

# Why building connections are key to a culture of engagement and retention.



**Looking out for #1:** Are your new employees already looking for the next best place?

Some of today's employees look, act, and, most notably have a different mindset than generations who have come before them as it relates to their loyalty to an organization. At the April 2023 American Society for Healthcare Human Resource Association Conference, Steve Cadigan, keynote speaker, shared that today's candidates have (and see through social media) infinite choices. With infinite choice, comes the concern of making the wrong decision. Further, emerging generations see job security as movement - *when I move to a new organization/role - I get more experiences...and I expand my network...and I encounter new ideas and thinking...and this leads to more opportunity in my future.*

**This is a brave new world. Retention is where it's at. Connections are key. So, let's talk about what can be done to put a 360-degree effort around this.**



## Make connections and communicate with pre-hires and new employees. Bring it early – and bring it often.

Connecting with pre-hires and in the early days of an employee's time with your company can create a sense of belonging. Start with a new hire welcome on day one, and keep the momentum going with recognition at regular intervals. By recognizing and connecting with your rising employee, you set the stage for your company culture; and then once they've started, onboarding efforts reinforce your commitment. There is value in making frequent connections and recognition - small efforts can mean big feelings for the new person. It will make them feel like they are part of the team and create that sense of belonging. No one should feel "buyer's remorse" about the decision he/she made to join your company. The emotion of connection is real, and what you put into your recognition efforts on the front-end with a new hire will pay the proverbial "dividends" on the back end by creating and maintaining a thriving culture of consistent employee engagement.





*The 5 Languages  
of Appreciation in  
The Workplace,*  
Gary Chapman  
& Paul White, 2019

**Late Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z place stronger emphasis on the co-worker relationship than past generations. Connections with co-workers are critical to engagement and retention.**

## **Make connections between teammates and managers. Teamwork makes the dreamwork.**

On-the-job relationships help employees feel strongly connected to each other. It's been said that disconnection from peers is one of the three issues (lack of employee recognition and lack of transparency being the other two) "that are at the heart of substantive problems management often deal with," according to Forbes.<sup>1</sup> Team building has always been a part of the equation and connecting with managers, work friends, and other employees helps create a sense of belonging, build connections, and deliver a culture of trust and teamwork. But these types of connections must start at the top; leaders and managers must set the example.

## **Make connections to your brand, its values, its messages, its pillars. The goal? To create pride in the company.**

Never underestimate the power of a good brand. Employee branding is equally as important as consumer branding. When employees become immersed in your brand's ethos, they understand the mission. They understand their "why." And they understand why their specific role is so important. With understanding comes the pride. Capitalize on that pride with the gift that keeps on giving – company-branded gifts. Communicated properly, packaged appropriately, and with thought to the diversity of your teams – company-branded gifts can make an impact to making everyone feel like they're on the same team. What a great feeling it is to see your employees outside of work proudly wearing their company swag. This shows they feel a connection with the company brand and think of you as #1.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2017/02/01/3-reasons-employee-engagement-is-declining-and-how-managers-can-improve-it/?sh=6d5c74dc2dc1>