



1 Perk Small Businesses Can Offer to Win Over Employees Now

Description

Unlike the United States, Canada isn't overly burdened with a labour shortage. While that may seem hard to believe, the numbers don't lie. According to Canada Statistics, the labour force participation rate, that is, the percentage of Canadians working or job hunting, declined only by .3% relative to pre-pandemic levels. For perspective, that number is 1.7% lower in the U.S.

Notwithstanding that bout of good news, small businesses are facing a challenge, and it might be on par with the Great (American) Resignation: employee retention.

Around 46% of small business owners say it's harder to find and retain employees than it was pre-pandemic, says a survey conducted by Maru Public Opinion for ADP Canada. Of those employees who are leaving, around 32% leave for better salaries, 29% leave for a career change, and 17% leave to take a more senior role at another company.

Sometimes you can't help it if employees leave for a new position somewhere else. But sometimes you can. And if you're going to reduce retention as much as possible, you may have to amp up a popular: flexibility.

The perk: Be flexible

If there's one word that will define the best companies post-COVID-19, it's certainly flexibility.

Employees want to work for small businesses that don't take a one-size-fits-all approach to work schedules. They want a company that's willing to accommodate people's different lifestyles, that gives people the freedom to work where they want, and that allows employees to speak into the projects they work on.

But there's something deeper here: workplace flexibility isn't just about giving more autonomy to employees. It's about recognizing that employees have different needs.

Some employees are extremely stressed about childcare, and they need a job that allows them to

spend more time with their children. Other employees are stressed about *adult* care, that is, taking care of elderly parents, with the same desire: a job with more flexibility. Medical conditions, mental health problems, and even financial problems can also push employees toward jobs that allow them to integrate unique living conditions with their jobs.

What does flexibility look like?

According to the survey, over half of small business owners already believe work-life balances and flexible schedules are key benefits to retaining employees. But what does that look like in practice?

For one, that means offering remote work as an option to employees. Of course, you don't have to go full-on remote. You could offer a hybrid model, allowing employees to work in the office part of the week and at home the other part.

For retailers and brick-and-mortar stores, who need employees to work onside, that could mean instead offering "flextime," or the ability to choose their own hours. When employees have more control over their day, they'll feel less burdened by their work schedules.

In addition to scheduling and remote work environments, flexibility could imply more employee autonomy. That means giving your employees the freedom and resources to solve their own problems. This kind of flexibility often leads to what some business leaders call "psychological ownership:" your employees want the company to succeed, not because you'll fire them if they don't, but because they take ownership in your company. They're pushing business objectives because accomplishing them means hitting their *own* personal milestones, too.

That, to me, is the real perk of flexibility. When your employees don't feel confined by their jobs, when they feel they have room to grow, they will. And who wants to leave a job that makes someone feel like a better version of themselves?

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Date

2025/06/30

Date Created

2021/11/17

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