

What do your people *want?*

> *Pay may draw people to a job; it is not what keeps them there.*

Ask most leaders what their people want and you will hear a familiar list: higher wages, bonuses, promotions, more time off. These things matter, and they do draw talent through the door. But they are not what keeps it there.

People join for the rewards. They stay for the relationships.

For most employees, work is more than a job title. It is an expression of their identity, relationships and values, and often a part of their calling. That is why material rewards alone rarely produce lasting satisfaction or fulfillment.

So what do your people really want from you? First, a caring leader who leads with empathy and makes them feel seen. Second, appreciation that is real, the kind that only comes when you are paying close attention to them.

They want belonging and a voice that carries weight. They want fair correction: not criticism, but respectful feedback that helps them grow. And most of all, they want purposeful work that ties them to something bigger than themselves.

The data points the same direction. In McKinsey's research on the Great Attrition, employees who had recently left their organizations most often cited not feeling valued by the organization (54 percent), not feeling valued by their manager (52 percent), and a lack of belonging (51 percent).

Notice what those reasons have in common. None is a line item. Each is a matter of how a person is treated, which means each is within a leader's power to change, often at little cost.

Give people more than a reason to join. Give them a reason to stay.

Sources: McKinsey, "The brave new (business) world" (Great Attrition research). Aaron D. Minard, co-founder of Boaz Strategic