

Trends in retail training and how this impacts talent retention

By  Michael Hanly

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There are very few instances nowadays where employees will spend their entire careers at the same company. The job landscape has changed so dramatically - particularly since the pandemic and the ability to work from home - that if a business fails to meet worker expectations staff simply look elsewhere and quit.



Image source: Blake Wisz from [Unsplash](#)

Scroll through any LinkedIn news feed and there are hundreds of motivational memes encouraging professionals to know their worth – and they do.

Phrases like “act your wage” are dominating the discourse on social media as employees leave in droves. No longer do they tolerate poor base salaries, limited career advancement, a substandard work-life balance or incompetent bosses; if they are not valued, they’re out the door faster than you can say corporate lame-duck.

Amid this shift, many companies are scrambling to find ways to retain staff, asking themselves “How do we make workers feel valued?”

Aside from the obvious answer of paying them what they're worth, recognising them for their contribution is another surefire way to keep them on the payroll. According to a Brandon Hall Group study, businesses that recognise workers several times a month are 41% more likely to retain them.

One of the best ways to do this is by offering them training programmes that send a message that management is investing in their professional growth.

Just as worker expectations have changed in the past few years, so too has the training itself. No longer can a training facilitator get away with reading a few slides in the hope a group of learners will take in the necessary information; now it's all about learning that speaks to the individual.

The first half of 2023 has already brought numerous shifts in retail training that every business should respond to accordingly.

In today's business world, the retail learning and development function is not a "nice to have" but a crucial part of the effort to ensure employees want to stay at the company.



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Below are some of the elements that should be emphasised in training programmes:

- **Digital and remote training:** As more people work from home so the need for virtual classrooms, e-learning platforms and video conferencing tools has grown. This is particularly useful when a company has branches across the country.
- **Soft skills:** Effective communication between business and customers has always been important in retail, but more now than ever. Bots are handy but can't hold a candle to a sales representative who is empathetic and can solve problems for the consumer.
- **Microlearning:** Short, focused training modules allow employees to learn on the go and reinforce their knowledge in small increments.
- **Data-driven training and analytics:** Data analytics help retailers measure the effectiveness of training programmes. Once the results are in, they can see where to improve to optimise training. Quality learning platforms will enable trainers to see, for example, how much time learners are spending on an activity and whether the time investment is paying off.
- **Upskilling for career progression:** Employees who gain new skills are more likely to be engaged and be loyal to the business. It's all about giving them a sense of worth.
- **Social learning:** Peer-to-peer learning platforms facilitate the exchange of ideas, best practices and insights. Promoting online communities and discussion forums resonates with modern workers.
- **Wellness element:** In perhaps the biggest shift, training programmes in 2023 now include sessions on stress management, work-life balance and mental health awareness. By recognising that these are important to workers, the business shows it cares.

ABOUT MICHAEL HANLY

Michael Hanly is the Managing Director of New Leaf Technologies. Michael has been in the e-learning industry for almost 10 years and has overseen many projects in the corporate training space, working on a multitude of well-known brands such as Bidvest, Nando's, Allan Gray, Nissan, and the Emirates National Oil Company.

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