



## How to Win the 'Great Resignation'

By Scott Miller

Uncertainty has many leaders feeling paralyzed.

Return-to-office plans have been written, rewritten, delayed, shelved, and in some cases shredded. Work-from-home requirements from employers have turned into work-from-home expectations from employees. Businesses can't find workers to meet pent-up demand. And the unprecedented willingness of workers to simply quit is keeping leaders awake at night. Then there are the explosive complexities, uncertainties and frictions of new federal vaccine mandates. And let's not forget the reverberations through the global supply chain.

Things are tough out there. And the future is very hard to see right now.

There is a clear way forward.

Unsure of what's next, some leaders pause, squint and deliberate. But the top-performing companies of the future are taking action -- not to mention a competitive lead.

They're doubling down on the "knowable" aspects of human nature and behavior -- things that are true now and will remain true. Things that are disruption-proof.

And one of the most disruption-proof, time-tested human needs is for development. People demand growth and development. They will leave companies that don't provide it and flock to companies that do. In a June 2021 survey with Amazon, Gallup found that 57% of U.S. workers want to update their skills and 48% would consider switching jobs to do it.

In fact, workers aged 18 to 24 consider upskilling a more important benefit than retirement, sick leave, parental leave, life insurance and vacation. Even among workers aged 55 and older, more than half (53%) say upskilling is "very" or "extremely" important.

Recognizing and acting on this simple fact right now creates a timely advantage.

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When you think about it, it's almost magnetic. The forces behind the "Great Resignation" repel -- pushing employees out of their orbits and dispersing a massive amount of human talent.

In this moment of opportunity, exceptional companies are reverse engineering those forces to attract top talent. They're acting decisively on what Gallup has discovered: The No. 1 reason people change jobs is for career growth opportunities.

Examples are everywhere. Amazon recently announced it will invest about a billion dollars in upskilling workers.

Forward-looking organizations like these are integrating the promise and process of growth into every facet of their employee experience, and they're not stopping there.

They're openly advertising development and upskilling as a competitive benefit. They're making it a centerpiece of their EVPs, writing it into their job ads, and talking about it early in the recruiting and interviewing process.

It's a winning strategy. And if your organization is looking to adopt it, Gallup has a strongly differentiated, research-based recommendation about where you might want to begin.

Start with your managers.

Well-developed managers create durable competitive advantages.

Take turnover for example. Many companies are learning the hard way that staying afloat while understaffed or unpredictably staffed is a serious business problem. Great managers reduce turnover more effectively than any other role in your organization. In fact, prior to the pandemic, Gallup Panel data found that it takes a pay increase of around 20% to lure most employees away from managers who engage them.

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Investing heavily in managers increases your company's magnetism. With great managers, current employees become harder to poach and new hires are onboarded to more engaged teams, making them more likely to stay.

Even while helping to balance the turnover equation, well-developed managers respond to challenges by helping companies do more with less. They fuel productivity, profitability and sales because they never stop cultivating employees' potential. They

set clear expectations and coach continually. This creates healthy accountability to top priorities and pays off in measurable business outcomes.

And because great managers prioritize team engagement, they inspire even higher levels of performance during times of severe disruption like we're facing now. You read that right. Engaged employees actually outperform themselves when times are tough.

Here's the bottom line: When you develop your managers, you harness one of the most reliable, time-tested performance drivers Gallup has ever discovered.

But manager development is more than an opportunity. It's a literal prerequisite to future success.

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Why? Managers are looking at job openings just like everyone else -- and they're more at risk than ever for everything from burnout to departure. Even under normal circumstances, managers tend to be less engaged than the people on their teams.

But things are especially difficult for managers right now. They're dealing with talent mobilization, turnover, remote work, hybridization, burnout (their team's and their own) ... it's just a lot.

What can you do about it?

Lock down your best managers today and set them up for success tomorrow. Make them unrecruitable. Then give them the tools and development they need to do their nearly impossible jobs.

Do that, and they're much more likely to stay and help forge a culture that shields your organization from the perils of current and future disruption.

Discover the Boss to Coach Learning Journey

Here's exactly what that looks like.

To become exceptional, managers don't just require upskilling: They often require reskilling.

Managers need a different set of skills than they used as individual contributors. To succeed (not to mention meet the basic needs and expectations of their team), managers need to become less like bosses and more like coaches.

"Table stakes" for the modern coaching manager include things like asking great questions, listening to individualize, and using employee strengths to drive engagement and produce measurable business outcomes.

Helping managers master these capabilities requires a sophisticated approach that's likely to include some combination of:

- Live instruction and discussion to inspire them and shift their mindsets

- Practical tools to enable deployment of their new skills

- Interactive practice, debrief, and repetition to build their automaticity and confidence
- Self-paced learning to deepen and individualize their mastery
- Experiential learning to promote application
- Social learning to build community and reinforce adoption
- Pervasive, individualized focus on the individual strengths of each manager
- Coaching and feedback to promote their engagement

This type of manager development works because it's more than instructive -- it's transformative. It evolves mindsets and skillsets, teaching managers explicitly how to look, think and act like a coach.

Start right now.

Effective manager development isn't necessarily quick or easy. But the return on investment is so disproportionate, so massive, that it's almost like cheating.

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Managers control around 70% of the variation in team engagement, but only one in three of them strongly agree they've had opportunities to learn and grow in the last year. Worse yet, only 30% of managers strongly agree that someone at work encourages their development.

It's time to close that yawning gap of development. Well-developed managers are an unstoppable force. They attract, engage and keep workers in an extremely competitive talent marketplace. They coach and rally employees to push your organization forward -- even as disruption shakes the ground.

It's easy for leaders to feel paralyzed right now. But inaction could lead to your organization's competitive extinction. Invest in your best managers now to retain and develop them for the future. Don't wait. Your most formidable competitors probably aren't.

<https://www.gallup.com/workplace/356729/win-great-resignation.aspx>