



# HOW TO RESIGNATION-PROOF YOUR COMPANY

Use Strategic Tenure™ to get ahead in the retention game and start building a more stable talent base.



# IT'S TIME TO SHIFT THE WAY WE RECRUIT, ENGAGE AND DEVELOP TALENT.

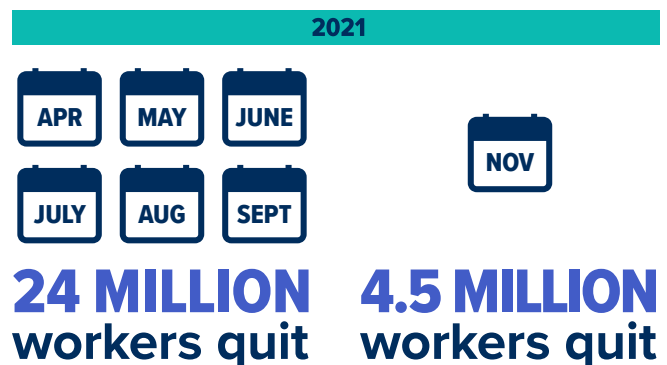
Like many organizations, you're likely more worried than ever about finding – and keeping – talent. What was once a concern largely contained to HR teams has now become a leading priority for CEOs and their executive teams.

For two decades, workforce experts have warned us about the global struggle for talent, driven by acute skills gaps and an overall shortage of human resources.

In the coming decade, we can also expect a steadily shrinking labor pool, as large numbers of aging workers retire or drop out of the workforce. This means worker shortages are likely to be a concern for the foreseeable future.

None of this is news to seasoned HR professionals who have seen this building over time, but we've hit a tipping point. Looking just at the United States, from April to September 2021, more than 24 million workers quit their jobs as part of the Great Resignation. In November alone, a record 4.5 million people – or about 3% of the workforce – quit their jobs, and the previous record was set just two months before. At the same time, the rate of retirees, 3.3 million between January 2020 and October 2021, exceeds what demographic trends would predict. And while resignations are high, the number of hires was even greater, at 6.7 million. Collectively, this makes for the most competitive labor market most HR professionals have ever experienced.

2021 saw record-setting resignations in the United States



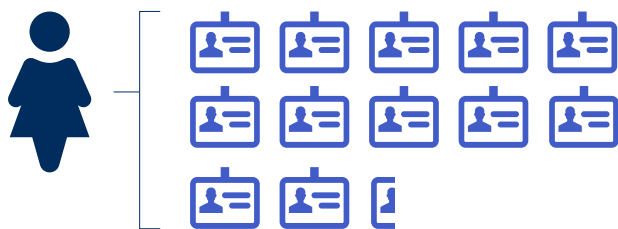
This is one of the most competitive labor markets ever



If current trends were to continue, more than one in three workers will resign by 2023, according to the Work Institute's annual retention report.



Workers have long been frustrated by the imbalanced relationship between employee and employer. The Great Resignation is proof of a collective awakening: employees do hold power in the relationship. If they are unhappy or their needs aren't being fulfilled, they can simply leave. In fact, according to a survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, **individuals hold an average of 12.4 jobs from ages 18 to 54.**



Many organizations will continue to respond to the Great Resignation with the recruiting, talent development and workforce management methods that they have relied on for decades. But best practices work until they don't, and smart leaders recognize the Great Resignation as a loud wakeup call.

Future-focused leaders who have recognized the signal that it's time for a new approach are working actively to right the imbalance in the employee-employer relationship.

They are building **Purpose-Driven Cultures**, and they're recruiting not just for skills but also for **Shared Values**. But most of their workforce management and development is still status quo.

They are missing the opportunity to be guided by **Strategic Tenure™**, an emerging way of thinking about investing in and developing the right employees to keep them for longer.

*In this eBook, we'll first look at the importance of building a culture centered on a strongly held purpose and then we'll take a closer look at Strategic Tenure™ and show you how using this framework gets you ahead in the retention game.*

CONTINUE  
READING





# BUILDING A PURPOSE-DRIVEN, VALUES-BASED CULTURE TAKES TIME & CONSISTENCY

## ENSURE YOU HAVE A PURPOSE-DRIVEN CULTURE

Does your organization have a clearly articulated purpose? Your mission clearly defines what you exist to do, often with an eye on economic value, but your purpose explains your why. It is vitally important to connecting people to your brand, whether those people are customers or employees.

If employees and employers form a contractual, transactional relationship, employees will only feel compelled to fulfill the basic duties outlined in their job descriptions. But when purpose isn't just a platitude, employees understand and believe in their contribution to something greater. This creates a deeper employee-employer relationship that can inspire incremental effort, creativity and engagement.

Infusing purpose through all levels of an organization requires continual focus, repetition and dedication by leaders and internal communications teams. The result is not only a more aligned, better performing organization with a higher level of customer experience, but also a more invested employee base, which makes for a more stable workforce.

**ODDS ARE, YOU HAVE A PURPOSE PROBLEM.**



According to Gallup,  
**only 4 in 10 employees strongly agree that the mission or purpose of their organization makes them feel their job is important.**

# RECRUIT NOT JUST FOR SKILLS BUT ALSO SHARED VALUES

The shifting balance of power as a result of the Great Resignation is clearly evident in the talent search, and some of the changing norms should be welcome to both employers and prospects. No longer is the interview process a one-sided evaluation—it's an important time for interviewees to determine personal fit, and values offer a meaningful way for prospects to understand if the company aligns with their identity.

Behavioral science helps us understand why this is so important. Research conducted by Adrianna Jenkins<sup>1</sup>, a psychology graduate at Harvard University, looked at activity within parts of participants' brains that process self-reference and identity. Her findings suggest an intriguing possibility about the human brain: when we think about people and perhaps companies that we identify with, we often use similar brain machinery as when we're thinking about ourselves.

With a bond so powerful that it is linked to a sense of self, it's not hard to understand how employees who have a shared set of values with their company are more likely to be retained for longer.

But like instilling purpose, values-based recruiting is a long-lead initiative and one with limited effect on new employees. **What can you be doing to make a quicker impact on the team you already have?**



<sup>1</sup>Jenkins, A. C., Macrae, C. N., & Mitchell, J. P. (2008). Repetition suppression of ventromedial prefrontal activity during judgments of self and others. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 105(11), 4507–4512. doi:10.1073/pnas.0708785105



# USE STRATEGIC TENURE™ TO GUIDE WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

If your sole focus is reducing turnover, you're likely stuck in a reactive cycle that is draining your resources and energy. Retention is a backward-looking metric that only reveals opportunities and problems once they've already occurred. While retention should remain a top KPI, it should be used as just that – an indicator of how your strategy is performing, not the foundation of your strategy itself. HR leaders who are guided instead by Strategic Tenure™ have a multi-horizon outlook and, as a result, are better able to stabilize and improve retention in a more proactive manner.

Advancing the traditional idea of tenure, which recognizes employees for their length of service, Strategic Tenure™ takes into account additional facets that contribute to the depth of value an employee provides. It represents many of the seemingly intangible reasons deeply engrained employees become more valuable over time, including their expertise, their professional network, their cultural contributions and their institutional knowledge.

Strategic Tenure™ provides a framework for more calculated investment in talent, which allows you to develop employees in ways that not only benefit your business but also meet their own personal needs and goals. They will be more invested, more engaged, happier and, notably, have a longer lifespan with your organization. As a result, you will end up reducing regrettable attrition, limiting turnover costs and ultimately driving better business results.

**Strategic Tenure™:**  
create happier, more  
fulfilled employees who  
create greater value  
and stay longer.

*Read on to see how recognition improves retention and strong employee and employer relationships make Strategic Tenure™ possible.*

# STRATEGIC TENURE™ HELPS CREATE A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP

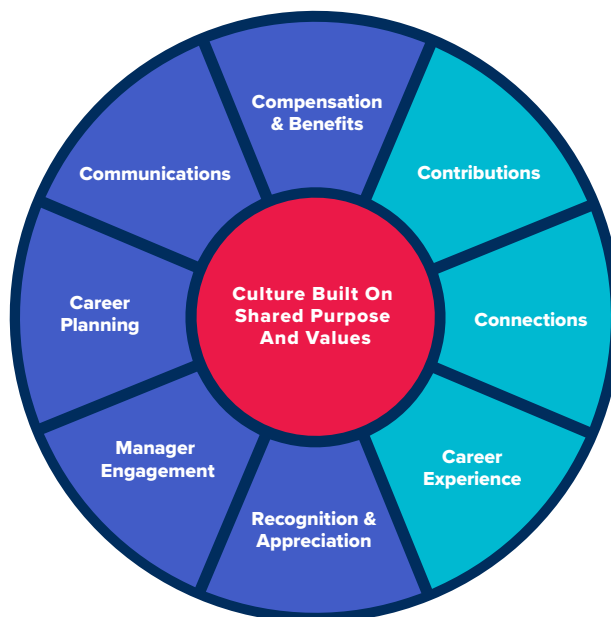
Strategic Tenure™ simply isn't possible without a strong relationship between employee and employer, so it's important to understand the responsibilities and expectations on both sides.

The employer creates conditions that impact employee happiness, engagement and retention, through compensation and benefits, manager engagement, communications, and recognition and appreciation.

The value the employee creates can be seen through their **Contributions**, **Connections** and **Career Experience**—the three Cs of Strategic Tenure™. Looking at all three creates a richer and more nuanced picture of each employee's impact than narrower views based solely on years of service or productivity measures.



Conditions that drive  
engagement & retention



Characteristics of a  
valuable employee

Viewing employees through this multi-dimensional, forward-looking lens can help guide manager coaching, jobscaping and career planning.



**For people early in their careers**, for example, it might uncover the need for positive reinforcement of good performance and exemplary behavior.



**For high performers on a fast track**, managers might offer new challenges and opportunities to build connections with people who can accelerate their growth.



**For valuable, long-tenured employees**, it might reveal the lasting value of a chance to mentor and develop promising newcomers.

So how do organizations implement this approach and what tools can managers, leaders and even peers use to ensure positive impact is felt throughout all levels? Ideally, HR teams are considering Strategic Tenure™ as they act on strategies across all the conditions that drive engagement and retention, but HR professionals are being stretched to do more than ever before, so where can you start for maximum impact given constrained resources?



The good news is that you likely already have an often overlooked and incredibly powerful tool: your Recognition & Appreciation programs.





# IMPLEMENT STRATEGIC™ TENURE THROUGH RECOGNITION & APPRECIATION

In its earliest forms, Recognition programs rewarded tenure in straightforward ways, with service anniversary gifts like gold watches (feel free to ask if you want more history on that!) Later, companies began implementing awards for above-and-beyond effort and performance, with programs like employee of the month.

Today, recognition and appreciation programs that follow accepted best practices include both service anniversaries and performance awards. But even those supposed industry-leading programs fail to support all the characteristics of valuable employees.

The good news is that implementing or evolving a recognition program to support the goals of Strategic Tenure™ can be easy. You'll want to design or update your recognition programs to reinforce and nurture the right behaviors, and you'll need to be sure your technology not only accommodates that program design but also has features that support Career Experience and Connections as well as Contributions.

Keep reading to discover how recognition programs designed through the lens of Strategic Tenure™ reduce regrettable attrition, build stable workforces and inspire more deeply invested, happier employees.

# WHAT MAKES A RECOGNITION PROGRAM DESIGN GREAT?

A recognition program designed with Strategic Tenure™ in mind allows your managers and employees to not only nurture employees' Contributions, Connections and Career Experience but also to reinforce specific behaviors that bring to life your shared purpose and values.

Consider whether your recognition program allows and encourages celebration within each of the Three C's of Strategic Tenure™.



## CONTRIBUTIONS

Have you accounted for a range of types of contributions? Many programs emphasize just everyday contributions, like peer-to-peer kudos, or are focused only on celebrating the biggest or most impactful contributions. If you want to invest in Strategic Tenure™, you'll make sure you have the right framework to recognize all of the above and everything in between.



## CONNECTIONS

The most likely to be overlooked in program design, Connections help create stickier experiences for employees and result in greater continuity, through things like knowledge sharing. Your program design should have recognitions that celebrate and nurture positive connections, including collaborative relationships and mentoring, encouraging employees to branch out and diversify connections and to deepen them.



## CAREER EXPERIENCE

If you're already recognizing service milestones, you have a great foundation to build upon. But you should evaluate whether your recognition starts early enough. While many should be aspirational and hallowed, they should still feel within reach, and that will be dictated by both your industry and the retention trends within your own organization. Also consider how to start strong with early achievements during onboarding, by doing things like celebrating a new employees' Welcome period, after they're likely through the steepest part of their learning curve (say, around 90 days), and creating annual rookie-of-the-year-inspired awards where it makes sense.

# WHAT MAKES A RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM GREAT?

The right software platform not only accommodates great program design, but its features also allow recognition to become a seamless part of your organization's flow of work and support your culture built on shared purpose and values.

Here are several things you should be sure your recognition platform can support.



**MULTIPLE PROGRAM TYPES**, with peer-to-peer, manager-to-employee and triggered recognitions. This allows you to democratize recognition, infusing the principles of Strategic Tenure™ quickly through your organization, increasing the likelihood that recognitions happen as close to the recognition-worthy behavior as possible, and allows creation of automation for certain time-based recognitions that simplifies program administration for your HR team.



**RECOGNITIONS TIED TO PURPOSE AND VALUES**, while the achievements themselves may be focused on Contributions, Connections or Career Experience, *how* they're achieved is just as important to developing a strong culture. And many organizations struggle with helping individuals understand how they can bring to life abstract ideas like core values or impact purpose, and that's why it's so important for recognition software to allow users to indicate specific values or purpose statements that are demonstrated in each recognition.



**SOCIAL FEATURES**, like social feeds, commenting and liking, to support the development of Connections between geographically or departmentally disparate teams and to allow showcasing of the types of desired behaviors you want your employees to know are valued most.



**MANAGEMENT AND MEASUREMENT TOOLS**, because by capturing and analyzing the data your recognition program generates, an organization can better understand the strengths and weaknesses of its employee population. This could inform personnel decisions: *What types of investment do employees need at different career stages? What areas do we want to develop and strengthen? What kind of talent should we pursue to shore up a weakness?*

# RECOGNITION REALLY DOES IMPROVE RETENTION

Our analysis of thousands of employees participating in Recognition & Reward Programs across companies in a variety of industries revealed a positive correlation between these program related activities and the likelihood of retention, listed here in order of impact.

1. Individual recognition by manager, including points
2. Group recognition by manager, including points
3. Individual recognition by manager, message only
4. Group recognition by manager, message only
5. Individual recognition by peer, including points
6. Group recognition by peer, message only
7. Point redemption for awards









# THE REAL VALUE OF A RESIGNATION-PROOF WORKFORCE


Adopting Strategic Tenure™ as a guiding approach has far-reaching benefits, but the most pertinent is likely its stabilizing effect on retention, which of course, has significant measurable and immeasurable value. It's estimated to cost between \$15,000 and \$30,000 dollars on average to replace an employee – and that's just recruiting and training costs. That doesn't even account for tougher to quantify losses that have much greater and lasting impact on an organization, such as lost expertise and institutional knowledge and damage to culture. Amid the Great Resignation, leaders are realizing just how much those things contribute to a company's success and stability.


With a long-term view of workforce development, built on the foundation of purpose and shared values, and guided by Strategic Tenure™, you'll see positive impact on retention as well as several other measures:

 **CONTRIBUTIONS** – measured annually through voice of employee surveys or, even better, more frequently with pulse surveys that allow you to identify and correct for trends more quickly

 **CONNECTIONS** – evident through measures of individual and company-wide output

 **CAREER EXPERIENCE** – visible through increased performance ratings and upward trends in recognitions

 **MORE INTERNAL HIRES** – the long-term development of employees can be quantified by the number of promotions and internal hires, even if lateral moves, proving employees are staying engaged and developing

 **IMPROVED CX AND BOTTOM LINE** – a more invested, higher performing employee base translates into better business outcomes, in fact *Harvard Business Review* [tells of one company](#) that more than tripled its stock price between 2008 and 2017 by better instilling a purpose-driven culture



## **NOW IS THE TIME TO TURN THE GREAT RESIGNATION INTO A GREAT OPPORTUNITY.**

Take a step back from your reactive response. What can you do to improve the imbalance in your relationship with your employees? You can build a more stable workforce.

Ready to make your organization Resignation Proof? Let's talk. At Maritz Motivation, our employee recognition programs reach people all over the world and are purposefully designed through the lens of Strategic Tenure™ to reduce regrettable attrition, build more stable workforces and inspire more deeply invested employees.

**For more information contact your Maritz Motivation account manager, email [info@maritz.com](mailto:info@maritz.com) or visit [maritzmotivation.com](https://maritzmotivation.com).**

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