

**PREDICTABLE
SUCCESS®**



Employee Retention MasterClass

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 **HRwisdom**



Table of Contents

Welcome from HRwisdom	2
About Les McKeown	3
Introduction	4
Part 1: Change Your Mindset	7
Why Everything We Know is Wrong	
Part 2: Picture the Shot	16
Using Interviews to 'Feel the Pulse'16	
Part 3: Backswing	23
Recruiting for Retention	
Part 4: Hit the Ball	31
Orientation for Retention	
Part 5: Follow-Through.....	37
Educating Managers, Mentoring and Coaching Programs	
Part 6: Summary	45
Putting it All Together	

Welcome from HRwisdom

HRwisdom and its contributing consultants have helped many organisations throughout Australia deal with employment issues in a wide variety of industries including manufacturing, oil and gas, consumer goods, professional services, mining, transport and logistics, building and construction, agriculture, government departments, IT and more.

With national business surveys regularly reporting that at least two-thirds of organisations in Australia are being affected by the global skills shortage, you are to be commended for trying to turn the global financial crisis and the ongoing skills shortage into a competitive advantage by planning ahead.

Proactive people like you tend to look for the silver lining in difficult situations. Proactive organisations realise that if they can continue to give great service outcomes whilst their competitors flounder with people-related issues then they will be more attractive to customers and clients and to the market at large.

Organisations that don't plan for employee retention should be prepared to manage excessive employee absenteeism, poor quality, attitude problems, key staff walking out at crucial moments, low morale, bad customer service, workplace injuries, cost blowouts and more.

Thanks to your forward thinking nature, you are about to gain access to the world-class thinking and expertise of Les McKeown who has helped organisations around the world to deal with employee attraction and retention issues.

Les has kindly agreed to partner with HRwisdom to bring world-class employee retention information and strategies to Australian organisations.



Ben Geoghegan
Founder of HRwisdom
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About Les McKeown



Les has over 25 years of global business experience, including starting 42 companies in his own right. Les was the founding partner of an incubation consulting company that launched hundreds of businesses with thousands of employees.

A native of Ireland, Les was awarded the Samuel Smyth Memorial Prize as a Chartered Accountant (CPA) in the UK and was, at that time, the youngest qualified Chartered Accountant in the UK. After a brief period with Price Waterhouse (now PwC), Les became Ireland's youngest ever accounting firm partner.

After a long career in advising individuals and organisations on growth and development, Les started his own training and development business, and when he sold his share in that practice to his business partner in 1998, it had grown to a 13-office, worldwide training and consulting business.

In 1999, Les relocated to the US, from where he writes, teaches and consults in high-performance organisational development.

Les' clients include Harvard University ; US Army ;Microsoft; United Technologies Corporation [UTC]; UK Dept. of Enterprise, Trade & Investment; Overture Services, Inc. (a Yahoo! company); Canadian Defence Department; Verisign; and many others.

Les McKeown is the author of:

Retaining Top Employees

The Complete Guide to Mentoring and Coaching

The Complete Guide to Orientation & Re-Orientation



Introduction

It's Les McKeown here, President & CEO of Employee-Retention.com.

Congratulations on signing up for my 6-part Retention MasterClass - I know you're going to both enjoy and profit from the time we'll spend together.

I guarantee that you'll refer to this course over and over again as you build (or rebuild) your retention strategy.

I **strongly** suggest that you print out this document, pour yourself a beverage of choice, bring along a pen to jot down some ideas, and take it all to your favourite sofa.

Learning a serious subject is so much more powerful when you're comfortable!

The six topics we'll cover are as follows:

Part 1: Change Your Mindset -
Why Everything You Know is Wrong

Part 2: Picture The Shot -
Using Interviews to 'Feel The Pulse'

Part 3: Backswing: Recruiting for Retention

Part 4: Hit The Ball: Orientation for Retention

Part 5: Follow Through: Educating Managers

Part 6: Summary: Putting it all together

Together, these six parts of your MasterClass will build to provide you with a complete retention strategy resource that you'll refer to over and over again.

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While working through the MasterClass materials, watch out for **three features**:

Feature 1:

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

IN FRAMES LIKE THIS, I will provide you with a specific implementation point, arising from the previous text. This is where you will extract the take-home value from your reading.

Remember: It's up to **you** to personalise and apply the materials in your Employee Retention MasterClass.

I can point out generic principles and best practices, but only you can make these your own, and customise them for your own organisation's circumstances.

Feature 2:

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

YOU'LL SEE 'SIDEBARS' FROM TIME TO TIME.

These are reserved for items which are important to the content of your email MasterClass, but which would break the flow of the main body of the text. These sidebars will give hints, tips and pointers, particularly to useful resources.

Feature 3:

DISCUSSION POINT

ENCLOSED IN THIS TYPE OF BOX you will find points that are discussed further on the Employee Retention MasterClass discussion board.

The Discussion Board is only accessible to registered site members.)

In the next section, we will begin the detailed work of creating and implementing your employee retention strategy. For now, I'd like **YOU** to do some **thinking** by way of preparation for all that we're about to cover.

Rather than simply diving in to the content, I'd like you to prepare for the next six lessons by asking yourself three questions.

Take 2 minutes to answer each question. Don't 'edit' your thoughts - write down just what first comes to mind. Be as **SPECIFIC** as possible in your answers:

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1. Why did I sign up for this MasterClass in the first place?

YOUR NOTES:

2. What **SPECIFIC** employee retention challenges does my organisation face at present?

YOUR NOTES:

3. What is the **ONE THING** I most want to get out of the next six sections?

YOUR NOTES:

DISCUSSION POINT

NOW THAT YOU'VE ANSWERED THESE QUESTIONS, why not share your answers to this exercise with your colleagues - you'll receive exceptionally valuable feedback.



Part 1: Change Your Mindset

Why Everything We Know is Wrong

This lesson runs to 10 pages - not much in print, but a LOT to read on screen.

Why not print this section out, wait until you can pour yourself a beverage of choice, bring along a pen to jot down some ideas, and take it all to your favourite sofa?

Learning a serious subject is so much more powerful when you're comfortable.

Let's get down to work...

What Part 1 covers:

1. Setting the Scene
2. The 'Who cares?' Test
3. How Good is Your Golf Swing?
4. People Stay Where They Feel at Home
5. Why Everything We know Is Wrong

1. SETTING THE SCENE

In this section, we're going to 'set the scene' for our work on developing a retention strategy during the rest of the week.

Before considering the question of retention, it's important to start by getting into the right frame of mind. To explain this, let me tell you what the **WRONG** frame of mind is:

The little town my wife and I live in is at the end of a peninsula. That means if we want to go **anywhere**, we've got to brave the coastal highway traffic - there's just no way around it.

When we first moved here, we thought the traffic was an aberration. We would get in the car to go somewhere, spend three times longer than we'd estimated getting there, complain loudly the whole time, and arrive late and annoyed.

Our stock of in-car swear words grew alarmingly.

Nowadays, we're natives. We take the traffic as a given, allow an appropriate amount of time, bring food, blankets and reading materials with us (well, a cup of coffee at least), and avoid certain times of the day at all costs.

Why am I telling you all this...? Well, there's an important analogy here with what's happening with employee retention:

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THE WAY WE WERE:

Retention strategies **used** to be based on the 'this is an aberration' model. This assumed that poor rates of employee retention were a bad thing, were relatively unusual, and that there was a more 'normal', 'acceptable' rate of employee retention, to which things would return in due course.

This is just like our original view of the highway traffic - 'this is terrible, and the sooner it gets back to normal, the better.'

Then time passes, with the same, clogged traffic, the same throughput of good employees, until one day it slowly dawns on us...it isn't **going** to get any better...!

APOCALYPSE NOW:

(Well, OK, I'm stretching the movie title analogy...) Employee retention difficulties, like the traffic on the highway, are here to stay. It **isn't** going to go away anytime soon.

So, what does that mean in the real world for you and me?

Here's five tips for dealing with the inevitable:

1. **MOVE YOUR MINDSET**

The first, and most important thing you can do is to change the way you look at retention issues. This isn't about stopping the traffic, it's about going with the flow.

You can no more stop the mobility of good people than you can stop the traffic on the highway. Mobility is a function of upskilling and economic growth, and neither you nor I can or should) stop it.

2. **THINK LIKE A DINER OWNER**

If you accept that 'traffic' in good people is here to stay, that mobility is a given, the next thing to do is to make **your place** somewhere that's attractive to people on the move.

Do you think a diner owner is upset to be located right in the middle of a huge volume of traffic? Of course not - she loves it! All those potential customers driving by every day.

Look around at your hiring practices, your publicity materials, your working environment. There **are** a lot of good people out there, 'driving by' your company every day. Do they see somewhere welcoming, beckoning them in? Or do they see an environment that's defensive, pre-occupied with not losing the people they've already got?

Good employees are on the move, **OK**, but they're on the move **TO SOMEWHERE**. Are you a stop on the way, or are you off the beaten patch, down a darkened alley, hard to find and dimly lit...?

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Stop thinking of yourself as a traffic cop. You can't tell people where, when and how they travel on their career path any more.

Employee mobility is happening whether we like it or not. Go with the flow...

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Stop focusing on how to stop people going **FROM** your company - everybody leaves the Diner eventually - and start focusing on how to make people come **TO** you.

Think like a Diner owner.

(We'll return to this when we talk about Recruiting for Retention on Day 2).

DISCUSSION POINT

How can you and your colleagues make your working environment more attractive for people 'driving by' - on the move?

What does your local 'image', your recruiting materials, your very buildings - your people, your products, say to potential new employees?

3. **GET ROADSIDE**

My Dad is a great fisherman. Ask him how he's so successful, and he'll say one thing: 'I go where the fish are'.

Good people are on the move. You want good people. So, where should you be? Where **they are** - right on the roadside, right by that flow of traffic. That means not only **accepting** employee mobility, but actively working **with** it.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

If you haven't already, get on the internet. Use recruiting boards like Seek.com.au, better still, use one of the many industry specific lists that are springing up. If you're not familiar with what's available, sign up for Electronic Recruiting Exchange at <http://www.erexchange.com/corprec/> - it's a free email discussion list on all things recruiting and the internet (we're not connected or involved, except as users).

Lurk for a week or two and you'll learn most of what you need to know.

4. **GET SOME VELCRO, DITCH THE MECANNO**

Employer-employee relationships used to be like Mecanno, that great stuff I played with as a kid - metal, bolts, screwdrivers - solid, structural, clanged when you touched it. Employees were 'bolted' to the company, and to each other, forming a sort of semi-permanent structure.

In the mobility world, employer-employee relationships are more like Velcro - easy on, easy off. Pliable, supple and re-useable.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Do you have consulting contracts you can use instead of contracts of employment? Have you got a telecommuting policy? An outsourcing alternative? Do you offer sabbaticals, re-engagement policies for individuals wanting to leave for a while and return?

Think Velcro - easy-on, easy-off.

Go to sites like <http://www.guru.com/> and <http://fastcompany.com/> to see how these new Velcro relationships work.

5. RETURN OF THE KEIRETSU

In the late '70s / early '80s, the Japanese trading model of Keiretsu (interlinking trading conglomerates, offering banking, financial, production and marketing facilities to each other) was upheld as a model for the future.

This prediction has come right, but in a way no-one then foresaw.

Keiretsu networks **are** here - in a big way - but on the employ**EE** side, rather than the employ**ER** side.

Now, it's the employ**EE** who builds her network, exchanges information about employers, and finds power in knowledge.

Look at sites like <http://vault.com> or www.linkedin.com for examples of places where employees are regularly exchanging information on employers and what it's like to work for them - maybe your organisation is mentioned there.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

You need to build your own 'network' of potential employee sources:

Get with your supply chain. Work out exchange programs, co-development programs for employees, cross-mentoring programs.

This works both ways - you find new sources of great potential employees, **AND** you create options for your own employees who may want to develop their resume further – Why 'lose' a good employee when you can 'trade' him or her?

You may even see them return in 18 - 24 months with more skills and a wider knowledge base.

2. THE 'WHO CARES?' TEST

Bearing in mind all of the foregoing, it's clear that employee mobility is here to stay. So what **CAN** you do to get good people to stay?

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The first thing to do is to apply the 'Who Cares?' test...

When did you last hear someone say: 'Well the reason I stayed with this company is because they have a **great** retention strategy?'

Come to think of it, when was the last time you heard **ANYONE** in a relationship (and employment is a relationship at heart) say that they stayed in the relationship because the other party had a great retention strategy?

If you knew someone who told you they 'held on to' their significant other by using a 'retention strategy', what would you think of them?

If a mother, fearful at the thought of her son leaving to go to college, or to get a life of his own, started to use a 'retention strategy' (I don't know...hiding his underwear...offering extra pocket money...)) to keep him at home, would it work?

Let's face it: **NOBODY CARES** about our 'retention strategies' - what they care about is **STAYING SOMEWHERE THEY FEEL AT HOME** (that's a phrase you're going to hear over and over again throughout this MasterClass).

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

As you make notes over the next six days, **DON'T THINK IN TERMS OF A STRATEGY** - nobody cares...think like a diner owner - think about how you can **genuinely** make your organisation a place where people feel at home.

3. HOW GOOD IS YOUR GOLF SWING?

I'm not a great one for sports analogies - and I'm not that great at golf - but over the years I've noted something about golf that underpins my long-standing (and successful) approach to working with retention. It's this:

Dealing with retention is very similar to developing an effective golf swing. There are three very separate steps:

- * The **BACKSWING** (your recruitment activities)
- * The **POINT OF IMPACT** (your orientation activities - or lack of them!)
- * The **FOLLOW THROUGH** - educating your managers and mentoring / coaching.

We'll be looking at each of these areas in detail in the next few sections, and at this point, all I want to point out is that although each of the three areas is **DISTINCT** and **DIFFERENT**, in order to produce a result, they have to be **COMBINED** in a seamless, flowing whole.

If you doubt what I say, try hitting a golf ball any distance by excluding any one element (backswing, point of impact or follow-through). It's impossible - whether you're a great golfer or have never played the game before, it just can't be done. Retention is just the same - try leaving out recruitment, orientation, educating managers or mentoring / coaching, and no matter **HOW GOOD** the rest of the component parts are, you will have problems with retention.

DISCUSSION POINT

Take a moment to briefly consider each of the elements of the 'employee retention golf swing'. Which aspects does your organisation excel in? In which could it do better?

Let's not labour this point too much here, as we'll be discussing it at length in the next section!

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

In your time on this email MasterClass, don't just work through each day's materials independently - think long and hard about how you can weave **each individual element** into a cohesive, seamless, continuous approach to your employee relationships.

REMEMBER: Strategies don't work

- people stay where they feel at home - your retention activities must run seamlessly throughout your whole organisation.

4. PEOPLE STAY WHERE THEY FEEL AT HOME

You may already be beginning to think you've heard this phrase too much, but believe me, you're going to hear it a lot more!

THIS PHRASE IS AT THE HEART OF EFFECTIVE RETENTION.

Think about that 'significant other' we talked of earlier; or the son whose mother is worried about him leaving home; think about yourself, in your own job at present. Are any of these people - including yourself - staying in the place they are now because of a 'retention strategy'?

No.

PEOPLE STAY WHERE THEY FEEL AT HOME. As we'll show later in this MasterClass, this applies to

EVERYONE you hire - from the seemingly loyal, company-centred employee to the most ruthless, money-oriented mercenary you employ - everyone - that's **EVERYONE** - stays where they feel at home. In all of this, please note that we haven't said 'People stay if you **MAKE** them feel at home.' This is the approach of those ineffectual retention **strategies** - 'How can we **make** our best people feel at home?'.

Well, the answer is, you **CAN'T** make people feel at home - they either feel it or they don't. You either **have** a welcoming environment or you don't.

So, be careful when you start using imperative words such as 'make', 'cause' or 'retain'.

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

THIS DOESN'T MEAN THAT 'HOME' MEANS THE SAME THING TO EVERYONE - While the underlying thesis ('People Stay Where They Feel At Home') applies to everyone, the **definition** of 'home' varies from person to person.

I'm not suggesting that you find out what 'home' means to everyone you employ, and then try to twist your organisation into some sort of chameleon-like 'all things to all people' paradise!

What **is** vital is that you find out what sort of 'home' your organisation **IS**.

Knowing this will help you through the rest of the golf swing (Remember?: Backswing = Recruitment; Point of Impact = Orientation; Follow-through = Educating managers, mentoring and coaching.)

Your recruitment, orientation, mentoring and coaching programs will **ALL** be impacted by this hugely important concept.

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Retention' itself is a poor word - it assumes that you can do something to 'retain' people - to 'stop' them leaving. In fact, successful retention is much more about being the organisation you are meant to be, and through that finding that people **STAY**.

If all this sounds a bit too 'zen' for your tastes, stay with it for a while, complete the exercises over the next few days, and you'll see how this principle of 'homebuilding' works.

To misquote Kevin Costner in Field of Dreams: 'Build it and they will come...and stay.'

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

TRY LOOKING THE TWO TERMS UP IN A DICTIONARY - See whether you're more comfortable with the words thrown up in defining 'retention' or by the words used defining 'home maker'.

Here's the URL's for AllWords' definitions of each:

<http://www.allwords.com/word-retention.html>

<http://www.allwords.com/word-home%20maker.html>

(If your email program has split the URLs on to two lines, make sure you 'cut and paste' the **whole URL** into your browser window.)

IMPLEMENTATION POINT (Part A)

Sit down **NOW** with a blank piece of paper and write down the words that best describe YOUR organisation - what makes it feel like 'home'? When it's showing its best face, what are the characteristics of your company that you're most proud of, that first attracted you, that inspire, encourage and move you?

If you have trouble making a start, try logging on to <http://www.greatplacetowork.com>.

These are the folks that do the detailed analysis for the Fortune magazine 'Top 100 Places to Work' list (and others) that you see regularly featured in many magazines.

The whole site is worth browsing through, but look particularly at:

<http://www.greatplacetowork.com/great/model.php>

...which should give you a few pointers.

Once your list is complete - look for 5 - 10 words that describe your company - keep it with you while you work through your email MasterClass, as we'll be referring to these characteristics regularly.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT (Part B)

Having problems getting a list together that you can feel comfortable with?

If so, you've probably hit the first (and most essential) issue you're going to face in your battle against retention. If you cannot - with ease - state what it is about your organisation that makes it feel like home, you'll have a problem getting people to stay.

You may want to consider calling a workshop with your colleagues for an hour or so to raise and discuss this issue. Don't make it a big deal - just say you're asking for their advice in developing a 'thumbnail' of the type of person who would likely stay with the company over time. Tease out your colleagues' views over a cup of coffee. Ask them to go through the exercise above.

You may find that your colleagues will have a different take on the issue, and they may be able to easily provide you with a list of 'home-words'. Alternatively, they may agree that you have a problem here.

In that case, there's a deep-seated cultural issue that needs professional help...call me...:)

5. WHY EVERYTHING WE KNOW IS WRONG

It's easy (and very tempting), when dealing with a complicated issue such as retention, to look for some sort of a 'package deal' that brings instant solutions to what seems like an intractable problem.

I hope, by what we've covered so far, that you can see the dangers inherent in this approach. Consider what we've discovered already:

* 'Who Cares?':

No-one has ever stayed anywhere because of a 'retention strategy';

* The Golf Swing:

Everything is interrelated - you cannot slap a 'package deal' into the middle of your employee recruitment, orientation, education, mentoring and coaching activities and hope it gets results;

* 'People stay where they feel at home':

You'll get your good people to remain with you IF they feel at home, not because of any packaged answers;

If all of that hasn't persuaded you that some off-the-shelf strategy won't solve your retention issues, then consider this:

In this fast-moving environment **NO-ONE HAS A ONE-SIZE FITS-ALL EMPLOYEE RETENTION 'ANSWER'.**

Read BusinessWeek, Time, Fortune, Inc, Forbes, Fast Company, Wired, the WSJ. Subscribe to ERE, HR.com, HBS, TrainingZone...No-one 'has the single 'answer' to employee retention.

What does this mean for you? It means that any so-called 'package deal' to address your retention issues is **WRONG**. It may have been right, for about 20 minutes.

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

Look at the management 'fad' book industry. It used to be that a good 'fad' book had a shelf-life of about 5 years before it was debunked and gave way to the next one. Now most of these books last three months before they're history.

That means some hard work ahead, because today, it's more important than ever that **you** (yes, you!) understand what's happening **NOW** to your company, and what **MAY** happen in the future.

We'll start that process by taking an overview of what IS happening in your organisation in Part 2: **PICTURE THE SHOT: USING INTERVIEWS TO 'FEEL THE PULSE'.**

DISCUSSION POINT

Experienced any 'bad' employee retention initiatives - seemingly good ideas that simply fizzled out or even worse, turned out to have a **NEGATIVE** impact on morale and retention?

Think about that ahead of the next session.



Part 2: Picture the Shot Using Interviews to 'Feel the Pulse'

This section runs to 9 pages - not much in print, but a **LOT** to read on screen.

Why not print this out, wait until you can pour yourself a beverage of choice, bring along a pen to jot down some ideas, and take it all to your favourite sofa?

Learning a serious subject is so much more powerful when you're comfortable.

What Part 2 covers:

1. Part 1 Review
2. Picturing The Shot
3. Acquiring Local Knowledge
4. Forget Exit Interviews...
5. Use 'Entry' Interviews
6. The Most Important Interview of All

1. PART 1 REVIEW

Take a moment to reflect on what we discovered in the last section...

The 'Who Cares?' Effect:

No one has ever stayed anywhere because of a 'retention strategy';

The Golf Swing Analogy:

Everything is interrelated - you cannot slap a 'package deal' into the middle of your employee recruitment, orientation, education, mentoring and coaching activities and hope it gets results;

'People Stay Where They Feel At Home':

You'll get your good people to remain with you IF they feel at home, not because of any packaged answers;

'Everything We Know is Wrong':

Events are moving so fast right now that it's **YOUR** responsibility to keep up with what is happening in **YOUR** company **RIGHT NOW** - no-one else can do that for you!

Does all of this seem daunting...?

Don't worry - over the next 5 sections, we're going to examine the implications in great detail - leaving you with an actionable plan for **YOUR** company.

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

DON'T FORGET - WE ARE HERE TO HELP AT ANY TIME -

If there is **any aspect** of your retention activities that you'd like help with, don't hesitate to contact us at any time. We love hearing from you!

2. PICTURING THE SHOT

Great golf players (and I'm not one!) all say that a fundamental prerequisite to a great golf shot is that you **VISUALIZE** the exact shot before undertaking it.

In other words, rather than just taking a whack at the ball and hoping it will land somewhere approximate to the pin, you take time to consider **exactly** where you are going to hit the ball, and to take into account the effect that the contours of the ground will have on the ball's subsequent bounce and roll.

In visualising golf shots, there's a great benefit in what is termed 'local knowledge'. In theory, golfers who are playing on their home course (and who know every bump and hollow on the course) should be able to visualise their shots much more accurately than those who have never played the course before.

It's much the same with employee retention. It's one thing just tossing an initiative of sorts into the work environment and hoping it'll have the desired effect. It's quite another to fully understand the 'bumps and hollows' of your company - the 'local knowledge' that ensures your retention-related activities have the **RIGHT** effect.

In this section of your Employee Retention MasterClass, we're going to look at how you develop that 'local knowledge' that will ensure success in all that follows.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Take a sip of that favorite beverage there by your hand... (you **are** working on a **PRINTED COPY** of this email in a comfortable environment - right? :)

Think back over the last 2 or 3 'initiatives' (preferable retention-related) that you've been involved in implementing - which one was the **MOST** successful, and which was the **LEAST** successful?

In the space below, list 5 reasons why one initiative was **MORE** successful than the others. On the facing column, write down five reasons why one initiative was **LESS** successful than the others:

SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVE

UNSUCCESSFUL INITIATIVE

Summary of initiative:

Reasons for success / failure:

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |
| 5. | 5. |

Take a look at the two lists...how many of the points listed boil down to an UNDERSTANDING of the organisation and the **APPROPRIATENESS** of the initiatives to your company, its culture and ideals?

How can you ensure that your retention related activities are more **RELEVANT** to your company and its needs (and therefore stand a greater chance of success)?

DISCUSSION POINT

Successful employee retention activities are those that are **RELEVANT** and **APPROPRIATE** to the organisation.

How do you avoid getting sucked into **IRRELEVANT** or **INAPPROPRIATE** employee retention activities?

3. ACQUIRING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

The best way of acquiring local knowledge on a golf course is to play it, over and over again.

Visiting golfers don't have that benefit, so what they do is something called 'walking the course'. Before a tournament, visiting golfers will literally 'walk' every inch of the golf course, practicing shots from every angle, playing on to every bump and hollow, testing the course to see how it responds to different shots and in different conditions. The more successful the golfer, the more time they spend testing, testing, testing.

In this context you will sometimes hear the phrase 'giving the course a thorough examination'. This is a clue to how **YOU** obtain 'local knowledge' in your game plan to beat your employee retention problems.

For you, the equivalent to 'walking the course' is asking questions. You will understand more and more about the likely effect of your retention-related activities by **ASKING THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED** - the employees. Every time you ask a relevant question of an employee, and receive a valid answer, it's like pitching a golf ball onto a tricky looking hillock and seeing how it runs.

Here's your biggest secret weapon in designing and implementing a successful employee retention strategy:

INTERVIEWS

Valid, useful employee interviews are your equivalent of walking the course.

You **MUST** incorporate these into your retention-related activities - otherwise, it's like stepping up to the golf ball wearing a blindfold and just taking a random whack at the ball.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Look back at the notes you made about the successful and unsuccessful earlier initiatives you've been involved in...

In retrospect, what **QUESTIONS** could you have asked **BEFORE** implementing the **less** successful initiative, that would have affected the result?

Before implementing **ANY** of the activities detailed in your 6-day email MasterClass, start **FIRST** by listing out all the relevant questions you want answered **BEFORE** you begin.

In the rest of this section, we're going to look at how you can use **INTERVIEWS** to acquire the local knowledge you need to be able to **PICTURE EVERY SHOT** in your fight against retention.

4. FORGET EXIT INTERVIEWS

...well..., forget exit interviews **ON THEIR OWN**, anyway.

Grappling with retention issues starts with understanding **why** people are leaving...So we **MUST** undertake exit interviews, right?

Well, that's what all the books and magazine articles say...And they're **wrong**.

Here's why exit interviews **ON THEIR OWN** don't work:

1. There's little point spending a lot of time finding out why people leave without an understanding of why they **JOINED** in the first place.

It's important to map what people say when they're **LEAVING** against what they said when they **JOINED**, to see what has **CHANGED** in between.

2. People leaving jobs **RATIONALISE** the decision, just as we all do when we buy a new car or house. We think of all the positive reasons why we made this purchase (or took the new job) to avoid feeling 'buyer's remorse'.

This makes the responses to the classic exit interview question 'Why are you leaving?' somewhat suspect.

What can you do about this?

A. Conduct ENTRY interviews, as well as exit interviews.

Have an external party consistently interview new hires to find out why they **JOINED** your company. You can do this during your orientation program (which you hold at least every month, right...? - more on effective orientation and its role in retention in a later section of the MasterClass).

Assure the new hires that information will be kept confidential by the third party, but that you will receive composite summaries of what is being said.

Use that information to track correlations between why people are joining and why they are leaving. For example:

- 5% of your new hires say one of the reasons they join you is because of the company's reputation as a 'fun place to work.'
- At exit interview, 62% say they one of the reasons they are leaving is because of 'a negative atmosphere in their workplace'.

This tells you something crucial about the messages being given out at recruitment time, compared to the reality internally.

B. Don't ask 'Why are you leaving?'

Even if your employees respond by telling the truth, you still won't get the answers you want.

Instead, ask 'Why didn't you stay?'

This is a crucially different question, even though it may seem semantically similar. Here's the difference:

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Let's say you ask Joe Leaver, 'Why are you leaving?' He thinks long, gulps and says, 'My supervisor was a bully.'

Is that what you really need to know? Let's say you ask instead, 'Well, why didn't you stay?' The answer is, 'Because you wouldn't do anything about my bullying supervisor when I complained.'

See the difference? 'Why are you leaving?' will uncover the **AILMENT**.

'Why didn't you stay?' uncovers the **CURE** you need to implement.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Decide now, **WHO** is going to undertake your Entry and Exit interviews, and the key questions you will ask.

Investigate <http://www.zoomerang.com> as an example of a great way to construct your interviews on-line (**AND** anonymously, if you wish).

[Note: We have no association with Zoomerang – we just like their product.]

5. USE ENTRY INTERVIEWS

So it goes without saying: Don't use Exit interviews without pairing them with Entry interviews.

By using both, as described above, you will radically improve the quality and usefulness of the information you receive from each.

6. THE MOST IMPORTANT INTERVIEW OF ALL

Want to know a secret...?

The single most important aspect of acquiring local knowledge isn't undertaken **AT ALL** by most companies.

What would you think of a tournament golfer who practiced very hard every week, but always on the **PREVIOUS COURSE** rather than on the one he was due to play next? Enthusiastic, but a bit short-sighted...?

Well, that's what it's like if you depend only on exit interviews - you're always dealing in **HINDSIGHT**.

Think of that golfer in terms of how **YOU** can gather **RELEVANT, IMMEDIATELY APPLICABLE** employee intelligence on why people stay with you...

You probably know many companies that undertake extensive **EXIT** interviews (you may be one of them) - and therefore know a lot about why people leave - but they almost **NEVER** ask their long-standing employees **WHY THEY STAY...**!

By doing just this **ONE THING** you can catapult your company to the top rank of those that are successfully grappling with retention:

The single most important interview you can implement is the

'WHY ARE YOU STAYING? INTERVIEW.'

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The 'Why Are You Staying?' or 'stay' interview asks those employees who have been with you a reasonable period of time (18 months or more) that simple question:

"Why do you stay here with us, rather than looking for another job"?

Now this may seem like a dangerous question to ask – who knows what responses you might get? Well, that's entirely the point - you **NEED** to know what answers you will get!

Here's what you'll learn from 'Stay' interviews if you frame the questions (and ask them) correctly:

- You'll learn what makes your organisation 'home' to its key employees - those cultural and environmental strengths that give you an 'edge' when recruiting.
- You'll learn what **doesn't** work - those issues that 'rock the boat' a little and make your good employees **consider** moving elsewhere.
- You'll learn - **IN ADVANCE OF THEM LEAVING** - who is unhappy or dissatisfied and considering a job change.

Make no bones about it: Done properly, the 'Stay' interview is an incredibly powerful tool.

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

DON'T CONFUSE THIS WITH YOUR REGULAR PERFORMANCE REVIEWS -

Your employee won't truthfully tell you 'why they are staying' if they think the question has a punishment/reward implication - they'll tell you what they think you want to hear.

The 'Stay' interview **MUST** be conducted outside of the performance review process, and ideally **NOT** by the employee's supervisor.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Right now - today - implement a nine-monthly 'Why are you staying?' interview with **EVERY** employee. You will learn more about what makes your company feel like home (and therefore what strengths you can build on) from one 'Stay' interview than from **10** Exit interviews.

Trust me. Do it. Today...

DISCUSSION POINT

What have you learned from exit, entry or stay interviews?
What mechanisms have you used to conduct interviews?
How do you extract valid, unbiased feedback from the employees and ex-employees?
When is the best time to conduct exit, entry or stay interviews?

In the next section, we'll look at the first part of your 'Retention Golf Swing' - **BACKSWING: RECRUITING FOR RETENTION.**

Whether or not you're directly involved in your organisation's recruiting activities, Part 3 of the MasterClass contains vital information you **must incorporate** in your approach to retention...



Part 3: Backswing Recruiting for Retention

Don't forget that your enjoyment of this MasterClass, and the benefit you receive from it, will be **ENORMOUSLY ENHANCED** if you read it in comfort.

Please print this section out - it's too long for comfortable reading on-screen - and find a relaxing environment in which to work through the contents.

What Part 3 covers:

1. Part 2 Review
2. The Hiring Model
3. Hire People Who will Stay
4. Hire In a Way That Promotes Retention
5. Not Everyone is a Potential 'Core Employee'

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

DON'T FORGET - WE ARE HERE TO HELP AT ANY TIME - If there is **any aspect** of your retention activities that you'd like help with, don't hesitate to contact us at any time. We love hearing from you!

1. PART 2 REVIEW

Take a moment to reflect on what we discovered in the previous section...

Picturing The Shot

Success in working with retention means anticipating the effects of any specific changes we are about to make...

Acquiring local Knowledge

This means obtaining a detailed knowledge of exactly what your employees reasons are for both leaving **AND** staying with you.

Forget Exit Interviews...

Exit interviews alone give a hugely distorted view of what matters to employees...

Use Entry Interviews

Entry and Exit Interviews combined will begin to give you the rich data you need to construct a working employee retention strategy that is customised to your organisation's exact circumstances.

The Most Important Interview of All

You need to include Entry interviews and 'Stay' interviews to get the complete picture.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

What have you **DONE** to implement what we learned yesterday...? What action points have you implemented?

If the answer is 'None, yet...', why not set this installment of your Employee Retention MasterClass down, and use the time instead to implement at least one action point from yesterday's installment...?

I'll be waiting right here when you return!

Set up your Entry/Stay/Exit Interview Program? Great!

Welcome back...

Now on to Part 3!

2. THE HIRING MODEL

As we begin to look at Recruiting for Retention, there is one factor of change that is more important to consider than any other - and that's the underlying shift in the 'Hiring Model'.

What do we mean by that?

Well, historically the employment 'contract' was this:

'You come work for me, I'll pay you, and so long as you do a good job, you can stay.'

This model has been completely shattered by demographic and economic shifts in the last ten years. Power in the hiring marketplace has largely shifted from the employer to the employee.

(You can see a similar change happening on the internet in consumer buying, where due to information flow and comparison shopping, power is shifting from the seller to the buyer...).

Couple with this is a shift from the mindset of working with one organisation for life (or two or three organisations at most), where a job change was a major (usually undesirable) 'life event' to the 'career portfolio' mindset where someone new into the workforce can expect to move between 7 and 11 times in their career, and where 'career development' is a positive, sought-after part of the employer-employee relationship.

This means there are now 4 hiring models where previously there was only one:

- Model 1: A version of the 'classic' model - you hire 'core' employees;
- Model 2: You hire 'career portfolio' individuals who are highly likely to move on to another job after 2-5 years with you.
- Model 3: You outsource the work to a third party;
- Model 4: You push the work down to your customers (e.g. self-assembly furniture, pack your own groceries, self-service gas, ATMs, etc.).

Organisations with low turnover recognise the differences in these types of 'employee', and know which model (or models) work best for them.

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Organisations struggling with high turnover are usually trapped in one 'model-view' of their world, and are losing good people who just don't 'fit' that model.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Which Hiring Model works best for you? Should you use different Models for different types of personnel requirements? Could you use **all** of them?

How flexible are your hiring processes, particularly with regard to Model 2? - do you have contracts and processes to encourage the hiring of 'career portfolio' employees?

Are you frequenting the sort of hiring markets that 'career portfolio' employees use (particularly the internet)?

What aspects of Model 4 can you implement? Could you put a task force on looking at which aspects of your activities can be pushed 'down' or 'out' to customers (if appropriate in your industry)?

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

MODEL 4 CAN BE A GREAT MARKETING 'BONUS' -

For example, years ago when we first started making downloads available from our website (instead of printed manuals), the positive comments from our clients were overwhelming!

Even though we don't have to print, bind, copy and mail the materials any more, our clients generally **prefer** the immediacy and re-usability of the electronic materials.

Can you think of ways to make your customer experience a **BETTER** one, **AND** push down some of the activities you undertake in-house?

DISCUSSION POINT

There are as many 'flavors' of the four hiring models as there are organisations that implement them.

How do you know which model is right for you?

How can you customise a hiring model to fit your needs?

3. HIRE PEOPLE WHO WILL STAY

Does this sound like a no-brainer? It is.

Still, it's amazing to me the number of companies that are regularly hiring individuals who are clearly **NOT GOING TO STAY WITH THE COMPANY** no matter what.

This is like planting a retention time bomb in your workforce and waiting for it to blow up in your face!

Why **DO** companies regularly hire people with limited skills, clear personality defects, ambiguous resumes, a track record of 'job-hopping', people who are clearly only joining for

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the stock options, or the salary, or specific job experience - people who even **STATE AT THE INTERVIEW** that they have no intention of staying for more than a short period?

Usually, it happens for one of three reasons:

1. There is a (real or perceived) shortage of alternatives;
2. The company doesn't have a clear understanding ('thumbnail') of the profile of the employee it needs for the job; and / or
3. The company doesn't have mechanisms to make a quality hire'.

Let's look at these in turn, and see how they're crucially interlinked:

SHORTAGE OF ALTERNATIVES

'I'm finding it hard enough to get **any** job candidates, let alone starting to turn people away!'

Is that your reaction when faced with the 'not-quite-right' candidate, or the 'job mercenary' who you know you can't keep?

The key here is to change your style of recruiting from **PASSIVE** to **ACTIVE**, with a single goal in mind - building a 'pool' of highly qualified candidates.

Organisations with a handle on employee retention know the absolutely vital need to have a wellspring of great job candidates available at all times to tap into.

They are pro-**ACTIVE** in their recruiting - constantly on the lookout, networking, schmoozing, head-hunting, using alumni - doing whatever it takes to build that pipeline that hiring managers can tap into when needed.

Organisations with retention difficulties, on the other hand are by and large **PASSIVE** recruiters - only going out into the market when a vacancy arises, thus restricting themselves to whatever is available at that very moment - a very hit or miss approach.

If you use passive recruiting, the statistics are packed against you - the chances of one 'great' candidate being in the market at that point - let alone a 'bench' of 2 or 3 - is statistically unlikely.

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

Recruitment technology - like Monster.com, Jobster, Dice.com etc. although helpful as a tool, has encouraged organisations to remain 'passive' recruiters, in the mistaken belief that there are thousands of great candidates out there, registered online.

There aren't, and there never will be - for one good reason: **THE BEST CANDIDATES ARE HAPPY WHERE THEY ARE.**

The people you want - the real star performers - are working in other organisations right now, **NOT** trawling the job market. You need to get pro-**ACTIVE** to unearth these folks.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Who is going to be the pro-**ACTIVE** recruiter in your organisation, department, division or team?

Who knows how to network well? Who likes going out to see people, and could make (and keep) a strong potential candidate consider a position with you some time in the future?

DEVELOP YOUR 'THUMBNAIL' OF A 'CORE EMPLOYEE'

Now that we've structured our hiring activity to reflect the reality we face - that we have to be **CONTINUOUSLY LOOKING** for great candidates, we need to design a way to recognise those who qualify as 'great candidates'.

This involves **two** steps:

1. UNDERSTAND YOUR CULTURAL 'MUST-HAVES'

Go back to the exercise we did in Part 1...Remember when you wrote out the attributes that made your company feel like 'home' - those characteristics that would make someone stay with the company...?

Well, isn't it realistic to assume that the people who will STAY with you are the same people who respond to those characteristics?

Let's take two examples to see what we mean:

EXAMPLE 1

Let's say the words you used to describe your company in the Part 1 exercise were:

Fast-moving; Energetic; Flexible; Passionate; Innovative.

It's highly likely that people who respond to these characteristics - who even exhibit them personally - will be most likely to feel 'at home' with you. These are the folks who will stay.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Use the 'company thumbnail' you created in Part 1 as a basis for creating a 'core employee thumbnail'. Write down all the characteristics of the type of person who is most likely to feel at home in your company - the type of person who will stay.

Again, 5 - 10 words should do it.

EXAMPLE 2

Let's say the words you wrote down were:

Stable; Conservative; Dependable; Secure; Long-established.

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Again, it's highly likely that people who (at least) respond to these characteristics - who even exhibit them personally - will be most likely to feel 'at home' with you. These are the folks who will stay with your company.

2. ADD-IN THE JOB-SPECIFIC 'MUST-HAVES'

The next step is to add the skills and attitudes that a candidate 'must have' to be a success in the specific job you are recruiting for.

Whether this is an accountant, engineer, check-out clerk or nurse, you must compile a job-specific set of 'must-haves' for that role.

The job incumbent, manager and internal customers can all help with this process.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

List the organisational **AND** job-specific 'must-haves' needed for the next three open positions you need to hire for.

Make sure you (or the recruiters and hiring managers) have a laser-like understanding of exactly what is needed to succeed in those positions.

DISCUSSION POINT

Review all your recruiting materials - do they reflect your 'core employee thumbnail' (the person who will match your organisation's cultural 'must-haves')?

Are you using words that will interest and attract your target 'core employee'?

What can you do to make sure your recruitment materials are seen by the sort of person who is likely to feel at home in your company?

Think about your 'thumbnail core employee'. What does he read? What does he like to eat? Drink? View? Where does she go on vacation? How does she use her leisure time? Are you going to these places? Advertising in them?

4. HIRE IN A WAY THAT PROMOTES RETENTION

Now we've established that **ONLY SOME** of the people that apply to you for a job will be in your target 'core employee' thumbnail, we can begin to build some ways in which we can help those people choose to stay with us.

In particular, there are three things you must ensure your hiring process embraces:

- [A] Hiring profiles;
- [B] Behavioural Interviewing; and
- [C] Panel Interviews.

[A] Hiring profiles

For your hiring to be effective, you must move away from a visceral, 'gut-based' hiring process to one where your hiring is conducted on the basis of agreed, competency-based hiring profiles as described above - where the 'must-have' candidate characteristics, competencies, experience and attitudes are clearly described and defined.

[B] Behavioural Interviewing

After going to the trouble of designing effective hiring profiles, the last thing you need is for the interview to studiously ignore all that hard work, concentrating instead on some arcane aspect of the candidate's background or history that has little or nothing to do with the key requirements of the job.

Your employment interviews must provide systematic behavioural proof of required talent - sometimes referred to as 'behaviourally-based interviewing'.

[C] Panel Interviews

Finally, make sure your interviewing isn't subject to the whims, preferences and biases of any one individual [however great - or senior - a manager they might be].

Ensure that you make only the highest quality hires by engaging in panel interviews - either synchronous [everyone in the same room at the same time], or asynchronous [not all together at once].

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Start right now: Put an interviewing panel together for the next important hire you must make.

Choose three people - the hiring manager, one 'internal customer' and one person wholly unrelated to the position.

Have them sit down and write out 2 or 3 behaviorally-based questions for each 'must-have' in your hiring profile.

If this process is entirely new to your organisation, division, department or team, you'll probably benefit from having a rehearsal - a mock interview where the hiring panel get used to asking the behaviorally based questions and not 'stepping over' each other.

5. NOT EVERYONE IS A POTENTIAL 'CORE EMPLOYEE'

Remember our 4 'employee models' from earlier?

How do you tell who are the Model 1 core employees – likely to stay 'loyal', and who are the Model 2 free agents – more likely to leave in 2 to 3 years and cause a turnover issue?

How do you decide which hiring track to put them on – the slower, relational process, or a fast-track, quick turnaround process?

Here's a couple of suggestions:

1. Ask the applicants.

Give all applicants (who fit your 'must-haves') the opportunity to share with you their career goals in the short, medium and long-term.

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2. Watch where the applications are coming from.

Many (though not all) 'resume-blasters', internet-based applications are geared for the 'career portfolio' model.

Word-of-mouth recommendations from existing long-term employees are usually potential Model 1 core employees.

Track the sources of your new hires for a while, and compare the length of time they stay. You can use the resulting data to produce a matrix that will help you direct future applicants down the right track.

3. Buy or devise an assessment instrument.

Now that you have profiled your ideal Model 1 core employee, you might benefit from purchasing or designing a (valid) questionnaire or quiz-type assessment instrument which will help you identify such individuals from the pool of applicants.

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

BE CAREFUL IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCH AN INSTRUMENT -

If your organisation is experienced in the use of such instruments, this is probably a good way to go, as you will already have experience in the use of a particular instrument that could be adapted for this purpose.

If your company has **NOT** used such instruments before, this is not a good place to start - there's too much at stake.

Introduce the use of assessment instruments **INTERNALLY** at first, debug their use, get comfortable with a particular instrument before using it on potential new hires.

Note there are also different legislative requirements governing the use and content of such instruments which vary from state to state.

Learn how to **RECRUIT FOR RETENTION**, and much of your later work will be **MUCH, MUCH EASIER**.

DISCUSSION POINT

Noticed any 'bad habits' slipping into your recruiting activities that have had a negative impact on the quality of your hires?

Or maybe you've implemented some 'good hiring habits' that help ensure that your employee retention starts right at the beginning of the employee - employer relationship?

Either way, list them out and make sure you stop the first, and continue the second!

In the next section,, we'll look at the second major part of your 'Retention Golf Swing' - **ORIENTATION**. Think orientation is deadly boring? Has little to do with retention...?



Part 4: Hit the Ball

Orientation for Retention

Don't forget that your enjoyment of this MasterClass, and the benefit you receive from it, will be **ENORMOUSLY ENHANCED** if you read it in comfort.

Please print this section out - it's too long for comfortable reading on-screen - and find a relaxing environment in which to work through the contents.

What Part 4 covers:

1. Part 3 Review
2. Orientation for Retention?
3. What Orientation Is Not
4. What Orientation **IS**
5. Why There's No Such Thing as 'No Orientation'

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

DON'T FORGET - WE ARE HERE TO HELP AT ANY TIME - If there is **any aspect** of your retention activities that you'd like help with, don't hesitate to contact me at any time - use the contact details at the bottom of today's installment. We love hearing from you!

1. PART 3 REVIEW

Take a moment to reflect on what we discovered in Part 3, **'BACKSWING: RECRUITING FOR RETENTION'**

The Hiring Model

Not every vacancy should be viewed as a 'core employment'. There are some circumstances in which you shouldn't wrestle with retention **AT ALL**. Instead, use other hiring models such as free agents to fill positions that aren't 'core'.

Hire People Who will Stay

For 'core positions', identify the thumbnail of the type of person who is most likely to feel at home with your company (and therefore to stay with you) - concentrate your 'core hiring' activities on them.

Hire In a Way That Promotes Retention

Build a pipeline of high-quality candidates by engaging in pro-active recruiting. Use hiring profiles, panel interviews and behavioural questioning to ensure candidates meet your profile.

Not Everyone is a Potential 'Core Employee'

Work with retention where you can - where you can't... fuggeddaboudit.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

What have you **DONE** to implement what we learned yesterday...? What action points have you implemented?

If the answer is 'None, yet...', why not set down this installment of your Employee Retention MasterClass, and use the time instead to implement at least **one action point** from yesterday's installment...?

We'll be waiting right here when you return!

OK - we're back!

Let's look at the **SINGLE MOST STRAIGHTFORWARD STEP** you can take to encourage employees to feel at home with you (and therefore to stay)...Orientation. (Yes, Orientation...)

2. ORIENTATION FOR RETENTION?

Let's be frank about this...orientation is the Cinderella of training...

The most-attended training process on the planet, orientation is thought of as boring, crashingly dull, tedious, time-consuming, wasteful, difficult...we both get the picture, I think...

As a result, orientation, if done **at all**, is done badly.

But let's think about this: Remember our initial premise regarding retention...**PEOPLE STAY WHERE THEY FEEL AT HOME**...right?

Well, what would you think of someone who invited you to their country house for the weekend, yet when you arrived, barely acknowledged you at the door, gave you no help with your bags, didn't show you where anything was, didn't show you around...?

What if in addition, they said they weren't sure if there was actually a room ready for you to sleep in yet, or if there was, there probably wasn't a bed there...that if you really needed a bed, here was a number to ring to try to get one...

I could go on...but I guess the picture is clear - **NO ONE IN THEIR RIGHT MIND** would want to stay a minute longer than they have to at such a place, or with people like that.

And yet we somehow convince ourselves that it's different in business. It's not.

Here's an important principle:

The employer/employee relationship is just like **EVERY OTHER RELATIONSHIP**. In a social environment, we mostly make our minds up about someone within 30 seconds of meeting them.

Only very hard work on their part will convince us that we are wrong about our first impressions.

It's just the same in business - your employees make their mind up about whether they feel at home or not in the **FIRST THREE WEEKS** with you. It takes **very hard work** to convince them subsequently whether they were right or not.

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

HERE'S THE REAL 'KICKER' - Previously, in a different employment landscape, new employees found it very hard to contemplate leaving a hard-won new job just because she felt she might have made a mistake. That gave employers time to correct early relational mistakes (like a poor orientation program).

Nowadays, there's much less pressure on the employee to do this. She only has to stay with you for maybe 18 months or so to avoid an unseemly blot on her resume.

Fail to make your employees feel at home from the get-go and...well, we all know how the story ends: You end up with an employee turnover 'surge' at the 12-18 month point – and guess what the root cause is?

THE IMPRESSION YOU GAVE IN THE FIRST THREE WEEKS.

It's a bit like the impact television has had on the movies. Movie producers **USED** to be able to take time positioning a story, setting up characters, building a plot. The movie-goer had paid their money, and was voluntarily stuck in the darkened cinema for 2 hours, with no other options.

Then along came TV. Fail to get the TV viewers attention in the first 30 seconds and your program is toast. Out comes the channel flicker and you're gone...

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Decide **TODAY** that within three months you're going to have an effective, welcoming, retention-focused orientation program. (That's a realistic time frame if you're starting from scratch - if you're refreshing an existing program, you may be able to do it in a month.)

DISCUSSION POINT

Effective employee orientation can have a **major** positive impact on employee retention.

What are you doing to make your new employees feel 'at home' right from the outset of their time with you?

3. WHAT ORIENTATION IS NOT

In ensuring that your orientation process is **RETENTION-ORIENTED**, it's important to realise that **ORIENTATION IS NOT INDUCTION.**

Induction (in-processing, form-filling, benefits and compensation details, health and safety instruction) is all about **GIVING PEOPLE TOOLS.**

Orientation is **SHOWING EMPLOYEES WHAT THEY (AND YOU) CAN ACHIEVE WITH THOSE TOOLS.**

There is little that is retention-related about the induction process. Induction is more about 'getting started' than 'staying'.

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An over-concentration on induction, at the expense of orientation (see the next point) is self-defeating to your retention activities. Most people want to get beyond mere induction fairly quickly, and on to orientation.

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

THINK OF IT THIS WAY - You've arrived in an exciting new city on a business trip.

How much fun do you get from schlepping your bags through the lobby, standing in line at the check-in desk, filing in registration forms...not a lot (unless you have a **serious** social problem -grin-)... (that's **induction**).

But once you're up in that luxurious room, out come the brochures, the room service menu, the movie list, the local attractions...much more exciting - , maybe you'll have time to enjoy some sightseeing, check out some local restaurants...(that's **orientation**)!

So, induction is **NOT** orientation, and the more you can place this induction / information on some sort of a self-guided platform (CD-ROM, intranet, web-based) the better.

Trying to find ways to take **INDUCTION** 'offline', so that more time can be spent face-to-face on the much more retention-positive activity of **ORIENTATION**.

Modern technology is making this a lot easier – and cheaper - than previously. And we don't mean investing in an all-singing, all-dancing CD-ROM that will be out of date in three months. Here are three great examples of the sort of technology tools available to help you take induction off-line:

1. <http://www.intranets.com> - provide hosted intranets. Put all that turgid stuff on your own internal web site, and let everyone get up to speed on company policies in their own time. You can even put the CEO's welcome right there. (BTW - the content doesn't need to sing, dance, change colour or twinkle to be worthwhile.)
 2. <http://www.getresponse.com> - you can set up as many autoresponders as you like at this excellent site. (An autoresponder is an automatic email reply that is sent out in response to someone requesting it - you received one when you subscribed to this newsletter.)
- Link it to the intranet above, and this is what you can do - set up any number of autoresponders for the most common induction queries you have. Say you get asked 10 times a week for more details on the company's compensation plan. Put the details in email form, set up the autoresponder, and employees who want that information just enter their email address, and bingo, it's right there on their desktop.
3. <http://OnlineOrientation.com> - our very own 'all-in-one', easy to implement online orientation solution. Take it out for a spin and see if it meets your needs.

Check these tools out for yourself. The effort involved in getting your induction 'off-line' seems a lot at first, but your orientation will definitely benefit.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

You have three weeks during which your new employees will decide if they feel at home with you (and will therefore stay). Don't spend it showing them how things work (induction) - **INDUCTION JUST EMPHASIZES HOW 'NEW' THEY ARE - THAT THEY'RE NOT 'AT HOME'.**

So, get your induction on to a self-guided platform - CD-Rom, intranet , web-based - it doesn't matter which - what matters is that you do it!

4. WHAT ORIENTATION IS

As we've seen, **INDUCTION** is the in-processing, form-filling, policy-explaining (often turgid) activity that many think of when they think 'orientation'.

Orientation, on the other hand, is about **ENABLING** your new hires to **FEEL AT HOME** - your pre-eminent goal.

In a sense, high-quality orientation gives your new employees **PERMISSION** to feel at home (I know, I know... I've spent too long in northern California - but you know what I mean.)

Effective orientation achieves this by making sure your new hires know:

- what is expected of them;
- how to add value in your company;
- how best to communicate with their colleagues; and
- how to integrate as team players more quickly.

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

THINK AGAIN ABOUT YOUR WEEKEND INVITE TO THE COUNTRY - What needs to happen when we turn up, to make us feel at home...?

Although necessary, spending a lot of time telling us where the bathrooms are and how to work the microwave only **ENHANCES** our sense of 'strangeness'. If the family treats us like that all weekend we'll **NEVER** feel at home.

What makes us feel at home is when:

We know what's expected of us:

'We do go to Church Sunday, but you're not expected to attend unless you'd like to...'

We know how to add value:

'I'm starting Sunday lunch - can you peel the potatoes...?'

We know how to communicate with others:

'Please, just call me John. I'm usually in the garden if you need me.'

We are integrated into the 'team':

'We're going to see Aunt Jemima on Saturday evening - we so want you to come along...'

DISCUSSION POINT

What do **YOU** put into your new employee orientation program?

What is the essential content to ensure your new employees feel at home right from Day 1?

What advice would you give to someone who has read this email MasterClass, and now wants to design and implement an orientation program for the first time?

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Your new employee orientation program can be two hours long, or two weeks long, but if doesn't show your new employees:

- what is expected of them;
- how to add value in your company;
- how best to communicate with their colleagues; and
- how to integrate as team players more quickly,

then it isn't helping them to **FEEL AT HOME**.

Review your current orientation program content - which of these four areas are covered? How would you score each area on a scale of 1 - 5 (1 = pretty poor, 5 = great)?

Which areas therefore need worked on? Who's going to re-design these elements? When?

5. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS 'NO ORIENTATION'

A simple point to finish on - there is no such thing as having 'no orientation'.

If we meet, and I ignore you, you are fully justified in using such ignorance in your judgment of me. I cannot plead that as we didn't actually speak, you can hardly know me.

The act of 'not speaking' said it all...

You cannot have 'no orientation program'.

If you take on new employees, and the first time you 'meet', they're ignored...are they going to feel at home...? Are they going to stay in the long term...?

If you're serious about retention, get an orientation program that you can be proud of. It's not difficult ('though it is hard work), and you'll never regret it.

In the next section, we'll look at the third major part of your 'Retention Golf Swing' - **FOLLOW-THROUGH**. Specifically, educating your managers to understand the importance of making people feel at home, and implementing a mentoring or coaching program.



Part 5: Follow-Through Educating Managers, Mentoring and Coaching Programs

What Part 5 covers:

1. Part 4 Review
2. Why is Follow-Through Important?
3. Turn Managers into Evangelists in Just Two Steps
4. Mentoring and Coaching – Retention's Magic Bullet
5. Tying Follow-Through Together

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

DON'T FORGET - WE ARE HERE TO HELP AT ANY TIME - If there is **any** aspect of your retention activities that you'd like help with, don't hesitate to contact Julie or me at any time - use the contact details at the bottom of today's installment.

We love hearing from you!

1. PART 4 REVIEW

Take a moment to reflect on what we discovered in Part 4, '**BACKSWING: RECRUITING FOR RETENTION**':

ORIENTATION FOR RETENTION?

Yes, the Cinderella of training - Orientation - is the single most effective thing you can do to make your employees feel at home - and therefore more likely to stay with you.

WHAT ORIENTATION IS NOT

Orientation is not **INDUCTION**. While a necessary function, induction should be minimised as much as possible, as it merely emphasises that your new employee is **NOT** at home.

WHAT ORIENTATION IS

Orientation is the process of making people feel at home. To achieve this, your orientation program should at **LEAST** tell your new employees:

- What is expected of them;
- How to add value in your company;
- How best to communicate with their colleagues; and
- How to integrate as team players more quickly.

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WHY THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS 'NO ORIENTATION'

'Not orienting' people is synonymous with making them feel uncomfortable - not at home. It's just like ignoring someone when you're first introduced to them...**DON'T DO IT...**!

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

What have you **DONE** to implement what we learned yesterday...? What action points have you implemented?

If the answer is 'None, yet...', why not set down this installment of your Employee Retention MasterClass, and use the time instead to implement at least **one action point** from yesterday's installment...?

If you're wondering where to start, why not call us? We are the national leaders in designing and implementing effective orientation programs.

Contact Julie or Les through HRwisdom using support@HRwisdom.com.au.

We'll be waiting right here when you return!

OK - we're back!

Let's look at the final stage in our golf-swing approach to employee retention - The Follow-Through.

2. WHY IS FOLLOW-THROUGH IMPORTANT?

(I sometimes wonder how I've got myself into this golf-swing analogy - it's nearly nine months since I've played a game, and here I am typing away in my study when I could be out playing....sheesh...)

Anyway...any decent golf player will tell you, that for the ball to land just where you want it, a good follow-through is vital. A strong follow-through puts **DISTANCE** and **ACCURACY** into the ball's flight.

It's just the same with employee retention (or any aspect of employee development, for that matter): While your **BACKSWING** (Recruitment) will impart **POWER** into the employer-employee relationship, and the **POINT OF IMPACT** (Orientation) gives **IMPETUS** - gets the new employee going - , it's the subsequent **FOLLOW-THROUGH** that delivers **DISTANCE** and **ACCURACY**.

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS ARE that you want each and every employee of yours to achieve?

If not, it's very hard for you - or your employees - to know if they have **really achieved anything** concrete over a period of time. This leads eventually to a malaise - at its worst, a sense of failure - that will end in the employee leaving for somewhere they can feel more fulfilled.

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By **DISTANCE**, I mean the length of time you and the employee will share a relationship (which is what retention is all about).

By **ACCURACY**, I mean the degree to which the employee will help meet overall organisational goals - there's little point in working hard to retain an employee for a lengthy period of time, only to find that they're contributing little to your organisational objectives!

There are two main elements in a strong follow-through - think of them as a powerful left and right arm, swinging the golf club through the ball, producing a **LONG, ACCURATE** golf shot... Your right arm is the employee's **MANAGER**, in his day-to-day activities - supervising, directing, instructing....the Manager ensures **accuracy** - achieving organisational goals.

The left arm is the employee's **MENTOR or COACH**, supporting, encouraging, advising... the Mentor ensures **distance** - helping the employee grow and develop as an individual **OVER TIME**.

(Of course, these two roles are not mutually exclusive – all good managers are mentors to some degree - but we'll see shortly how important it is to have **BOTH** - formally, and separately.)

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Be sure that your **PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS** clearly delineates the goals each employee is expected to achieve with you year by year.

You will remember we made the point earlier in this email MasterClass, that it is important that your 'Entry' and 'Stay' interview are **not** linked to performance appraisal (otherwise you may not receive truthful answers).

...For effective **FOLLOW-THROUGH**, the **opposite** is the case. You can easily measure the **DISTANCE** in your 'golf-shot' retention activities (how long are people staying?), but you cannot measure the **ACCURACY** unless you know **exactly** how each individual is contributing to overall organisational goals.

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

A LITTLE CONFUSED ABOUT THE DIFFERING ROLES of managers, mentors, coaches, supervisors...? See my hugely-acclaimed 640-page workbook 'The Complete Guide To Mentoring and Coaching' (TCGTMAC).

Generally acknowledged as **the** accepted text for anyone wanting to design and implement a mentoring or coaching program, TCGTMAC covers the differences in these and other important roles in the mentoring environment.

3. TURN MANAGERS INTO EVANGELISTS IN JUST TWO STEPS

After all the hard work you've put in to ensuring that you are recruiting for retention, and enthusiastically orienting your new employees, they feel right at home...

...then they go back to their department.

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And meet their Boss.

The 'real boss', as he likes to remind everyone...a boss who 'doesn't care a hoot what you've been doing up there in head office for the last two days - let me tell you how it **really is** around here...'

Never happened to you...? It will.

Of course, not every manager is a dyed-in-the-wool Luddite with little care for his employees well-being or your retention issues - but **SOME** of them are - and those people can crush everything you've done to make people feel at home (and therefore be more likely to stay) with one arched eyebrow.

Even those managers who are genuinely well-intentioned have a job to do: a substantial, time-consuming, stress-inducing, don't-dump-another-darned-initiative-on-my-lap, overworked job. They don't need or want to get dragged into what they see as the latest 'flavour-of-the-month' fad campaign.

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

THIS IS ONE OF THE REASONS 'RETENTION STRATEGIES' DON'T WORK - Trying to 'graft' a strategy onto an organisation is a bit like putting in a new vital organ - it's always in danger of being rejected.

As we've said throughout this email MasterClass, forget strategies - just concentrate on making your employees feel at home...

So, how do you get your managers to accept (and **ACTIVELY SUPPORT**) what you're trying to do?

There are only two steps necessary to turn your most hardened managers into fervent evangelists for your retention activities;

1. Don't launch a 'strategy'! [I think I've made my point on this...:-)].
2. Ask, don't tell.

This second step takes time, effort, and a little bravery, but it will reap you unimaginable rewards...

Many of us spend a lot of time and effort devising programs, presentations, persuasions, whatever, to get managers to 'accept' something we're trying to implement. In fact, most of the time, the 'something' is actually for the **MANAGER'S** benefit - not **OUR'S**.

That being so, wouldn't it be a great idea to involve the managers right from the outset - **BEFORE** you actually put pen to paper (or mouse to pad - whatever works for you)...?

I strongly suggest **INVOLVING YOUR MANAGERS RIGHT FROM THE OUTSET** in planning **all of your responses** to this MasterClass - particularly in asking them one crucial question:

"What is the **ONE THING** we can do to make your life easier...?"

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

I'VE USED THIS 'MAGIC QUESTION' OVER AND OVER to get managers involved and enthusiastic about orientation programs (a notoriously hard sell - managers just want their new employees on site **AND WORKING** on Day One).

Try sitting with your most un-convinced manager, and ask this simple question: 'What is the **ONE THING** we could teach your new employees in **ONE DAY** that would most make **your** life easier...'

You'll first notice a quizzical look, then a visible gleam appear in her eye...a shuffling forward...a look of 'Aha!'...then you're off and running - you won't be able to get her to stop.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Write down - right now! - the names of **three key managers** you will go talk to **THIS WEEK**. Bring your notes from this email MasterClass - and **ASK THEIR ADVICE**.

Don't forget the 'Magic Question' - 'What's the **one thing** we could teach your new employees in **ONE DAY** that would most make **your** life easier..."

DISCUSSION POINT

Ever had problems getting divisional managers or supervisors 'on-side' for an important activity?

Anticipating some 'push-back' from colleagues when you start to implement all you've learned in this MasterClass?

How are you going to overcome that opposition?

4. MENTORING AND COACHING - RETENTION'S MAGIC BULLET

Why have I included mentoring / coaching in the **FOLLOW-THROUGH** stage of your retention activities...?

Because, quite simply, it's your **magic bullet** in the fight against retention.

(Remember the old Vincent Price horror movies in which the vampire could only be killed by either a stake through the heart, or a magic silver bullet...stake through the heart is a bit messy, so we'll go for the magic bullet...)

What do women rate higher than 'fast career advancement' in appraising their employer...?

What did Deloitte and Touche say forms a firms 'best line of defence in managing retention'...?

What is it that 61% of employees who get it say they're likely to stay with their employers for the next **five years**...?

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(Wharton MBA Study, Journal of Management Consulting, Emerging Workforce Study)

Got it yet...? It's....mentoring.

Want a few more statistics?:

Top reason for offering mentoring programs: Retention of employees - 73%

(others include -

'Improve leadership and managerial skills'

'Develop new leaders'

'Enhance career development'

'Put high-potential individuals in the fast career track'

'Promote diversity'

'Improve technical knowledge')

[Retention & Staffing Report, Manchester Inc,' (378 companies)]

'...their importance [mentoring and counsellors] cannot be stressed enough. They form a firm's first and best line of defence in managing retention, and in recognition of this, our firm has established formal mentoring and counselling programs.'

'Managing retention at Deloitte and Touche' Journal of Management Consulting.

'Everyone knows how important feedback and coaching are, yet most companies don't do them very well. Seventy-three percent of executives view informal feedback and coaching as essential or very important to development, but only 30% rate their company as excellent or very good at providing them.'

'Sixty percent strongly value being mentored, but only 25 percent are content with their mentoring.'

THE WAR FOR TALENT, The McKinsey Quarterly.

* 62% of employees who have received training, mentoring, or education from their employer say they are very likely to stay with their current employer.

* 61% who think their employers provide them with mentoring opportunities, say they are likely to remain in their jobs for the next five years.

Interim Services Inc, Emerging Workforce Study

'Of course, pay is important to employees. What is surprising, however, is that it is not more important than training and mentoring.'

Interim Services Inc 1999, Emerging Workforce Study

75% of executives say mentoring played a key role in their career.

ASTD

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Surprisingly, while employees highly value training and mentoring, these factors are most often overlooked by employers.

Interim Services Inc Emerging Workforce Study

CEO survey shows mentoring one of top three factors in their career.

Accountemps survey of Fortune 500

Managers who take time to act as a mentor will likely experience more success with retention, the Study says.

Interim Services Inc Emerging Workforce Study

77% of companies report mentoring programs were effective in increasing retention.

Centre for Creative Leadership

Mmmm...pretty overwhelming, I'd say...and totally in keeping with everything I've discovered in 20+ years of working with employee retention and development issues.

Let me put it this way...if you're serious about retention, ***DON'T EVEN THINK OF NOT HAVING A MENTORING OR COACHING PROGRAM***...it's not just a 'no-brainer' - it's a vital necessity.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Get a mentoring and/or coaching program...***NOW!***

Why not check out my manual: 'The Complete Guide to Mentoring and Coaching' - it is quite simply ***THE BEST*** resource available for designing and implementing a world-class mentoring or coaching program for **any size of organisation**.

Written by your esteemed author, you'll already recognise the style...Check out all the details, and get your copy ***TODAY***.

DISCUSSION POINT

Have you implemented a mentoring or coaching program, or are you considering one?

What are the barriers to doing so?

5. TYING FOLLOW-THROUGH TOGETHER

How do you tie together the activities of the managers on the one hand, and your mentors/coaches on the other, for optimum retention? How do ***ACCURACY*** and ***DISTANCE*** combine to land the ball inches from the hole...?

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Well, remember our motto throughout this email MasterClass...'People Stay Where They Feel at Home'...

They **DON'T** stay because of a strategy.

They **DON'T** stay because your managers decide they should.

They **DON'T** stay just because they have a mentor.

They stay because they feel at home. A manager, a mentor, many other things can contribute to that sense of 'home' - but none of those things on their own are 'Home'.

'Home' is the sum of all the parts that we've discussed in this MasterClass - ...and guess who's job it is to tie all of those parts together - ? Who gets the opportunity to make the whole more than the parts? Who is it that must add value, not just to someone's job, but their whole career? To **really** make a difference?

That's right. You.

In the next section, we'll discuss how to tie together everything we've discussed - Backswing, point of impact and follow-through - into the most powerful, gracious, straight-as-a-die golf swing ever seen...

In Part 6, we finally get to see the ball drop sweetly on the green...inches from the hole!

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

In preparation for our final session tomorrow, go through all five installments of your email MasterClass to date (you have been printing your copy out and scrawling all over it, haven't you...?), and list each Implementation Point to date.

Mark beside each one:

- * **WHAT** you have decided to do;
- * **WHO** will help you; and
- * **WHEN** you will have it done by.

Part 6: Summary **Putting it All Together**

What Part 6 covers:

1. Part 5 Review
2. 'I Don't Think We're in Kansas Anymore, Toto' '

In this final instalment of your Employee Retention MasterClass, we're going to look at how all of the material we've covered so far combines to provide you with all you need to work with retention issues within your organisation.

First, let's briefly review what we learned in Part 5.

SIDEBAR COMMENTS

DON'T FORGET - I AM HERE TO HELP AT ANY TIME -

If there is **any aspect** of your retention activities that you'd like help with, don't hesitate to contact me at any time - use the contact details at the bottom of today's installment. We love hearing from you!

1. PART 5 REVIEW

Take a moment to reflect on what we discovered yesterday in **FOLLOW-THROUGH**: Educating Managers, Mentoring and Coaching Programs.

WHY IS FOLLOW-THROUGH IMPORTANT?

While your **BACKSWING** (Recruitment) will impart **POWER** into the employer-employee relationship, and the **POINT OF IMPACT** (Orientation) gives **IMPETUS** - gets the new employee going - , it's the subsequent **FOLLOW-THROUGH** that delivers **DISTANCE** and **ACCURACY**.

TURN MANAGERS INTO EVANGELISTS IN JUST TWO STEPS

1. Don't launch a 'strategy'!
2. Ask, don't tell.

MENTORING AND COACHING - RETENTION'S MAGIC BULLET

If you're serious about retention, **DON'T EVEN THINK OF NOT HAVING A MENTORING OR COACHING PROGRAM**...it's not just a 'no-brainer' - it's a vital necessity.

TYING FOLLOW-THROUGH TOGETHER

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Guess who's job it is to tie all of those parts together - ? Who gets the opportunity to make the whole more than the parts? Who is it who must add value, not just to someone's job, but their whole career? To **really** make a difference?

That's right. You.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

What have you **DONE** to implement what we learned yesterday...? What action points have you implemented?

If the answer is 'None, yet...', why not set down this installment of your Employee Retention MasterClass, and use the time instead to implement at least **one action point** from yesterday's installment...?

If you're wondering where to start, why not contact me? I am a global and national leader in designing and implementing effective retention strategies.

Contact Julie or Les toll-free at support@HRwisdom.com.au.

OK - we're back!

Let's look at tying together everything we've learned so far in our MasterClass...

2. 'I DON'T THINK WE'RE IN KANSAS ANYMORE, TOTO'

We sure aren't.

Just like the statement that Dorothy makes to her little dog after the whirlwind has lifted both of them up and deposited them in the land of OZ, the old landscape has completely changed.

There are few signs in the surrounding countryside that are familiar or re-assuring. Dealing with the 'New Demographics' is perplexing and stressful - and in the middle of all this stress and complexity WE'RE supposed to be helping OTHERS feel more at home! As Alannis Morissette might say - 'Isn't it Ironic...'

I'm not going to use this final session to restate what we've already covered - I hope you've taken my advice and printed out each session for future review. (I also hope you've been making notes of the actual implementation points you are going to work on right away).

Nor am I going to talk about any particular **PROCESS** or **PROGRAM** that will solve your retention issues (I think we've made our point very strongly on this already...!).

Instead, I want to talk about **PEOPLE**.

Not just any people, but a very unusual, admirable group of people. They're not much in the limelight. They don't feature in many corporate profiles in 'Fortune' or The Wall Street Journal. Our ears don't prick up when we hear what they do for a living.

There's little possibility of these people pocketing record-shattering stock options, or stepping down from a corporate jet; nonetheless, these are the people in whose hands the future landscape of commerce currently rests.

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And that's you. Yes, **YOU**. The one who has to make sense of all of this, who has to find a way to harmonise recruitment, orientation, mentoring, coaching, manager education, and...oh...a thousand other things.

Because **YOU'RE** the one with the onerous responsibility of mapping out a way in which the 'New Economy' can work with the 'New Employee'.

You're the one who has to wrestle with the 'Hiring Model' to make it something real - with a heart and integrity - and not just a bullet point on a flip chart.

You're the one who has to develop that well-grooved golf swing - **BACKSWING:POINT OF IMPACT:FOLLOW-THROUGH**, and it's got to be as good as Tiger Woods'!

You'll remember something I said right at the start of this MasterClass -

'Nobody knows what's going on. We're ALL making it up as we go along.'

Just like Dorothy when she met the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion and the Scarecrow, **nobody** knew quite what to do. What was obvious was that **SOMEONE** had to take the lead, or things would just get worse.

So what I'd like to do in this final instalment of our Employee Retention MasterClass is to share with you the attributes and characteristics of those **PEOPLE** - people like you - the Dorothy's - who are (sometimes reluctantly, often unknowingly) taking the lead in not just 'working with retention', but changing the employment landscape.

Here's my observations on what it takes to 'pull it all together':

- * You must be genuinely interested in 'making people feel at home', and not just in 'Making People Stay';
- * You must want to ask and listen at least as much as you plan and tell;
- * You will see the interconnectedness of all the activities you undertake, and will not try to 'graft' initiatives into your company;
- * You will 'walk the course' frequently, almost by habit, talking, asking, interviewing, and above all **listening** to your employees - the very people you want to feel at home;
- * You recognise the need to greet everyone – socially and in business, friends and employees - in a way that will make them feel at home;
- * You regularly recruit others - managers, supervisors, mentors and coaches, to help in the work of making people feel at home, and in doing so, you imbue **them** with the importance of doing so;
- * You are prepared to accept that everything you know is wrong, and you regularly review everything you're doing in the light of the changing landscape.

Isn't this why you entered business in the first place...?

IMPLEMENTATION POINT

Look at the list of attributes above -

Which are your strongest characteristics?

Which are the weakest?

What can you do about the weaker attributes?

How can you leverage your strengths?

You see, 'pulling it all together' isn't about producing a cookie-cutter plan with 18 action points. It's about character and integrity - yours.

It's about doing what Dorothy did, **ACTING** with little information, **RISKING** that some decisions might be wrong, **ENCOURAGING** others to try something different, something unheard of in their philosophy.

Years ago, in a very different economy, the business world was ruled by **Business Plans** - predictable, word-processed answers to predictable problems. I was practicing as a CPA then, and I produced hundreds, maybe thousands of them...I had templates on my computer I could pull down to cover every eventuality.

Maybe someday we'll return to Kansas, that world of total stability...predictability. Maybe someday employee retention will be a thing of the past...But somehow, I don't think it'll be soon.

If that day ever does return, I'll write a different close to this MasterClass, one with 6 or 8 bullet points, showing you 'what the answer is'.

In the meantime...the answer is **YOU**.

Good Luck.

DISCUSSION POINT

We started this whole MasterClass by asking:

"Why are you here?"

We're going to finish with one equally simple question:

"What are you going to do now?"