



Do You Strive to Have 'Top Gun' Employees?

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"Top Gun," the 1986 action film starring Tom Cruise grossed \$356 million. It was about the best fighter pilots who received special invitations to train at the U.S. Navy's fighter weapons school, called Top Gun.

A sequel, titled "Top Gun Maverick" and also starring Tom Cruise, is now playing to greater critical and commercial success. The term, "top gun," made me wonder how it could be applied to employees. Top gun is defined as "one who is at the top as in ability, rank or prestige." The first known use of the top gun term was in 1941.

A top gun recruitment process needs to focus on the candidates who are the best of the best. To hire the best requires a thoughtful recruiting process. To determine the best way to find, attract and hire the best people for your organization, think about the type of people you need for your organization and adjust various recruitment processes based upon the departments and teams you are searching for over time. Keep the process simple and short.

Make sure you have a focused recruitment process to weed out the top talent from the pool of applicants. Examine other organizations that have outstanding employees. See how these employees were hired. Look at their recruiting and orientation process. Do you believe you have top gun employees? If you are lucky enough to have top gun employees, determine ways to retain these employees.

The key to success and longevity in today's complex organizational environment begins and ends with employee retention. The financial implication of high turnover is

high. The role of employee retention must be an organizational strategy. Best practices for retaining key top gun employees include knowing how to retain them before you hire them. You need to identify your key players and understand why they are important to the organization.

Make sure your key employees are motivated and have open lines of communication with them. Strive to overcompensate them so there are no salary issues. Give key employees growth opportunities and develop them within the organization. Provide non-salary employee benefits and offer a healthy work environment through recognition and culture of appreciation.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce notes one way to keep your organization growing is by keeping core talent. This can be achieved by paying above-average salaries, allowing employees to speak their minds, showing appreciation and respect, encouraging input and feedback, avoiding micromanagement, identifying and investing in high performers, and offering the ability to grow. Constantly talk to your high achievers about what is important to them. Make sure the organizational mission and their personal mission are in alignment. Seek to support them in ways that will keep them from thinking about leaving the organization.

The workplace is evolving, and employees are now job hopping. It is important to strive to keep employees from leaving and encourage new potential employees to apply. Make sure you hire the right people who have the skills and personality to fit within your organization. Show employees new opportunities and provide them a variety of unique benefits.

Manage top gun employees with trust and establish a splendid work environment. Provide work amenities for employees. Prioritize a work-life balance and establish constant, two-way feedback. Make employees feel valued and give them freedom to work. Show that your organization is talent-worthy and ensure their high engagement. Interview employees when they leave to determine ways to improve retention.

Organizations are suffering due to the Great Resignation. It is obvious when a top gun employee leaves, the pressure builds on others within the organization to perform in

greater quantity and quality metrics. Quality employees are leaving due to inadequate salary and benefits, feeling overworked and unsupported, lack of appreciation, dislike of the company culture, desire to make a change and other reasons.

To help improve organizational retention now, focus on establishing or improving these areas:

1. Onboarding and orientation
2. Mentorship programs
3. Employee compensation
4. Perks
5. Wellness offerings
6. Communication
7. Feedback on performance
8. Training and development
9. Recognition and reward systems
10. Work-life balance
11. Flexible work arrangements
12. Effective change management
13. An emphasis on teamwork
14. Acknowledgement of milestones, big and small

Do you strive to have high performing top gun employees? If so, recruit well now and make every effort to retain your current best of the best employees. High performers

enjoy and desire to work with other high performers. It is now time to improve your team which will lead to greater organizational success!

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