

7 TIPS FOR ADDRESSING Burnout & Staff Retention

In September, La Piana Consulting asked nearly 100 nonprofit leaders across the U.S. how their organizations are addressing staff burnout & retention. Here are the 7 tips we learned, alongside dozens of ways that leaders are putting these ideas into practice!

1 PROVIDE TIME FOR STAFF TO REST

- Have a flexible schedule & flexible vacation plan (e.g., holiday leave is a set number of days that staff can use whenever they want)
- Turn a single holiday off into a week-long vacation period for all staff (e.g., entire week off between Christmas & New Year's)
- Give time off following major programs, events, or all-staff efforts (e.g., 2 weeks off after a big annual event)
- Establish a 4-day work week or different variations of it (e.g., every other Friday off, Fridays off during the summer or from summer through the year end)
- Institute collective rest, so everyone comes back refreshed with minimal emails in their inboxes upon return (e.g., one week shut down period for all staff on a quarterly or biannual basis)
- Provide unlimited vacation time, sick time, &/or mental health days
- Offer 3-month, paid sabbatical for all staff after they've been with the organization a certain number of years



2 PROPERLY COMPENSATE STAFF FOR THEIR WORK

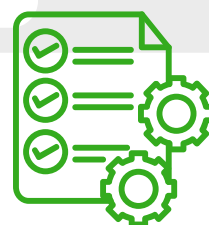
- Conduct a compensation analysis for all positions & adjust as needed
- Offer retention bonuses
- Provide stipends for remote work expenses (e.g., cell phone, internet, home office equipment) & travel expenses (e.g., parking pass, mileage reimbursement)
- Provide cost-of-living salary adjustments
- Improve staff benefits (e.g., retirement matches, professional development funds)



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3 UPDATE YOUR INTERNAL PROGRAMS, PROCESSES, & POLICIES

- Institute an official remote or hybrid work policy
- Create a department dedicated to supporting people & organizational culture
- Review policies & procedures to address staff equity concerns
- Launch a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging plan
- Have organization-wide conversations on burnout & retention to develop solutions that incorporate feedback from all staff
- Explore &/or assess interest in the prospect of staff unionizing
- Critically assess the types of turnover that your organization is experiencing – not all turnover is bad, so it's important to evaluate where turnover is occurring naturally (e.g., staff leaving a temporary or seasonal role) vs. unnaturally (e.g., staff leaving an entry-level role despite wanting to continue working for the organization, because sufficient paths for advancement do not exist)



4 CHECK-IN REGULARLY WITH STAFF

- Listen & respond to staff when they let you know their workload is too much
- Make space for staff during check-ins to share how they're doing in their personal lives before diving into work
- Do a pulse check of how staff are experiencing work (e.g., "are you happy doing the work &/or being in the organization?")
- Acknowledge staff's hard work & commitment (e.g., handwritten thank you notes, kudos during staff meetings)



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5 SUPPORT YOUR STAFF'S MENTAL HEALTH

- Provide an annual allowance for wellness
- Hire an organization therapist
- Create a wellness committee
- Offer generous sick leave & wellness / mental health days



6 PURPOSEFULLY BUILD OFFICE CULTURE

- Hold celebrations for staff (e.g., birthday parties, holiday gift exchanges)
- Shift people back to the office through social gathering
- Acknowledge holidays, birthdays, & anniversaries as a policy
- Regularly communicate about social engagement & wellness opportunities
- Hold in-person retreats over 2-3 days for all staff on at least an annual basis – & bring in coaches, speakers, & facilitators so staff don't have to lead it



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7 FOSTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Provide an annual allowance for professional development
- Develop/find trainings, workshops, & conferences to share with staff that will support their professional or personal development
- Create space for best-practice or knowledge sharing across the organization
- Normalize transition, so staff feel encouraged by leadership & other staff to explore new opportunities both inside & outside the organization
- Designate formal time on a regular basis to explore alignment of staff's personal/professional goals with organizational goals & priorities

