

Ten Proven Methods for Increasing Aboriginal Retention

REVISED

1. **Strengthen every source of employee engagement.** There is one sure route to a more retentive workplace and a more productive organization: high employee engagement. The pivotal role of engagement grows more indisputable by the year. Employee engagement studies conducted by Gallup and the Saratoga Institute over many years clearly indicate that companies with high employee engagement tend to prosper, while companies with low engagement are seldom equally competitive. (Jacques Fitz-ens, *The ROI of Human Capital*, Chapter Eight.)
2. **Career advancement planning, professional development, and continuing education.** Without the opportunity for room to grow, many of the best Aboriginal employees will almost certainly move on elsewhere.
3. **Provide frequent reminders, why an employee's work is meaningful.** This can come from the manager, it can come from others in the work group. Wherever a sense of meaningful work grows strong, engagement and retention also grow; where the sense of meaningful work diminishes, engagement and retention also decrease.
4. **Support employees by encouraging their best work.** Some workplaces support their employees by feel-good strokes and chipper smiles. Other workplaces expect their employees to find their satisfactions in tackling a challenging job. A culture that challenges its employees without itself being a challenge to them, will be a retentive culture.
5. **Avoid micromanagement with Aboriginal employees.** Give them their own space and trust them to do what is necessary.
6. **Offer free counseling services with full confidentiality.** Some employees are challenged by drugs, alcohol, gambling, family and other conflicts, and these problems can be a frequent source of employee attrition. Ideally, an employer should offer fully confidential (outsourced) counseling, available in ways that make the employees' access to counseling acceptable, invisible, and free.
7. **Offer opportunities to involve spouses and family.** At some of the fly-in fly-out mining operations in the north, spouses are occasionally flown in and given plant tours. Many companies use the on-boarding process for new employees to involve and inform new workers' spouses. At many companies there are "Take our kids to work" days, which also help strengthen employee engagement.
8. **Offer flexible scheduling for funerals, hunting, and other community-related events.** The larger an Aboriginal employee base, the more accommodating many organizations tend to be about such scheduling.
9. **Offer free or low-cost meeting spaces that strengthen the Aboriginal community at your workplace.** Is there an assigned place where Aboriginal employees can meet and network? Is that place appropriately decorated and inviting? Are phones available (perhaps with no long-distance charges) for calling family and community?
10. **Conduct exit interviews.** The reasons employees have been leaving should be an organization's foremost guide to an improved retention policy. The only way to know those reasons is to ask for them, from every departing employee.