands of dollars in bonuses, remote work options, and more prominent positions doesn't go unnoticed by enthusiastic workers. They can feel devalued. Talk to your loyal employees and find out what motivates them and makes them satisfied with their work.

Incorporate the stay interview with your employees

Employees do not believe an annual review is helpful. They need regular feedback. Find out why your employees stick around and what would make them leave by incorporating the [stay interview](#) in your feedback process.

HR can formulate a meaningful strategy to retain loyal employees when managers share this info. A retention plan with employees' input shows you value your current employees and may decrease turnover.

Upskill your management team

Many reports or surveys point to bad management as a top reason for the Big Quit. An SHRM survey shows a staggering [84% of employees would like to leave current employers because of poor management or bad bosses](#).⁸ Managers can no longer

be trained with a "that's the way it's always been done" attitude.

Managers need new skills to address the rapidly changing workforce. Managers show skill gaps when dealing with a multigenerational workforce, technology, critical thinking, and challenges of managing remote work teams. Organizations need to help managers update their skills.

Deploying a bi-annual, 360-degree performance appraisal can be tricky, but it's invaluable in improving their effectiveness. HR can create a survey that encourages quantitative and qualitative feedback to ensure the survey is based on performance and not popularity.

Encourage a team-based culture

Team-based cultures thrive during staff shortages. It gives some of your employees what they want most; an atmosphere of trust, transparency, and open communication.

This group needs little management, speeds up the decision-making process, and generates breakthrough ideas. Team-based organizations can decrease the phenomenon of [social loafing](#)⁹ in a group.

Social loafing could be interpreted as employees feeling invisible in large groups. A team member may believe their effort will go unnoticed (or unrewarded), so why put forth the effort? The larger the group, the more significant the effect. Smaller groups give every team member the chance to be recognized for their efforts, inspiring all associates to put forth their best effort.

Frequently, I see organizations attempting to structure a workplace based on a single generation's expectations of benefits and conditions (one size fits all), and the result is that they alienate at least half of their workers.

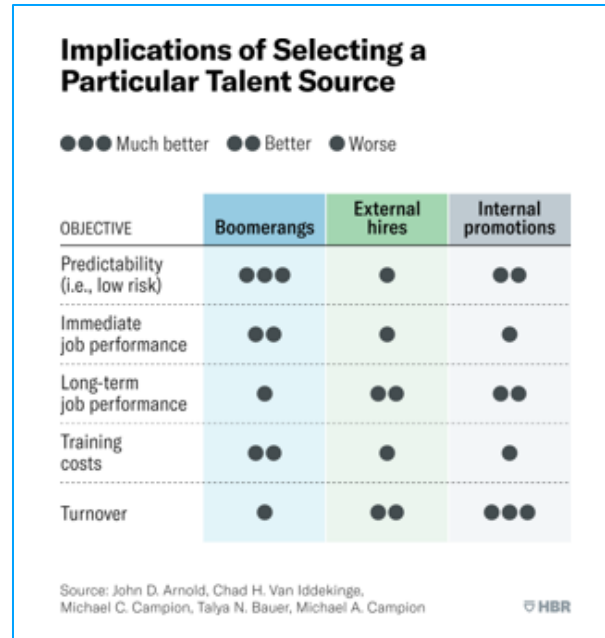
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Bring back boomerang employees

In times past, rehiring an employee was unthinkable. In some fields, the pool of qualified candidates is so small that hiring former employees is a sensible business practice. The onboarding process is quicker, and the training cost is lower. The HR team doesn't have to worry if this person is a good fit with the culture.

Some employers believe it's risky to rehire employees because they are likely to quit again. However, it can be a temporary fix for companies in dire need of workers.

Use these strategies to increase employee retention. Taking care of the employees who keep organizations afloat during the shortage should be a top priority.



FOUR: Decrease candidate drop off with a candidate-centric hiring process

The sharpest candidates aggressively seeking work will apply to multiple positions, not to mention recruiters actively seek these candidates if they have an active LinkedIn profile. The competition is fierce, and it takes little for an [applicant to drop out of the hiring process](#).¹⁰ A candidate-centered hiring process will make you stand out among competitors.

Create an enticing ad that makes a candidate say, "I want that job!"

First, make sure your ad is professional, precise, and error-free. Just like a good book, tell the most exciting attributes of the job at the beginning to keep the applicant reading until the end. Sell the position by communicating the benefits of the role. In the job description, paint a clear picture of the benefits the candidates receive to entice them to apply.

Provide a simple application process

Keep the application process as short as possible; if the process is complex, confusing, and frustrating, some candidates will not complete the application. The more information you ask for, the more likely they are to drop out of the process. Do you have filters that determine how far a candidate got with your application process? You might be surprised at what you learn.



I receive weekly solicitations from hiring managers; occasionally, I accept out of curiosity. I see poorly prepared application processes and harried interviewers whose minds are elsewhere. I have an agency that calls me every month to tell me I'm a top contender for a position I applied for in mid-September; it's *now the end of December*. I'm grateful that I love my current job.

Anna Kozlov,
Journalist,
Grand Island, NE

Make your interview process candidate-centric

Do you value the candidate by showing up to the interview on time? Do you abruptly cancel/reschedule interviews? Do you request candidates undergo multiple interviews on different dates that may disrupt their schedule? Do you ask redundant interview questions addressed in the resume, cover letter, or application? Do you "ghost" candidates that reach out for an updated status or feedback?

These company-centric strategies may demonstrate that your company doesn't communicate well with its employees in the interviewee's mind. The best candidates are interviewing you, noticing the verbal and non-verbal cues. If candidates feel undervalued during the process, they will likely drop out

Strong company branding and social reputation increase candidate retention

Savvy candidates will investigate your company to see if you're a good fit for their lifestyle. They will check online review services like Glassdoor to discover what employees think about your company. They will check your site for DEI info and hybrid work opportunities. Eighty-five percent of job seekers will not apply for a job that doesn't offer remote work options. If your brand projects a strong employee-centered culture, candidates may stay with the interview process until the end.

Shorten the hiring decision

The number one reason candidates drop out of the hiring process is the time between the interview and a job offer. HR personnel knows with current staff shortages, all systems are delayed, including the time it takes to process a new hire. Unfortunately, job seekers don't understand the procedure.

Impress your candidates by providing regular updates on their application status. A three-month hiring process may sound reasonable to an HR team, but it's unacceptable to candidates. Job seekers may perceive that your company is uninterested in moving forward with the hiring process.

Your best candidates who are energetically looking for work will wait 7 – 14 days before losing interest and accepting employment with your competitor with a shorter hiring time.



Provide complete transparency during the hiring process

Keep your lines of communication open during the hiring process; the candidate expects you to keep them in the loop. You may increase candidate retention by listing hiring process times in your job ads.

Reverse-engineer your hiring process and think like a candidate. Imagine you are applying for the job you offered and ask yourself if you would stick around to the end of the process.

Five: When remote work isn't possible, offer perks

Frontline workers like nurses, construction workers, cashiers, production line workers represent the deskless workforce. They work in positions where hybrid or work-from-home options are not available. With 85% of the workforce demanding hybrid options, attracting and retaining deskless workers presents a challenge. There are still incentives you can offer frontline workers.

Flexible Schedules

Remote work is not an option in the restaurant and hospitality industries, but you can offer flexible hours. A restaurant in Florida is testing a [4-day work schedule](#) they hope will decrease burnout and turnover. It is seeing positive results as they have devised a schedule that allows them to remain open seven days a week. One chef states, "[it's] one of the biggest selling things."



Offer Benefits

Some deskless workers are put in a position where they can't afford to work. If a monthly wage is \$1,160 and child care for one child costs \$400 - \$1,600 per month, it puts them in a dilemma. Offering child care, mental health, healthcare benefits, paid vacation, or college savings assistance can help retain frontline workers. You can also survey current employees to determine what benefits would help them the most.

"Job candidates are shopping. They are looking for the company with the best offer. Even those making minimum wage are looking for companies that offer benefits. The company with the most attractive employee package will win."

Stephen Quinn, Recruiter, Staffing Agency, West Jordan, UT

Embrace DEI policies and programs

Diversity can increase your talent pool. DEI is essential, and some applicants will not apply to companies that don't embrace DEI in their work culture. Shawmut Design and Construction, [a multibillion-dollar construction company, achieved 100% pay equity for their employees.](#)¹² An inspirational feat in an industry that is male-dominated.

Through their diversification efforts, Shawmut increased their women and people of color hires by 15% and 5%, respectively. They have implemented mentor programs designed to guide new hires through onboarding and expose employees to different cultures. It can be a challenge to live by a new standard, but a work ethic that increases retention and helps employees work together as a team is worth it.

Mentoring

The first 90 - 120 days for a new hire is crucial; unfortunately, 33% don't make it past that mark. Many companies lose new hires in the first six months because newer generations of workers demand ongoing assessment.



One-third of new employees quit because of poor onboarding practices like frustrating paperwork, poor training, and undesirable work cultures that cause workers to leave companies quickly.

Assigning new employees mentors offers them strong support through the difficult onboarding process. It builds diversity and allows companies to gain new perspectives and ideas by seeing the company through new employees' eyes. Mentoring shows promising results, with [83% stating mentoring influenced their decision to stay with their current employer](#).¹³

Generation Z is entering the workforce; they have their own unique needs - the demand continuous feedback, not just once a year. Building a mentoring program into the onboarding process encourages employee retention. As an article in [Forbes](#)¹⁴ explains, "Generation Z wants to be mentored, not managed."

When looking for new workers, mention the benefits you offer in your job ads; you'll increase the quality and quantity of applicants. Job seekers will be more likely to apply when they see your company is offering more than a paycheck.

Use these five radical solutions to change your organization internally and externally. Using extreme tactics to resolve ongoing challenges may bring positive results. Finding and retaining new staff members during this crisis is only half of the solution.

The Great Resignation is a cause-and-effect relationship. The problem, or cause, is broken systems within an organization, and staff shortages are a symptom of the broken systems. Until the internal problems are resolved within companies, the external problem (staff shortages) will continue.

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Denise Hubbard designed and wrote this spec white paper. If you would like to collaborate on a project, contact her at denise@writersimpact.com or review more of her work at www.writersimpact.com.

