

The Complete Employee Lifecycle Management Guide

From job interview to exit interview, support employees at every stage of their journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
ATTRACTION	4
RECRUITMENT	8
ONBOARDING	11
DEVELOPMENT	14
RETENTION	16
SEPARATION	20
CONCLUSION	22

INTRODUCTION

Employees are your business' most important investment. While recruiting great talent can help ensure your company comes out on top, your job isn't over when a candidate signs their offer letter. In fact, it's just beginning.

The six stages of the employee lifecycle are **attraction, recruitment, onboarding, development, retention, and separation**. Through each of these stages, it's HR's job to ensure employees have everything they need to succeed.

In this ebook, we'll look at best practices for every stage of the employee lifecycle, so you can set employees up for a successful career at your company.



1. Attraction

When it comes to attracting talent, companies need to stand out from the crowd. Advertise all the great things that make your organization unique, whether it's your culture or benefits and perks. Here's how to establish your company as a memorable employer.

Have a Thriving Culture

[Company culture](#) isn't something that just lives on your "About Us" page. Your culture is the culmination of the values, beliefs, and personalities that make your company a great place to work. Be sure to share how your company got its start, what makes your culture special, and how you're different from other organizations.

Many companies go a step further and share their "[culture deck](#)" or employee handbook externally. Sharing this information publicly not only shows your dedication to transparency, but it also shows you want to be held accountable for your promises. This fosters a culture of openness and trust and is a great way to attract talent that's aligned with your company's mission and values.

Highlight Your Commitment to Learning

Get into the mindset of the candidates you're trying to attract. Eighty-seven percent of millennials say professional development and [career growth are very important](#) factors in their job search. Call out your learning and development programs and show how dedicated your team is to helping employees grow during their tenure. Be genuine and authentic to your brand and you'll inspire potential applicants to imagine their new career at your company.

Focus on Compensation and Benefits

Your compensation and benefits package should be about more than bonuses and [snacks in the office](#). To attract and retain top talent, you'll need a top-of-the-line package that suits your current and potential employees' needs.

Seventy-two percent of employees say they would sacrifice perks for better healthcare benefits.

Source: [Namely](#)

There are many options for building a competitive compensation package. Aside from ensuring that your salary ranges meet or exceed the market rate in your area, you can also offer bonus incentives or stock options to supplement employee salaries. [401\(k\) employer match programs](#), pensions, and college savings plans allow employers to supplement employees' savings and retirement funds.

To be competitive in the job market, companies must offer a benefits package that goes above and beyond—ping-pong tables and [happy hours](#) just don't cut it anymore. Aside from core healthcare, dental, vision, and retirement benefits, additional voluntary benefits that align with your business' mission and culture can increase employee happiness, trust, and engagement. For example, a fitness



company could offer employees subsidized gym memberships or on-premise facilities, while a [non-profit](#) might give employees paid [volunteer time-off](#) or sabbaticals to help the local and global community. These perks are small ways to both reward employees and show your commitment to their wellness and growth.

A [robust benefits package](#) starts with a thorough understanding of your employee demographics and their needs. What's the best way to learn this? Ask them! Survey employees to determine which benefits interest them the most. Once you know what your employees want, hire a [broker](#) who can find the best rates for your organization.

Build Your Social Media Presence

Help put a face to your company by building a [strong social media presence](#). Potential candidates may check out your company's Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, so it's important to keep them updated and curated. In addition to promoting your product or service, social media is a great platform to share the personal side of your business. Photos from a company happy hour, holiday toy drive, or rock climbing adventure highlight the human side of your company and show off daily life as an employee. [Spotlight posts](#) are also a great way to showcase your stellar employees and share how they fell in love with your company. These behind-the-scenes pictures and videos help boost your employer brand.

Encourage your employees to share their own photos and videos on their personal channels. Create hashtags for company events to keep track of employee-generated content. Don't be afraid to ask employees to share their experiences on Glassdoor and LinkedIn, [like this Namely employee](#) did.

2. Recruitment

Now that you've attracted a strong applicant pool, it's time to narrow down your selections to bring in the best candidates. Here's how you can refine your company's hiring practices and ensure you hire the right person the first time around.

Invest in Best Hiring Practices

Hire for *culture add*, not *culture fit*. When it comes to hiring, less of the same can be a good thing. [Studies show](#) more diverse teams benefit from increased creativity and productivity compared to homogeneous ones. Having different backgrounds, working styles, and different points of view on a team can inspire unique and innovative solutions to challenges. Be sure to prioritize diversity when bringing in candidates to interview. If you simply bring on new hires who fit in with your existing culture, you might be rejecting candidates who could do wonders for the company because they don't fit the typical mold.

As the saying goes, try before you buy. Ask candidates to complete a [trial assignment](#) or case study to see how they think and work under pressure, whether they're qualified for the role, and how they will work with your current team. Trial assignments are a great way to combat bias as they let you compare candidates based on their skills and performance, rather than personal characteristics. Additionally, [topgrading](#), an in-depth approach to interviewing, may help you discover the highest quality candidates. Invented by Brad Smart, topgrading reviews a candidates' education, career goals, past troubles, experiences, and skills from high school onward. The comprehensive approach to interviewing can reveal your most qualified candidates and identify which are best fit for the role.

Avoid Bias

Unconscious bias and unfair hiring practices are the enemies of productive, diverse hiring. Bias can begin before a candidate even steps foot in your office. Companies should remove gendered words from their job descriptions and anonymize candidate resumes to reduce hiring bias. At the interview stage, having a diverse, cross-functional hiring panel ask standardized questions will give each candidate a fair opportunity to prove their skills.

Incentivize Employee Referrals

When it comes to sourcing top talent, turn to the people who know your business best: your employees. A [recent SHRM study](#) showed that referrals remain the top source for talent, accounting for 45 percent of new hires last year. Leveraging your employee's professional networks is a great way to connect with high-performing, interested candidates. Aside from being more familiar with your company, referred employees have quicker, less expensive hiring timelines and [better retention rates](#) than applicants sourced from other channels. With the right [employee referral program](#) and applicant tracking system, you can attract top talent that will add to your culture and drive your company forward.



3. Onboarding

Once you've found the all-star talent for your open roles, it's time to welcome them to the team! Help them start their journey with a warm welcome and comprehensive training program so they have everything they need to succeed in their new role. Here's how to kick-off a killer onboarding program.

Start Off on the Right Foot

Everyone gets the first day jitters. Help reduce anxiety by emailing new hires an onboarding agenda so they know what to expect. Make your new hires feel welcome the second they step through the door by having a familiar face, like someone they met during the interview process, greet them at the door. Catered meals and new hire buddies are a great way to let your new employees settle in.

Here's how 15Five and Namely welcome new hires:

15Five

Every new hire has a welcome package waiting for them on day one with their laptop and a list of the company's core values. At their first team meeting, their manager shares slides prepared by the new hire showcasing their family or other personal tidbits about themselves. Employees are then given the opportunity to put the new hire in the hot seat to ask questions to get to know more about them.



All new employees start on a Monday, which coincides with bagel breakfast day. New hires' manager or teammate joins them for a quick coffee break before they start onboarding. They receive their laptop and a Namely-branded backpack, t-shirt, and jacket. During their first two days, new employees are treated to lunch with their managers and new hire buddies so they don't have to worry about where to eat or who to sit with in the kitchen.

Share Your Company Story

Once your new hires are all settled in, it's time to teach them about your company. They'll likely know a lot from their interview process, but now it's time to fill in any gaps. [One study](#) showed that only 61 percent of employees know their organization's vision, mission, and values. Use onboarding as a time to discuss these. Employees are the heart of your organization and ultimately help shape its future, so it's important to instill your [company values](#) in them from day one. Values are also their true north. Through the years as they contribute, they can turn to the values to determine how to proceed on the new challenges that arise.

Set Your Employees Up for Success

[Employee-centric onboarding programs](#) result in greater [retention](#) and customer satisfaction. Provide new hires with a [clear job description](#) on day-one—they likely have forgotten what was included when they applied. Outline new hire expectations clearly and make sure they know how success will be measured in their new role, including performance review cycles. Encourage managers to sit down with employees and set goals for the remainder of the month, quarter, or year.



4. Development

One of the [top reasons employees quit](#) is a lack of growth opportunities. If your employees can't find what they want at your company, they will be forced to search elsewhere. Keeping your team engaged and happy at work will increase employee retention and save you the time and money it takes to find new talent:

Make Learning and Development a Top Priority

Start providing hires with [learning and development opportunities](#) on day one. [A PWC study](#) showed that millennials ranked L&D as the number one benefit an employer could offer. Conference stipends, lunch and learns, tuition reimbursement, and mentorship programs are just a few ways you can encourage employees to continue growing their skills and competencies.

Practice career development over career confinement. Some managers may be afraid to offer L&D opportunities to top performers in fear that they'll lose talented employees. By holding employees close, you send the message that you care more about productivity than that employee's best interests. Encourage employees to pursue their interests with passion projects and cross-departmental projects so they can grow and learn if they're feeling restless in their current roles.

Develop Career Ladders and Frameworks

Many employees quit because they believe they're in dead-end jobs with no option for lateral or vertical movement. More than [70 percent of high-retention-risk employees](#) say they have to leave their company in order to advance their careers. Create detailed career ladders and frameworks to define the standard skills, competencies, and level of experience each position requires. This increases transparency around the expectations for promotions and lateral career movements and helps your employees set a career trajectory and establish their professional goals.

5. Retention

Now that you've onboarded your new employee and invested in their growth, it's time to focus on keeping them around.

Be Transparent

Nothing inspires employee loyalty and trust like organizational transparency. Open door policies, executive office hours, and frequent company all-hands meetings are great ways to keep employees in the loop on strategic initiatives and business decisions. [Objectives and Key Results](#), or OKRs, are another great way to show employees how their work contributes to larger business goals and impacts the bottom line.

Trust has to be earned. Hold yourselves and business leaders accountable. Open and consistent communication is imperative, not only among managerial staff but also throughout the entire organization. Celebrate wins, acknowledge disappointments, and focus on change as an aligned team. Follow through on promises and set the standard for a culture of respect and accountability.



Give Workers Flexibility

Giving your employees the ability to work when and how they want can also inspire employee trust and loyalty. Flexible working schedules and [telecommuting](#) can actually improve productivity and employee retention.

74% of workers would switch jobs for the opportunity to work off site more often.

Source: [Softchoice](#)

Not quite ready to institute work-from-home Wednesday? Ask employees what is important to them and do your best to fulfill their requests. For example, [generous parental and sick leave policies](#) might be a bigger priority for your employees than remote work.



Recognize Hard Work

Give credit where credit is due. A [study conducted by Gallup](#) showed that companies that approached employee recognition strategically had nearly 25 percent lower turnover rates.. Additionally, [a Forbes study](#) showed companies that fostered a a “recognition-rich culture” enjoyed a 31 percent lower voluntary turnover rate than companies with poor employee recognition programs.

Taking the time to make employees feel valued at work, regardless of their role and title, can increase employee morale and tenure. Prove that the work your employees at all levels perform every day genuinely matters to the company by recognizing employees who do exceptional work.

Think outside the box or try out one of these suggestions to recognize employees’ accomplishments:

- Give employee “shout outs” in a company-wide newsletter or at your next all-hands meeting.
- Encourage peer-to-peer recognition on the [company newsfeed](#).
- Create an award that shows appreciation for those who go above and beyond.
- Throw an office [happy hour](#).
- Give extra paid time off.
- Provide a special treat like catered lunch or doughnut.
- Write a handwritten note.

Measure Morale

How can you know what's working if you don't ask? Ask employees what your company is doing right and how you can improve with quarterly satisfaction surveys. Their helpful feedback can give you insight into where you need to double down your efforts, but in order to prove the surveys' worth and encourage your employees to take them seriously, always take action based on the results.

[Employee net promoter score \(eNPS\)](#) surveys usually consist of a number of statements that employees can respond to with a number from 0 to 10. Employees who select 0 to 6 are detractors, 7 to 8 are passive, and 9 to 10 are promoters. Here are some eNPS questions to get your survey started:

- "I would recommend company as a great place to work."
- "I am proud of the work that I do."
- "When I get up in the morning, I'm excited to go to work."
- "I'm happy when I'm immersed in my work."
- "I would recommend my manager."

Don't keep the results a secret. Review an overview of the survey findings as a company and call out your team's commitment to improving certain issues. Consider facilitating a deep dive or a cross-departmental focus group on an opportunity area that surfaced during the survey results. Reviewing the survey results shows that you're holding yourselves accountable and are committed to improving the company.

6. Separation

All great things must come to an end. Whether an employee is dismissed, decides to retire, or leaves to pursue other opportunities, it's your duty to support their decision, celebrate their contributions, and make the transition as seamless as possible. Do your best to end things amicably and keep the door open for future. Who knows, your employee could always [boomerang](#) back.

Separate Gracefully

Create a smooth and secure end to an employee's tenure with the company. Help them phase-off projects, share login information, and potentially train a replacement. Partner with the employee on how to deliver the news to the rest of their team, depending on how much information they want to share.

Organize Exit Interviews

While it can be hard to see great employees go, their departure provides a great opportunity to collect candid feedback. Organize an [exit interview](#) to ask what you can do to improve office life. From improving work-life balance to getting better office snacks, whatever feedback you receive can help direct your future initiatives and, hopefully, keep your other employees around longer.

Focus on Team Morale

It can be hard losing a teammate. Be sure to check on the team after an employee departure and see how they are holding up. Reassure your employees that life does go on and employees leave all the time. Keep them updated on any recruiting progress if you are trying to fill the role, or ask for applications if the position can be filled internally. Then, begin looking for a replacement candidate to begin the cycle again.

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

Now that you're familiar with every stage of the employee lifecycle, you can audit your company's employee experience. Take a closer look at your company's efforts and offerings at each stage and see how they stack up to your employees' expectations and industry standards. Identify and improve any gaps you find to increase employee morale, loyalty, and engagement.

Once you've perfected your company's employee lifecycle, your employees will have everything they need to enjoy a long and successful career at your company.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Namely

Namely is the first HR platform that employees actually love to use. Namely's award-winning, powerful, easy-to-use technology allows companies to handle all of their HR, payroll, time management, and benefits in one place. Coupled with dedicated account support, every Namely client gets the software and service they need to deliver great HR and a strong, engaged company culture. Namely is used by over 1,000 clients with over 175,000 employees globally.

15Five

15Five is a continuous performance management solution that helps employees grow and develop, in just 15 minutes each week. Through a lightweight weekly check-in, 15Five delivers everything a manager needs to impact employee performance, including continuous feedback, objectives (OKR) tracking, recognition, 1-on-1s, and 360° reviews. 15Five is the #1 performance management software out of 185 vendors on G2Crowd, with over 1,600 forward-thinking companies using the solution to bring out the best in their people.