How employers can manage employee retention, engagement during talent shortage - Benefits Canada.com

Source: gnews-employee-engagement-broad | **Published:** July 16, 2026 | **PMS Relevance:** PMS RELATED | **Type:** Opinion/Commentary | **Geography:** Global

Source URL: https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMivgFBVV95cUxNRENhSlNXTm4zbWNqRXZDclltU1N

Executive Summary

This article addresses the challenge of employee retention and engagement amid a growing talent shortage in Canada. The author conveys the perspective of Matthew Coons, global head of employee experience at Xero, who argues that organizational clarity, segmented employee listening, and leadership capability are central to reducing regrettable turnover. Key evidence is drawn from Xero's internal HR practices, including company-wide surveys segmented by performance outcomes to differentiate engagement drivers across employee tiers. Coons also highlights the risk of survey fatigue and the importance of calibrating survey frequency to allow meaningful action. The article concludes that employees are more likely to remain engaged when organizations clearly articulate expectations, culture, and total rewards, and when leaders at all levels maintain active dialogue with their teams. No independent studies or quantitative data are cited to support these claims; the article is largely anecdotal and practitioner-driven, offering a practitioner's operational lens on a widely discussed HR challenge.

Key Insights

1. Regrettable retention is linked to role ambiguity and lack of organizational direction, rather than solely compensation dissatisfaction.

2. Segmenting employee listening data by performance outcomes allows organizations to tailor engagement strategies to top performers versus mid-tier employees.

3. Survey fatigue is identified as a real constraint, requiring deliberate calibration of survey cadence to ensure insights translate into actionable outcomes.

Practical Takeaways

• Organizations conducting employee surveys may find value in segmenting results by performance tier to better understand differentiated engagement drivers.

• Calibrating survey frequency to allow sufficient time for action may reduce survey fatigue and improve the perceived impact of listening programs.

Critical Analysis

Strengths: The article provides a practitioner-grounded perspective from a named HR leader at a recognizable technology company, offering operational specificity around employee listening practices. The concept of segmenting engagement data by performance outcome is a substantively meaningful observation. Limitations: The article relies entirely on a single practitioner's assertions with no cited empirical studies, external validation, or comparative data. All claims are anecdotal and specific to Xero's context, limiting generalizability. The article reads partly as a promotional platform for the individual's viewpoint. Bias: As a practitioner-opinion piece published in a benefits and HR trade outlet, the framing is inherently positive toward survey-based engagement tools and leadership dialogue, without acknowledging structural or systemic limitations of such approaches.

Organizational Practice

Xero's HR team conducts regular company-wide employee surveys segmented by performance outcomes to identify drivers of regrettable retention and differentiate engagement strategies across employee performance tiers. Leaders at multiple organizational levels are engaged in active dialogue with their teams as a complementary retention mechanism.

Strategic Implications

The article reflects a broader trend toward data-segmented employee listening as a retention tool, with performance-tiered analysis emerging as a differentiator from generic engagement surveys. The emphasis on organizational clarity and role definition as retention levers suggests a shift away from purely compensation-driven retention models. The acknowledgment of survey fatigue points to a maturation in how organizations approach continuous listening programs.

Validation Status: passed
