MANAGING STAFF RETENTION
An Information Guide for Government Departments
Foreword by the Director-General

Improved service delivery is one of the highest policy imperatives of Government. To be able to provide services to the people of South Africa, the Public Service needs to be adequately staffed. Although unemployment in South Africa is generally fairly high, there are still shortages of skilled staff in a number of regions and occupations in the Public Service. Retaining skilled staff is, therefore, the main challenge that employers currently face.

To meet this challenge, employers globally and in the South African private sector are becoming more pro-active and are increasingly applying innovative, creative and experimental solutions to retain staff, including offering:

- Competitive remuneration;
- More generous service benefits;
- Additional training and development opportunities; and
- More flexible working arrangements and other incentives.

In the midst of this, the Public Service needs to ensure that it is able to attract and retain suitable staff for its operations and curb job hopping.

This Guide has been written for human resource practitioners and departmental line managers, to sensitise, inform and guide you about staff retention and to encourage departments to develop their own comprehensive retention strategies in the light of their own unique needs and circumstances. A Guide of this nature cannot cover every challenge or situation. The matters in this Guide are therefore largely of a generic nature, although every attempt has been made to present information in a way that offers a ‘platform’ on which to build your own creative, practical and focussed solutions and programmes. The purpose of this Retention Guide is therefore to:

- Contextualise staff retention within the scope of the people management in the Public Service;
- Create a better understanding of what staff retention is about; and
- Assist departments in developing strategies and solutions they can use in managing staff retention challenges in the workplace.

The development of the Guide was made possible through support from the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). I trust you will find this a useful guide to assist in retaining skilled and committed staff in your department.

Prof. Richard Levin
Director-General
Department of Public Service and Administration
March 2006
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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The Guide has four chapters:

- **Chapter one** introduces the Guide, its purpose and contents.
- **Chapter two** puts staff retention and scarce skills issues in a broader socio-economic context. The chapter touches on skills supply and demand in the broader South African labour market and in the Public Service. It explains the current regulatory framework that forms the basis for staff retention management in the Public Service and provides some statistics about staff mobility.
- **Chapter three** provides a conceptual framework for staff retention, and deals with matters relating to the need for staff retention management, its key aspects and how to cost staff losses.
- **Chapter four** looks at the practical aspects of staff retention management. It highlights the requirements for successful retention strategies and describes the typical steps in the retention management process.

1.2 Events leading to the development of this Guide included the following:

1.2.1 A new human resource management framework

On 1 July 1999, a new human resource management framework was introduced for the Public Service. Amongst other things, this framework:
- Gave departments wide powers to develop and implement their own human resources management policies, practices and processes; and
- Introduced an open employment system. According to this system, all vacancies in the Public Service have to be advertised before they can be filled.

This system emphasises the need for departments to apply efficient recruitment, selection and retention practices to meet their human resource requirements.

1.2.2 Shortcomings in how departments recruit and retain staff

Various studies into employment practices at departmental level in the Public Service revealed serious shortcomings in the ways departments recruit and retain staff. For example:

- Recruitment and selection practices and decisions were not properly integrated or aligned with the organisational, service delivery, equity and strategic priorities of departments.
- Although decisions about selection are mostly based on interviews, the interview process appeared flawed in that:
  - The requirements for the post, and for the person needed to fill it, were not properly defined;
  - Questions raised during the interviews were not properly linked to job requirements, operational needs and the work environment of the job;
  - Assessment and scoring techniques used during interviews were inconsistent; and
  - Members of interview panels seemed to lack interviewing/selection skills.
- Departments often have no systems in place to monitor and measure the effectiveness of their recruitment and selection processes.
- Departments do not use well-researched and planned methods to retain staff.

1.2.3 Public Service Commission toolkit

To deal with the problems around recruitment and selection, the Public Service Commission developed a toolkit for departments on the management and execution of these processes. The toolkit, however, does not address staff retention.
1.2.4 Scarce Skills Strategy and Policy

Serious skills shortages experienced especially by service delivery departments, have recently become a main point in discussions around staffing in the Public Service. Government consequently adopted in 2002, a "Scarce Skills Development Strategy for the Public Service" that called for a renewed focus on staff retention.

Flowing from this strategy, the Department of Public Service and Administration developed a "Scarce Skills Policy Framework for the Public Service", aimed at providing guidance to departments in the development of scarce skills programmes.

1.3 This Guide

Despite the existence of the aforementioned documents and policy, there is nevertheless a need for a plain language document that explains the concept of staff retention in more detail – which is why this Guide was developed, and is meant as an information source for both line managers and human resource practitioners.
Chapter 2
Background and context

2.1 Introduction

Before looking at ways to retain staff and secure skills, there is a need for a better understanding of:

- The kinds of skills that are in short supply;
- The reasons for this; and
- The ‘regulatory framework’ (laws, policies and regulations) that govern how staff retention may be facilitated in the public service.

2.2 Why is there a skills shortage?

To understand what skills are lacking and why this is so, we need to look broadly at the past and at current factors (such as HIV and AIDS) that have an impact on the lack of skills in the country generally. Knowing this will help to understand why there is a similar lack of skills in the Public Service, and the challenges the Public Service faces in attracting and keeping employees with these skills.

2.2.1 Historical reasons for the shortage of skills

As a result of South Africa’s apartheid-based economy in the past (that restricted international interaction, small business development, skilling and occupational mobility), growth in the country’s secondary and tertiary sectors was slow. Access to highly specialised skills (such as those necessary to be doctors, lawyers, accountants and engineers) was also reserved for only a few people, and the costs of these were beyond what most families could afford. Although we have now moved to democracy and, in theory, everyone should have access to education and to acquire skills, the result of the policies of the past is that there remains a shortage of skilled employees.

2.2.2 The impact of HIV and AIDS

Although there is no recent assessment of the impact of HIV and AIDS on the Public Service, the fact that it employs more than a million people makes it particularly vulnerable. Because of the huge impact HIV and AIDS can have in the workplace, managers need to improve their responses to it. For example:

- HIV and AIDS education and prevention programmes must be supported.
- Specific issues related to HIV and AIDS should be explicitly incorporated into:
  - Planning, implementation and core departmental functions; and
  - Strategies and plans for skills development.

For more information on this topic refer to “Managing HIV/AIDS in the Workplace – A Guide for Government Departments, July 2002”.

2.2.3 Globalisation

Because of changes in the world economy, and because South Africans are more easily able to find work outside the country, some skills are more likely to be in short supply. Both the Public Service and the private sector have been negatively affected by this ‘skills flight’.

For example, the increased need for nurses and teachers in the UK (and the salaries offered there) has led to many of these people emigrating and a shortage of nursing and teaching skills in South Africa. To be able to keep such workers, departments need to find innovative solutions.

2.2.4 Increased mobility

Although it was common in the past for a person to work for one or perhaps two employers over the course of their life, this is no longer the case. Instead, employees with scarce skills are in great demand and are often ‘poached’ by other employers or recognise for themselves that they can earn more money working for someone else. As a result, these people are much more mobile (in that they can move easily from one employer to another) and it is much harder to keep them.
2.3 What skills are in short supply?

2.3.1 A general lack of skills

For the reasons noted above, there is a general lack of skills in the South African labour market. For example, research has shown the following:

- In 1999, only 11% of South Africans above the age of 20 held some form of post-matric qualification. Twelve percent have received no education at all. (Stats SA)
- In 2001, 3 million of the 10 million economically active labour force were regarded as ‘skilled’ or ‘highly skilled’. The rest (7 million) were semi-skilled and unskilled. (Department of Labour, 2001)

The biggest skills shortage is in the areas of technical and artisan skills. It is a worrying fact that, despite these shortages, very few people have matric level mathematics and science. As a result, technical and professional occupations (such as nurses, teachers, medical technicians, engineering technicians, IT workers and draughtspeople) can command well paid posts in the area of their choice. At the more advanced skills levels, the problem is even more severe and qualified architects, doctors, civil engineers and scientists are very difficult to find and retain.

*Figure One: Further Education and Training Enrolments by Province in 2000 (Powel & Hall, 2000)*

2.3.2 Pro vincial differences

Because of the substantial differences in terms of wealth and employment opportunities across the provinces, staff attraction and retention can be expected to be much more difficult in provinces like Limpopo than in those like Gauteng.

The type of skills lacking in a province will also differ depending on the province’s economic focus. For example, the number of employees with IT skills needed in Gauteng is much greater than in the Northern Cape, while the number of engineers needed in Mpumalanga is greater than anywhere else.
The table below illustrates the differences (in economical terms) between provinces.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
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<td>5.2</td>
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<td>Eastern Cape</td>
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<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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<td>Northern Cape</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
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<td>Gauteng</td>
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<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.1</strong></td>
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2.3.3 Shortages in the Public Service

Between April 2001 and March 2002, the Public Service lost 50 919 staff members, a turnover figure of 8.5%. However, the turnover rates in certain areas were far higher than this average figure, turnover rates were highest in the following categories:

- Computer programmers - 33%.
- Health professionals (excluding nurses) – 24.7%.
- Nursing professionals - 10.7%.
- Computer systems designers and analysts - 17.7%.
- Physical, mathematical and engineering science professionals - 16.4%.
- Physical and engineering science associate professionals – 12.4%.
- Senior management services (salary levels 13 - 16) - 10%.
- Middle management (salary levels 11 and 12) - 11.2%.

This illustrates those areas in which more attention to staff retention is required. The Scarce Skills Development Strategy for the Public Service (2002) also recognised that high growth rates in employment and demand are expected in respect of legal professionals, chartered accountants, agricultural scientists, engineers, veterinary surgeons, science technicians, health professionals and information technology personnel. Retention strategies are urgently needed in these areas.

2.4. Management framework for staff retention in the Public Service

Managing staff retention is not a new responsibility for departments. Although the Public Service Act, 1994 and other laws, regulations and policies covering human resource management in the Public Service do not specifically use the term ‘staff retention’, they do form the basis of the management of staff retention in that they provide for:

- **Incentives** – positive things that can be used to attract and retain staff; and
- **Disincentives** – negative things that may make an employee think twice about leaving.

2.4.1 Incentives

Because the Public Service Act, 1994 (‘the Act’) gives heads of departments the responsibility of ensuring that human resources are managed effectively, departments can deploy and use employees in ways that will improve their chances of keeping them. (See Sections 3(5) and 7(3) of the Act)
In addition, the law and policies governing employment allow for some changes to the normal practices when these are necessary to find or keep people with scarce skills. For example:

- Section 37(2) of the Act and the Public Service Regulations, 2001 (Chapter 1, Part VIII F and G) allow for employees to be rewarded (either financially or in some other way) for good performance and valuable suggestions or improvements.

- In terms of the Public Service Regulations, 2001 (Chapter 1, Part V C.3), the salary and/or salary level for a post (or an employee) can be set at a higher notch or level than usual if necessary to recruit or retain an employee with the required skills.

- Within departments, employees can be deployed to other posts horizontally if this addresses their career development expectations (See the Public Service Regulations, 2001 - Chapter 1, Part VII C 2.5).

- Departments must provide employees with ongoing access to training that should support their work performances and career development. Bursaries can also be granted to employees or prospective employees to improve their levels of education (See the Public Service Regulations, 2001 - Chapter 1, Part IX).

- Employees can be granted special leave for developmental purposes (for example exam and sabbatical leave). This can be paid or unpaid leave depending on the department (PSCBC Resolution 7 of 2000). Obviously, paid leave is an even greater incentive.

- Because some skills are in such short supply that the Public Service needs to look for these outside of the country, PSCBC Resolution 3 of 1999 allows for a once off amount (which can be determined by the employing department) to be paid to recruits from abroad for their initial expenses in moving to South Africa.

2.4.2. Disincentives

In addition to the positive things that can be done to attract and keep employees, the following rules make it difficult for employees to leave:

- Employees that leave before completing 12 months’ service will forfeit their service bonus.

- If an employee resigns before completing 12 months’ service, any relocation costs that were paid to them (such as their expenses for transport, subsistence and storage of their household goods etc.) may have to be re-paid by them.

- An employee has to serve at least 12 months in a rank before qualifying for assessment for pay progression.
Chapter 3

Understanding staff retention

3.1 What is staff retention?

Although writers on the topic sometime differ, it is generally agreed that staff retention:

- Focuses on both:
  - Attracting employees to join an organisation through focussed recruitment strategies; and
  - Keeping those who are already employed – especially those whose skills are crucial to the organisation.
- Is about motivating staff.
- Covers both the psychological aspects of the employee (their perception of themselves, their goals and their behaviours) and the operational aspects attached to the job or tasks for which they were appointed.
- Can either be part of the day-to-day human resource management, or it can be undertaken as a specific strategy to obtain or retain staff.
- Requires a management approach that takes all factors (both inside and outside the organisation) into account.
- Is linked to, and depends on, almost all other human resource management practices.

3.2 Why is it necessary?

The work environment and the attitudes of the modern day employee have changed. Although most employees today are self-directed and willing to work hard, they want to do so on their own terms and expect development in the work environment. Unlike in the past, where employees expected long-term job security and employment with dependence on their employer for career opportunities and income, people now tend to take personal responsibility for their career growth and advancement. For example, some study part-time at their own expense, and many will change jobs for a better position in another organisation rather than wait to be promoted by their current employer. In fact, research shows that people no longer see loyalty in terms of the number of years spent with the employer, but rather in terms of the contributions they make and the value they add to the organisation during their period of employment.

Because employees are more mobile, employers are no longer expected to just ensure they are looked after for life. Instead, employers need to manage employee turnover to ensure as little disruption in the workplace as possible and therefore staff retention needs to be seen as a strategic human resource issue in this regard.

Human resource components and line managers need to take on new organisational roles to ensure that all human resource and management processes contribute to the retention of scarce skills.

3.3 The key aspects of staff retention

As shown in figure 2 below, staff retention is directly influenced by the quality of six components of the human resource management system:

- Human resource planning, recruitment and selection;
- Optimal human resource utilisation;
- Human resource development;
- Compensation and benefits;
- Employee and labour relations; and
- Safety and health.

The better each of these is managed, the more likely staff will be attracted to the organisation and the less likely they will be to leave.
Staff retention also has a strong focus on the psychology of workers and how motivated they are. The more compatible an organisation’s goals are to the employee’s expectations and personal preferences, and the more the organisation does to motivate the employee and meet these expectations and preferences, the more likely the employee will be to stay. For example:

- Employees must see their work as worthwhile and important;
- They must see themselves as personally accountable for performance outcomes and task execution; and
- They must be told about their performance and the quality of their work.

Within departments, supervisors and line managers play a key role in staff retention. They must determine the quality of a variety of retention ‘drivers’ (things that encourage people to stay, such as work culture, opportunities for growth, rewards for performance and grievance handling). In fact, a recent study of labour management trends in South Africa has shown that staff retention management is now regarded as one of the top five business priorities in organisations. Research also showed that:

- Managers must ‘own’ retention methods by linking them to their own performance appraisal system. In other words, managers must agree to be evaluated on the basis of their ability to retain staff.
- Managers should pay attention to the signs that valued employees are looking for other jobs. These include, amongst others, employees who:
  - Have been in the same job for some time;
  - Are suddenly interested in job advertisements;
  - Are curious about the benefits they can expect if they resigned (such as their pension schemes or whether they will be paid out for leave they haven’t used); and
  - Express their dissatisfaction with working conditions.
- Employee development plans and strategies should go beyond job related training and should focus on life-long learning, personal development and capacity building.
- Staff retention should be underpinned by an approach to start with the right people by means of sound recruitment and retention practices.
Human resource planning is also crucial in ensuring that staff retention is managed properly. Because human resource planning is aimed at making sure the organisation has the right staff, at the right time, and in the right places, it provides a good basis for developing retention management and strategies.

However, there is no 'one-size fits' all approach to managing staff retention. As we will see in Chapter 4, staff retention activities should rather be adapted to the specific circumstances or occupational group that they are targeted at.

3.4 Why do employees leave?

Employees leave their employers for a variety of reasons. Some of the reasons for staff turnover are unavoidable and beyond the control of the department. For example, it can be caused by the death of an employee or for personal reasons such as retirement, the employee's health or family relocation.

On the other hand, some staff turnover is avoidable and can be managed, which is why staff retention management becomes both possible and important. These avoidable reasons for staff turnover include:

3.4.1 Financial considerations. Many people leave because they are offered better salaries or service benefits elsewhere. Although the Public Service remuneration system is perceived as inflexible and not competitive enough to attract and keep talented staff, you can make an effort to reward staff who excel and to counter any attempts to poach staff. The provision in the Public Service Regulations, 2001 that allows departments to raise an employee's salary for purposes of retention is an important tool in this regard.

3.4.2 Work environment. A poor work environment leads to employees being unhappy at work and makes other job options attractive to them. Some examples of a work environment that might chase people away are:

- Low morale;
- Little motivation of employees;
- Lack of strategic direction;
- Lack of leadership and communication;
- Poor work challenges; and
- Lack of empowerment of employees.

3.4.3 Career development. Employees want to grow in their work and will continually search for opportunities for growth. If you do not provide these opportunities, employees will begin to look elsewhere.

3.4.4 Demand for employees from designated groups. The high demand for employees from the designated groups is one of the major reasons why some employees move from one organisation to another. Like in most developing countries, the South African labour force is becoming younger and more dynamic. Because both the private and public sectors have to comply with laws relating to affirmative action and employment equity, and because there are still skills shortages amongst historically disadvantaged groups, there is a lot of competition for (and poaching of) those who have acquired these skills.

3.4.5 Resistance to change. All organisations go through changes – some minor and others major. When this happens, some employees may not agree with the changes and may leave. The most common reasons for this are:

- Fear of the unknown;
- Reluctance to change old habits;
- Self interest;
- Economic insecurity;
- Failure to recognise why the change is necessary; and
- General mistrust.

3.4.6 Internal mobility and job-hopping. The opportunities for internal mobility (moving around within an organisation, either through promotion or by moving to another department) are obviously far greater in the Public Service than in the private sector, simply because the Public Service is so big. At the same time, modern employees tend to 'job-hop' from one job to another, especially where their skills and profile are in high demand in terms of market forces. Complicating the problem for some provinces is that the provinces are unequal in an economical sense. As a result, young talent is often attracted to the economically stronger provinces.
3.4.7 Leadership and management style. Talented employees will leave an organisation if they believe the management style is stifling growth and not empowering, or where managers are not people-focused. Some managers may also make it difficult for their employees to grow, usually by not giving them accurate performance assessments and failing to identify development opportunities for them.

3.4.8 Lack of effective communication and grievance procedures. It is common for employees to find something that they dislike about their job, the work environment or their managers. Where no effective grievance procedure is in place or is not followed, employees have no way of having their concerns heard and addressed. In the end, the only option left to them is to resign. To prevent this, all departments should have an effective grievance procedure in place and should provide their employees with a way of communicating their problems.

Knowing as much as possible about the avoidable reasons for staff turnover will help you to plan to avoid these problems and to retain staff. For example, managers with bad leadership and management styles can be trained or sensitised to improve their style to prevent employees leaving.

3.5 The cost of losing staff

Despite the general concern around staff turnover, few organisations are able to say exactly what staff losses cost them. According to research conducted by PE Corporate Services in 2000, it costs (on average) more than 30% of the annual remuneration costs to replace a staff member. This includes:

- The loss of efficiency during the notice period;
- The cost of recruiting and selecting a new staff member; and
- The induction stage (when new staff members are not that efficient).

The replacement cost can be even higher when the person who leaves has been in service for a long time. Such cases usually:

- Have a severe impact on the productivity of the organisation;
- Increase training costs; and
- Result in a substantial loss of organisational memory.

Because it is difficult to calculate the invisible costs when staff leave (such as loss of organisational memory or loss of productivity and efficiency), most organisations focus only on the more visible costs related to separation, the vacancy, replacement and training.

- **Separation costs** cover exit interviews, administrative expenses related to termination, severance pay and so on.
- **Vacancy costs** include expenditure incurred due to increased overtime or the employment of temporary staff.
- **Replacement costs** include recruitment and selection costs (such as advertising and competency assessment) and pre-employment administrative expenses (such as purchasing new furniture or equipment).
- **Training costs** include both formal and informal training costs.
3.6 What makes employees stay?

As noted previously, the reasons why employees stay with an employer are closely linked to their own motivation and preferences. However, there are many initiatives employers can take to encourage their staff to stay. For example, research has shown that the following can have a positive result:

- Make sure there are enough resources available to meet the demands of the job.
- Empower employees (through training and skills development) to meet the job standards.
- Create a culture of ownership – where workers feel that they are a part of the organisation and so are 'working for themselves'.
- Give employees challenging work.
- Provide opportunities for both individual and team work.
- Reward good work properly.
- Ensure there is proper communication with, and feedback to, workers.
- Provide sufficient opportunities for growth and development.

*(How well is your department doing? To help you to check how well your own department is doing, take the test in Annexure 1)*

3.7 Whose responsibility is it to manage staff retention?

Staff retention is best achieved through a partnership between line managers and human resource components.

3.7.1 Line managers

Line managers are the main link between the department and the employees. As such, they need to be both competent technical managers and people managers. Their role in this regard though is not easy and managers are often blamed for staff losses. For example, research in the USA into 6 500 managers found that 86% of employees who worked for an under-performing manager wanted to leave. Line managers need the following competencies to be able to play this role:
• The ability to effectively lead, coach and mentor staff;
• The ability to give proper feedback;
• The ability to align work process and jobs with organisational goals; and
• The ability to create a culture of continuous learning and development, in which employees can grow and improve their own competencies.

3.7.2 Human resource components

For departments to meet their mandates, senior and operational line managers need to be provided with relevant, efficient and strategic human resource advice and interventions. While providing a personnel service was enough in the past, the human resource component now needs to be a key partner to the line manager. This highlights the need for human resource practitioners and managers to be on the cutting edge of new people management thinking.

Theory and best practice studies suggest that it is essential for human resource components and line managers to work together on people management issues - including staff retention management. Below are key roles that each should play.

Table two: Roles and responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>The role of the human resource component</th>
<th>In partnership</th>
<th>The role of the line manager</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide human resource administrative services</td>
<td>To establish appropriate policies, procedures and systems for human resource management.</td>
<td></td>
<td>To apply human resource policies, procedures and systems fairly and consistently to all employees.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide expert advice on human resource matters</td>
<td>To translate the department’s business strategy into a human resource strategy.</td>
<td>Develop an effective human resource plan.</td>
<td>To effectively manage staff.</td>
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<td>To identify employees or categories of employees who might leave.</td>
<td>Identify positions and or occupations where sudden departures would derail strategic objectives or have an immediate negative impact on operations.</td>
<td>To motivate employees and create an enabling environment for employees to perform.</td>
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<td>To analyse staff movement trends and identify high-risk employees or occupations for line managers.</td>
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<td>To provide training and other support to employees.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop strategic retention interventions</td>
<td>To constantly analyse skills demand and supply trends in the labour market.</td>
<td>Design targeted, accelerated dev. programmes for talented employees.</td>
<td>To understand worker’s preferences and what drives and motivates them.</td>
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<td>To perform constant skills audits within the department.</td>
<td>Identify core and scarce skills within the department.</td>
<td>To implement diversity management and employment equity programmes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To develop interventions to address critical skills shortages.</td>
<td>Develop focussed retention programmes.</td>
<td>To implement staff retention strategies.</td>
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<td>To manage performance effectively.</td>
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<td>To give employees challenging work.</td>
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<td>To empower employees through effective delegation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring and benchmarking</td>
<td>To analyse labour market trends. To analyse internal staffing trends and give feedback to line managers on an ongoing basis.</td>
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Chapter 4
Managing staff retention in practice

This chapter provides practical ideas and suggestions for planning and putting staff retention management into operation.

4.1 Creating a successful retention strategy

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' staff retention strategy. Instead, best practice shows that a successful retention strategy should as a minimum, have the following characteristics:

- 'Time-bound, circumstance specific and occupation or skill specific', that is, it should focus on the skills required by the organisation at that particular in time;
- Informed by the availability of, and demand for, the particular skill within the organisation and in the broader labour market;
- Supported by senior management within a clearly defined framework of authority, execution and responsible role players;
- Implemented through a partnership between human resource components (which provide expert advice and support) and line managers (who are accountable for the management of their staff); and
- Anchored by a sound human resource strategy and execution plan.

Although interventions should be targeted at a specific circumstance or occupation, they should be linked to the widest possible array of human resource practices (such as recruitment, orientation and performance management) that may improve an employee's job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. When deciding which approach to take in managing staff retention, the decision should be based on:

- What resources there are to track and analyse information;
- How common the problem of high turnover is; and
- The impact of staff turnover on the department's operations.

4.2 Common mistakes in staff retention management

The following are some common mistakes in managing staff retention:

- Assuming that staff retention is not a strategic issue;
- Lack of proper tracking systems in place to provide information on staff movement;
- Inadequate or lack of understanding market forces and trends regarding remuneration;
- Lack of partnerships between human resource components and line managers to deal with people management;
- Lack of a human resource strategy – which leads to poor human resource planning; and
- Filling vacant positions under pressure and not following effective recruitment practices. This is usually because of a lack of proper human resource planning mechanisms with the result that people are recruited who do not really meet the job requirements and who do not really fit within the organisational culture.

4.3 Key steps in staff retention management

There are four key steps to managing staff retention:
- Analysing staff mobility and turnover trends;
- Identifying the skills to be retained;
- Designing appropriate interventions to retain staff; and
- Monitoring and evaluation.
4.3.1 Analysing staff mobility and turnover trends

The first step in analysing why employees leave is to find and analyse the correct information. Some of the ways of doing this are:
- Assessing staff morale,
- Conducting exit interviews,
- Interviewing candidates who turn down job offers,
- Keeping staff statistics,
- Conducting internal human resource audits,
- Benchmarking with other employers, and
- Analysing information and looking for trends.

i. Assessing staff morale
Knowing how employees feel about the organisation, their managers and the nature of their work is essential. The best way of finding this out is to use a ‘climate survey’, which could point out where things need to be improved. An example of such a survey can be found in Annexure 2.

Note
Question 8 of Annexure 2 deals with employees’ job satisfaction. As such, it provides a useful tool for finding out whether employees are at risk of leaving.

ii. Conduct exit interviews
Knowing why employees leave will help to identify and deal with any problems within the organisation. One of the ways of doing so is for human resource practitioners to conduct exit interviews. The results of these interviews should be analysed as soon as the employee resigns and feedback should be given to the relevant line managers as soon as possible.

A template for conducting these interviews is attached as Annexure 3.

iii. Interview candidates who turn down job offers
Sometimes when looking for new staff, offers are made to candidates who turn them down. Where this happens, it might be useful to interview these people (even over the phone) to find out why they turned the offer down. Because they have nothing to lose, these people are likely to give you the most honest answers.

iv. Keep staff statistics
Information on staff turnover, age profiles, length of service, staff composition, promotions, disciplinary actions, grievances and so on should be kept. Human resource practitioners should analyse this information to help them understand staff movement.

v. Conduct an internal human resource audit
In some cases, it might be useful to conduct a complete internal audit of practices and circumstances within the organisation. A checklist that can be used to conduct such an audit is attached as Annexure 4.

vi. Benchmark with other employers
One of the main reasons why employees leave is that they are attracted by competitive remuneration, better career growth opportunities and better incentives that other employers offer them. ‘Benchmarking’ involves looking at other employers to find out the gaps that exist between what your department offers and what other employers offer. This allows you to improve what you can and to prevent staff leaving. A template for conducting a benchmarking activity is attached as Annexure 5.

Note
Benchmarking exercises can also be undertaken to see whether other employers are experiencing the same challenges. For example, are they also losing staff? In what areas? And what skills are most affected?
vii. Analyse the information and look for trends

Having gathered information on how employees feel and why they leave, the information needs to be properly analysed and addressed. For example, you need to look at:

- What are the causes of employee turnover?
- Are these causes avoidable (in which case you can develop retention strategies to address them) or unavoidable (in which case you cannot)?

This analysis should also try to establish whether any trends exist. For example, it could look at:

- What are the turnover rates for specific employee groups or occupational groups?
- Has the turnover rate varied over time? If so, for what groups of employees? And what changed in the department that increased or decreased the rate?
- Where do employees that leave go? That is, who is the competition?
- What are the roots causes of staff losses?
- Whether the reasons for staff losses are external (due to market forces) or internal (related to circumstances in the department).

To help you prioritise where to focus your strategies, ask yourself:

- For which groups of employees is turnover likely to have the greatest impact on your department’s strategic goals and performance?
- How would the department’s goals and objectives be compromised by the unplanned and unforeseen loss of employees?
- What are the likely solutions to counter undesired staff losses?

4.3.2. Identify the skills to be retained

Not all staff turnover is bad. Sometimes, staff turnover allows for new ideas to come into the department and for the development and promotion of employees who remain. However, the loss of some employees can be very damaging and so it is these that need to be prioritised. To know which employees need to be prioritised, you need to classify the skills that are important to hold onto. **Classifying skills is therefore a key step in ensuring a focused and cost-effective retention strategy.** This is not meant to discriminate against some categories of employees, but rather to allow for a focussed approach towards retaining staff and skills.

i. Which skills need to be retained?
The skills that you need to target with staff retention strategies are those needed to realise and meet:

- The service delivery needs of the department; and
- The department’s primary mandate.

ii. How are these identified?
The best way of identifying these skills is through consultation between human resource practitioners and line managers. Care should be taken to identify those skills that are important for the department to meet its goals.

iii. Classifying skills
It is useful to classify skills as scarce; valued; or high risk. This makes it easier to identify which skills need to be prioritised.

**Scarce skills** are those skills that are needed to realise the department’s goals and objectives, but which are **difficult to recruit and expensive to replace.** These will not always be the same. At some times, a particular skill may be in short supply, while at others a different skill may be hard to find and expensive to replace.

These skills are identified by:

- Analysing staff turnover;
- Considering acquisition trends in a particular job category or geographical area; and
- Understanding the department’s skills requirements and the competition for such skills in the labour market.
With valued skills, the focus is not on the scarcity of the skill as such, but rather on the valued staff member who contributes positively and whose loss would have a negative impact on the department’s ability to meet its goals.

These skills are identified by looking at an employee’s performance evaluations and the role they perform in the department.

High-risk skills are the skills that employees have who may soon leave. These include employees who have indicated a need to leave the department, those who are de-motivated and those who may have reached a career ceiling.

The process of classifying skills should be a joint exercise between human resource components and line managers. An example of a questionnaire that can be used to do this is attached as Annexure 6.

4.3.3. Designing appropriate interventions to retain staff

Interventions to retain staff are most effective:

- If they are aimed at a specific circumstance or skills group; and
- At the same time, the interventions are integrated and linked with as wide a variety of human resource practices as possible.

Generally, the following human resource practices need to be integrated and aligned with a staff retention strategy:

i. Link staff retention with an effective recruitment and selection process
A lot of staff losses are caused by bad selection decisions, where the wrong person is appointed for the job. To prevent this, accurate job descriptions must be developed that clearly identify the core competencies required for successful performance. And, just as importantly, these must be used during the recruitment and selection process. In some cases, it has also been shown to be good practice to "hire for attitude and train for skills". This is where a person is appointed because they have the right attitude to be able to do the job, even though they might not yet have all of the skills required (since these can be acquired through training).

ii. Link staff retention with an effective induction process
Best practice studies show that the first few weeks of employment are important for establishing employee commitment to employment. It is therefore essential that line managers and human resource practitioners lay the foundation for future commitment by being part of the induction process.

A good way of addressing this is to have a well-structured and dynamic induction programme that stretches from the employee's first day at work until they have been thoroughly introduced to their job. A useful tool in this regard is to develop a ‘new employee guide’ that can be given to employees to read even before they start work. An example of such a guide is attached as Annexure 7.

iii. Integrate employee development into your staff retention strategy
Rather than sending new employees for long periods of training away from work, provide them with phased training that allows them to gradually acquire the required knowledge and skills. This increases confidence in the work and also builds the employee’s trust in the employer.

Where appropriate, developmental initiatives in respect of scarce skills should be accompanied by contractual binding to service after completion of the relevant developmental activity.

iv. Align competencies with job requirements
Although this is not always easy to achieve, aligning the department’s needs with the employee’s competencies results in a positive ‘organisational fit’. As far as possible, employees should be used in jobs that are aligned with their personal preferences, interests and strengths.

v. Provide growth opportunities
Besides making sure that employees are able to perform in their current jobs, they need to be given opportunities to grow by acquiring competencies that improve their ability to work in other areas or at other levels.

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vi. Reward employees who are high performers and value creators within the department
Rewards for excellent work can be both monetary and non-monetary. Ideally, they should be immediate, linked to performance and individualised. For example, a letter addressed directly to an employee that recognises their outputs and good work is much more valuable than a standard letter, addressed to all staff, once a year.

vii. Lead by example
Most employees are more committed to their managers, fellow employees and the culture that drives the department than to the department itself. After establishing your department’s values it is essential that managers are seen to be living up to them.

viii. Conduct exit interviews
As already mentioned, knowing why employees leave is important to understanding and countering staff turnover. Exit interviews are an important tool for designing staff retention interventions.

ix. Compensation
Although departments have little flexibility in how much employees are paid, there are some measures you can make use of to find and keep employees with scarce skills (as discussed in paragraph 2.4.1 of Chapter 2 of this Guide). In addition, jobs in the scarce and high risk categories should be properly designed and evaluated to maximise the compensation you can offer to candidates and employees. Departments must fully and correctly utilise the scarce skills allowances available for certain categories of staff.

x. Performance management
One of the most important management tools in the Public Service is the implementation of Performance Management and Development Systems. Departments must ensure that they have such systems in place for both SMS and non-SMS employees and that utmost care is taken to ensure the fair, consistent and transparent application of employee appraisal. Processes for awarding of pay progression and bonuses should be managed fairly to avoid unhappiness and grievances. Management capacity to deal with poor performers and staff development must also be improved.

xi. Career-pathing
Although modern departments no longer need to focus on long-term employment, employees still need to be made aware that opportunities exist for career growth and an increased level of responsibility. These growth opportunities might not always be upwards though. For example, some employees may be satisfied with learning a new job that they are very interested in even though it will not mean a promotion or a higher salary to them. The establishment of a personal development plan for each employee is the joint responsibility of line managers and employees and should have linked to their current competencies, performance management outcomes and the department’s needs. Line managers and employees should review these plans on a regular basis.

4.3.4 Designing interventions for certain employees
In addition to the general interventions listed above, the following methods can be used for specific groups of employees:

i. Senior and middle managers
Interventions for senior and middle management staff could include the introduction of mentorship and coaching programmes. Mentors and coaches play the role of career counsellors and sounding boards for managers. Enhancement programmes for senior and middle managers (that continuously re-focuses and renews their skills) could also be considered. These programmes should be owned by the most senior line executive and managed by the human resource component. They could provide training on the key executive or senior management competencies that are required, and could allow for interventions designed for each specific manager.

ii. Knowledge workers
‘Knowledge workers’ are employees who are specialists in their field (such as information technology, health, justice and engineering). Because they have gained their expertise through formal education or experience over a long period of time, their knowledge and skills cannot be easily transferred to the department or to other employees. Also, they tend to build up their own networks that are usually lost when they leave.
Retaining knowledge workers is difficult because the 'drivers' (factors) that make them stay or leave are more complex. Some ideas though can include the following:

- Increase their opportunities for development.
- Include intellectual property clauses in their employment contracts (to protect you from them taking the knowledge they acquired in your department to another employer).
- Have contracts that are linked to any increased investment in their development. For example, a contract might say that the organisation will provide the employee with three months' training provided that the employee agrees to stay in employment for one year thereafter. If they leave before the end of the year, they will have to pay back the costs of the course.
- Assist them to join their respective professional association and allow them to get external exposure.

iii. Promising and talented employees
These employees are usually highly sought after by competitors. As a result, special care must be taken to manage their work and careers, and accelerated development programmes (supported by dynamic mentorship systems) should be considered for them. These programmes could include:

- Special work and study arrangements and inclusion in departmental incentive and service reward schemes;
- Job rotation and exposure to a variety of functions;
- Special assignments with greater responsibilities; and
- Partnerships in project teams.

iv. High performers
These are employees who excel at their work. Possible retention strategies for them could include:

- Special work arrangements and inclusion in departmental incentive and service reward schemes;
- Increased study and development opportunities; and
- Flexible employment agreements.

v. Designated groups in terms of employment equity
The laws and policies around employment equity established designated groups of people that employers need to actively seek out and keep – for example blacks, women and people with disabilities. Because your competitors also need to meet employment equity targets, these employees will be in high demand and staff retention strategies need to focus on retaining them. Although any strategy will need to take their particular level and occupational group into account, there are some general ideas that can improve their positions at work and so reduce the 'drivers' that might in future cause them to leave.

For example:
- Mentorship and coaching programmes may be developed.
- Efforts must be made to make it easy for disabled people to get access to their place of work, to bathrooms and other parts of the building.
- Flexible employment policies can be introduced to allow women to take care of their family responsibilities.
- Crèches or day-care centres can be set up.

Note
Annexure 8 sets out some interventions that various sectors, departments and organisations have developed to deal with staff retention.

4.3.5 Monitoring and evaluation
Ongoing monitoring and periodic evaluation of staff retention strategies would allow the department to check the impact of the intervention, and to see where it might need to be changed. It also promotes 'organisational learning', which will improve any future planning. As a result, all staff retention strategies must include proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be identified right at the start of the project and must form part of the strategy.
They could include:

- Periodic assessment (perhaps quarterly or every six months) of the turnover within the targeted skills or occupational groups;
- Checking from time to time whether what you are offering is still appropriate;
- Assessing skills movement within the department and within the sector; and
- Most importantly, assessing whether the interventions are actually having any impact. This can be done through surveys, interviews and so on which could include a comparison between the turnover rate experienced in a particular occupational group and the national figure for the Public Service in that group. The latter information can be obtained from the web site of the Department of the Public Service and Administration.
- Comprehensive evaluation exercises over longer periods to assess the impact of departmental retention strategies.

4.4 Drafting a departmental staff retention policy

Departmental policies must provide a framework of rules, processes and conditions regarding the way in which staff retention issues will be managed. The following outline can be used to guide you in drafting one:

A policy outline

1. **Introduction**
   - Briefly introduce the concept of staff retention, the reasons for it and the need for a policy to cover it.

2. **Definition**
   - Define staff retention in terms of your departmental circumstances.

3. **Purpose**
   - Outline the purpose of the policy and what it seeks to achieve.

4. **Sources of authority**
   - Describe the regulatory framework that underpins and mandates the policy.

5. **Principles**
   - List the principles underpinning the policy.

6. **Scope of applicability**
   - Indicate who the policy applies to and covers.
   - Identify the skill categories (scarce skills, high risk skills and valued skills) and occupational classes that will be targeted.

7. **Retention strategies for the targeted categories**
   - Expand on and outline the strategies and interventions that will be used for the different categories and occupational classes.

8. **Roles and responsibilities**
   - List the roles of various stakeholders in managing staff retention.

9. **Monitoring and evaluation**
   - Describe how and when the policy will be monitored and evaluated.
   - List the responsible people, unit or component.

10. **Review of the policy.**
    - Describe the methods, conditions and period in which the policy will be reviewed.

*An example of such a policy is attached as Annexure 9.*
4.5 Conclusion

As noted at the outset, the retention of skilled staff is a major challenge facing employers currently in all sectors of the economy. This is also true for the Public Service, which emphasises the urgent need to be more pro-active and to increasingly apply innovative, creative and experimental solutions to retain staff skilled and competent staff and to curb job hopping.

A retention strategy would not necessarily stop the exit of employees, but constitutes a serious attempt to reduce staff turnover and job hopping. A retention strategy is intended to quantitatively and qualitatively reduce staff turnover and must be utilised to ensure that departments do not lose employees who may have stayed if the environment, style of management and organisational culture had been more conducive to staff being retained.

This Guide, as noted above, was developed to contextualise staff retention within the scope of the people management in the Public Service, to create a better understanding of the concept of staff retention, and to assist departments in developing strategies and solutions they can use in managing staff retention challenges in the workplace. The responsibility rests on departments to use this Guide to assist in retaining skilled and committed staff, to improve service delivery by the Public Service.
Annexures
Annexures

Annexure 1  Assessment of your department
Annexure 2  Climate survey
Annexure 3  Exit interview template
Annexure 4  Checklist for internal human resource audit
Annexure 5  Benchmarking exercise
Annexure 6  Critical skills identification process
Annexure 7  New employee guide
Annexure 8  Interventions used in different sectors, departments and organisations
Annexure 9  A policy outline
ASSESSMENT OF YOUR DEPARTMENT

The following is an example of an assessment that can be used to assess your departmental culture and approach to managing employees. A line manager should complete it with the assistance of the human resource component.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How well is the department doing in respect of</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seldom = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often = 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Empowerment:** Employees are empowered to make decisions about how work should be done.

- **Commitment:** Employees have a vision and direction that commits them to working hard.

- **Challenging work:** Employees are given challenging work that provides opportunities to learn new skills.

- **Collaboration or team work:** Employees work in teams to accomplish goals and tasks.

- **Culture:** The work environment provides opportunity for celebration, fun, excitement and openness.

- **Communication:** Employees enjoy open, honest and frequent information-sharing with management.

- **Concern for due process:** Each individual is treated with dignity and differences are openly respected and shared.

- **Access to equipment:** Employees have access to the appropriate resources to do their work.

- **Competence:** Employees have the skills and knowledge to do their work well.

**SCORE TOTAL**

Scores below 6 in any of these areas indicate a need for an in-depth assessment and possible intervention.
CLIMATE SURVEY

This survey is designed to give the department’s management guidance on how to improve the workplace environment. This survey is to be answered anonymously.

1. Ratings

Please rate the department on the following issues by circling one of the numbers from one to five (one being awful, and five being great).

(a) Compensation to employees
(b) Opportunity for advancement
(c) Benefits
(d) Friendly work environment
(e) Training
(f) Performance evaluation
(g) Quality of supervision
(h) Management culture
(i) Job security
(j) Overall satisfaction with job

2. Employee Morale

(a) How would you describe the morale (or spirit) of your fellow employees in general?

(b) What could the Department do to improve employee morale?

3. Guidance

(a) Are you given enough guidance to perform your job?

(b) Are you given enough feedback on your work?

(c) How would you change the procedure for performance appraisals?
4. Training and Technology.
(a) What additional training could be given to employees (if any) that would improve morale? 
(b) What additional technology do you believe would benefit the department? 

5. Benefits.
(a) Which of the benefits that the department offers do you think are valuable? 
(b) What other benefits would you like to see the department offer?

6. Flexibility.
(a) Are you given enough flexibility to perform your job? 
(b) What more flexibility could you be given that would help you to do your job better?

7. Supervisor.
(a) Are you adequately supervised? 
(b) Is your supervisor aware of any concerns you may have? 
(c) How would you improve any of the supervisory procedures in the department?

8. Job satisfaction

Please circle the response which you think is appropriate

(a) In my job, I have more positive than negative experiences
1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

(b) In general, how satisfied are you with the benefits you get from the department?
1. Very satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Dissatisfied
4. Very dissatisfied
(c) Is it easy for you to find out all you need to know about the benefits the department offers?
1. No, the information is poor and not easy to find
2. The information is good, but it is not easy to find
3. The information is easy to find, but it is not very good
4. Yes, the information is good and easy to find

(d) Do you understand the benefits offered by the Department?
1. A bit
2. Absolutely
3. Not really
4. Not at all

(e) Does the department provide benefits that compare favourably with other comparable employers?
1. More or less
2. Yes, absolutely
3. Not really
4. Not at all

9. General

What else needs change or improvement in the department? __________________________
Exit Interview Template

This form should be used during exit interviews to find out why the employee is leaving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee’s name:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Branch/Division:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Job title:</td>
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<td>Supervisor:</td>
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<td>Dates of employment:</td>
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1. What is your main reason for leaving?

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3. Would you consider coming back to the department?

4. In your opinion, were you paid an adequate salary for the work you did?

5. Under what conditions would you have stayed?
6. If you were to change something in the department, what would you have changed?

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7. Do you believe management in the department adequately recognised your contributions?

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8. Did you understand the various departmental policies and the reasons for them?

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Retention Guide 2006
9. Have you seen any illegal acts taking place within the department?


10. Do you feel your training was adequate?


11. Were you satisfied with your working conditions?


12. Are security arrangements appropriate in the department? If not, how could they be improved?


13. Do you have any suggestions for improving employee morale? 


14. What did you like:
   (a) Most about your position? 


(b) Least about your position? 


15. Could anything have been done to prevent you from leaving? 


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16. Did you find that the goals and targets of your role were clear during your employment? 

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17. Could your qualifications and skills have been used to better advantage? 

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__________________________________________________________________________

Signature of person conducting the interview
CHECKLIST FOR AN INTERNAL HUMAN RESOURCE AUDIT

Introduction

1. This checklist covers the following:
   Part A: Institutional arrangements
   Part B: Human resource planning
   Part C: Recruitment and selection
   Part D: Compensation and performance management
   Part E: Employee relations and communication
   Part F: Human resource policies and workplace rules
   Part G: Equal employment opportunities
   Part H: Employee development
   Part I: Labour relations
   Part J: Employee health and wellness

2. The questions are general and relate only to things that might influence staff retention management.

PART A: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. Does the human resource component participate in the Department’s strategic planning?
2. Are human resource considerations adequately addressed in the organisation’s strategic plan?
3. Does the departmental human resource component demonstrate a clear understanding of the human resource needs of the department?
4. Does the human resource component participate actively in striving for a more empowered and participative work force (including productivity improvement, cost reduction, quality improvement and improved quality of work life programmes)?
5. Do all employees have job descriptions that state the major job objectives, responsibilities and accountabilities?
6. Do all employees understand their roles and relationships to others in the department?

PART B: HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

1. Is there a dedicated team or component accountable for reviewing the organisation’s human resource requirements?
2. How often is this review updated (for example, yearly, every two years, three years or more)?
3. Do the projected human resource needs include the following considerations:
(a) Availability of outside workforce demographics (age, sex, minority classification, education, skills level, occupations, etc.)?

(b) Anticipated changes in the department’s objectives, processes and services?

(c) The human resources required (for example in terms of skills, numbers, location and composition)?

4. Which sources outside the department provide the information?

5. What sources within the department provided this information?

6. Who are these projections communicated to?

7. Is there a team or unit accountable for reviewing and assessing employee’s skills, education, interests and needs?

8. How often is this assessment updated (for example, yearly, every two years, three or more years)?

9. Who are these assessments and projections communicated to?

10. Are these assessments and projections used for training and development?

11. Is there a formal career planning process in place?

12. Is there a career counselling system to identify individual skills, interests and needs?

13. Are high-potential employees identified for key positions?

14. Are human resource projections (i.e. numbers, job classifications, skills, knowledge, ability and education levels) identified in the departmental recruitment plan?

15. If the human resource plan calls for restructuring or downsizing, are there strategies to deal with displaced employees?

16. Are the human resource projections part of the department’s budgeting process?

Statistics

1. What is the department’s monthly absentee rate?

2. In what areas are absences particularly high and why?

3. What is the annual turnover rate (per occupation or salary level) and why?

4. Are exit interviews conducted?

5. Who is given feedback from exit interviews and how is it used?

6. Are demographics of turnover data analysed?
PART C: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

1. Is there a policy in place stating the department's approach to recruitment and selection?

2. Does the approach or policy contain procedures to guide managers through the recruitment and selection process?

3. Is there a team or unit within the department that is accountable for overseeing and co-ordinating recruitment and placement?

Recruitment

1. Is there a formal process in place for identifying job vacancies in advance?

2. Is recruitment done pro-actively in anticipation of imminent staff losses as well as reactively (to immediately replace staff that leave)?

3. Is recruitment linked to human resource planning and the projected staff requirements?

4. Is a job analysis conducted for each position?

5. Does the job analysis accurately identify the key objectives and responsibilities of the position?

6. Does the job analysis accurately identify the essential skills needed?

7. Is sufficient consideration given to internal candidates for all or some job openings before outside recruitment begins?

8. Are the requirements of the job accurately reflected in the job advertisement and are these requirements not unnecessarily stringent?

Selection

1. How many candidates are interviewed before filling a position?

2. How many individuals are involved in the interviewing process?

3. Are hiring managers trained in proper selection techniques (for example, interviewing techniques, competency and position-related questions and legal implications)?

4. Are reference checks conducted?

5. Are competency tests used in the selection process?

6. Is the number of job advertisements in line with the department's overall recruitment and selection capacity?

PART D: COMPENSATION AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

1. Does the department have a policy clearly stating its position on employee compensation?

2. Is this policy linked to the department’s approach on compensating employees, and does it reinforce the values of the department?

3. Is the department's compensation policy clearly communicated to all staff?

4. Does the compensation policy contain procedures to guide managers on how to implement the compensation system?
5. Is there a team or unit within the department accountable for overseeing and co-ordinating all compensation-related activities (job evaluation, job classifications, job descriptions and so on)?

6. Is there a process to acquire information about the compensation paid for comparable job functions in the region and/or countrywide?

7. How frequently are market studies performed?

8. Does your department have an employee performance management system?

9. Does the performance management system establish clear objectives, expectations and performance measurement criteria linked to that specific job?

10. Do performance assessments provide objective, interactive and meaningful feedback on performance?

11. Do performance objectives clearly support departmental and organisational objectives?

12. Are assessment criteria discussed with the individual employees?

13. Are employees informed of the outcome of their performance assessments?

14. Do performance assessments include a development plan to improve employees’ competencies?

15. Are systems to reward performance and excellence through the various mechanisms (pay progression, bonuses and special recognition) available?

16. Does the organisation emphasise and reward leadership to ensure success and satisfaction in the organisation?

PART E: EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. Is a dedicated team or unit within the department accountable for overseeing and co-ordinating all communications to employees?

2. Is an internal communication policy or strategy in place?

3. How is the communication policy or strategy distributed and to who?

4. Is a system in place for the induction of new employees?

5. Are follow-up employee orientations scheduled?

6. Are there forums that allow for regular interaction and information exchanges between employees and management?

7. Are there forums in which racial and minority concerns are conveyed to management with the intent of affecting positive changes?

8. Does the department engage in employee opinion surveys?

9. Are survey results communicated to employees?

PART F: HUMAN RESOURCE POLICIES AND WORKPLACE RULES

1. Are the human resource policies and procedures aligned with the department’s mission and objectives?

2. Do these policies reflect a desire to be an “employer of choice”?
3. Do they balance empowerment of staff with sufficient controls to ensure achievement of the organisation's mission and objectives?

4. Are personnel policies condensed into an employee handbook?

5. Does the organisation regularly assess existing policies for replacement or amendment?

PART G: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Does the department have an employment equity policy in place?

2. How is this policy communicated inside and outside the department?

3. Is a dedicated team or unit within the department accountable for overseeing and co-ordinating the equal employment policy and procedures?

4. Are job openings analysed for job-related skills, education, and knowledge and ability requirements?

5. Are all managers trained in non-discriminatory management practices?

6. Is there an internal process for employees to register complaints concerning discrimination and harassment?

7. Does your department have an explicit policy against sexual harassment?

PART H: EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

1. Is a departmental policy on human resource development in place?

2. Is a dedicated unit within the department accountable for overseeing and co-ordinating training and development activities?

3. Is there a process for assessing the department's immediate training needs and individual development needs?

4. If yes, how is this assessment carried out?

5. How often is the assessment updated?

6. Who participates in the assessment?

7. Is there a process to assess the department's future training needs?

8. If yes, how is this assessment carried out?

9. Are job skills, knowledge and ability of staff considered in assessing training needs?

10. Are organisational issues (such as the department's mission, objectives and customer orientation) considered in assessing training needs?

11. Are the department's social responsibilities and approach to diversity reflected in assessing training needs?

12. Are employee development plans addressed in performance appraisals?

13. How are training programs and opportunities communicated to employees?
14. Are subscriptions to professional training and development journals maintained and provided to staff?

15. Are the results of training programs monitored and evaluated?

16. Are employees cross-trained to perform duties outside their major areas of responsibility?

17. Are employees provided with adequate training and professional development to meet the department’s challenges and demands?

18. Is involvement in professional associations encouraged?

PART I: LABOUR RELATIONS

1. Is a departmental policy on labour relations in place?

2. Is there a dedicated team or unit within the department that oversees and co-ordinates labour relations activities?

3. Is management informed and supportive of labour relations strategies and goals?

4. Is adequate assistance provided to managers in the handling of grievances and disputes?

5. Are managers trained in handling discipline matters, record keeping, counselling skills, precedent-setting issues and so on?

6. When grievances are submitted, are they speedily resolved?

7. Are disciplinary procedures and rules of conduct explained in an employee handbook or other form of notice?

8. Are progressive forms of discipline expressly cited?

PART II: EMPLOYEE HEALTH, WELLNESS AND SAFETY

1. Is a departmental policy on employee safety, health and wellness in place?

2. Is this policy actively supported and executed by management?

3. Does the policy provide guidance to managers on the implementation of related programs?

4. Does a dedicated team or unit within the department oversee and co-ordinate safety, health and wellness activities?

5. Does the department have a wellness program in place? Does it include:
   (a) A designated senior manager to oversee the departmental policy and processes, including occupational health and safety programmes?
   (b) A health risk assessment?
   (c) Counselling and feedback on safety, health and lifestyle improvements?
   (d) Discussions and training on safety and health-related topics?
The following example of a benchmarking exercise can be used by the human resource component as part of a staff retention strategy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key factors for benchmarking</th>
<th>Component or department’s offerings</th>
<th>Competitor offerings</th>
<th>Gap</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compensation and benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides competitive salary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides comprehensive benefit packages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides incentives such as bonuses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career growth and development opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides career growth and career counselling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides promotional opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides employee development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interesting and exciting work environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides challenging work assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offers job transfers, job rotation, lateral moves and learning opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature of the physical work environment and conditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stability and organisational culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job/employment security</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive organisation image</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication of organisation’s objectives and values</td>
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</table>

These factors could be ranked to assess the department’s strength and weaknesses in relation to talent attraction and competition and to allow for tailor-made solutions.
CRITICAL SKILLS IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

1. What are the top three skills or competencies that you will require to achieve the goals set for the unit?

2. Who could you not stand to lose at this moment and for what reasons?

3. What are the critical skill areas for your unit now?

4. What skills do you have amongst your employees now that you will not have in two years?

5. If all but 10 employees within your unit need to be replaced tomorrow, who would you seriously attempt to keep?

6. What skills would significantly improve the performance of your unit over the next 12 months?

7. Of the candidates who declined your job offers during the past year, who do you most regret not signing on to your unit and why?
NEW EMPLOYEE GUIDE

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR/HEAD OF THE UNIT

Welcome to the Resource Administration Unit of the Department. You are joining a Unit that is well known for its high standards of client orientation and service delivery. We are sure that your placement with us is appropriate and that working in the Unit will be a worthwhile experience for you. Be assured that we in the Unit will make every attempt to ensure that you are properly introduced to your responsibilities and new work environment.

This Guide is intended to help you get started as a new employee at the Unit. Specifically, it provides you with:

✓ Some general background information about the Unit
✓ A checklist of important actions you need to take as a new employee

For further information, please approach your supervisor or the human resource component to which you will be introduced once you assume duty.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

The Resource Administration Unit has been established during 1995 and its current staff complement comprises of 25 employees (yourself included). The operational objective of the Unit is to render advice to the Department’s management and other components on issues related to the gathering of information, the capturing of data and the analysis of information for purposes of operational planning and monitoring in the Department.

NEW EMPLOYEE TO-DO LIST

Please look this list over carefully and take care that proper attention (your supervisor will assist you in this regard) is given to the relevant matters.

✓ Identification card: All employees must carry this card which is obtainable from the security desk;
✓ Pay check: Kindly take care that the necessary arrangements are made for depositing your salary into your bank account.
✓ Employment papers: Complete all employment papers as required by the human resource component.
✓ Employment status: Know your employment status and rank title,
✓ Service benefits: Please acquaint yourself with the benefits applicable to you. You will be put into touch with the human resource component for this purpose.
✓ Parking arrangements. Your supervisor will clear this with you.

Note that particulars of the service benefits offered by the Department are also accessible on the department’s Intranet.

ORIENTATION

The following topics will be discussed with you during the first two days at work. You should discuss them with your supervisor to help you understand and adjust to your work environment.

✓ Performance evaluation. What is your probationary period and the performance evaluation process?
✓ Work schedule and compensation. What are your hours of work, overtime, call-in procedures, time sheets, vacation, and sick leave?
✓ Your Unit: Who is the Unit’s human resource practitioner? What is the Unit’s purpose and functions?
✓ Facilities and resources: This will include a tour and description of the department, the location of restrooms, eating facilities, photocopiers, the mail drop, suppliers, access to computers and other equipment.
✓ Departmental procedures: Staff meetings, breaks, and lunch times, sign in/out board, mail and memo distribution, building and office keys.
✓ Working relationships: How your co-workers prefer to work together, their patterns of communication, individual and team relations, reporting relationships, etc.
✓ Health and safety regulations: The procedures covering injuries, hazardous materials, emergency evacuation routes, and disaster plans.

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## Annexure 8

**Interventions Used in Different Sectors, Departments and Organisations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector or Department</th>
<th>Retention Measures</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Public Service in general             | • Providing counter offers.  
• Focussing on high impact occupational groups such as SMS.  
• Allowing interdepartmental staff movement as opposed to total skills loss.  
• Continuous human resource planning.  
• Accelerated Human Resource development (fast tracking)  
• Internships and study assistance.                                             |
| Public Service: Health departments    | • Bilateral agreements with other countries.  
• Job rotation and internships.  
• Job enrichment.  
• Re-employing staff.  
• Use agencies for temporary staff.  
• Recruit staff with specific skills from abroad.                        |
| SANDF                                 | • Link competency development with remuneration.  
• Job enrichment.  
• Maintain appropriate job and pay structures.                             |
| Private sector                        | • Pay incentives e.g. share options, profit sharing.  
• Promotions & accelerated development for top contributors.  
• Leadership development.  
• Mentorship and coaching for high fliers.  
• Bursaries and internships.  
• Contractually binding employees who have been developed over time.  
• Increase perks that are tax–friendly.  
• Job enrichment - that is, increase job scope rather than position.  
• Job rotation - that is, rotate employees to different assignments within the organisation.  
• Flexible work hours to accommodate the family or work environment.  
• Dynamic and responsive human resource planning.  
• Tight sourcing strategies.  
• Flexible employment contracts.  
• Defined promotion opportunities (including succession plans).               |
| Telkom                                | • Contractually binding employees after training.  
• Accelerated development programmes for high fliers and scarce resources.  
• Contractually binding bursars.  
• Share option for employees.                                               |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>CSIR</th>
<th>INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC SECTOR</th>
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</table>
| • Partnership between the organisation and tertiary institution.  
• Promote cross organisation collaboration (which leads to job rotation, research collaboration and job enrichment).  
• Bursaries focused at post graduate and contractually binding agreements.  
• Contractually binding employees who have been developed and those who visit overseas for experiential learning.  
• Bonus incentives and profit sharing. | • Job rotation.  
• Continuous research on internal staff morale, profile and external market trends.  
• Effective human resource planning.  
• Focussing on a specific employee profile that would suit specific setting (Canadian Model).  
• Focussing on a holistic approach to recruitment, i.e. look for placement for the spouse and schooling for the children (United Kingdom model).  
• Having flexible employment practises especially for scarce or critical skills. For example, having allowances for health practitioners working in rural areas (Canadian model).  
• Focussing on recruitment and selection practises and ensuring linkage with human resource planning.  
• Focussing and linkages with entrance of minority groups such as women and people with disabilities (American Model). |
A POLICY OUTLINE

Note
The following serves as an example. It is understood that senior managers, line managers and so on within the department may have special titles. Instead, it is merely intended to suggest what such a policy might look like.

STAFF RETENTION STRATEGY FOR PROSECUTORS

1. Introduction
Finding and keeping staff is important to this department. Without staff, it will not be possible to provide the services this department is meant to provide to all in South Africa. As a result, this policy has been developed to guide line managers and human resource components in attracting and retaining key staff.

2. Definition
Staff retention is about finding the best employee for the job and finding ways of keeping these employees within the department. It involves a range of ideas and human resource practices that should all be seen as interlinked.

3. Purpose
This policy is designed to assist line managers and human resource components in retaining prosecutors, particularly with regard to those who have scarce and valuable skills. It aims to ensure that the department always has the best, most well trained and suitable employees occupying each position.

4. Sources of authority
This policy is based on the:
• Public Service Act; 1994;
• The Scarce Skills Strategy for the Public Service, 2002;
• The Scarce Skills Policy Framework for the Public Service, 2003; and
• The provisions in the Public Service Regulations, 2001, Chapter 1, part V.

5. Principles
The policy is based on the principles that:
• Although all employees are valuable, some employees have skills that are of vital importance to the department without which prosecution by the Department will be seriously jeopardised.
• Some prosecutors have skills that are in high demand by competitors in other departments and in the private sector. The interventions to retain such skills will be based on the individual’s performance, and his or her specific job responsibilities.

6. Scope of applicability
This policy applies to prosecutors at Magistrate Courts in the Limpopo and North-West provinces.

7. Retention strategies that will be implemented
The following retention strategies will be used:

(a) Women and people with disabilities:
• Measures on non-discrimination in the workplace will be implemented.
• Measures on sexual harassment in the workplace will be implemented.
• An accessibility survey will be conducted to establish whether all parts of the departmental buildings are accessible to those with disabilities.
(b) General

- The department will pay for admission as advocates for all prosecutors holding LL B degrees.
- Whenever a prosecutor submits her or his resignation, attempts will be made to retain them, including:
  o Offering a higher salary allowed for the position; and
  o Offering opportunities (including bursaries) for further study.
- To prevent staff leaving, the following will be conducted:
  o Staff morale will be assessed on a quarterly basis.
  o Exit interviews will be conducted whenever staff in the above categories leave. The results of these will be shared with line managers within one week of the interview.
  o An internal audit of the prosecutors’ dispensation, job structure and work circumstances will be conducted every second year. The first audit will take place in 2005.

8. Roles and responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roleplayer</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Deliverables and timeframes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Steering Committee (composed of the Director: Human Resources, Director: Prosecutions in both the Limpopo and North-West provinces). | • To implement and maintain the policy.  
• To monitor implementation and the impact of the policy.  
• To report to the Director-General on the above. | • Policy cleared with organised labour by end November 2004.  
• Policy communicated to prosecutors and line management by end December 2004.  
• Monitoring of the strategies to be done continuously.  
• Progress / status quo to be reported to the Director-General on a quarterly basis, with a first report for the period up to 31 December 2004. |
| Human resource component | • Development of measures on non-discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace.  
• Accessibility survey in respect of people with disabilities.  
• Develop a proper procedure for line managers to make counter offers.  
• Assessment of morale amongst prosecutors.  
• Internal audit of the prosecutors’ dispensation, structure and work circumstances. | • Measures to be cleared with organised labour by end November 2004.  
• All staff trained on / introduced to measures by end February 2005.  
• Survey completed and recommendations submitted by end February 2004.  
• Procedure to be completed by end December 2004.  
• Assessment to be completed by end April 2005.  
• Audit completed by end May 2005. |
| Heads of prosecuting in the Limpopo and North-West provinces | • Share the responsibilities of the human resource component.  
• Design a proper system for exit interviews with prosecutors leaving the Department. | • Same as those for the human resource component.  
• System operable from 1 February 2005. |

9. Monitoring

This policy will be monitored on a monthly basis by the human resource component, which will report its findings to the steering committee.

The policy will be evaluated within a period of six months of it coming into effect, jointly by the human resource component, line managers and the senior management team.

10. Review of the policy

The policy will be reviewed annually.