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## Tags

Accounting and finance professionals with in-demand skills are finding they have many options when it comes to job offers. This is great news for candidates. However, as a manager, you recognize a rosier hiring environment means you have to work harder...

**Paul McDonald** • Aug. 01, 2015



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An employee's deteriorating work attitude could be an indication she's considering leaving your firm. When a worker who used to approach every challenge with gusto becomes more distant, she could be entertaining job offers at other companies. At the very least, this change signals something is not quite right.

## **2. Quality of work drops**

A telltale sign an employee's mind is not on the job is when he turns in work late and at subpar quality. Though this sometimes occurs when a staffer is under personal stress, it also could be a sign he's halfway checked out and has lost interest in his current role.

## **3. Disengagement with colleagues**

Engaged workers show up to meetings, work functions and social events. A retention red flag is an employee who's frequently late or a no-show to office activities, even the optional ones, especially when she used to volunteer for assignments and was the life of the party.

## **4. Absences**

Employees who uncharacteristically take long lunches or leave early may be interviewing for other positions. The same is true of team members who have never missed a day of work except for scheduled vacations but now frequently take personal days. They could be using up their paid time off instead of losing it when they leave.

## **5. Shift in dress**

Has your senior accountant or financial analyst upgraded his wardrobe, and now he comes to work more often in business attire? While it's possible he's experimenting

with a new look or dressing to get ahead, he also may be heading to interviews

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## How to Respond to Retention Red Flags

There are several steps you can take to turn the situation around and keep top employees happy, satisfied and with your organization. Even if you don't see any red flags, you should still be proactive about enhancing your retention strategy.

### 1. Hand out raises

A Robert Half [survey](#) found an inadequate compensation package is the top reason good employees leave their jobs. Take a look at the wages of your most productive accountants, and compare them to the salary ranges listed in the [2015 Salary Guide](#) from Robert Half.

If salaries are on the lower end, bump them up before your top performers seek better pay elsewhere. It's too late to offer them a raise when they turn in their resignation letter; a [counteroffer](#) is a poor retention tool.

### 2. Help balance the burden

Sometimes a formerly good worker turns in lower-quality work because he's stressed. If his work-life balance is off, offer time perks like a flexible schedule, telecommuting options, a compressed workweek or even going part-time.

If the work is too much for one person to handle, hire a new full-time employee or bring in temporary help. Let him know you're on his side.

### 3. Show a way up

A key aspect of job satisfaction for motivated employees is knowing they have potential for career advancement. Ask about their career goals and aspirations and whether they're happy with their current roles and responsibilities. If a staff member

feels she's hit a ceiling at the company, work with her to map out a possible [career](#)

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recognition program, put one in place. Bonuses and gift cards are effective, but there are also many [low-cost ways](#) to thank valuable workers and let them know you're glad they're part of the team.

The best retention strategy is to be proactive — *before* star employees start sending out warning signs. But even if you see retention red flags, you still have time to turn the situation around so they'll have every reason to stay.

Regardless of how the situation turns out, avoid burning bridges. Stay in touch with high-performing professionals who leave, and they may boomerang back to your firm in the future.

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*Paul McDonald is senior executive director with [Robert Half](#), the world's first and largest specialized staffing firm. Over the course of his 30-year career with the company, he has spoken extensively on employment and management issues based on his work with thousands of companies and job seekers.*

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