

Technical Staff Retention Cheat Sheet



There's a talent shortage in cybersecurity. When coupled with recent large-scale resignations across many functions and industries, the power has switched from companies to employees for the first time in a long time. This "cheat sheet" aims to enable you to cultivate an optimal work experience for your existing IT/IS staff, so that you can not only retain your technical employees, but also improve their engagement, efficiency, and growth potential.

We encourage you not to accept that [The Great Resignation](#) is a foregone conclusion for your organization. By giving your time, monetary investment, empathy and understanding, you can get ahead of this (and of those competing for the same talent). In fact, we predicted in 2021 that [2022 could see a "Great Retention" of IT/IS personnel](#) - as IT leaders implement initiatives like those discussed below.

| What to do | Why |
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| Engage your people team to help you plan and implement engagement and retention initiatives. | Your people team probably have a KPI to reduce regretted attrition, or improve employee engagement, already! Use them. |
| Provide multiple channels for staff to raise concerns and provide feedback, regularly. | The key to gathering feedback is to make it easy for people. Ensure some of the ways you provide are anonymous - this will let employees know that they can bring up tough issues without fear. Examples include: surveys, listening sessions, anonymous forums, team focus groups, or 1:1 meetings with managers and/or people team members. |
| Create measurement mechanisms (KPIs) and track them over time to evaluate your program. | A traditional one is employee satisfaction, which is easily surveyed. But we have found that employee engagement is a stronger indicator. |
| Evaluate and prioritize outcomes staff are asking for. | With an engaged staff who are telling you what the issues are, it's important to acknowledge their participation and be transparent by highlighting what they brought up, how you'll be pursuing it, and why you should or can't. |
| Consider and implement ways to improve "Flexibility" within your IT/security team. | Flexibility is one of the things most requested by technical employees. This includes the ability to turn off - so, have a plan so that employees know they're covered when they're on vacation, and that there's not an expectation for them to work/answer emails outside of working hours. Talk to your team about other ways to improve flexibility. |
| Make improved working conditions a priority. | If your working conditions are good, staff will be able to bring up issues easily. Part of this is being proactive, ensuring managers have dedicated time allotted for 1:1s (that aren't about task management), |
| Maintain a balance of novel and routine tasks by using automation. | One reason staff resign is because they find their duties mundane. Fortunately, in domains like IT/IS there are many opportunities to automate routine tasks, leaving more time to focus on new and engaging responsibilities. Empower managers to give staff opportunities to nominate functions for automation. |

| What to do | Why |
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| Make and recommend changes to improve work culture. | Culture is the sum of the people on your teams, and influences how team members feel about sharing tough issues, and even about their day to day interactions. You may find that by pursuing the items on this checklist that you positively impact your culture. An indicator of disengaged employees is not being able to define the culture. |
| Conduct optional, informal, unstructured activities for your team | Traditional company-wide “team building” events can cause more stress than they relieve. Even a happy hour. Managers should be creative; one size doesn’t fit all, and can experiment to see what engages their teams. |
| Improve growth by offering mentorship and learning opportunities. | Specialists can have a tough time achieving growth, and this can be another reason they resign. By providing mentorship opportunities across different functions and seniority levels, staff can learn new ways to grow. Another great self-directed way to grow is through skills training, which both engages employees and can improve their output. |
| Lead by example | If managers aren’t taking vacation, employees won’t feel like they can. If managers aren’t publicly voicing concerns, neither will their team members. It’s important to apply the concepts and actions of this checklist yourself, and across your people leaders, to ensure that employees know that your organization “walks the talk.” |

Other Resources:

- Blog: [Cybersecurity talent shortage](#)
- Blog: [Three Key Attributes for Achieving Meaning in Cybersecurity](#)
- Fireside Chat: [The Minds Behind the Hyperscale SOC](#)

For those of you who have been unable to hire or retain cybersecurity staff, consider adding ActZero’s elite Threat Hunters as an extension of your IT team, with our [Managed Detection and Response \(MDR\) service](#).

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