

WORKSTEP

eBOOK:

7 Key Ways to Raise the Bar to Remain the Best Place to Work



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A REVOLUTION IN FRONTLINE WORKFORCE EXPECTATIONS

For supply chain employers in 2023, the labor market continues to confront seemingly endless challenges, with resignation and reshuffling becoming the norm. Voluntary turnover is at an all-time high and the frontline employee liberation continues as we face a cultural turning point.

It is now more critical than ever that supply chain employers craft and execute on a defined retention strategy, combat turnover, and prioritize both hiring and retention of frontline workers with measurable performance metrics.

Is your organization doing enough on this front to remain competitive? With the continued evolution of the labor market, it is becoming increasingly important for employers to raise the bar to remain the best place to work. In this eBook, we'll discuss 7 key ways to do just that.

The Best Talent Works for the Best Companies

As an Employer of Choice, even if you truly take these strategies to heart and implement a company-wide focus on hiring and retention, it may still not be enough. Not only are your competitors also more attuned to the needs of hourly workers but the hourly workforce itself grows ever more sophisticated in how they research and evaluate potential employers.

It's no longer enough to be good - you have to be among the best and stand out as an Employer of Choice.

They research. They Google. They ask colleagues for feedback. And, yes, they really do look at top 10 places to work lists.

The strongest companies know that their people are the key to holding on to and increasing market share, and so an investment in their people is an investment in the company itself and often correlates directly with the bottom line. They know that it's no longer enough to be good—you have to be among the best and stand out as an Employer of Choice. And for companies who have already obtained this status, how do you ...how do you get to the number 1 spot and be the leading in your industry?

Here are 7 key ways to prioritize your hourly workforce and ensure you are seen as the BEST Employer of Choice.

Be mindful of generational shifts

Millennials are currently the largest group in the talent pool, while the Gen Z workforce is set to triple by 2030, and yet many companies continue to focus their efforts primarily on Gen X and Baby Boomers.

With 40% of Gen Z and 24% of Millennials looking to leave their jobs within the next two years, a third of whom would quit without even having a new job lined up, factoring in their wants and preferences is critical to a successful frontline labor strategy.

If you're an Employer of Choice for only part of your potential talent pool, you're not really an Employer of Choice.

#1 COMPETITIVE PAY AND BENEFITS

Let's get this one out of the way because it's often what we all think of first. After all, pay is the most important consideration for employees, right?

Well, not quite.

Our latest research shows that employees often prioritize other factors higher than compensation, with career growth being #1 reason for turnover and feedback #2.

That's not to say that pay doesn't matter. It remains a key consideration, and while other factors take higher priority, in today's competitive landscape, you can't afford to fall behind on any part of your hiring and retention strategy. But you would be remiss if you only focused on pay at the expense of other factors. Keep in mind also that more than ever, frontline employees view pay as part of a complete package of benefits. So if you're striving to reach the best Employer of Choice status, you probably want to keep employee satisfaction with compensation on your radar.

Career growth being #1 reason for turnover and feedback #2

Money Isn't Enough

While Employers of Choice offer competitive pay and attractive incentives like sign-on bonuses, rewards for employee referrals, and enhanced 401(k) plans, they recognize that total compensation is only the start and the baseline upon which they build their employer brand. They understand the vital importance of benefits and worker-friendly policies that impact hourly employees in their personal lives.

Employers of Choice can raise the bar by providing resources to help their hourly workers achieve and sustain financial wellness—by offering tuition reimbursement, student loan assistance, and personal financial education.

To remain competitive, they should provide generous vacation and paid time off, even to part-time hourly workers, strong health insurance, and life insurance. In short, to be the must-work-for company Employers of Choice should strive to provide all the same types of benefits they would like for themselves.

We're All a Little Burned Out

By most any measure, we've collectively experienced a rather difficult last few years and, frankly, many of us could use a little help. The strongest employers recognize that their employees are struggling and make mental health a true priority.

Though more than 50% of Gen Z and Millennials acknowledge that employers have made mental wellness efforts since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, they're still not always comfortable speaking openly about their stress, anxiety, or burnout. This is a problem because employees need to feel they can communicate personal and health issues to their employer without fear of reprisal.

Employers must reach past platitudes and token measures. Focus your efforts on mitigating the causes of stress and burnout in the workplace. Provide mental health resources such as company-sponsored therapy, and eradicate the taboo of discussing mental health. This way if an employee does feel anxious or burned out they can confidentially discuss it with their supervisor without feeling judged or penalized. Consider leveraging modern engagement platforms that can help you check in with your employees regularly and anonymously so they're more likely to share when they're feeling burned out or unhappy.



#2 MEANINGFUL WORK

Even a decade ago, research showed that more than half of the workforce would take a 15% pay cut to work for a company whose mission aligned with their values, and similarly, almost half would take a 15% pay cut to work for companies making a social or environmental impact.

Even more than previous generations though, younger workers care about the environment and sustainability. Nearly two in five workers among Gen Z and Millennials say they have rejected a job or assignment that was misaligned with their values. On the flip side, those who are satisfied with their company's societal and environmental impact, have a stronger desire to stay with their employer for more than five years.

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They prefer employers who make an effort to fight climate change and take environmental action such as using environmentally friendly materials in the workplace, and incentivizing

workers to use their bikes or public transportation.

While it's important for them to know how their role impacts the world, they also want to know how their work aligns with their personal career goals, and how they can make the best use of their time each day. That's why, to stand out as an Employer of Choice, you need to consider how your company's mission aligns with the top talent you're trying to attract and keep.

Of course, you can't know if your mission aligns with that of your employees unless you know what their values are. So you have to engage and ask them directly. Check in frequently and find out what matters to them, from a perspective of fostering positive change in the world, but also in terms of how their jobs impact their day-to-day and if they feel the work they are doing is useful and efficient.

Focus on specifics that make their routine purposeful and stress-free. For example, unless you have an uncharacteristically older workforce, your frontline employees are likely rather tech savvy and accustomed to always being connected. Infuse technology into the workplace. Whether making use of supply chain software, robotic assistance to improve efficiency, or conducting employee check-ins via mobile, your employees will appreciate it.

Encourage collaboration on the frontline by providing job rotations, cross-functional teams, and shared responsibilities among workers while also encouraging and rewarding independence.

We'll touch upon career development and company culture later, but in broad strokes, you want to create a meaningful work environment by putting yourself in your workers' shoes and fostering a company culture that you'd want to be a part of. This will set you apart from the competition.



#3 STRONG LEADERSHIP

None of this is possible without effective leadership. Hourly workers appreciate strong managers whom they trust, and likewise want themselves to be trusted by leadership. Employees are especially responsive to leaders who are approachable, remain transparent, and encourage autonomy.

The best leaders act as mentors, connect with hourly workers on a personal level, and encourage them to reach for their goals and work towards their ideal vision of themselves.

Many hourly workers are self-starters with entrepreneurial mindsets, and they thrive in environments where they are allowed to spread their wings. Today's workers are tomorrow's leaders. The best Employers of Choice take advantage of this and offer continued learning opportunities, encourage initiative-forward thinking, and identify future leaders early on so they can provide workers with mentorship programs and leadership tracks.

What will also set a company apart is if they are transparent about business operations and company performance, but wise enough to share from a solutions-oriented standpoint. They are approachable and available to answer questions, provide positive reinforcement, and regularly check in with employees.



#4 CAREER DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES



The most valuable performers tend to abhor stagnation and bore quickly. You can either cater to their development and keep them in-house, or risk losing them to competitors.

Sought-after supply chain employers tend to have a culture that fosters personal growth by providing cross-training, upskilling and reskilling, job rotations, and ongoing learning opportunities such as seminars, training sessions, and online education. Employers of Choice encourage and celebrate promotions - this is what will position you as a best-in-class employer.

Career development undoubtedly benefits frontline employees, but ultimately the employer could benefit even more. Not only does it encourage retention, and boost employee satisfaction and morale, but it also benefits employers because they are rewarded with a better skilled workforce that is already well-versed in business knowledge, company history, and operating procedures. Frontline workers who grow with a company require less training in their day-to-day and have a versatile skill set that makes them more flexible.

#5 WORK-LIFE BALANCE

LinkedIn reports that 72% of Gen Z, 69% of Millennials, 53% of Gen X, and 59% of Baby Boomers have either left or considered leaving a job because of rigid work policies. Clearly a flexible workplace that considers work-life balance is essential across the board, no matter which demographic currently makes up the majority of your workforce.

As an Employer of Choice you know that work-life balance promotes healthier, happier, more productive employees. How are you raising the bar in this department to be identified as a company these generations will want to work for and stay with for the long-run? For some companies, a flexible environment might include remote or hybrid workstations, but for warehouse and most types of supply chain workers, remote work isn't an option. There are still many other ways you can help your employees meet their personal obligations and avoid burnout.

Consider offering generous paid time off and sick leave, flexible and predictable shift start and end times, split shift options, part-time/contract roles, and job sharing opportunities.

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Additional ways to really stand out is to encourage a healthy work-life balance and overall satisfaction among hourly workers includes strengthening child care options, offering mental health benefits like we discussed earlier, on-site yoga, massage or meditation sessions, cutting back on required meetings, offering paid lunches, and implementing relaxed dress codes. Companies should also consider the impact of mandating overtime due to staffing shortages, and how this could easily lead to employee burnout.

When companies encourage employee well-being, while offering frontline workers the flexibility to attend to personal matters and lead a fruitful life outside of work, they are more likely to be rewarded with a workforce that is less stressed, more engaged, and ultimately, more productive.

#6 ATTRACTIVE COMPANY CULTURE AND BRAND

Your reputation matters. Research shows that even with a pay increase, 50% of job candidates wouldn't work for a company who had a bad reputation, and that 92% of people would consider a job switch if they were offered a role at a company who had an excellent reputation. As an established Employer of Choice, you probably already have a respected brand, but how can you elevate your name resonate even more with employees and consumers?

50% of job candidates wouldn't work for a company who had a bad reputation

First, you need to understand your workforce and respond accordingly. Engage with workers and ask what improvements would make the work day better, and then act and implement the most sought-after measures.

Examine and understand the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and promote fairness, respect, and non-discriminatory practices. This includes being open to new ideas from employees of all levels and all backgrounds.



Free lunches, ice cream socials, summer Fridays, and the occasional afternoon off are all much-appreciated perks, while certificates, gift cards, and monetary incentives are some examples of performance-based rewards. Companies must recognize first and foremost that while incentives and perks encourage employee satisfaction, they are enhancements to an employee's compensation and benefits package, not a replacement. Otherwise, efforts can be seen as disingenuous maneuvers to sidestep competitive compensation with less costly token gestures.

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While a company's employer brand is paramount to establishing itself as an Employer of Choice, so too is the overall brand. Workers want to feel proud of where they work, so it's incumbent upon employers to create a modern, compelling logo, identity system, web presence, and print collateral.

#7 ENGAGED WORKFORCE WHO ACT AS BRAND AMBASSADORS

All of the aforementioned factors will encourage hourly worker engagement, but employers can also take direct steps to ensure workers feel engaged and fulfilled in their workday.

Outline clear expectations so employees know what is expected of them, how their performance will be measured, and what they have to do to qualify for promotions and incentives.

Provide them with the knowledge, materials, and equipment necessary to excel, and ensure they are assigned to the role or

department that best fits their skill set. Check in with them on an ongoing basis to assess satisfaction, avert potential issues, and identify areas for improvement.

Workers who trust their employers are 78% more likely to advocate on their company's behalf

Good news is infectious. We all like to share the positive elements of our lives. When employees love where they work, they tend to act as natural brand ambassadors. In fact, workers who trust their employers are 78% more likely to advocate on their company's behalf. They tell their friends and family about how much they like their jobs, they post to social media, they review their company on a website like Glassdoor, and they encourage potential job seekers to apply.

Having a workforce that publicly vocalizes their satisfaction in where they work is the best way to surpass the Employers of Choice status and really be seen as the best in the marketplace. It'll be no surprise when the competition competition is left behind, scratching their heads, wondering how they might catch up.

TAKE ACTION ON YOUR FRONTLINE FEEDBACK

How do you know if you're considered a top Employer of Choice? You might start by looking at your company ratings on Glassdoor, or similar websites, but the best way is to ask your employees.

You likely already have some type of survey methodology in place, but if you're not engaging directly and then actively making changes based on your employee feedback, your efforts will be only marginally effective at best.

32% of Gen Z and 33% of Millennials say decisions are made from the top down at their companies and that their companies don't often act on employee feedback. And 41% of hourly workers say management never seeks feedback. Don't let this be you.

WORKSTEP CAN HELP POSITION YOU AS A BEST-IN-CLASS SUPPLY CHAIN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

Give your hourly workers a voice with WorkStep, the modern employee engagement platform that provides clear, real-time feedback. With check-ins delivered in your employees' native language, no app download or work email required to participate, and feedback that's prompted via email, SMS, QR code, or kiosk, WorkStep helps you collect consistent, actionable feedback with minimal administrative overhead.

WorkStep enables you to analyze underlying drivers of workforce turnover, address issues in real-time, measure the impact of initiatives, and retain your frontline for the long run, while providing easily digestible insights that inform worker-centric policy so you can establish yourself as an Employer of Choice and attract top frontline talent.

Ready to make WorkStep part of your frontline engagement strategy?

Learn more at workstep.com



WORKSTEP

**Helping supply chain companies hire
and retain their frontline workforce.**

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