

RETAINING HIGH POTENTIALS

When employees have compelling career opportunities elsewhere, there are really only two reliable ways to retain them: 1) bribe them, or 2) engage them. Assuming our preference is for engagement, we should look to research and make evidence-based decisions to drive engagement. The same engagement drivers that apply to the general employee population also apply to high potentials. In other words, all employees are engaged by the same engagement drivers, e.g., boss relationship, career support, recognition, pay fairness, etc. However, some engagement drivers are especially important to high potentials. Here are a couple of examples:

Trust in senior leaders. All employees want to have confidence in their senior leaders, but this is significantly more important for high potentials. Your hi-pos watch the behavior of senior leaders more closely than other employees and are more likely to jump ship if they don't have confidence that senior leaders are able to effectively execute the business strategy. Provide opportunities for hi-pos to connect with and learn from senior leaders.

Personal influence. All employees want to feel like they have a voice, that they're heard by people who matter. But this is not an option for hi-pos. If they believe their opinions don't count, if they're not listened to, they will actively seek a different environment. Virtually all executives can do a better job of listening, and they should especially listen to their hi-pos.