

# Culture Budget: How To Properly Invest In Your Employees

6 min read



## Key Takeaways

- **More Than Just an Office Party: What Does Strategic Investment Look Like?** High emotional intelligence can help generate positive outcomes in the workplace and day-to-day occupation of the money you put into your employees must work on several levels. Employee investments should:
- **Foster Your Employees Philanthropic Passion:** A recent study found that 58% of U.S. workers look at a company's social and environmental commitments when choosing a workplace
- **Offer Access to Professional Training and Self-Paced Educational Resources:** be willing to provide access to professional training through certification programs and seminars.

As we slowly inch into the new year, 2021 will go down in history as *The Year Of The Great Resignation*.

Business leaders are still facing challenges associated with the turnover tsunami.

A recent study of North American workers revealed that 1 in 4 workers are still considering leaving their jobs <sup>[1]</sup>. Another study from Microsoft that looked at 30,000 people in 31 countries around the globe is predicting attrition rates as high as 41% <sup>[2]</sup>.

Even minimal employee turnover rates should not be ignored, as the cost of turnover is surprisingly high. With both direct costs associated with hiring new employees and indirect costs that occur as a result of production lags, training lags, customer continuity issues, diminished employee morale, and more, it can cost up to 150% of a higher-level employee's salary to fill the void they leave behind. Now, imagine what it would cost if 41% of your employees decide to turn in their resignation letters.

The impending churn has already begun with labor shortages reported in the workforce and for hire signs posted in nearly every business's window. Odds are, if you have employees, you're probably hiring right now – and it seems the problems with the turnover surge and labor shortage are going to get worse before they start getting better.

So how do we leave this problem behind in 2022? Here's a good start...

## **What You Can Do to Weather the Turnover Tsunami**

To survive the turnover tsunami, today's business leaders must face the frightening truth about today's turnover trends: we have to do more to attract new employees with staying power and to invest in the happiness of the employees we already have.

**Read More:** [2021 Turnover Surge: Investing In Your Employees Pays Off](#)

Business leaders actually need to budget for their culture and employee investment and come up with a solid human capital management strategy that aligns investment in employees with the company's operating strategy and overarching goals.

But how do you properly invest in your employees? How should you use your cultural budget to get the best ROI of your employees?

## More Than Just an Office Party: What Does Strategic Investment Look Like?

Investing in your employees strategically goes beyond paying a living wage, holding office parties, and keeping the breakroom well-stocked with an array of snacks.

To be considered strategic and an actual investment, the money you put into your employees must work on several levels. Employee investments should:

- Encourage professional and personal development.
- Help you meet and satisfy more of your employees' higher-level [needs](#), fostering self-actualization, self-improvement, creativity, learning, and opportunities for advancement.
- Simultaneously, your employee investments should also strengthen your company's culture, longevity, and overall success by aligning with your business's larger operational goals.

**Read More:** [Lower Turnover & Boost Profits By Honoring Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs](#)

No one is telling you that you should cancel this year's end-of-summer cookout or the annual holiday bash – these offer important team-building and relationship-cultivating opportunities, too. You should, however, also incorporate some more thoughtfully curated employee investments into your office's culture and your human capital management strategy.

## 8 Strategic Employee Development Examples

### 1. Send Employees to Professional, Industry, and Trade Events

Select certain employees and pay their way to attend professional conferences, events, lectures, and seminars. They'll meet other people working in the industry, while also learning about new perspectives and the latest trends in your industry.

Be sure to set clear expectations regarding what you hope for your employees to take away from these kinds of events.



<https://www.antisyn.com/2018/11/investing-employees-smart-business-decision/>

## 2. Foster Your Employees Philanthropic Passions

A recent study found that 58% of U.S. workers look at a company's social and environmental commitments when choosing a workplace. <sup>[3]</sup>

Businesses across the country are beginning to see the benefits of recognizing their employee's philanthropic passions. One way to get started is considering a Matching Gift Program- where your business can match a ratio of gifts made by employees, in a donation to a nonprofit of their choice.

## 3. Community Networking Programs

If your local business community offers a networking lunch program, monthly business social, leadership training, or other similar gatherings, encourage your employees to attend.

They'll make meaningful connections within the community, develop their professional skills, and find new opportunities for your business.

#### **4. Mentorship Programs**

Mentorship programs in which senior employees are paired with lower-level employees for mentorship and training can be beneficial in two ways: they offer opportunities to lower-level employees for learning and also keep the higher-level employees connected to the company culture at all levels.

#### **5. Shadowing Opportunities**

Similar to assigning mentoring or coaching pairs, shadowing opportunities allow lower-level employees or inter-departmental employees to get a look at other roles, responsibilities, and opportunities in your business.

Although these situations are not typically long-term, they can improve the overall functionality of your business's operation, as employees gain a better understanding of every aspect of the business and how their roles affect others' responsibilities.

#### **6. Offer Access to Professional Training and Self-Paced Educational Resources**

If your employee cannot get appropriate or needed training in-house from another employee, then be willing to provide access to professional training through certification programs and seminars.

Additionally, there are several learning resources, such as online training and testing, that you can provide to your employees to encourage them to further their education during their downtime.

## 6. Host Lunch and Learns

Encourage employees in your organization to get together and learn by providing lunch and a relaxed, energized atmosphere – that doesn't feel quite like a meeting. This is a great way to sharpen your employees' business acumen!

**Read More:** [Cultivate Your Competitive Advantage With Better Business Acumen](#)

You can discuss individual jobs, challenges, or even present new tools that you're considering implementing in the business.

This is the perfect time to take a temperature on any potential changes and help your employees feel more involved and engaged in the business's outcomes and success.

## 7. Implement a Rotational Program

Rotational programs are especially beneficial for new employees who are less familiar with the different aspects of your company. Implementing a rotational program allows you to assign certain employees to certain projects, mixing individuals from different departments and keeping work interesting.

This allows new employees to get acquainted with individuals from other departments while also learning all about the inner workings and ins and outs of the company.

## 8. Be Mindful About the Employees You Select

When deciding whether to sign an employee up for a professional training program, seminar, or convention or to put them on the schedule for shadowing or a rotational program, be mindful about who you select for which opportunities.

**Read More:** [Why Talent Management Matters To Your Business Strategy](#)

Sending an employee to a training seminar that's too advanced or not advanced enough could end up working in the opposite direction, leaving your employee feeling discouraged.

Consider the individual employee, their current skill levels, and their interests before deciding which development opportunities will be most beneficial.

## **Budget for Culture and Employee Investment and Measure Your ROI**

If you don't already, your business should be budgeting for its culture by investing in a range of employee development opportunities. Find a way to work these opportunities into your budget, and you'll be able to calculate your return on investment when you see your employees become increasingly engaged and watch your turnover rates shrink, your productivity increase, and your bottom line expand.

With a stronger base of satisfied employees, you can strengthen your company's culture, survive this post-pandemic turnover surge, and start future-proofing your business.

---

[1] <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/238079/state-global-workplace-2017.aspx>

[2] <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work>

[3] <http://philanthropyoutlook.com/projections/corporations/>