

What employees want from employers

SB smartbrief.com/original/2021/10/what-employees-want-employers

October 12, 2021



Pexels

The Great Resignation. Record-high job openings. Employee burnout. It's more difficult than ever to attract and retain top talent.

In the struggle to determine what employees want, many employers may wish they had the ability to read employees' minds -- like the character in the movie "What Women Want" who has the ability to hear what women are thinking. There are five essential basics that employees want: clarity, to be equipped, respect, trust and recognition.

By starting with these, employers can make themselves much more attractive to new and existing employees.

Learn more in this video.

To book Denise Lee Yohn to inspire and teach your people to become great leaders, see her [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

If you like this article and video, sign up for SmartBrief's free email newsletter [on leadership](#). It's among SmartBrief's [more than 250 industry-focused newsletters](#).

Transcript

Between the record-high job-opening rate and the dramatic increase in people quitting their jobs, companies are struggling to attract and retain employees these days. You're probably wondering what employees want.

Of course, employees want competitive compensation and benefits. And there's plenty that human resources teams can do to improve recruiting, performance management, and other HR aspects of the employee experience. But as business leaders, we play an important role in ensuring employees get what they want so that new people are attracted to our company and existing employees are motivated to stay.

Generally speaking, there are five basics of what employees want:

First, clarity. Employees want to be clear about what they are supposed to do and why it's important. So, we must ensure people know what they're expected to do and what success looks like. And employees want to do meaningful work, so we must connect the dots between their daily tasks -- especially those that seem mundane or rote -- and the broader purpose of our organization.

Second, employees want to be equipped. They want to be successful at their jobs, so we should ensure they have the skills and the tools they need to do their jobs well. Given how the nature of work is changing so dramatically, this means providing training on new technology, data and analytics, and/or on communicating, collaborating and cultivating new relationships. And we must arrange for employees to be equipped with tools, such as devices, platforms and resources.

The third thing employees want is respect. They want to be respected as people in general, so we must recognize our common humanity and treat employees with dignity and care. Moreover, employees want to be respected as individuals, so we must acknowledge different needs and wants within our workforce and appreciate the different backgrounds and perspectives our people have.

Related to respect is trust, and that's No. 4 on the list of what employees want. They want to be trusted to do their jobs, so we must give them freedom and support -- freedom to make decisions and support to help them make those decisions well.

Of course, this must be done at a level that is appropriate for the job, but in general, employees are much more likely to perform with excellence and produce results if we trust them to figure out the best way to do their jobs.

And lastly, employees want recognition and appreciation. They want to know that we see them and we value their work. We don't only do this through financial rewards. In fact, many studies show that once employees feel their compensation is fair, they're more motivated by other types of awards and recognition. And a simple, timely and public "thank you" can be very effective.

It's a difficult time to be an employer, but starting with these basics of what employees want is the best way to attract and retain top talent.