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and working environments. Intermittent outbreaks and lockdowns are forcing companies to innovate alternatives to the typical "commute to the 9-5 office" routine...

Christopher Stark • Feb. 04, 2022



In just under two years' time, the global pandemic has touched every aspect of business life and working environments. Intermittent outbreaks and lockdowns are forcing companies to innovate alternatives to the typical "commute to the 9-5 office" routine, making it difficult to require employees to physically come into the office to work after over a year of working fully remote. Additionally, offices could face further

delays and setbacks for reopening, so continuing to have an effective

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With a rapidly changing labor market, it's important to understand why people are resigning from their jobs, where they are going, what they are or are no longer willing to sacrifice for a job, and how you can make your firm highly appealing to top talent.

Improve Your Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

Several conditions and factors gave rise to this tectonic shift in the labor market. The pandemic has people making more “heart and value” centered decisions about where and how they invest their time and energy. **Firms that have a greater purpose beyond profitability**, such as commitment to a social, economic, environmental, or otherwise noble mission or cause, are attracting top talent.

Workers spend the majority of their waking lives at work. Organizations who are attracting top talent have the following characteristics: allowing people to bring more of themselves to work; creating a positive culture imbued with a sense of belonging; offering a flexible work model; creating tracks for growth for their employees; and having a mission beyond profit.

In an effort to alleviate burnout, **firms are offering large salary raises, stay-bonuses, promotions, and other perks**. While this may work for now, it likely isn't a sustainable, long-term solution for most small- to mid-sized firms. **Conduct a salary study** and make market adjustments so you can offer the highest possible salary to your top talent. For smaller to mid-sized firms, it may be difficult or even impossible to offer salary raises to your entire team, especially all at once. Salary, while important, is not the sole factor in determining job satisfaction, fulfillment, or employee retention. Taking a **holistic approach** is the most effective way to attract and retain top talent, such as: unlimited paid time off, health insurance, work flexibility (location and hours), wellness programs, and incentive-based referrals for new hires.

When evolving your firm into a business with a purpose beyond profit, it will be

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must offer an integrated and connected experience that is felt and upheld by your leadership down to your employees and through to your current and prospective clients. From 2022 onward, [the success of your firm](#) rides on the integrated experience of your brand, which is built upon your core values. Think of your branding as a way to communicate your firm's personality, who you are, who you serve, what you do, and why.

Opportunity Lives in Times of Chaos

In order to stay competitive and profitable, firms are investing more time and money in recruitment, training, and growth opportunities to meet the demands of the ever-changing labor market. It is the development and implementation of systems — hiring, training, leadership, work culture, benefits, pay, and growth tracks — in addition to establishing your firm's core values and upgrading your branding that will help give your firm an edge.

With many firms struggling to hire and retain top talent, while trying to fulfill client obligations, comes an opportunity to [filter the clients](#) you work with so that you create capacity to only serve your ideal client avatar. Culling clients also improves morale among your limited staff.

Here's a recap of strategies you can implement in your firm to stay competitive:

- Invest in establishing or updating your firm's core values, along with updates to branding to ensure a consistent experience of alignment among executives, employees, and clients.
- Create a [holistic and systematic approach](#) for employee retention, recruitment, referral incentives, overall work culture, competitive benefits and [flexibility](#).
- Develop or update hiring and training processes.

- Hire high-level managers and executives to establish, maintain, and oversee a

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and your team while boosting morale.

- Implement creative hiring and retention strategies, such as fractional, [offshore](#), and temporary hires. There are [no borders for hiring top talent](#). Find talent outside of your normal geographic borders and typical industry finds.

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Christopher Stark is President & CEO of [Cetrom](#), a cloud hosting provider for CPA firms that has implemented many of the strategies mentioned in this article, that he says has contributed to the company's success as a leading cloud solutions provider for firms of all sizes and overlapping industries. Cetrom's cloud enables the flexible schedule and telework-from-anywhere model, with added security needed to do so securely.

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