Tips for Managing and Retaining Superstars

Retention starts with understanding what helps people do good work and what gets in their way. Use these actions for a strong employee experience across your team, including your highest performers.

BUILD CONDITIONS FOR GOOD WORK

1. **Make expectations clear.** Agree on outcomes, priorities, and decision authority. When priorities shift, explain what should stop or move down the list.

2. **Check workload and support.** Do not make your strongest performers the default backup for every gap. Address capacity, tools, and recurring interruptions before adding more responsibilities.

3. **Discuss growth.** Ask which skills and assignments interest the employee. Agree on a realistic development action, time to pursue it, and a follow-up date.

4. **Recognize specific contributions.** Explain what the person did and why it mattered. Match recognition to their preferences and give credit fairly across the team.

5. **Review the complete experience.** Consider pay, benefits, flexibility where feasible, manager support, and advancement. Avoid assuming one factor matters equally to everyone.

Make retention a routine

A short, useful conversation followed by action is more valuable than a long survey with no visible response.

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Have a useful stay conversation

Schedule time to understand the employee's experience before there is a resignation to respond to.

FIVE QUESTIONS TO START

1. **What makes a good week here?** Ask which parts of the role are meaningful and which conditions help the employee perform well.

2. **What repeatedly gets in your way?** Look for process friction, unclear priorities, workload issues, or missing tools you can address.

3. **What would you like to learn or do next?** Discuss a realistic project, skill, mentoring relationship, or career direction.

4. **How can I support you better?** Invite feedback on communication, availability, autonomy, and coaching.

5. **What should we change first?** Agree on one or two actions, identify owners, and set a date to review progress.

Follow through visibly

Do what you commit to, explain constraints honestly, and revisit the conversation. Track patterns without exposing private comments.

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