

How to Avoid Being Dumped by Your Best Employees



Career Outcomes Matter

Melissa Llarena

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Introduction

Are you surprised that 2 million Americans quit each month, per the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)? Corporate America faces a **\$6 billion-plus epidemic**. Replacing one quitter costs **\$3K to \$18K**, according to GetHired.com. Technology supports covert exit strategies (e.g., [How to Secretly Use LinkedIn](#)), the economy faces an uptick in job openings (as mentioned on [Varney & Co](#)), and professionals sense an end to this 18-month slump.

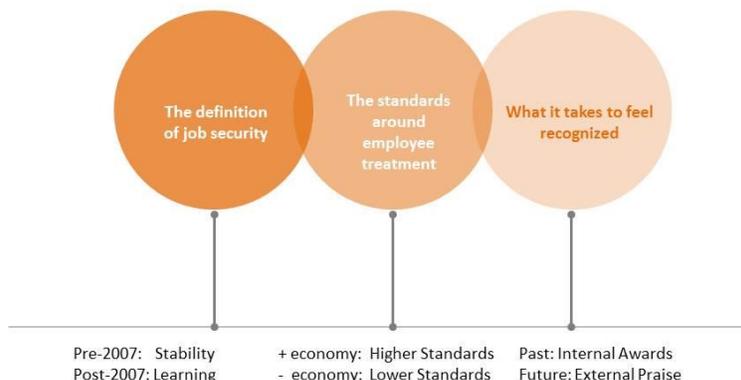
The Great Recession was the ultimate boot camp for the fittest workers, and now their tolerance for doing the jobs of three employees while earning one salary is depleting. Ironically, employees used this downturn to become more employable. Some returned to school. Others refined their survival skills by keeping firms afloat despite industry-wide setbacks. All did more with fewer resources. As a result, currently employed Americans can back up their confidence to quit.

Employees had time to reevaluate three factors that impacted whether they chose to quit: the definition of job security, what they would tolerate from a suboptimal work environment, and whether they felt appreciated in light of concessions made during a poor job market. These three factors are dynamic, making it difficult for corporate America to mitigate what is becoming this decade's biggest profit leakage. However, the solution is under its nose, specifically within marketing departments.

Let's talk about these factors in light of what my clients are saying.



Three Dynamic Factors That Influence Quitting



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The definition of job security has evolved from the promise of stability to that of a continuous learning environment

My clients are top talents who are most likely to jump ship when the economy turns. Most of them thought about quitting when they lost **trust** in their employer's ability to provide them with a job tied to a steady source of career-building or wealth-building opportunities. Their peers were let go. Bonuses were withheld. They became exhausted asking for promised promotions.

With this trust fractured, they reevaluated what job security really meant for them. **The definition shifted from the ability to give them a stable job to the ability in developing their skills so they would be forever employable, within and beyond an organization.**

This notion of job security as continuous professional development is taking precedence over even matching an A-player with a phenomenal boss. One of my clients declined a strong job offer from his favorite boss because it excluded funding for his MBA. The desire for more reliable career safety nets (ex: general-training programs or education subsidies) is becoming a deciding factor.

The standards of what it takes to treat employees well is dynamic

Treating your employees well will help rebuild their trust in your capability to make them employable for a longer term. **However, figuring out what it takes to treat employees well is like aiming for a moving target.** Employees are more tolerant of suboptimal treatment during poor job markets. Corporate restructurings also change how employees wish to be treated. Employees need an added incentive to stay onboard when faced with the same career-building opportunity after peers have been let go.

Meanwhile, it becomes harder to stay abreast of personal changes in your employees that can redefine what they expect from you. Strategically micromanaging your star employees can help you have a better sense of these private changes. The most effective ways to ascertain their expectations is by leveraging customer-loyalty-building strategies: conducting primary research and building solutions so they will adore you. **Most employees will not tell you the truth for fear of burning bridges, so find a talent management partner who can offer you a direct feed into changing trends rather than one who relies on static data.**

It takes more today for an employee to feel recognized than in the past

Employees also have different notions of what it is to be properly recognized. 95% of my clients focus on public testimonials from former bosses, while only 5% refer to internal awards. Your most desirable employees no longer think these award programs are worthwhile because they are only coveted in-house. **Today, employees are calling for broader recognition programs that extend across industries.**

Bigger wins call for bigger prizes, just like at carnivals: if you throw the ball in the hardest bull's-eye, you get a bigger teddy. My clients have done amazing things. How do you recognize a pioneer in the distressed-debt field who kept his firm afloat during the Asian financial crisis and the US Great Recession? Consider how marketers are engendering customer loyalty. SAP features customers in airport ads to serve as case studies for potential clients and to engender tighter relationships with existing patrons. SAP is recognizing its clients through the tagline “The best-run businesses run SAP.” It’s time to recognize your most desirable employees in public, and it doesn’t require spending thousands in ads. Consider companies like HubSpot, which features its [top thought leaders](#) on its site, along with their signature presentations. The ultimate way to recognize employees today is by bringing your praise online: elevate their leadership potential so they *will* be forever employable.

Conclusion

The best-run businesses today will consider their top employees’ redefined notions of job security by proactively ramping up engagement and retention efforts. Americans are not quitting abruptly. Many bankers evaluate their savings to eventually jump into social investing when they hit that magic savings amount. Some professionals work on e-books and blogs to launch shadow careers, hoping they can focus on them full time later. Others jump without a parachute, realizing it’s just as risky working for you as it is working for themselves. Your best employees are in the trenches thinking about their exit strategies. There is still time to reevaluate how to retain them.



Email me [melissa@melissallarena.com] to discuss how I can stop this profit leakage by giving you access to what your top employees want. Given my individual coaching relationships, I can leverage the same principles the best marketers in the world have used to increase customer loyalty and regain the trust of your employees while building recognition programs that are suitable for today’s successes.

About Career Outcomes Matter LLC:

Career Outcomes Matter is a **talent management consulting/career-coaching** firm headquartered in New York City.

Our mission is to provide firms with strategies and tools to support successful employee transitions, and help high-performers use their “superpowers” to propel career leaps.

We are unique partners for firms because we offer a direct feed into what top talent desires in a dynamic job market rather than rely on old data to empower firms.

High-performers love our use of ideas from unexpected sources that inspire longer-lasting change.

To both, **we bring the top-talent insights, firsthand transition experiences, and multidisciplinary best practices** that allow for a high level of success and satisfaction.

Our portfolio of solutions includes:

Corporate Scope (Consulting Engagements)

Talent Acquisition	Talent Management	Talent Risk Mitigation
How to hire business leaders	How to effectively train employees	How to quicken the job hunt for displaced staff
The best methods to transition new hires	The most innovative ways to showcase employee talent	How to conduct exit interviews and report trends

Individual Scope (Coaching Engagements)

Career Leaps	Career Growth	Career Positioning
Preparing for the job hunt	Positioning talent for transfers and global assignments	Utilizing LinkedIn and social media
Using effective career-change strategies	Devising business cases for salary negotiations and promotions	Elevating style from managing to leading

Who We Work With:

Corporate Scope

We partner with clients who believe that talent should provide a competitive advantage for their firm. Satisfied talent proactively drives marketplace innovation, cultivates longer-lasting customer relationships, and seeks new ways to increase profitability.

Our clients include executives at all levels who have worked for:



Individual Scope

We work with professionals who want to accelerate their careers. These high-performers appreciate the benefits of leading their professional development. Benefits to this approach include feeling empowered throughout organizational changes and uncovering opportunities to mitigate the risk of ever feeling stuck.

Our clients include executives who have worked in these functions:

- Accounting
- Administration
- Creative Services
- IT
- Production
- Human Resources
- Client Services
- Sales and Marketing
- Finance
- Business Development



About Melissa Llarena:



Melissa Llarena is an employee-transition expert with 10-plus years of experience in career development. She is the president of Career Outcomes Matter. She has transitioned across 16 different business units throughout her career and has coached professionals since 1997.

Melissa began her career at JPMorgan Chase as a generalist in HR, where she focused on performance management and high-potential career-development programs. Later, she transitioned into the bank's Internet-marketing unit, where she worked on competitive intelligence. She then left the bank to join Reuters, where she was the lead trainer for Fidelity Investments. These experiences positioned her well for later roles marketing brands across sectors, including in consumer product goods, financial services, and technology. After 10 years as a marketer of products and services for brands including AmEx and P&G, she decided to help top talent market themselves.

Today, Melissa is an adjunct instructor for NYU and lends her expertise as a volunteer interviewer for not-for-profit, career-development organizations in the US. She also delivers transition strategy talks at Harvard, NYU, Baruch College, the NYC LGBT Community Center, Ivy League Alumni LinkedIn Group, and other organizations.

Melissa authored a widely viral eBook, [The Mommy Shift: A Reentry Strategy](#). [Fox Business News](#), [American Express Open Forum](#), [US News & World Report](#), [Social Media Week](#), [WSJ](#), [TheLadders](#) and [Technorati](#) have turned to her for insights. She has authored articles for [Forbes](#) and [Women 2.0](#) focused on career transitions, and has recently published [How to Avoid Being Dumped by Your Best Employees](#) in 2013.

Melissa earned an undergraduate psychology degree from NYU. She earned an MBA from the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth. **To learn more about Melissa Llarena, click any of these icons below:**

