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Do you have what it takes to be an employer of choice?

To come out on top in the fierce competition for behavioral healthcare talent, organizations need to create a mission-driven company culture and offer compensation packages with benefits that appeal to top prospects in today's evolving marketplace. While it's certainly important to offer a competitive salary, and **mhca's** annual [CEO & Top Management Compensation Report](#) can help benchmark top administrative salaries, there are other critical factors that determine if you will be an employer of choice.



Company Culture

Clarifying and clearly communicating your organization's mission will help you attract and retain employees, as well as clients and donors. Employees don't want to just do a job, they want to live it. They want to believe in, and become a part of, your organization's brand. A survey of behavioral health employees

seeing their clients make progress toward their goals.

Today's workforce also values social responsibility and desires a sense of community. A study by Harris Group found that 72% of millennials prefer to spend more money on experiences than on material things, and shared experiences build bonds. Create opportunities for your employees to share meaningful experiences. Bring your leadership team to one of [mhca's quarterly conferences](#) and plan to enjoy some fun local activities together during your downtime. Volunteering together in your community once a quarter is another great way to get your staff energized and engaged.

Opportunities for Development and Advancement

You may be focused on the current or anticipated vacancy you need to fill, but prospective employees are thinking more long term. Do you offer a clear career path with opportunity for them to grow within your organization? Investing in professional development, training and mentoring programs bolsters recruitment, reduces turnover and results in more well-rounded employees.

Appealing Benefits

Research from Glassdoor found that 57% of job seekers say benefits and perks are a top consideration when deciding to take a new job, and four out of five workers say they would prefer new benefits over a pay raise.

Better health, dental, and vision insurance top the list of desirable benefits, followed by flexible scheduling and additional vacation time. Some companies are also finding holistic wellness programs, which recognize employees' emotional, social, physical, and fiscal health are all related, are popular. Look for a program that offers employees flexibility to customize their own path to wellness based on what matters most to them.

Recruitment and Retention Strategies:

Communicate

The total compensation package – salary, benefits, work environment, flexible policies, etc. – is your organization's unique selling proposition and should be clearly communicated to differentiate you from your competitors.

If your staff looks homogeneous, you may need to broaden your employment funnel. Take a closer look at your recruitment practices and look for new ways to tap into diverse pools of talent within your community.

Think Mobile

You need a mobile-friendly online presence - 43% of smartphone users looked up job information on their phones and 18% used their mobile device to submit applications. Are your online job postings easy to find, and can candidates easily apply from their smartphones?

Collaborate

- Pool recruitment resources with other agencies to share the cost of advertising campaigns and career fairs.
- Offer referral bonuses for current employees – paying half upon hiring a referral and the other half at their successful completion on a 6-month review.
- Partner with local colleges to educate and recruit students and recent graduates. Weigh the benefit of offering internships with stipends or tuition reimbursement, or offering student loan repayment programs for top recruits.

Remember - Not all turnover is bad.

Losing an unhappy, under-performing employee can actually be good. Zappos recently decided to change their management approach. Rather than spending time and money trying to win over reluctant employees, they offered a severance package, which 14% of employees accepted. While this was costly, it may have been even more costly to introduce changes that ultimately failed because of employee resistance. Turnover can be beneficial if it leads to the right people filling positions so the organization is better positioned to compete in a rapidly changing industry.

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