



Retaining Top Retail Sales Leaders

→ Five Tactics to Retain Your Top Performers

WHITE PAPER



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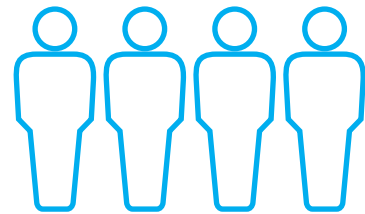
Turnover in the New Age of Retail

Executives in retail are struggling to reduce record-high turnover rates across the industry as brick-and-mortar stores continue to evolve. A survey of 53 leading retailers conducted by global management consulting firm Korn Ferry found that part-time retail employees have an average turnover rate of 81 percent over 2018. This turnover rate of part-time employees increased from 76% in 2017.¹

Retail will always be a business carried by the associates on your store floor. The relationships associates create with customers to convey your brand will never be replaced by e-commerce.

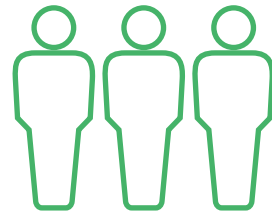
Understanding that your stores are the most important touchpoint that customers have with your brand reinforces the notion that retaining your sales leaders and employees are the best way to deliver an outstanding in-store experience.

81%



**part-time retail employees
turnover in 2018**

76%



**part-time retail employees
turnover in 2017**

A photograph of three young women in a clothing store. They are smiling and looking towards the camera. The woman on the left has curly hair and is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. The woman in the middle has long straight hair and is wearing a red knit sweater. The woman on the right has long blonde hair and is wearing a light-colored sleeveless top. They are standing in front of a clothing rack with various items hanging on it. The background features wooden shelves with decorative items like vases and plants.

What You Can Do to Retain Your Top Performers

1. Provide transparency on objectives and frequent feedback
2. Provide opportunities for advancement through coaching and development
3. Enable your associates with technology
4. Provide opportunities for associates to increase hours
5. Provide fair and objective sales targets

1. Provide Transparency on Objectives and Frequent Communication

Success must be part of your culture and your objectives should be routinely communicated to your associates on the sales floor.

Soft Surroundings, a specialty retailer with 80+ retail stores in the United States, believes “People are our most important asset”. The inspired lifestyle brand cultivates a philosophy of both individual accomplishment and teamwork throughout the organization. They effectively communicate what they expect from store associates, their company goals, achievements and development opportunities. That communication encourages and inspires a performance-driven spirit in their stores.^{2,3}

Using individual and store leaderboards, streaks, and rankings will bring out friendly competition in your stores to help them achieve sales targets. Gamification is an excellent opportunity to communicate your brand and drive your sales performance.



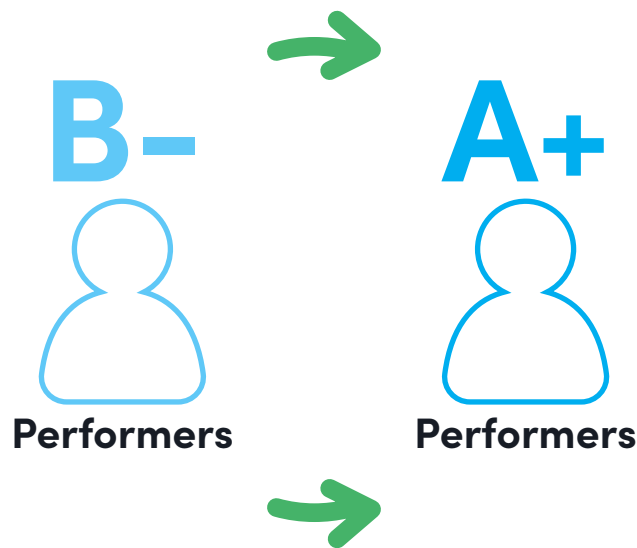
2. Provide Opportunities for Advancement through Coaching and Development

An assessment of your talent will help you understand the gaps between what you are currently providing associates and what they need.

Demonstrating an on-going commitment to building skills and knowledge within the employee base allows employees to recognize the career growth opportunities to “move up the ladder” within your organization. Coaching a bottom-performing employee is different from coaching a

top-performing employee, so it is critical that store and district managers are aware of multiple coaching strategies that they can implement.

Coaching your B- performers to help them become A+ performers provides you the opportunity to promote from within more often, which increases sales teams’ product knowledge, secures a great customer experience in-store, and reduces recruitment costs.



3. Enable your Associates with Technology

Whether via corporate devices or BYOD (“Bring Your Own Device”) policy, make use of new technology tools to not only make the tasks of your associates easier, but to also change how they work.

For most retailers, the bulk of their store staff are millennials (“Tech Savvy”) or Gen-Z (“Tech Native”). Delivering simple, mobile-native self-service Apps to your workforce will require minimal training and will improve the experience of your employees. With these tools, employees will be able to view their schedules, request time off, exchange shifts, and review their time cards using a personal device without the assistance of a manager. This associate-oriented tool will enhance the engagement between you and your associates.

Consider implementing more advanced tools to help store and district managers better manage sales performance, create performance-optimized schedules, and store execution tools. Tools that automate these processes will free up time for managers to focus on coaching their team to provide a better in-store experience.



4. Provide Opportunities for Associates to Increase Hours

More tenure equals higher Product Knowledge (PK) – keeping experienced staff on the payroll is essential to driving in-store customer experience.

After holiday, however, it is often difficult to provide enough hours to part-time associates to allow them to make ends meet. As a result, they may either pick up a second (or third) part-time job at another retailer, or they may leave to find greener pastures.

Wherever possible geographically, pool part-time labor requirements within markets and allow associates to pick up shifts in multiple stores. This is particularly helpful in urban markets where you may have multiple stores that an associate can get to easily.

Pooling labor provides associates with opportunities for more hours during slow periods of the year, optimizes the use of part-time labor, and creates more desirable jobs.



5. Provide Fair and Objective Sales Targets

Let's face it, the primary role of a store associate is to sell – their opportunities for advancement, and often their compensation, depends upon it. Yet surprisingly, many retailers still fall into the trap of providing unfair sales targets based on productivity measures and tenure.



**fair sales targets
according to**

A tenured full-time employee may end up working more weekdays, as the part-time staff may not have availability during these periods. A part-time staff working Friday night and weekends may end up with a higher sales productivity, as measured by Sales Per Hour, or SPH, than your seasoned staff.



time of day

Instead of measuring on a productivity basis, adjust the sales target for each individual according to the time of day and day of week they are working – if the sum of your store employees' sales targets do not balance to the weekly sales target for the store, you have not set fair and objective sales targets.



day of week

The future of retail is in the hands of your store associates, and the real opportunity lies in you being a best-in-class employer that provides employees an excellent experience. This will bring character to your retail brand and help you retain longer-tenured employees who know more about your products and are excited about their work and your brand.

References

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2. Soft Surroundings. (2019). *FAQ'S Careers - Welcome*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2khKgWE>
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About Author



Allie is a Client Engagement Manager at StoreForce. She interacts with client resources to provide guidance and input on how StoreForce can support their operational initiatives and build relationships with various levels of the client's organization. She plays a direct role in opportunity identification, training, creation of program materials, and development of results reporting. Allie previously held various roles with a Canadian specialty retailer. Throughout these roles, she acquired significant experience and knowledge in managing sales teams and operating retail stores.

About StoreForce



StoreForce has been helping specialty retailers around the world exceed sales performance goals and deliver exceptional customer experiences since 2010. StoreForce is a sales performance platform, underpinned by a specialty retail workforce management system. It is called “wfm+”, where the “+” represents a focus on positive sales growth and consistent delivery of the brand in your brick and mortar stores. This approach is entirely unique to StoreForce, and it is why the “+” also represents a foundational shift from the way traditional wfms approach labor planning in Specialty Retail.

For more information, visit: www.storeforcesolutions.com

For more insights and discussions about **wfm+** visit the **StoreForce Resources**

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Engaged Store Associates
Equal Happy
Customers



SMK PODCAST: StoreForce,
Built by Retailers for
Retailers



Stores as 'Markets'
in the World of Unified
Commerce

CASE STUDIES



StoreForce is the
Winning Bet at Marshall
Retail Group



StoreForce, Perfect Fit for
Growing Retailer
Soft Surroundings



Success Story:
LUSH Australia



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