# How High-Performing Organizations Retain Talent in 2026

## THE RETENTION GAP

### Organization Investments

1. Recruitment Technology
2. Employee Branding
3. Comp Benchmarking
4. Workplace Analytics

### Root Cause of Turnover

1. System Failure
2. Unclear Expectations
3. Stakeholder Misalignment
4. Manager Ambiguity

Retention is *not* a downstream HR responsibility.
It is a *leadership system* designed upstream, reinforced daily, and collectively owned.

## IMPACT

**40%**
of <u>employees</u> leave their job within **1 year**

**31%**
of <u>employees</u> leave their job within **6 months**

**$2.0T**
<u>lost in productivity</u> due to employee **disengagement**

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## THE RETENTION STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

### 1. Intentional Recruitment

**Controls:** Strategic Role Alignment

- Define success before candidate evaluation
- Align stakeholders on priorities & tradeoffs
- Confirm readiness to support the role
- Communicate pace, ambiguity & decision context

**Rationale:** Misalignment at hiring compounds quickly and drives early disengagement.

### 2. Onboarding Direction

**Controls:** Role Clarity

- Establish role direction, not orientation
- Define priorities, authority, and success
- Reinforce alignment via structured meetings
- Position the role within broader objectives

**Rationale:** Direction accelerates contribution and stabilizes early engagement.

### 3. Leadership Clarity

**Controls:** Execution Priorities Trust

- Set clear expectations for people leadership
- Reinforce performance through ongoing feedback and correction
- Make decision logic and constraints explicit
- Correct misalignment before it compounds

**Rationale:** Clarity keeps teams focused on execution, not interpretation.

### 4. Role Evolution

**Controls:** Sustained Role Alignment

- Acknowledge role shifts explicitly
- Reprioritize as scope expands
- Reset success metrics as expectations change
- Scale support with responsibility

**Rationale:** Unaligned role evolution is a leading cause of disengagement.

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**Retention is not a downstream outcome.**
**It reflects leadership decisions made before performance concerns surface.**
**When those decisions are aligned, retention stabilizes and execution follows.**

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