



💬 “Money isn’t what drives the best people.”

You’ll hear it in the quiet moments—after the meetings, after the burnout, after the resignation letter is already written.

💡 “I just want to know my work means something.”

💡 “If I’m growing and respected, I’ll stay.”

💡 “I’d take less money for a place that values me.”

And the truth is—they mean it. The data backs them up.

📊 Toxic culture is 10x more predictive of employee turnover than compensation

MIT Sloan Management Review found that people aren’t just chasing better pay—they’re fleeing disrespect, dysfunction, and workplaces that drain meaning.

URL: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/why-every-leader-needs-to-worry-about-toxic-culture/>

📊 9 in 10 employees would give up 23% of future salary for meaningful work

According to BetterUp's Meaning & Purpose report, the average person is willing to trade tens of thousands of dollars just to feel that what they do matters.

URL: <https://www.betterup.com/press/workers-value-meaning-at-work-new-research-from-betterup-shows-just-how-much-theyre-willing-to-pay-for-it>

#### Belonging drives retention and performance

Employees with a strong sense of belonging perform 56% better and are 50% less likely to quit, says BetterUp. When people feel connected, they stay engaged.

URL: <https://www.betterup.com/blog/can-belonging-drive-retention>

#### Retention is about growth, clarity, and inclusion—not just raises

BetterUp's strategies focus on mentorship, well-being, and human leadership as the foundations for long-term engagement.

URL: <https://www.betterup.com/blog/employee-retention>

#### \$8.9 trillion lost annually due to disengagement

Gallup's 2023 Global Workplace Report puts a hard number on the soft issue. When people feel invisible, the economy bleeds.

URL: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/349484/state-of-the-global-workplace.aspx>

#### So what does this mean for leaders?

The best people don't want to be overpaid.

They want to be well led.

They want purpose over perks.

Respect over rewards.

Belonging over burnout.

Pay matters—it always will. But it's the bare minimum. If your culture is chaotic, your leadership absent, or your mission hollow, money won't fix that.

#### Underpaying good people doesn't just lose talent. It loses trust.

And they won't argue.

They'll just disappear.

☒ Pay fairly.

☒ Lead wisely.

☒ Build a place worth staying.