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It's long been said that people don't quit their jobs, they quit their managers.

To boost retention, companies need people who can effectively inspire and lead others. In fact, [LinkedIn's 2023 Most In-Demand Skills](#) list puts management at the top of the most needed skills.



4 Minute Read

“The role of the manager is really important, because managers are the everyday representation of the company,” says Andrew McCaskill, career expert for LinkedIn. “Your manager is how you see the company and how you navigate your relationship with the company. It’s one of those roles where the person has to hone their skills in being good managers, always be learning and developing.”

McKinsey’s [2022 Great Attrition research](#) found that uncaring and uninspiring leaders were one of the top three reasons those who left their jobs chose to quit, says Emily Field, coauthor of [The Power to the Middle: Why Managers Hold the Keys to the Future of Work](#) and a partner at McKinsey’s Seattle office.

“Additional [McKinsey Global Institute](#) research found that organizations that excel at building up their employees—we’d argue through their middle managers—experience attrition rates that about five percentage points lower than their peers,” she says.

Management is a skill made up of underlying skills. People who make good managers often create dedicated teams that work hard for the collective success of the team and the organization. Here are five traits of manager that employees won’t want to quit.

1. They give context

One of the biggest mistakes managers can make is assuming that their team understands what’s happening in the company, says McCaskill. “Managers have to help give context to what’s happening around them and what’s happening in the industry,” he says. “Given all of the uncertainty that’s in the marketplace, it’s so easy to just look at the headlines and not double-click and actually read the articles. They should be having real conversations with employees about how the company is doing.”

Even if the news isn’t good, transparency can build trust. “Staying open, informing employees, and being empathetic in all the conversations with direct reports is a winning strategy,” says McCaskill.

2. They are proactive

Most leaders hold exit interviews, asking employees questions such as, “What went wrong?” “What were you seeking that we couldn’t provide?” Or “What could I have done to make it better?” But after someone has decided

to leave, it's too late, says Ola Chowning, partner at global technology research and advisory firm ISG.

Instead, leaders should remain continually engaged with their employees, asking them about their goals and needs, if they are feeling engaged and challenged, and how they can make the employee's work life better, she says.

"[Show] interest and compassion and [take] mitigating actions before an employee begins to think about leaving," says Chowning. "Employees work for leaders from whom they can learn. Share knowledge, share insights, be vulnerable and open. Allow employees the environment to ask questions and learn."

3. They are empathetic

Empathy is of utmost importance, says Ravishankar Gundlapalli, author of [*The Art of Mentoring: Simple Tools and Techniques to Achieve Your Full Potential*](#) and the founder of the peer-to-peer learning platform MentorCloud.

"As a leader, you are dealing with people, so you need to have empathy along with compassion," he says. "You need immense patience. . . . For leaders to be effective coaches, they must inspire more than they influence."

4. They help employees grow

Employees won't want to leave when their managers bring out the best in them.

"Managers do this best by serving as navigators, connectors, and coaches, helping employees navigate their organizations and individual careers; fostering learning and continuous development; ensuring each person's voice is heard and respected; and understanding and advocating for the needs of their direct reports," says Field.

Good leaders give employees new tasks, delegate with impunity, and create a culture of psychological safety that recognizes that doing something new often results in mistakes, adds Chowning.

"Help employees find where their right fit is from a capability perspective," she says. "Younger employees in particular are often testing and trialing

different areas—give them candid feedback on how they perform to better allow them to recognize and further expand strengths and mitigate weaknesses.”

Then apply the leadership adage: “Stand behind employees when they are successful,” says Chowning.

“Let them have the limelight, praise them openly,” she says. “Stand in front of them when they are obstructed to break down barriers to success, defend when necessary . . . give them stretch tasks that allow them to learn and grow.”

5. They value employees’ input

Your role as a leader isn’t to know all the answers; it’s to help your team develop the answers, says Shanna Hocking, leadership consultant and author of [*One Bold Move a Day: Meaningful Actions Women Can Take to Fulfill Their Leadership and Career*](#).

“Ask questions and truly listen to what your employees say,” she says. “They often have insights on what can be done to make the work better and more efficient. This is especially valuable when you’re starting a new project or initiative. Employees who feel heard and valued are more likely to want to contribute to projects and do their best work.”

That said, Hocking doesn’t believe managers should aim to be someone employees don’t ever leave. “It’s my job as a leader to create an environment where employees thrive personally and professionally, and help people fulfill their potential, wherever best suits them,” she says.

Source: Fast Company

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