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OUR TIME IS NOW: TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

*Our Time is Now!*



# Effective Staff Retention Strategies for Non-Profits

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# Retention Challenges – Top Reasons Why Staff Left their Nonprofit

## As of 2023

1

**Workplace Culture** - too much work stress, unrealistic expectations, personal conflicts, low productivity.

2

**Management** - poorly trained people managers that don't motivate or engage their staff.

3

**Flexibility** – stringent rules on work locations and hours that don't support work-life balance.

4

**Salary Competition** - monetary or nonmonetary pay not aligned with hours of work or personal sacrifices made by employees.

5

**Growth and Development** – insufficient opportunities, feedback, coaching and professional development.

6

**Budget Constraints & Insufficient Funds** – limited resources to do the work creating instability in job satisfaction.

7

**Stress & Burnout** – Too much workload without balance or use of innovative technology.

8

**Onboarding Experience** – not given enough support to understand expectations and culture.

The pandemic exasperated retention challenges and escalated the generational workforce shift leaving most nonprofits at 52% more vacancies in than prior to 2020

Note: Above not listed in priority order. Data extracted from National Council of Nonprofits, Vantage Circle, Graham-Pelton, LinkedIn, McKinsey & Company's workplace analysis for 2022-2023

# Baseline Steps in developing your Retention Strategy

Perceptions vs Reality

Communication

Workplace Values

Approaches to Work

Recognition vs Appreciation

# Characteristics of Generational Workers

Generations of Workers	Prefers communication that is.....	Values things like.....	Approaches work by....	How they like to be acknowledged.....
Baby Boomers Born between 1946-1964	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>structured and systematic</li> <li>In-person meetings and phone calls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expertise and experience</li> <li>loyalty</li> <li>defined paths for career</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>separating professional and personal life</li> <li>building strong relationships &amp; networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>competitive salary, promotions, a cushy corner office, or bonuses</li> <li>health &amp; wellness perks</li> </ul>
Generation X Born between 1965-1981	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>face to face, or email</li> <li>skeptical so likes clear, concise, and transparent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>efficiency &amp; hands off management</li> <li>work/life balance</li> <li>security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>working independently</li> <li>learning on the fly</li> <li>multitasking</li> <li>being pragmatic and resourceful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extra days off, flexible schedule from time to time</li> <li>rewards that improve quality of life outside the office, like travel perks &amp; discounts</li> </ul>
Millennial Generation Y Born between 1981-1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instantaneous &amp; technology based – text and emails</li> <li>honesty &amp; transparency about organization's priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fast-paced work environment</li> <li>Empowerment and in the know</li> <li>creativity, innovation, collaboration, flexibility</li> <li>coaching and feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>working with others, socializing</li> <li>doing what's meaningful and has purpose</li> <li>technology that can solve any problem and streamline processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fair pay and time off to decompress with learning and career growth</li> <li>Craves recognition</li> <li>rewards that drive progress towards social causes (donations, time off to volunteer, etc.)</li> </ul>
Gen Z Born after 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fastest digital platforms – Teams, What's App, etc.</li> <li>brief, direct messages that support quick, relevant bursts of thought</li> <li>What is employer doing to make the world better</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fast-paced work environment</li> <li>empowerment</li> <li>creativity, innovation</li> <li>flexible work schedules</li> <li>clear purpose and direction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>working with others, teamwork, socializing</li> <li>doing what's meaningful and has purpose</li> <li>Being pragmatic</li> <li>technology based for all things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fair and equitable pay and professional development</li> <li>achievements promptly and publicly using technology</li> <li>rewards that drive progress towards important social causes (donations, time to volunteer, etc.)</li> </ul>

The table outlines some common trends in each generation. These characteristics may help you uncover the root of different expectations and preferences amongst each worker type. However, use your interpersonal relationships skills to form solid bonds with those you lead and get to know them personally; generational stereotypes should never replace healthy conversations between individuals.

Although, generation gaps have always been present in the workplace, never have we encountered such differences in values, communication style, and expectations of employees mixing together on the workplace stage as now. By leveraging your understanding of similarities and differences, you can capitalize on the dynamic work environment created from the mix of generations, while minimizing the tension that can arise when different expectations are present.

# Baseline Steps in developing your Retention Strategy

Roadmap

Real World Solutions

# Retention Strategy Roadmap





# Effective Staff Retention Strategies for Non-Profits

**Monica Cardenas**  
**Deputy Director**  
**Orange County Community Housing Corporation** | *SteppingUP*

# Why Staff Retention Matters in Nonprofits

- **Mission-Driven Impact**
  - High turnover disrupts the delivery of programs
- **Financial Efficiency**
  - Recruiting and training new staff is costly
- **Institutional Knowledge**
  - Long-term staff retain valuable insights and skills
- **Donor Perception**
  - High turnover may affect donor confidence

# Benefits of Effective Retention Strategies

Improved Employee Morale

Higher Productivity and Innovation

Reduced Hiring and Training Costs

Stronger Organization Reputation



# Key Retention Strategies



## Offer Meaningful Compensation (Direct and Indirect)

- Competitive salary, creative perks like additional time off, stipends or flexible work arrangements



## Opportunities for Career Development

- Training programs, mentorship, opportunities to lead special projects, promotions



## Work-Life Balance Support

- Flexible work schedules, hybrid work models, manageable workloads, mental health support



## Foster a STRONG Organizational CULTURE

- Recognize achievements, CELEBRATE milestones, nurture community
- Surveys, regular feedback, social events, FUN!

# Role of Leadership in Retention

- Lead with Empathy and Transparency
  - Authentic vs. Aesthetic Care
- Communicate Mission Alignment Regularly
  - Provide frequent feedback
- Involve Staff in Problem Solving and Decision-Making Processes
- Recognition and Appreciation Systems



***“Train people well enough so they can leave, treat them well enough so they don’t want to.” –Richard Branson***

**“Sharing our knowledge  
provides opportunities to  
learn from each other”**

# Group Exercise

## Use Table Flipchart to Capture Responses

- Can you identify a time when you felt more committed to your role/org because a leader made you feel appreciated? What did they do or didn't do? 5 mins
- What can you identify from these experiences that can be a retention idea? Or what other retention ideas can you share that have worked for your organization? 10 mins
- At each table, list one thing you identified that can show your staff they are appreciated. And two things you can include in your strategy to retain staff. Flipchart your ideas. 5 mins
- Designate one person at each table that will share the groups ideas.

# When I Felt Appreciated

"When I had flexibility in work schedules like closing during holidays"

"When I received monetary recognition instead of more work for doing well."

"Having authentic leadership by investing in what I wanted to achieve"

"Availability of mentorship where leaders/the mentored always had opportunity to learn"

When my leader had my back.

"When I had an authentic boss – we trusted and knew each other well."

"When I was recommended to Bosses role"

"Celebrated all small successes"

"Leader ID'd my potential and my leader afforded me opportunity to learn thru her experiences"

"Got involved in special projects to develop"

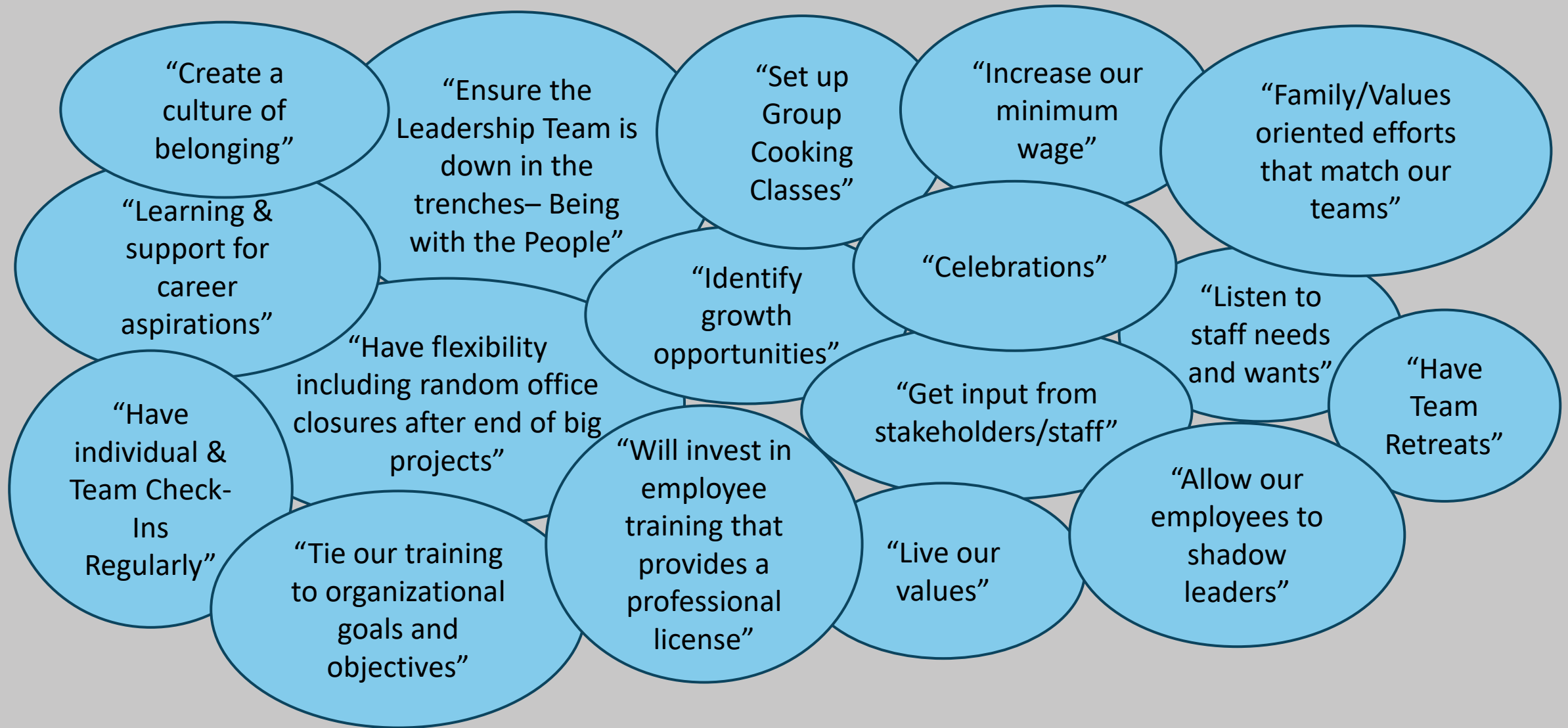
"Being given help to grow and be my best self."

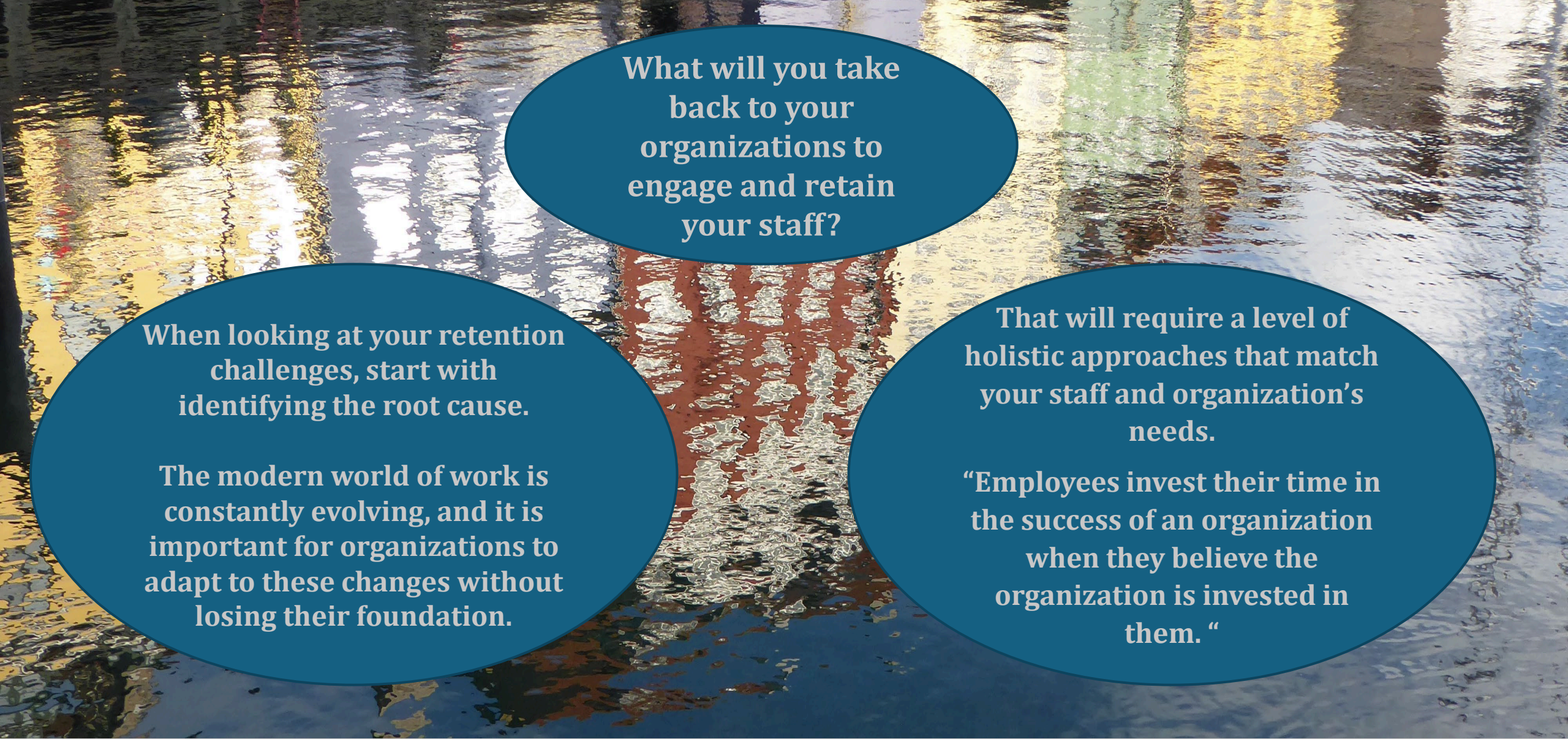
"Receiving appreciation vs recognition"

"When a safe place for honest exchange was created"

"When my leader provided flexibility and connected authentically."

# Retention Ideas To Take Back – Group Sharing





**What will you take  
back to your  
organizations to  
engage and retain  
your staff?**

**When looking at your retention  
challenges, start with  
identifying the root cause.**

**The modern world of work is  
constantly evolving, and it is  
important for organizations to  
adapt to these changes without  
losing their foundation.**

**That will require a level of  
holistic approaches that match  
your staff and organization's  
needs.**

**“Employees invest their time in  
the success of an organization  
when they believe the  
organization is invested in  
them.”**

# **Reflections**

obrigado

Dank U

Merci

mahalo

Köszí

спасибо

Grazie

Thank  
you

mauruuru

Takk

Gracias

Dziękuję

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Kiitos