

Want committed employees? Try helping them to belong

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A sense of belonging is just as important a retention tool as good pay and benefits, according to Dr Ali Fenwick of Nyenrode Business University.

This is because identifying with the team, leader, brand and organisation is paramount to workplace commitment as well as work performance.

Fenwick says: "The world of work is changing rapidly and we are seeing increasing numbers of professionals choose to become contractors or work remotely. For businesses, creating a committed workforce in today's rapidly changing and digitalised environment requires the development of a social contract which doesn't only include pay and benefits, but also provides pride, purpose, mastery, and a sense of belonging."

Fenwick's paper, which examined common retention methods, presents an improved model based on 'identity leadership' where managers use group identities to foster attachment and create a sense of shared purpose.

He suggests that core values, shared goals and meaningful work are important organisational tools for leaders to sustainably attract and engage employees.

Fenwick says: "As a leader, it is absolutely vital to be able to communicate the values and purpose of an organisation, which not only helps understand the 'why' behind work, but also improves employee retention and engagement in today's changing nature of work. Organisational socialisation practices such as newcomer onboarding and identity enhancing activities such as creating a shared vision are critical types to develop this psychological attachment, yet HR managers still mainly rely on transactional approaches to employee retention such as competitive salaries and benefits. They are widely overlooking the opportunity to inspire loyalty by encouraging employees to really believe in the company's mission, which fosters a more durable psychological attachment."

The paper, *Creating a committed workforce: Using social exchange and social identity to enhance psychological attachment within an ever-changing workplace* is available here

(<https://www.nyenrode.nl/docs/default-source/default-document-library/creating-a-committed-workforce-book-a-fenwick.pdf?sf>)

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