



# Game Plan for Taming Turnover

By Alice Dendinger, SPHR

**THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE** facing today's employer is employee retention. Once recruited and hired, retention is critical. The cost of replacing employees is one to two times' annual salary for highly educated and/or skilled employees. No longer can employers have the attitude that "if an employee does not like it here, they can leave."

Football metaphors are over-used in the business world, but the turnover analogy is irresistible. In business, as in football, turnovers halt your progress toward the goal, interfere with your operations, and give the initiative to your competitor. They disrupt your game plan, change your direction, take your best players off the field, and make you play defense.


There are three kinds of employee turnovers:

- 1. Fumbles:** negative factors in the working environment that cause employees to leave. These include bad hires, undefined roles and tasks, no sense of belonging or contribution, unexplained or surprise changes in roles or tasks, inadequate training, micromanagement, unclear compensation plans and poor communications.
- 2. Interceptions:** competitors attract your people by providing more-appealing work environments. This includes positive factors like higher pay, better benefits, more job security, flexibility and work/life balance, recognition, autonomy and independence, and opportunity for advancement.
- 3. Penalties:** procedural violations, errors or impediments that can negate positive results. These include deviations from

government standards (OSHA, ADA, EEOC, FMLA) as well as departures from company policies or agreements. Penalties can really throw your business for a loss.

To reduce employee turnovers, your HR game plan should include provisions to:

1. Eliminate or reduce negative factors (fumbles) that could cause employees to leave.
2. Introduce and enhance positive factors to exceed competitors' offerings and prevent interceptions.
3. Play by the rules and train employees to observe these rules (avoiding penalties).

Employee turnovers limit your business success, create disruptions and confusion and waste time and resources. Reducing these fumbles, interceptions and penalties will enable your organization to keep the ball moving, overcome competitors and achieve its goals. 

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