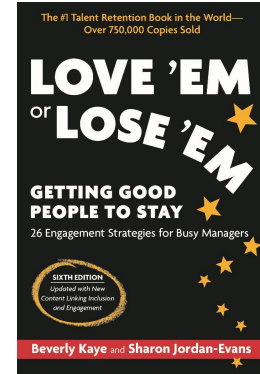


Employees want—and expect—meaningful work, supportive leaders, recognition, and a chance to learn and grow. This guide offers twenty-six simple strategies—from A to Z—to help managers create a supportive workplace culture, address employee concerns and keep your team engaged.



Adapted from the Wall Street Journal bestseller, *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay* by Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans



A ASK: Why Do You Stay?

Conduct stay interviews. Learn what engaging or meaningful work means to each teammate and if it's not in your scope, then help him or her find that ideal next position inside the organization. The next time a talented employee asks for something you think you might not be able to give, respond by using these four steps:

1. Restate how much you value the employee.
2. Tell the truth about the obstacles you face in granting the requests.
3. Show you care enough to look into the request and stand up for the employee.
4. Ask, "What else?"

B BUCK: It Stops Here

The truth is you matter most – more than money. If you are a manager or a project leader, you actually have more power than anyone to keep your best employees. Why? Because the factors that drive employee satisfaction, engagement, and commitment are largely within your control. And the factors that satisfy and engage employees are the ones that keep them on your team.

C CAREERS: Support Growth

Your role in career development has changed. You still have an important role, but your employees actually *own* their careers and they know that.

Your job is to lend support by providing perspective and having an ongoing dialogue that helps uncover and discover opportunities for fulfillment. Five steps to build your talent pipeline and support your employees' search for a good career fit:

1. Know their talents.
2. Offer your perspective.
3. Discuss trends.
4. Discover multiple options.
5. Co-design an action plan.

D DIGNITY: Show Respect

Notice your employees. Pay attention as you walk down the halls and say hello by name. Smile, greet your employees, and introduce them to others - even those of higher rank. They will feel respected and definitely not invisible.

E ENRICH: Energize the Job

When promotions and pay raises are in short supply, you might turn to learning as a way to enrich their jobs. Learning on the job is a powerful way to engage or reengage with the work. One by one and team by team, you can build and reap the rewards of a learning organization.

F FAMILY: Get Friendly

You have tremendous opportunities to get family-friendly within your own work group. What you do as a manager can mean so much to your employees as they juggle work and family. And much of what you can do as a manager costs you and your organization little or nothing.

G GOALS: Expand Options

Do you get a knot in your stomach when a valued employee says one of these phrases?

- I'd like to talk to you about my career.
- I don't understand why X got that promotion. I thought I...
- Only a step up makes me feel appreciated.

H HIRE: Fit Is It

Engaging and retaining talent starts with the hiring process. Why? Because getting the right people in the door in the first place increases the odds of keeping them. As the manager, you have the clearest sense of the right fit for your department. Spend more time identifying the critical success factors for a position, preparing and conducting excellent interviews based on those factors, and, finally, evaluating and comparing the candidates before making a hiring decision.

I INFORMATION: Share It

People's attitudes toward having, sharing or hoarding information has changed. Your team expects you to help them look to the future. That includes providing information that supports your employees' development. You need to share what you know about the following:

- Your organization's strategic direction and goals
- The emerging trends and new developments that may affect career possibilities

J JERK: Don't Be One

Have you ever had a boss who exhibited "jerk-like" behaviors? You know, they're the ones who shout, humiliate, discriminate, fail to listen, demand perfection, disrespect, betray trust—and simply don't care.

K KICKS: Get Some

How do you feel about fun at work? Do you believe in it? Support it? Make it happen? Discourage it? Evaluate your own assumptions about fun at work. Then consider creating and supporting kicks in the workplace.

A fun-filled workplace generates enthusiasm—and that leads to increased productivity, better customer service, a positive attitude about the company, and higher odds that your talent will stay.

L LINK: Create Connections

Are you a linker or non-linker? It's difficult to leave a workplace when you have links (connections) to *people* and organizational *purpose*. On some level you know that's true. But are you helping your talented people create the links that will engage and retain them?

M MENTOR: Be One

Mentoring has become a way not only to transfer crucial skills and knowledge but to inspire loyalty in new employees, emerging leaders, and older workers who might otherwise leave sooner. It also broadens the opportunity net to include those who might have been overlooked. If you hope to build a more inclusive organization, consider mentoring as one powerful approach to doing that.

N NUMBERS: Run Them

What is the real cost of talent loss? Who are your high-fliers, high-potentials, and stars? They're also your solid citizens—the ones who show up every day to do great work. They are men and women, young and old. They look, speak, create, and think differently from you. And you need them on your team.

O OPPORTUNITIES: Mine Them

Engagement-focused managers listen carefully to the diverse requests their talented people bring them. They avoid pigeonholing and making assumptions about what opportunities people would really want.

Opportunity mining, as the name suggests, entails digging deeply, looking carefully, and capturing new opportunity. Its key behaviors are *seeking*, *seeing*, and *seizing*. As a manager, you can partner with your employees to opportunity mine.

P PASSION: Encourage It

Passion for work means that people find what they do to be so exciting that it sometimes doesn't even feel like work. When was the last time you pulled your team together to ask for their ideas and encourage them to build on one another's creativity? Employees love the opportunity to think aloud with their managers; they want to "blue sky" occasionally.

Q QUESTION: Reconsider the Rules

Which would you rather keep – the rules or the people? We had a great test of rule questioning in the early months of the coronavirus pandemic, when established ways of doing business had to be redesigned in a hurry.



R REWARD: Provide Recognition

Pay fairly and pay competitively. But don't stop there. The research that suggests you need to pay fairly to keep your people also says that money alone won't keep them. *Money is not the major motivator.* Challenge, growth opportunities, flexibility, great coworkers, meaningful work, a boss who values them, and recognition are examples of things that matter to most of your people.

S SPACE: Give It

Think about the last boss you had who dictated your every move, held stringently to the policy manual, or was never open to new ideas. That boss didn't understand inner space or outer space.

- Inner space is the mental and emotional space employees need to feel like creative, productive team members.
- Outer space is the physical world; breaks, work space and location.

T TRUTH: Tell It

Studies show that employees yearn for straight talk. They want to *hear* the truth about their performance and the organization. And they want to *tell you* the truth about your performance. When truth is missing, people feel demoralized, less confident, and less loyal.

The secret of truth telling is to view it as a *gift*. If you believe that giving truthful, balanced feedback will help people be more effective in their careers and in life, then you will be more inclined to give (and get) feedback.

U UNDERSTAND: Listen Deeper

When you tune out, you miss out. Be curious and listen to understand. Communication is critical to keeping your talent. If people feel heard, understood, and valued by you, they will work harder and produce more. And if they don't feel heard, they will disengage or depart.

V VALUES: Define and Mine

Values are the standards for measuring our bottom-line needs. And more than anything, they are the engine for our actions. They help us decide how much of ourselves we bring to our work and whether we should stay – or leave for a job that delivers on what matters most.

W WELLNESS: Sustain It

Today's workplace is typically high-energy and highly productive. To play successfully within it, you and your employees must be *well* and *fit* – mentally, emotionally, and physically. Wellness is a "must have" rather than a "nice to have." Without it, you simply will not win. As a manager, how do you enhance your team's wellness?

X EXPLORE GENERATIONS: Beware and Be Aware

Generations are defined by spikes and declines in birthrates. The people in each group are influenced by the cultural events, changes, and challenges that they experience, especially during their formative years. As a result, they bring their own set of attitudes, perceptions, and values to the workplace. Be aware, today's workplace has five distinct generations, each with its own perspective and expectations.

Y YIELD: Power Down

Empower your team. Give an employee a chance to lead that project that you've been holding for yourself. Offer the spotlight. YIELD and coach when necessary. What has he or she learned? What did you learn?

Z ZENITH: Go for It

How wide is your knowing-doing gap? Amazing leaders are always learning, striving to improve, and reaching for a new zenith. In the process they engage and retain talent. Some action steps for gap-closing:

- *Create* your to-do list
- *Test-drive* it
- *Get* feedback
- *Seek* help

