What led you to your interest in talent management and employee retention?

I did my doctorate thesis on how organizations developed the careers of their employees. I have always believed if a person has passion for what they do they will be engaged. Based on this interest, I wrote my first book, “Up is Not the Only Way.” It is so important for organizations as they are in the race for talent that they continue to grow their employees.

What are the greatest challenges to employee retention in 2012?

There will be a surge in employees seeking other opportunities and those companies that have not treated their employees well will be left in the dust. If talented employees do not see opportunity where they are at they will go elsewhere. So it will be important to retrain and hold managers accountable for retaining their employees.

What are employees looking for when selecting a company to work for?

Across the board employees are asking, is this an organization that will grow and develop me? Will there be opportunities to grow, get feedback and will I understand where the company is going? Will I be in on the strategy of the organization? Will my skill sets be used — if not, they will pack up and go to an organization that will help them grow. Employees are also looking for great colleagues to work with, too.

Research shows that people generally leave their manager vs. their company. What are a couple of things that a manager can do to retain their most talented employees?

I wrote “Love ‘Em or Lose ‘Em” to give people ideas. The book is arranged in alphabetical order with ideas. A is “Ask your people, what can I do to retain you?” You have to ask. Instead of an exit interview, do a stay interview. What can a manager do to keep employees with their organization? What are the small things that really matter to an individual so they can grow and flourish? Once you know, move forward and do something about it.

How does a company become an employer of choice?

One is to understand the difference between knowing and doing. A lot of companies do surveys, analyze the data, and benchmark best practices, but they do not take any real action. Managers need to also ask, are employees doing what they love? Are managers showing that they care? And are managers being held accountable?

What is your best advice for up-and-coming leaders?

Get to know the talent of your people and what they can offer ... Don’t assume that you know it because you have worked with them in the past.

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