

WORKSTEP

eBook

# Engagement and Retention Efforts Are Most Effective When HR and Operations Are in Sync

WORKSTEP.COM







## IT TAKES TWO

Workforce engagement and retention are sometimes seen as the domain of HR, but the reality is that while HR might be explicitly charged with engagement and retention, the success of these efforts is ultimately contingent upon buy-in from both HR and Operations.

Fortunately, when both departments are equally vested, not only do they both benefit in terms of their own priorities, but there is a synergistic impact at the organizational level with increased employee satisfaction and overall workforce strength.



# THE CHALLENGE: DIFFERENT PRIORITIES



While everyone in an organization is ultimately on the same team and working towards a common goal, the reality is that different departments have different priorities in terms of how they work towards that goal.

For instance, HR typically leads with a focus on engagement, retention, competitive benefits, DE&I, and efforts to establish the company as an employer of choice. Whereas Operations tends to prioritize productivity and meeting day-to-day business demands like shipping, warehousing, inventory, and production. In terms of workforce management, their focus tends to center around time to ramp up because they need employees to be productive right away, as well as retention beyond the 90- to 120-day mark to avoid training and onboarding overheads.

Of course, this is understandable because they have divergent responsibilities and are thus also measured by different criteria. But all of the aforementioned factors are extremely important to the success of a business (as we've discussed in various past publications) so it's important that both teams work together for the company to be most effective.

While HR might hold the budget allocation and top-line responsibility for engagement and retention, it's Operations that's on the frontline and therefore has a more direct impact on engagement and retention in terms of day-to-day success. So it's incumbent upon a business to minimize the disconnect between where there are resources for employee programs and where the programs are ultimately executed.

# THE SOLUTION: WORK TOGETHER TOWARD UNIFIED GOAL



## Communication

As obvious as it sounds, the solution starts with communication. It's vitally important that leaders on both teams meet regularly to discuss workforce issues and strategies.

### Meet Regularly

Like most things, communication works best when it's planned and not left to ad hoc whim. Consider establishing ongoing meetings between HR and Operations (and other relevant departments) on a pre-set schedule. The meetings don't have to be long and time consuming — just enough to set goals, agendas, and collaborate on strategies to make sure everyone is in sync. This would also be an ideal time to plan for known and expected issues and shocks such as holidays, labor strikes, etc.

### Delegate Responsibilities and Hold Each Other Accountable

Identify point-people on both teams who can call on each other for support. Similarly, identify leads on each team who are expected to proactively communicate with their counterpart and are responsible for addressing potential issues. For instance, it should be clear who on HR and the appropriate Operations team will intervene when an employee check-in response indicates they may be thinking about leaving, if they're unhappy, or another potential area of concern.



## Shared Execution

HR can identify and spearhead efforts towards retention and engagement, but it's Operations who often has to, well, put them into operation.

Here are just three examples of how the success (and failure) of engagement and retention efforts is the product of both HR and Operations working together.

### Example 1: DE&I

HR and the company overall may prioritize DE&I efforts and make significant strides in hiring more diverse workers. But if these workers do not feel comfortable and at home in their day-to-day work, they are unlikely to stay with the company. So ultimately there has to be buy-in from Operations, as well as departments company-wide for the initiatives to succeed.

### Example 2: Work-life Balance

While an organization and its HR team might be thinking generous vacation time and flexible schedules look great on paper — which they likely will — Operations has to be the one to ensure frontline employees are truly given the opportunity to take vacations and work in a flexible way, while still meeting the needs of the business and ensuring everything is running on schedule.





### Example 3: Company Culture

No matter how much you pride yourself at the organizational level on being an employer of choice and having a culture that promotes career growth, a positive work environment, and a team atmosphere, it's all for naught unless the direct supervisors and managers in Operations are invested in the same and are providing open lines of communication, mentoring, and positive reinforcement.

The same is true for essentially all engagement and retention efforts.







## Shared People Data & Analytics

Organizations need a people data and analytics solution that allows teams to proactively identify problems — and fix them before they become more serious issues.

For instance, if there is a safety incident in a warehouse, after addressing the health of the employee, to Operations the primary concern may be the danger of work slowdown and not meeting shipping targets. So they will likely take immediate steps to resolve the issue and then switch attention to making up for any shipment shortfalls of the day.

To HR, the primary concern may be impact on employee retention and the potential for legal complications, so they might look foremost to ensure procedures and all safety and employee wellness guidelines are followed.

Of course, both approaches are necessary and equally important, so it's critical that the teams are in sync and that both are notified immediately and aware of the issue so they can not only act to address the potential implications most relevant to them but support each other to make sure nothing is missed and falls through the cracks.





## **Invest in the Right Technology**

It's not enough to say that HR and Operations should work together, they also need the right tools to collaborate effectively. Look for a technology solution that allows for granular data access control with real-time availability and analytics. When the relevant information is available to all in an easy-to-use and clear manner, collaboration happens more naturally.

When demoing platforms, consider inviting at least one representative from HR and Operations so both departments can get insight into what the software can do and can contribute with feedback and concerns from their departmental perspective.

## **Empower Managers and Supervisors to Take Action**

Once the new system is implemented, and HR and Operations are on the same page, be sure to empower your frontline managers and supervisors to intervene directly with immediacy. No matter how well software performs or how much insight you have into your workforce, it doesn't mean much if no one is taking action on the frontline.



# WORKSTEP RETAIN CAN HELP SYNCHRONIZE YOUR HR AND OPERATIONS TEAMS

WorkStep RETAIN helps you collect consistent feedback from your frontline via SMS, QR code, or kiosk, in a worker's preferred language.

RETAIN empowers HR and Operations to overcome systemic and daily challenges by enabling both teams to easily identify frontline problem areas based on employee feedback, which is available to all relevant team members in a cascading fashion.

## **Easily configurable permissions**

To ensure that HR and Operations have visibility into the data most important to them, RETAIN can be configured so regional managers are able to see the feedback of their entire region, while facility managers have access to the feedback within just their facility, and so on.

## **Give HR the tools they need to succeed**

Engage hourly workers by tracking and monitoring the impact of your retention initiatives, creating a feedback culture, and calculating the cost and reasons for turnover.

## **Give Operations the tools they need too**

Engage distributed workers at scale, improve average workforce productivity, get notified of safety concerns, and compare workforce sentiments across facilities and regions.

Ready to see how RETAIN fosters collaboration between HR and Operations with real-time engagement and people analytics?

Learn more at [workstep.com/retain](https://workstep.com/retain)



# WORKSTEP

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

**Ready to see how WorkStep RETAIN  
boosts collaboration between HR and  
Operations?**

**Learn more at:**

**[workstep.com](https://workstep.com) | [marketing@workstep.com](mailto:marketing@workstep.com)**