WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAYBOOK:
Talent Retention

Retaining interns and recent college graduates, encouraging them to stay in Indiana, poses several significant challenges. Similarly, convincing out-of-state graduates to stay in your state rather than moving back home is another significant hurdle.

New Graduates may receive offers from firms out of state that offer higher salaries or more desirable locations. To combat this, companies need to ensure that compensation is competitive regionally, not just locally. Employees will also want to feel valued and connected to the organization, its mission and goals.

Talent Retention: 21st Century Graduates

There are some key differences between today's generation of college graduates (Gen Z) compared to those from 10+ years ago, along with their expectations for their first job. Increased cost of living and the caution in student loan debt has made financial security a higher priority for students. Students that do commit to a college education are generally career-driven, motivated to secure their future and ensure balance in their life.

- ► Establish and promote your company values proudly. Younger generations desire to work for companies with a sense of purpose that aligns with their personal beliefs. They value diversity and inclusion and expect their workplaces to reflect these values while promoting a sense of belonging and impact.

- ► There is a greater awareness and prioritization of mental health and work-life balance. While most engineering graduates understand the demand of the job, there is a greater emphasis today on flexible working hours and remote work options when not on a job site. Companies that lean into these policies will attract and retain young talent easier.

- ► Younger generations are future focused; they anticipate robust opportunities for professional growth, training, and clear career advancement pathways. Consider building internal mentorship programs to help young professionals connect to the company and their work and provide guidance toward continued growth opportunities.

- ► Active engagement and feedback mechanisms such as regular performance reviews, goal-setting meetings and "stay interviews" can be used to gather feedback, providing insights into areas for improvement and ensuring that employees feel heard and valued.

Talent Retention: Incumbent Workforce

Effective talent retention strategies go beyond competitive compensation, encompassing a holistic approach that nurtures a positive work culture, fosters effective management practices, encourages active engagement and feedback and instills a sense of purpose.

- ▶ Be able to articulate how each employee's role contributes to the firm's overall success. While this is particularly important to younger professionals, helping each person see how their work contributes to the overall mission helps establish a sense of belonging.

- ▶ Compensation and benefits is about more than competitive salaries. Wellness programs for physical and mental health provide a holistic approach to employee well- being. Policies that allow flexibility for personal use as well as community service help build a sense of community.

- ▶ Creating a positive work culture and environment is pivotal in retaining talent. Firms should aim to cultivate a supportive and inclusive workplace culture where diversity is celebrated, and employees feel empowered to contribute their best.

- ▶ Employee development and career advancement initiatives are critical for retention. Competitive companies provide robust opportunities for professional growth through training programs, workshops, and other initiatives that support employees in acquiring new skills.

- ▶ Effective management practices are essential for creating a positive environment for talent retention. Firms that ensure managers are equipped with the necessary leadership, communication, and conflict resolution skills will build a cohesive team and foster a culture of trust.

- ▶ Provide open lines of communication so employees feel heard and valued. Consider conducting "stay" interviews (see next page) as a means to receive and provide regular feedback on employee strengths and areas of improvement.