

# ELEVEN TIPS TO RETAIN EMPLOYEES IN THE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

**M**y business career in technology started in 1966 and continues today. Throughout that time, I have followed four business principles:

- Never lose a good client.
- Never lose a good employee.
- Deliver what is promised.
- Be No. 1 in all you do.

These principles are “on the walls” at all the companies where I worked. They also are printed on the reverse side of every employee’s business card.

So, why 11 and not 10 tips here? The simple answer is that after 40 years and some gray hair, I should have at least one “extra” tip for you.

I learned these tips and refined them by making a lot of mistakes

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along the way. And like everyone else, I continue to learn about human behavior every day and how to adapt to today’s world — and today’s employee.

## 1. Recruit, Recruit, Recruit.

Successful leaders and managers in technology always must be looking to fill all the positions (development, customer service, administration, etc.). Recruiting is 24x7, almost an obsession.

## 2. Hire Only the Best.

Never offer employment unless you and your team think a candidate can perform to an “A” level in that position.

## 3. Find Your Replacement.

A successful CEO has at least one person on the team who can take

his or her place. A successful manager in technology has three or four staff members who can do more.

## 4. Learn From Other Executives and Managers.

Observe the management styles of people around you, then eliminate the ones that clearly don’t work with employees. Embrace the management practices that inspire employees to perform at high levels.

## 5. Purify, Purify, Purify.

“First loss is best loss.” Usually, you can tell after one year whether your employees can perform to the highest level.

## 6. Provide a Long Leash, but Apply a Quick Trigger.

Employees and managers want direction, but they typically also want room to do the job their way. Suggest jointly establishing the length of the leash that measures performance. Also suggest having a plan to make a change quickly if performance is not met. The change could be termination, demotion or redeployment.

## 7. Create a Void versus Keeping Low-Level Performers On-board.

Put another way, “No breath is better than bad breath.” No team member appreciates working extra hard to make up for the slackers. Morale always goes up when a low-level performer is removed from the company, and managers are respected for taking action.

## 8. It’s a Volunteer Army.

Almost everyone who works in technology loves their work — and their company. Although rare, continually complaining employees can be a distraction and should be reminded that “it’s a volunteer army.” If they can’t do work without complaining, suggest they find another company and soon.

**9. Bad News is Like Fish — the Older it Gets, the More it Smells.** Deliver all the news (good and bad) to all employees in a timely manner. This builds trust, which is the top way to retain employees.

**10. Create “Raving Fans” From Your Customers.** Employees feel good when clients are satisfied. They are truly energized when customers become “raving fans” for technology products and services.

**11. The Monthly Activity Report.** Here is the bonus tip: Each month, I require each employee to complete a monthly “fill-in-the-blank” electronic activity report.

### • Key accomplishments:

Room is left for four to five “bulleted” items. It give employees a chance to reflect on what they did, pat themselves on the back and let management know their top activities or accomplishments for that month.

### • Disappointments/Concerns:

This area is to reflect on incomplete items, concerns, etc. Writing them down provides managers with very important information about employees.

### • What will be accomplished next month:

Again, there is room for bulleted items, which gives employees a road map for the month and a chance for you to respond.

### • Suggestions to improve the business:

This is a short fill-in-the-blanks suggestion box. Some great suggestions have come from this section. **TM**

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