EVENBETER HEADSHOT

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The State of iGaming Teams 2027

Why people stay. Why they leave.
What this means for companies.



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Daria Fot

HR Director at Evenbeter

«Why do some professionals stay with their company while others consider new opportunities? What shapes that decision, and how well do employers understand what their teams expect?

Employee retention is more than an HR responsibility. It's part of how a company grows over the long term. Even clear processes and good working conditions don't guarantee that what a company offers matches what employees expect. To understand what matters to their teams, employers need to look beyond their own assumptions and listen to what employees say about their experience at work.

We worked with Headshot to study what influences employees' decisions to stay with or leave iGaming companies. We also compared how employees and managers answered questions about retention to see where their views agree and where they differ.

I hope these findings help companies better understand what employees expect and assess how well their current retention practices are working. The results can also help employers decide what to improve in the workplace».



Polina Kapitonova

CEO of Headshot

«The iGaming industry is growing and changing, and so are professionals' expectations and the demands placed on employers. Building long-term relationships with employees requires an understanding of what influences their decisions to stay with a company or explore new opportunities.

It is also important to look beyond the overall numbers and consider the people behind them. Industry experience, professional role, and region of residence all shape what employees expect from their employers.

Together with Evenbeter, we conducted this study to better understand why professionals stay with iGaming companies and what influences their decisions to leave.

For me, the practical value of this report is that it lets business leaders compare their assumptions about retention with employees' responses. They can identify potential gaps and understand which working conditions may need to change within their teams».

About the study

Why do people stay with iGaming companies, why do they leave, and what does this mean for businesses?

The State of iGaming Teams 2027 is a joint study by Evenbeter and Headshot exploring what influences employees' decisions to stay with their current employer or seek new opportunities.

We examined the experiences of non-managerial employees and managers to understand which working conditions encourage employees to stay and where employees' expectations align with or differ from employers' perceptions.

Salary, career prospects, relationships with managers, workload, work processes, and team atmosphere all shape the employee experience. We sought to understand how these factors relate to decisions to stay or leave, and which of them companies can influence.

The study combines a quantitative survey of 500 iGaming professionals, 31 in-depth interviews, and insights from industry experts. This allowed us to compare common survey responses with participants' personal experiences and managers' perspectives.

Who this study is for

Employee retention is not just an HR responsibility. It is shaped by business decisions, management quality, the nature of the work itself, and employees' day-to-day experiences.

The study will be valuable to professionals across different areas of the iGaming industry:

- **CEOs and company owners** — to understand why a competitive salary alone is not enough to retain employees and what other factors influence their choice of employer.
- **HR professionals** — to compare the findings with their company's practices and identify potential gaps between employees' expectations and their actual experiences.
- **Team leads** — to understand how professionals' expectations change as they gain experience and why timely conversations about career development, autonomy, workload, and feedback matter.
- **Industry professionals** — to move beyond common assumptions about motivation and discuss retention based on data, actual employee experiences, and management decisions.

Our goal is not simply to understand why people stay with or leave their employers. We want to show what companies can change to help talented professionals see opportunities for growth and want to build their careers within the organization.

Methodology

To examine the factors influencing employee retention, we combined a quantitative survey with in-depth interviews. The survey shows which responses were most common, while the interviews help explain the experiences and situations behind them.

Together, these methods provide both an overall picture and a deeper understanding of participants' experiences.



When and where data were collected

The study was conducted **from September 3 to October 2, 2026.**

We collected data through three channels:

- Online, using the Alchemer platform
- Online, in one-on-one interviews
- In person, at SBC Summit in Lisbon

What the study includes

Quantitative component. We received a total of 760 responses. The main analysis includes 500 fully completed questionnaires from individuals who were employed in the iGaming industry at the time of the study. Incomplete questionnaires were excluded.

Qualitative component. We conducted 31 in-depth interviews online: 19 with non-managerial employees and 12 with managers.

Study limitations

The sample reflects the views of the study participants and is not representative of the entire iGaming market. Participants were recruited through different channels, and the sizes of professional and regional groups vary. Therefore, findings for smaller subgroups should be interpreted with caution.

For some questions, the number of responses is lower than 500 because some participants skipped the question or selected «I don't have a manager». In these cases, we report the actual number of responses.

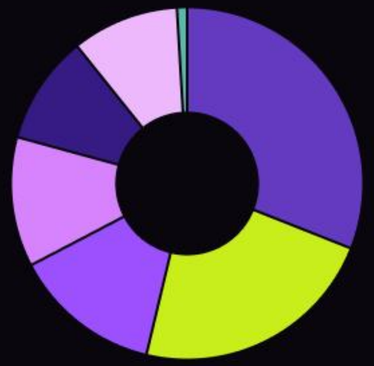
Profile of study participants

The survey included professionals at different job levels, in different functions and regions, and with different amounts of iGaming experience. This allows us to compare their responses while accounting for differences in experience and expectations.

1. Job level

The study included professionals with varying levels of responsibility, from entry-level employees to team leads and top executives.

Senior-level professionals make up the largest group. The sample also includes Mid-level and Junior professionals, as well as managers at different levels. The distribution is shown in the chart.



Senior	155 (31%)
Middle	114 (22.8%)
Head	68 (13.6%)
Lead	60 (12%)
Junior	50 (10%)
C-level / CEO / Founder	50 (10%)
Other	3 (0.6%)

This composition allows us to compare responses from non-managerial employees and managers, while taking into account the size of each group.

2. Job function

The sample includes professionals from a range of functions within iGaming, from marketing and sales to software development, product management, and HR.

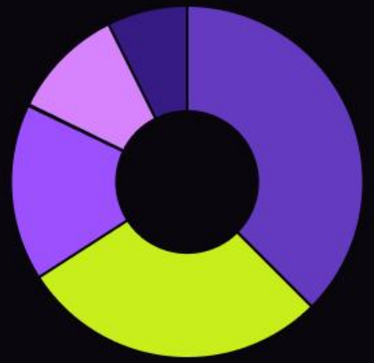


Marketing & Traffic Acquisition	107 (21.4%)
Sales, Business Development & Account Management	85 (17%)
Product & Project Management	76 (15.2%)
Technology & Data	65 (13%)
HR, Recruitment & People	59 (11.8%)
Operations, Customer Support & VIP	44 (8.8%)
Other	34 (6.8%)
Finance, Legal, Risk & Compliance	30 (6%)

The sizes of these groups vary. Therefore, when comparing results, it is important to consider both percentages and the number of participants in each group.

3. iGaming industry experience and tenure with the current employer

Participants have varying levels of experience in the iGaming industry, ranging from professionals who have recently entered the industry to those who have worked in it for more than 10 years.



3–5 years	189 (37,8%)
1–2 years	142 (28.4%)
6–10 years	82 (16.4%)
Less than 1 year	52 (10.4%)
More than 10 years	35 (7%)

Tenure with the current employer follows a different pattern: a large share of participants have been with their current company for a relatively short time. This is important to consider when interpreting the responses, as they reflect the experiences of employees at different stages of their tenure.

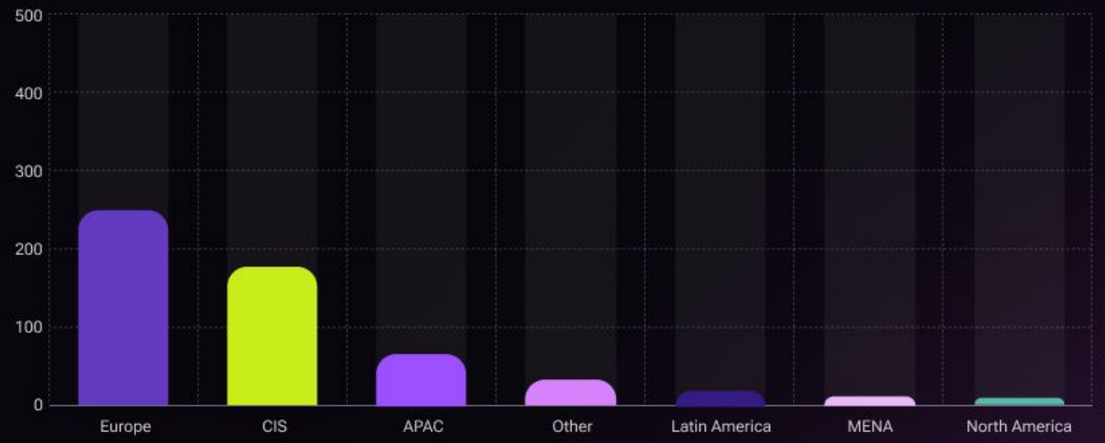


1–2 years	144 (28.8%)
Less than 6 months	97 (19.4%)
6–12 months	94 (18.8%)
3–5 years	66 (13.2%)
2–3 years	62 (12.4%)
More than 5 years	37 (7.4%)

Extensive experience in iGaming does not necessarily mean someone has been with the same company for a long time.

4. Region of residence

Most participants live in Europe and the CIS. The sample also includes professionals from the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America, MENA, and North America. The distribution is shown in the chart.



The study therefore covers several regions, although most responses come from Europe and the CIS.

How to read this study

This report is built around six hypotheses about employee retention in iGaming. Each chapter explores a different question. The first three look at the role of compensation, how work-related burnout is associated with employees' intentions to stay, and why employees leave or stay. The last three look at how the role of managers changes across career stages, how closely employees' and managers' views on retention align, and the importance of flexibility.

Each chapter presents survey findings, open-ended responses, and quotes from in-depth interviews. Where available, quantitative findings are supported by comments from industry experts.

We compare potential reasons for leaving with factors that encourage employees to stay, examine differences in responses across job levels, and compare employees' responses with managers' perceptions.

When the data provide only partial support for a hypothesis, we explicitly acknowledge this. Findings from smaller groups are interpreted with their sample sizes in mind.

The findings are based on participants' responses and may not be representative of the iGaming industry as a whole. Our goal is to test common assumptions about retention against the data collected, rather than to confirm them in advance.

Six hypotheses, six questions

1. Money matters, but it is not the only factor in employee retention
What role does salary play in the decision to stay or leave? And why might employees remain open to other job offers even when they are satisfied with their pay?

2. Burnout increases the risk of leaving a company
How are frequent signs of work-related burnout associated with employees' intentions to stay with their company?

3. Reasons for leaving and factors influencing retention differ
Which factors are most frequently cited as potential reasons for leaving, and which encourage employees to stay?

4. What professionals expect from their managers changes with experience
How do employees at different job levels assess the role of their direct manager, the quality of feedback, and support for professional development?

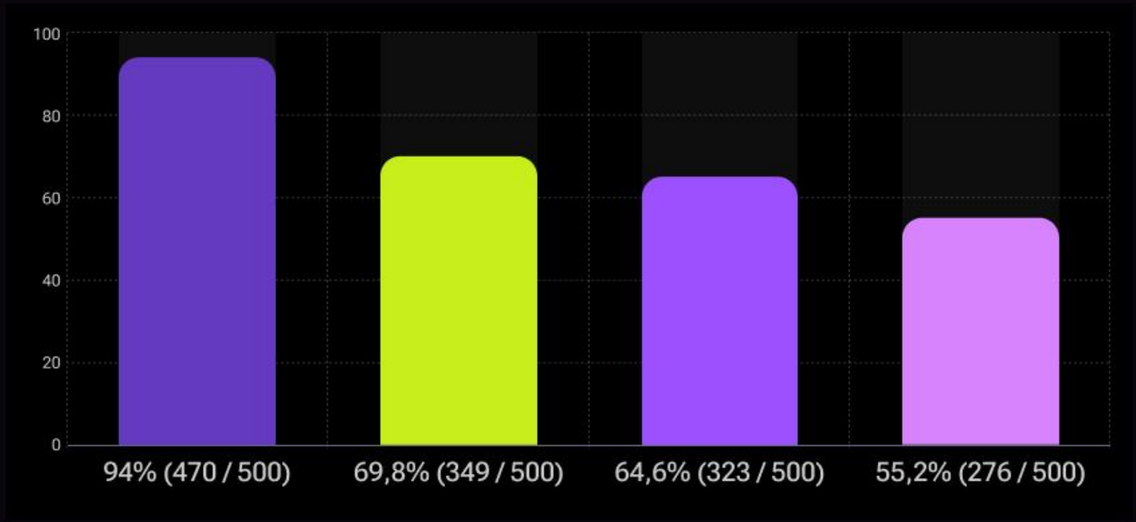
5. Employees and managers see retention differently
How closely do employees' personal reasons for staying align with managers' perceptions of what helps retain high-performing professionals?

6. Flexibility matters, but it is rarely the main reason to stay
How important are flexible work hours and work arrangements to employees? How do these factors influence satisfaction with working conditions and the choice between job offers with the same salary?

Hypothesis 1. Money matters, but it is not the only factor in employee retention

How satisfied are employees with their salaries? Are they willing to consider other job offers even when they are satisfied with their current pay? This hypothesis explores the role salary plays in employees' decisions to stay with or leave their employer.

What the data show



- Salary and bonuses are important or very important.
- Cite good pay as a reason to stay with their company.
- Would consider moving to another company for a 20% salary increase.
- Identify dissatisfaction with their salary or bonuses as a potential reason for leaving.

For 94.0% of participants (470 out of 500), salary and bonuses are important or very important. Good pay was cited as a reason to stay by 69.8% (349 out of 500), while 55.2% (276 out of 500) identified dissatisfaction with their salary as a potential reason for leaving.

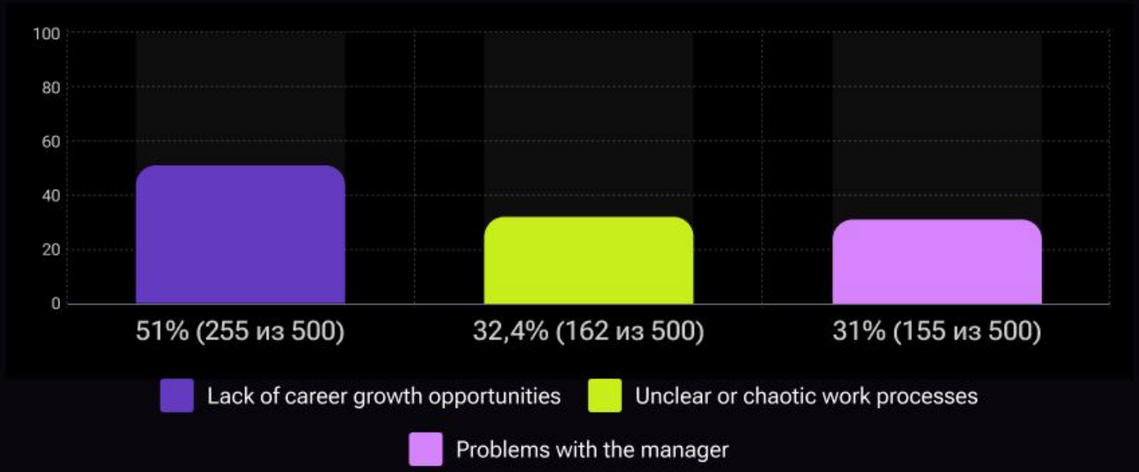
Even employees who are satisfied with their current salaries may be interested in other opportunities. Overall, 64.6% of participants (323 out of 500) would consider moving to another company for a 20% salary increase. Among those satisfied with their current pay, 59.0% (173 out of 293) would consider such a move. However, willingness to consider an offer does not necessarily mean an employee intends to leave.

How the role of salary varies

Responses also vary by job level. For example, among Mid-level professionals, 68.4% (78 out of 114) cited dissatisfaction with their salary as a potential reason for leaving, compared with 34.0% (17 out of 50) in the C-level / CEO group.

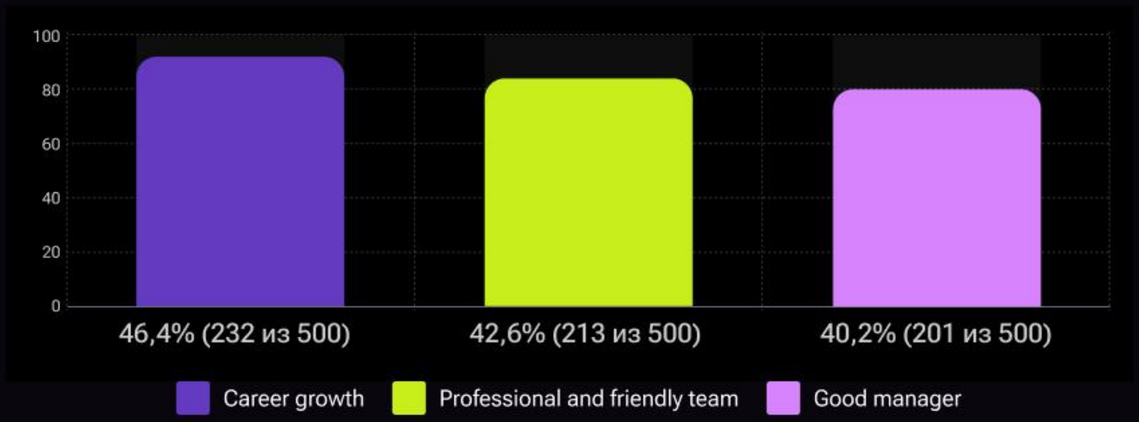
This does not mean that money is unimportant to top executives. The data simply show that participants at different job levels prioritize factors differently.

Potential reasons for leaving (excluding salary)



Other potential reasons for leaving cited by participants include a lack of career growth opportunities, unclear or chaotic work processes, and problems with their managers.

Retention factors (excluding salary)



Other factors encouraging employees to stay include career growth opportunities, a professional and friendly team, and a good manager.

These findings suggest that the factors influencing employees' decisions to stay go beyond salary. Opportunities for development, how work is organized, and relationships with colleagues and managers also matter.

What participants say

Head of Sales

A competitive salary was a basic requirement when choosing a company, but the main deciding factor was the opportunity for professional growth.

HR Director

A high salary is just a 'hygiene factor' that employees quickly get used to.

Digital Analyst

I know for sure that praise motivates me. I could earn less, but knowing that I'm valued, that I'm being praised and recognized... That matters to me. I want the work I do to be acknowledged.

Expert comment

A lot depends on the atmosphere within the team. Employees need to feel connected to the company's culture, share its goals, and feel personally invested in achieving them.

If the company culture is weak, salary is not what keeps a person there, and they see no opportunities for growth, they certainly won't want to stay.

Companies need to show employees what opportunities for growth exist within the organization. Employees should not only hear about these opportunities but also see and feel for themselves that they can grow much more at their current company than at one that pays more.



Anton Khomenok
CEO of X6 GROUP

Expert comment

In iGaming, competitive pay matters, but it can't always make up for the instability and uncertainty in the industry. Changes in regulations and payment processing, traffic problems, and domain blocks all affect day-to-day work. Teams have to make decisions quickly. A company's internal processes should help teams deal with these challenges without adding to the pressure.

For me, it's a warning sign when it's unclear who makes decisions, priorities keep changing, and the same problems keep coming up, or when the team looks for someone to blame instead of finding out what caused the problems and how to prevent them. When problems inside the company keep adding to the pressure from outside, even high pay may eventually stop being enough. The strain builds over time and can lead to burnout.

Professional growth means different things to different people. Some want to move into management. Others want to take on new tasks, develop their skills, or have more autonomy in their current role. It's important to understand what each employee wants and offer opportunities that match their goals.



Olga Hlukhovskaya,
Business Development Director at 1spin4win

Practical implications for employers

1. Do not rely on salary as the only retention tool. Good pay helps retain employees, but it does not eliminate their interest in other opportunities. Career prospects, a professional and friendly team, and management quality also influence decisions to stay.

2. Account for differences across job levels. For example, Mid-level professionals cited salary dissatisfaction as a potential reason for leaving more often than participants in the C-level / CEO group. These differences should be considered when assessing the risk of employee turnover.

3. Make career growth opportunities visible. A lack of development opportunities is frequently cited as a reason for leaving, while career growth is among the factors that encourage employees to stay.

4. Pay attention to management quality and work processes. Relationships with managers, team dynamics, and how work is organized are also associated with employees' willingness to stay. These conditions should be treated as part of the overall employee value proposition rather than as secondary factors.

Conclusion

The hypothesis is partially supported. Salary influences both employees' decisions to stay and their willingness to consider leaving. Even among those satisfied with their current pay, some would consider an offer with a 20% salary increase. However, other important retention factors include career growth opportunities, a professional and friendly team, and having a good manager.

What this means for businesses

Salary adjustments alone are not enough to retain employees. Equally important are the development opportunities a company offers, how work is organized, and how comfortable employees feel interacting with their managers and colleagues.

Hypothesis 2. Burnout increases the risk of leaving a company

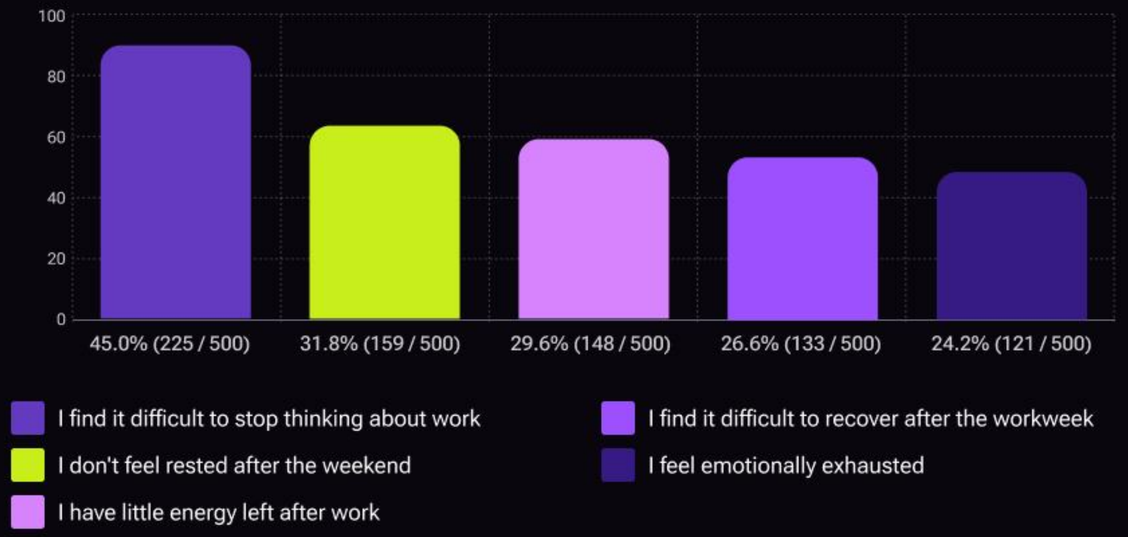
Feeling tired does not necessarily mean an employee is planning to leave. However, frequent signs of work-related burnout may be associated with a lower intention to stay with the company.

We examined five signs of work-related burnout and compared participants' responses with their intentions to stay with their current employer for at least another year.

What the data show

The questions explored whether participants have enough energy left after work, whether they can recover from a demanding workweek and feel rested after the weekend, and whether they can disconnect from work-related tasks.

Five signs of work-related burnout



The most commonly reported difficulty was disconnecting from work at the end of the day. Participants also reported struggling to recover after weekends and demanding periods, as well as frequently feeling drained after work.

Participants were classified as experiencing three or more frequent signs of work-related burnout if they selected «often».or «almost always».for at least three of the five statements.

How burnout is associated with intentions to stay

Overall, 27.4% of participants (137 out of 500) reported three or more frequent signs of work-related burnout. Meanwhile, 38.6% (193 out of 500) did not report experiencing any of the five signs «often».or «almost always».

Intentions to stay with the company also differ between these groups:

- Among participants reporting three or more frequent signs of burnout, 51.8% (71 out of 137) plan to stay with their company for at least another year.
- Among those reporting no frequent signs, 75.6% (146 out of 193) plan to stay.

The difference between the two groups is 23.8 percentage points.

Intention to stay with the company for at least another year



Overall, 66.8% of participants (334 out of 500) plan to stay with their company for at least another year. This share is lower among those reporting three or more frequent signs of burnout. The survey shows an association between these responses but does not establish that burnout itself causes employees to leave.

Where multiple risk factors occur within specific professional group

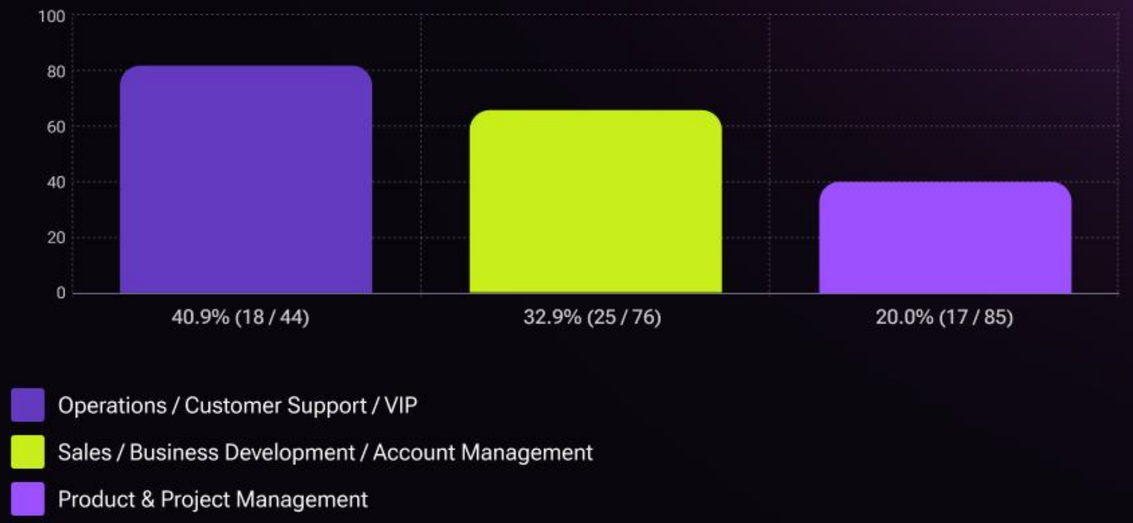
The Operations / Customer Support / VIP group stands out. Among participants in this group:

- 40.9% (18 out of 44) reported three or more frequent signs of work-related burnout.
- 47.7% (21 out of 44) plan to stay with their company for at least another year.

For comparison, the share of participants reporting three or more frequent signs of burnout is:

- 32.9% (25 out of 76) among Product and Project Management professionals
- 20.0% (17 out of 85) among Sales, Business Development, and Account Management professionals

Share of participants reporting three or more frequent signs of burnout by job function



The Operations / Customer Support / VIP group shows both a relatively high share of participants reporting frequent signs of burnout and a lower share intending to stay with their company. This is worth considering when assessing working conditions within these teams.

What other factors matter

According to the survey, 33.0% of participants (165 out of 500) work beyond their regular hours three to four times a week or almost every workday.

- Among participants reporting three or more frequent signs of burnout, 51.8% plan to stay with their company. Among those who also report dissatisfaction with their manager, this figure drops to 31.1% (19 out of 61). See Hypothesis 4 for more details.
- These data do not establish whether workload or relationships with managers have a greater influence on employees' desire to leave. However, both factors should be considered when assessing the situation.

What participants say

HR Specialist

In my experience, high-performing employees are often rewarded for good results with even more work. If you complete tasks quickly, you're given new tasks and responsibilities until you burn out. Companies underestimate how much this drives their best employees away.

Legal Specialist

I think companies often underestimate the importance of basic, clear communication, keeping their commitments, and providing clear opportunities for growth. Even a good salary isn't always enough to retain someone when their work involves constant chaos and an excessive workload.

Expert comment

Based on what I've observed over the past two years, people in iGaming often burn out not so much because of the amount of work, but because of chaotic management. The iGaming industry changes rapidly, and that's normal. Burnout starts when tasks and expectations keep changing along with the market, but no one clearly explains why or what we're trying to achieve.

I've encountered situations more than once where I had to make sense of a constant stream of chaotic requests from the business and translate them into clear goals, priorities, and deadlines for the team.

In my view, one of a manager's main responsibilities is to explain what we're trying to achieve, define areas of responsibility, and agree on interim results. After that, people should have the freedom to decide how to reach the goal themselves. There's little point in hiring experienced professionals and then micromanaging every little detail.

And this applies to the entire management chain. When there's a lack of clarity at one level, micromanagement almost inevitably starts further down the line. In this kind of environment, people spend their energy not only on their work but also on dealing with constant uncertainty. To understand how this affects the team in time, it's important to look at HR survey feedback alongside business metrics: declining results may be a sign of employee exhaustion rather than a lack of effort.



Valeria Vinchenko,
HR Expert

Expert comment

The study found that employees who reported frequent signs of work-related burnout were less likely to say they planned to stay with their company. This does not establish that burnout itself causes people to leave, but it does point to a clear retention risk. When assessing how a team is doing, consider overtime alongside how much autonomy employees have and how well they work with their managers.

The warning sign is a long-term loss of interest in work, not short-term tiredness after a busy period. The employee stops suggesting solutions, avoids discussions, and does only the minimum.

If the workload can't be reduced quickly, the manager should revisit priorities, agree with the employee on which tasks can wait, cut unnecessary task switching, and give them more autonomy. Promising that things will get easier later won't rebuild trust unless the way the work is organized changes.



Mike Waizman,
CMO at VoltPlay

Practical implications for employers

1. Consider not only workload but also opportunities for recovery. Regular overtime and difficulty disconnecting after work may signal burnout. Check whether work organization allows employees enough time to recover.

2. Account for differences between teams. Workloads and burnout risks vary across functions, so prevention measures should reflect the specific needs of each team.

3. Look beyond well-being alone. Burnout signs may coincide with dissatisfaction with a manager. Consider both employees' well-being and their relationships with direct managers.

Conclusion

The hypothesis is supported: among participants reporting three or more frequent signs of burnout, 51.8% plan to stay with their company for at least another year. Among those who report no frequent signs of burnout, the figure is 75.6%.

What this means for businesses

Burnout can be a sign of underlying problems with how work is organized. Monitoring employee wellbeing, workload, and work processes helps identify potential risks to engagement and retention early.

Hypothesis 3. Reasons for leaving and factors influencing retention differ

Reasons for leaving and retention factors overlap, but they are not entirely the same. Comparing participants' responses helps us understand what influences their decisions to stay and what might make them leave.

The table presents responses from the full sample. Participants could select up to three potential reasons for leaving and up to three retention factors. The figures therefore show how frequently each option was selected.



What the data show

Factor	Potential reason for leaving	Retention factor
Pay	Salary dissatisfaction — 55.2% (276/500)	Good salary and bonuses — 69.8% (349/500)
Career prospects	Lack of growth opportunities — 51.0% (255/500)	Career growth — 46.4% (232/500)
Work processes	Unclear or chaotic processes — 32.4% (162/500)	—
Manager	Problems with the manager — 31.0% (155/500)	Good manager — 40.2% (201/500)
Team	—	Professional and friendly team — 42.6% (213/500)

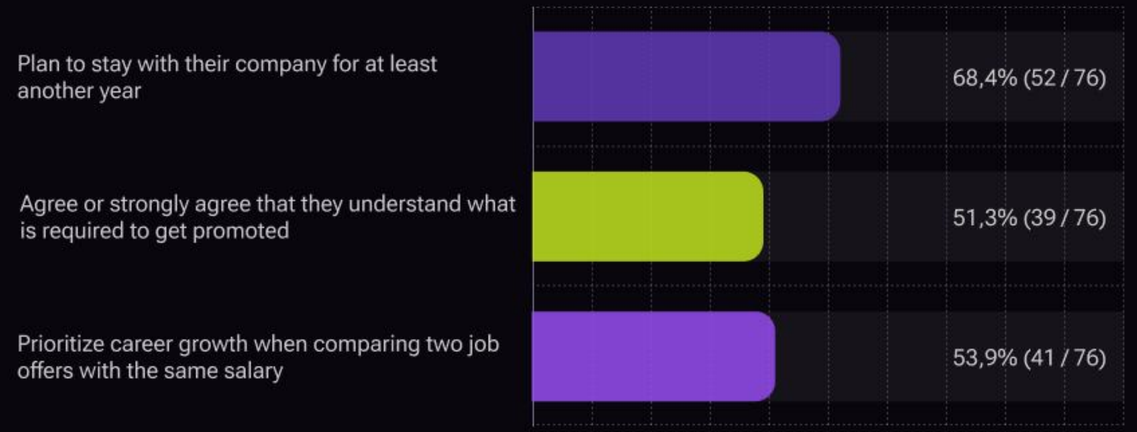
Which factors matter for both decisions, and where do they differ?

Some factors are relevant to both decisions to stay and decisions to leave:

- **Pay** — a factor in both staying and leaving. Good salary and bonuses are cited as a retention factor more often than dissatisfaction with pay is cited as a potential reason for leaving.
- **Career prospects** — a lack of growth opportunities is frequently cited as a reason for leaving, while opportunities for career development are cited as a retention factor.
- **Manager** — problems with a manager may make employees leave, while having a good manager encourages them to stay.

Career growth: employees intend to stay, but not everyone sees a clear path forward

The Product and Project Management group (n=76) provides a specific example.



These findings apply only to the Product and Project Management group. Still, they highlight an important point: even when participants generally intend to stay, not all of them clearly understand what their next career step could look like – was the answer given by 48.7% of participants.

What participants say

CTO

Money will definitely never be a motivator, but of course, it will always remain a major factor... What matters most is the team, company culture, and creating an environment where people feel comfortable working.

Legal Specialist

I think there are two main things every company should have: predictable, well-organized work processes and good pay. As long as those two things are in place, there may be some issues here and there... but people generally won't leave or keep jumping from one company to another just because of those issues.

Expert comment

It's important to listen to employees early and do so systematically. One way to achieve this is through dedicated stay interviews, where high-performing employees are asked what keeps them at the company, what might make them leave, and what they would like to change.

Managers should also keep track of the concerns and requests raised by each employee and how they are addressed, because unresolved issues tend to build up over time. It's equally important to recognize less obvious warning signs: an employee starts contributing fewer ideas, participates less frequently in discussions, or repeatedly brings up the same issue that remains unresolved.

When these signs appear, a salary increase is rarely the answer. More often, what's needed is a change in responsibilities, a new project, or clear criteria for career advancement.



Fernando Saffores,
Founder and CEO of Focus Gaming News

Expert comment

The table in this hypothesis highlights a key point: reasons for leaving and retention factors are not mirror images of each other. Chaotic processes drive people to leave (32%), but no one cites well-organized processes as a reason to stay. A strong team encourages people to stay (43%), but a weak team is not cited as a reason for leaving. In other words, eliminating problems and creating reasons to stay are two different tasks.

Why do companies continue trying to retain employees with the same things they used to attract them in the first place: money and prestigious job titles? Because it's easier. Salary is easy to quantify, it's already part of the budget, and it can be increased in a single day. But the factors that actually encourage employees to stay, according to the report — the team, the manager, and opportunities for growth — can't be fixed overnight, and usually no one is directly accountable for them.

A direct manager is evaluated on project outcomes, deadlines, and revenue, not on how many team members are still with the company a year later or what they say in employee surveys. Nor does the manager have a budget specifically for improving the team. So, when an employee comes in with another job offer, the company has only one quick response: a counteroffer, usually in the form of a salary increase. It buys the company only a few more months, because the underlying reason for leaving wasn't money in the first place. And it teaches the market that negotiating pays off.



Roman Petruchuk,
Head of Total Rewards at SOFTSWISS

Practical implications for employers

1. Address reasons for leaving and retention factors separately. Resolving problems that might cause employees to leave is not the same as creating reasons for them to stay. Beyond addressing existing issues, companies should develop the aspects of the work experience that employees value.

2. Look beyond pay and career opportunities when addressing retention. Having a good manager and a professional team also matters to employees. In addition, unclear work processes can be a potential reason for leaving.

3. Make career prospects clear. The existence of growth opportunities does not guarantee that employees can see their next career step within the company. It is important not only to offer development opportunities but also to explain what options are available and what is required for advancement.

Conclusion

The hypothesis is supported. Reasons for leaving and retention factors overlap, but they are not identical. Good pay and a good manager are cited as retention factors more often than salary dissatisfaction and problems with a manager are cited as potential reasons for leaving. The figures for career growth are relatively close: 51.0% cited a lack of growth opportunities as a potential reason for leaving, while 46.4% identified career growth as a retention factor. Unclear work processes are mentioned among potential reasons for leaving, while a professional team is cited among retention factors.

What this means for businesses

Addressing sources of dissatisfaction and creating an attractive work environment are two different tasks. A company may resolve its main problems, but that alone is not always enough to make employees want to continue developing their careers there. Sustainable employee retention requires not only reducing dissatisfaction but also creating a positive work experience.

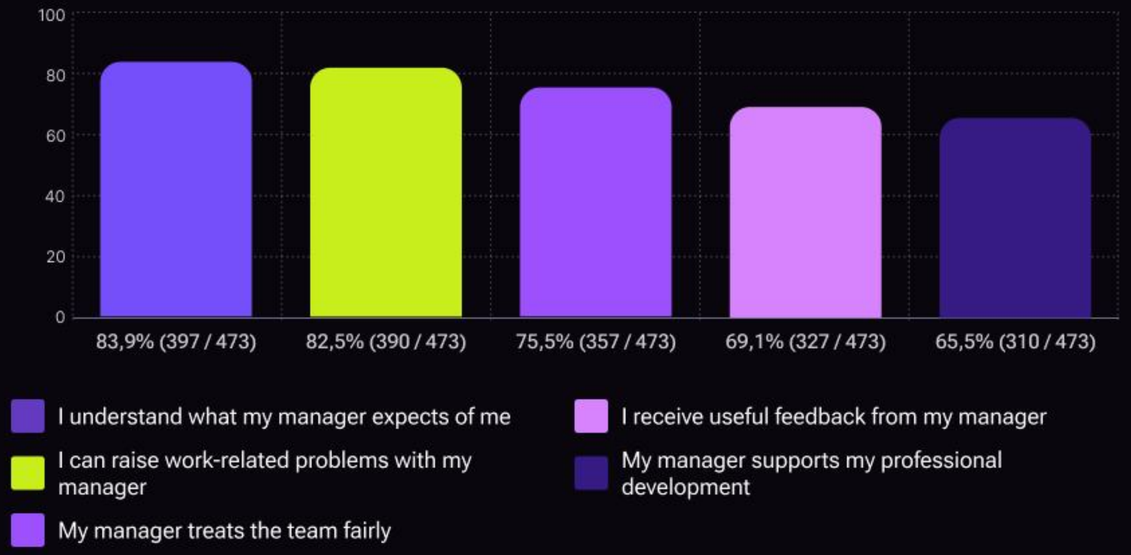
Hypothesis 4. What professionals expect from their managers changes with experience

As employees gain experience, their responsibilities and expectations of their managers change. Junior professionals may value clear guidance and support with their work, while more experienced employees may place greater importance on meaningful feedback and support for professional development.

We examined how participants at different job levels assess their interactions with their direct managers, the quality of feedback, and support for professional development.

What the data show

How participants assess their interactions with their managers (473 participants with a direct manager)



Most participants give positive ratings to how clearly their managers communicate expectations and how willing they are to discuss problems. Ratings are lower for the quality of feedback and support for professional development.

A total of 27 participants (5.4%) reported that they do not have a direct manager. Their responses were excluded from the analysis of questions about interactions with managers.

How expectations vary across job levels

Perceptions of managers' roles vary by job level.

- Junior. 34.0% (17 out of 50) cited having a good manager as a retention factor.
- Middle. 51.8% (59 out of 114) cited having a good manager as a retention factor, the highest share among the job levels presented.
- Senior. 40.0% (62 out of 155) identified having a good manager as a retention factor.

How the role of managers is perceived across job levels



According to the Chart Mid-level professionals are the most likely to identify having a good manager as a retention factor, while problems with their manager also remain a potential reason for leaving.

Feedback and development: not everyone receives enough support

The table presents managers' assessments across professional levels. The first two indicators are calculated based on the total number of participants in each group, while the last two are based on the number of valid responses to each question.

Job level	Good manager as a retention factor	Problems with manager as a potential reason for leaving	Helpful feedback	Support for professional development
Junior (n=50)	34,0% (17/50)	34,0% (17/50)	71,4% (35/49)	73,5% (36/49)
Middle (n=114)	51,8% (59/114)	35,1% (40/114)	76,3% (87/114)	70,2% (80/114)
Senior (n=155)	40,0% (62/155)	26,5% (41/155)	65,4% (100/153)	60,9% (92/151)
Lead (n=60)	36,7% (22/60)	30,0 (18/60)	69,5 (41/59)	67,8 (40/59)
Head (n=68)	41,2% (28/68)	35,3% (24/68)	65,6% (42/64)	60,0% (39/65)
C-level with a direct manager (n=33)	36,4% (12/33)	45,5% (15/33)	60,6% (20/33)	60,6% (20/33)

Note: To make the C-level figures comparable, the table uses the same subgroup of 33 participants who have a direct manager and answered both questions. Of these, 20 participants (60.6%) rated the usefulness of feedback positively, and the same number rated support for professional development positively.

These findings do not mean that one group requires more attention than another. They show that participants assess feedback and support for professional development differently depending on their job level.

What participants say

Engineering Team Lead

I followed my manager to my current company. That was probably the most important factor for me.

CEO

Entire departments or teams follow their leaders. This has both advantages and disadvantages: sometimes a strong leader leaves and takes part of the team with them.

Expert comment

I think problems arise when someone's responsibilities have grown, but the way they're managed hasn't changed. Detailed instructions used to help them settle into the role. Now they're expected to deliver results for an entire business function, yet every action is still being checked. At some point, they start wondering: if every decision is made for me, what exactly am I responsible for?

«At the same time, I wouldn't say that Mid-level professionals need constant supervision. Support is useful as long as it helps people do their jobs. When it turns into a requirement to get approval for everything, it can cause frustration at any level.



Yury Makarov,
CCO at Evenbeter

Expert comment

It's important to distinguish between two concepts here. Mid-level and Senior are seniority levels that reflect a person's expertise, while individual contributor, Team Lead, Head, and C-level are roles associated with different levels of management responsibility. One doesn't necessarily have to lead to the other: a strong Senior professional doesn't have to become a manager to continue growing.

We're currently seeing a trend toward horizontal career growth, particularly among Gen Z professionals. This means deepening expertise, developing skills in new areas, and taking on more complex challenges without moving into management. And that's perfectly normal. A horizontal career path should be seen as a real alternative to moving up, not as a lack of ambition.

At the Team Lead or Senior level, the ability to make independent decisions without seeking approval at every step is highly valued. Attempts to closely control the work of these professionals may be perceived as a lack of trust in their expertise and as micromanagement. 'If you already know how to do my job better than I do, then why am I here?'

Approaches to employee motivation also differ. A Mid-level professional might be encouraged to stay through a salary increase or expanded responsibilities, for example. More experienced professionals take a broader view of career growth: where the product is heading, what opportunities they have to influence outcomes, and what prospects the company can offer.



Sofia Sverdlova,
Head of Marketing at TRUE LAB

Practical implications for employers

1. Consider employees' experience. Expectations of managers vary across job levels. The type of support provided should reflect each employee's experience and responsibilities.

2. Provide feedback and support professional development. Assigning tasks and monitoring results is not enough. Employees also need useful feedback and a clear understanding of how they can continue developing professionally.

3. Allow greater autonomy as employees gain experience. Professionals with more advanced expertise may need greater freedom to make decisions independently.

4. Pay attention to the quality of relationships with managers. A manager can be both a retention factor and a source of dissatisfaction. These relationships are particularly important to consider when employees also report frequent signs of burnout.

Conclusion

The hypothesis is partially supported. Assessments of managers, feedback quality, and support for professional development vary across job levels. Mid-level professionals are more likely than other groups to cite having a good manager as a retention factor.

Still, problems with managers remain a potential reason for leaving among participants at different levels. The findings do not mean that each group requires a separate management style.

What this means for businesses

Management quality influences employees' work experiences and their willingness to stay with a company. It is important to consider employees' job levels, as their needs for feedback, support, and autonomy may change as they gain experience.

Hypothesis 5. Employees and managers see retention differently

Managers make decisions that shape working conditions and influence employees' willingness to stay with a company. But do their perceptions align with what employees themselves consider important?

We compared the retention factors selected by managers and non-managerial employees. We also examined what managers see as the main reasons high-performing employees leave and which measures they believe help retain them.

What the data show

The study included 500 participants: 226 with management responsibilities and 273 without. One participant did not specify their position.

Where perspectives align and where they differ

The largest differences are in responses concerning salary and managers: non-managerial employees are more likely to cite these as retention factors. Responses regarding career growth, the team, and training are similar across the two groups.

Retention factor



Reasons for leaving



How managers explain why high-performing employees leave

The managers in the study were also asked separate questions about what might make high-performing employees leave a company and which measures could help retain them.

Managers most frequently cited factors that companies can influence: pay, career growth opportunities, relationships with managers, and workload.

Problems with the direct manager rank third among the potential reasons high-performing employees might leave. This further suggests that management quality influences both decisions to stay and decisions to leave.

What managers consider most effective for retaining employees

Managers most frequently identify competitive salaries and transparent bonus structures as effective retention measures, followed by career growth opportunities and support from managers.

Top 5 most effective measures for retaining high-performing employees, according to managers



Managers also recognize the importance of a professional team and training opportunities.

How employees' responses compare with managers' assessments

We compared the factors that encourage employees to stay with their companies and the measures managers consider effective for retaining high-performing professionals.

Salary and career growth rank among the top priorities in both groups. Both groups also recognize the importance of the direct manager. However, employees select a professional team more frequently than managers do, while both groups give roughly equal weight to training and development.

Note that the questions were worded differently: employees identified their personal reasons for staying, while managers assessed measures for retaining high-performing professionals. This is therefore a comparison of priorities rather than a direct comparison of identical measures.

Top 5 retention factors



What managers believe companies underestimate

In their open-ended responses, participants also noted that companies do not always pay enough attention to:

- Recognition of employees' contributions
- Management quality
- Career growth opportunities
- Trust and autonomy
- Workload and work-life balance

One issue is the tendency to assign more work to employees who perform well. High-performing professionals take on more responsibilities, but do not necessarily gain greater authority or more opportunities to influence decisions. As a result, strong performance leads to an increased workload rather than new opportunities.

What participants say

HR Manager

You can't earn trust through a survey. People only speak up when they see that something actually changes as a result of those conversations.

HR Business Partner

The more responsibility and autonomy we give employees, the better the results we can achieve.

These comments add context to the survey findings: employees want to see that their companies act on feedback and give them enough autonomy in their work.

The open-ended responses show that employees' attitudes toward their companies are shaped not only by formal retention measures but also by their day-to-day experiences: recognition, trust, development opportunities, and the ability to influence outcomes.

Expert comment

I see a management paradox here: managers understand very well how important autonomy is to them personally, but they don't always recognize that employees need the same independence.

One reason is that managers understand their own motivation from the inside, while they often judge employees' motivation based on what they can observe. For example, a manager may see a request for a salary increase without recognizing what is behind it: a feeling of being undervalued, a lack of career prospects, or a desire to have a greater impact on results.

At the same time, I wouldn't downplay the importance of money. Salary really does remain one of the main potential reasons for leaving. But sometimes a competitor's higher-paying offer is simply the final factor in a decision that has been taking shape for a long time. There's a difference between the reason an employee gives when resigning and what actually led them to that decision. Managers need to be willing to understand that difference, even if the answers aren't particularly pleasant.



Daria Fot,
HRD Evenbeter

Practical implications for employers

1.Check decisions against employees' perspectives. Managers and non-managerial employees may assess the importance of individual factors differently. It is therefore important to regularly seek feedback from the team and take it into account when making decisions.

2. Give employees authority alongside responsibility. When employees take on more tasks, they should also have opportunities to make decisions independently and influence outcomes.

3. Act on employee feedback. It is important not only to collect employees' opinions but also to show what changes have been made in response.

Conclusion

The hypothesis is partially supported. Employees and managers agree on the main point: compensation and career growth are key factors in employee retention.

However, employees without management responsibilities are more likely to emphasize the importance of salary and having a good manager.

Managers also identify management issues, high workloads, and unclear processes as reasons why high-performing employees leave. Meanwhile, open-ended responses show that employees value recognition of their contributions, trust, and autonomy.

When comparing the two groups, it is important to note that the questions were worded differently for each group.

What this means for businesses

Managers may correctly identify the main retention factors without always accounting for employees' day-to-day experiences. When developing retention measures, companies should therefore rely not only on management's perspectives but also on feedback from their teams.

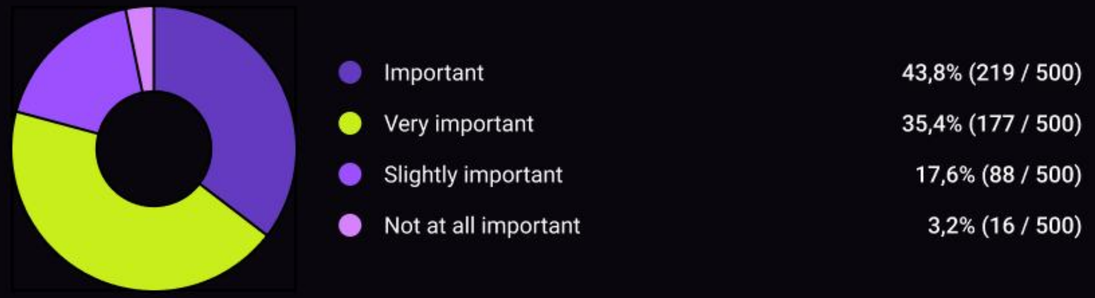
Hypothesis 6. Flexibility matters, but it is rarely the main reason to stay

Flexible work hours and work arrangements are important to many professionals. But how much do they influence employees' decisions to stay with a company? Flexibility may have become a basic expectation rather than an additional benefit offered by employers.

We examined how important flexibility is to participants, how satisfied they are with their current work arrangements, and what role flexibility plays when choosing an employer.

What the data show

How important are flexible work hours and work arrangements?



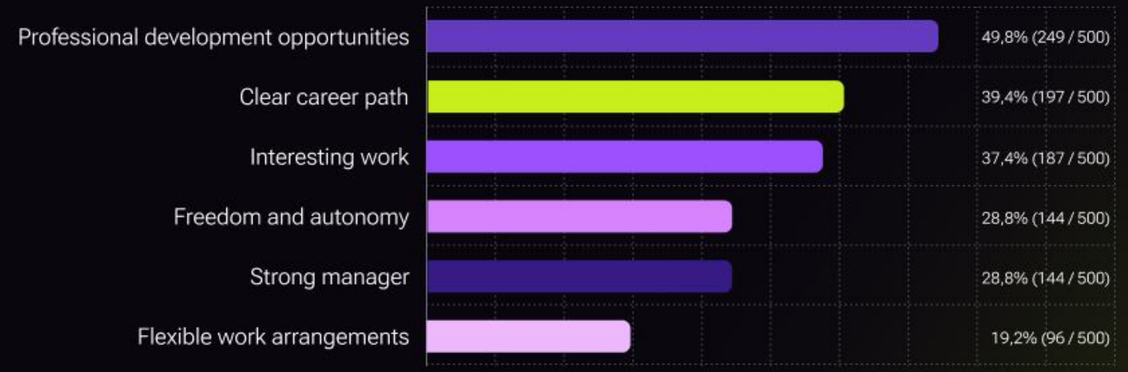
Most participants consider flexibility an important aspect of their working conditions and are satisfied with their current work arrangements. This suggests that, for many professionals, flexibility may have become a standard part of what employers offer rather than an additional benefit. However, the survey does not directly establish why participants assess their work arrangements this way.

Flexibility is rarely cited as a direct reason for staying or leaving:

- Retention factor: 89 participants (17.8%) cited flexible work hours and convenient work arrangements as a reason to stay with their company.
- Potential reason for leaving: 63 participants (12.6%) identified inconvenient work arrangements or location as a potential reason for leaving.

Compared with other working conditions, flexibility is less frequently cited as a factor on its own when employees consider staying or leaving. For example, salary dissatisfaction and a lack of career growth opportunities are more frequently cited as potential reasons for leaving.

What employees would choose if salaries were equal



When salaries are equal, participants are more likely to choose opportunities for professional development, a clear career path, and interesting work. This shows that when comparing similar job offers, employees consider not only working conditions but also the opportunities a company provides.

Flexible work arrangements remain part of an attractive job offer, but they do not replace interesting work or opportunities for professional growth.

What participants say

Sourcer

Flexible start times, the freedom to manage my own schedule and workload, no tracking tools or micromanagement, and the option to take an extra day off — all these things have a major influence on my decision to stay with a company.

CEO

One downside I see with remote work is the lack of informal communication. It can be difficult to understand how an employee is feeling or find out about problems they're dealing with in their personal life.

Expert comment

I wouldn't assume that everyone expects the same level of flexibility across all roles. Personally, I tend to favor office-based work when it's important to discuss ideas quickly and learn from colleagues. And that can be an advantage for an employer, too: people know who they'll be working with, who they can learn from, and what challenges they'll tackle together.

At the same time, international businesses often need a hybrid approach. Some team members work from offices, while others work remotely because the right professionals are based in different countries. So, for 2026–2027, I wouldn't define the standard as any single work arrangement. I'd say it's about being able to explain the benefits of the chosen arrangement for a specific role.

If you're asking someone to work from an office, it's important to show how working alongside colleagues will benefit them. If you're hiring someone in another country, explain how they'll be able to participate in discussions and share knowledge with the team.



Polina Kapitonova,
CEO of Headshot

How managers assess flexibility

Among managers, 11.9% (27 out of 226) consider flexible work hours and convenient work arrangements an effective measure for retaining high-performing employees.

This is not a direct comparison with employees' responses, as the questions were worded differently. However, managers' responses add to the overall picture: they, too, rarely identify flexibility as a retention measure on its own.

Practical implications for employers

1. Maintain flexibility as part of working conditions. Remote work and flexible schedules should not be treated as optional perks. For many professionals, they have already become standard expectations of an employer.

2. Do not rely on work arrangements alone. Flexibility cannot compensate for a lack of career prospects or interesting work, problems with work processes, or poor relationships with managers.

3. Consider the challenges of remote collaboration. Develop ways to maintain communication within teams, identify problems early, and keep employees and managers connected.

Conclusion

The hypothesis is partially supported. Flexibility is important to most participants, but it is relatively rarely cited as a retention factor on its own or as a potential reason for leaving. When comparing job offers with equal salaries, participants are more likely to prioritize professional development, career prospects, and interesting work.

The findings suggest that flexible work arrangements may have become a basic expectation for many professionals. Offering flexibility helps employers meet employees' expectations, but it does not, on its own, guarantee long-term loyalty.

What this means for businesses

Flexibility is gradually becoming a standard part of the employee value proposition. Simply offering it is therefore unlikely to help a company stand out from competitors or retain employees who are dissatisfied with other aspects of their work.

However, flexibility should not be confused with a lack of management processes. Remote work and flexible schedules require clear agreements, regular communication, and trust between managers and their teams.

A competitive advantage comes not from any single work arrangement, but from a combination of suitable working conditions, professional development opportunities, interesting work, and effective management. These factors should be considered when developing an employee value proposition and a retention strategy.

Risk Factors

The findings point to several groups and combinations of factors where multiple retention risks appear at the same time. These are not predictions of turnover, but areas employers should watch.

Operations / Customer Support / VIP

Among participants in this group (n=44):

- 40.9% report three or more frequent signs of work-related burnout.
- 47.7% plan to stay with their company for at least another year.
- 68.2% cite a lack of career growth opportunities as a potential reason for leaving.
- 86.4% would consider moving to another company for a 20% salary increase.

The group combines signs of exhaustion, lower intentions to stay, and high sensitivity to career prospects and compensation.

Work-related burnout and relationships with managers

Among participants reporting three or more frequent signs of exhaustion and dissatisfaction with their manager (n=61), 31.1% plan to stay with their company for at least another year. Among those experiencing exhaustion but not dissatisfied with their manager, the figure is 68.4%.

In this group, dissatisfaction with managers is associated with a lower intention to stay. This is an observed association, not evidence of a causal relationship.

Product and Project Management: intentions to stay and interest in development

Among Product & Project Management professionals (n=76), 68.4% plan to stay with their company for at least another year. At the same time, 51.3% understand what they need to do to get promoted, and 53.9% would choose a job offer with greater professional development opportunities if the salary were the same.

Even when employees plan to stay, this does not mean they are not considering other opportunities. Professional development remains an important factor for this group.

Overall conclusion

Several factors may influence employees' intentions to stay with a company at the same time, including workload, relationships with managers, career prospects, and salary. It is therefore important to look not only at individual indicators but also at how they interact.

Professionals’ Expectations

As employees progress to higher job levels, their responsibilities and expectations of managers change. The study highlights several differences across career levels.

Junior and Mid-level: development and support from managers matter

Among Mid-level professionals, having a good manager is the most frequently cited retention factor (51.8%). At the same time, 35.1% identify problems with their manager as a potential reason for leaving.

Support for professional development is rated positively by 73.5% of Junior and 70.2% of Mid-level professionals. The figures for feedback quality are 71.4% and 76.3%, respectively.

Compensation is also a particularly important concern for Mid-level professionals: 68.4% cite salary dissatisfaction as a potential reason for leaving.

Senior and Lead: professional development and feedback quality

At the Senior and Lead levels, assessments of interactions with managers differ.

Feedback is rated positively by 65.4% of Senior and 69.5% of Lead professionals, while support for professional development receives positive ratings from 60.9% and 67.8%, respectively.

Having a good manager is cited as a retention factor by 40.0% of Senior and 36.7% of Lead professionals. Meanwhile, 26.5% and 30.0%, respectively, identify problems with their manager as a potential reason for leaving.

Head and C-level: differences in the role of managers

Having a good manager is cited as a retention factor by 41.2% of Head-level professionals and 36.4% of C-level and CEO participants. Feedback is rated positively by 65.6% and 60.6%, respectively, while support for professional development receives positive ratings from 60.0% and 60.6%.

Salary dissatisfaction is cited as a potential reason for leaving by 34.0% of C-level and CEO participants, compared with 68.4% of Mid-level professionals.

Conclusion

Expectations change with career level, but professional development and the quality of relationships with managers remain important throughout an employee’s career.

For Mid-level professionals, having a good manager and compensation stand out in particular, while at the Senior and Lead levels, feedback quality and support for professional development are more prominent.

Expert predictions

The iGaming industry continues to change. The demands on professionals, management approaches, and employee expectations are changing with it.

We asked industry experts which changes they believe will have the greatest impact on teams in the coming years.

This section brings together perspectives from managers and experts who lead teams, recruit professionals, and help grow businesses.



Expert comment

Over the next two years, iGaming companies will need to rethink how they retain employees. The competition for talent will increasingly depend on how well companies are managed, rather than on what they pay or what working conditions they offer.

Strong performers want to know where the business is headed, how they can influence results, and whether the company gives them what they need to do their jobs well. What will make employers stand out is how they manage: whether their processes are transparent, whether employees have room to make decisions, and whether leaders pay attention to how their teams are doing.

Retention can't be HR's responsibility alone. Direct managers shape much of what employees experience at work day to day.

In the long run, the companies with the strongest teams will be the ones people don't want to leave, not just the ones that have gotten better at retaining them.



Daria Fot,
HR Director at Evenbeter

Expert comment

In 2027, clarity and trust will become the new standards for an ideal employer in iGaming. Employees will expect a clear path for professional growth, autonomy combined with accountability for results, a manager who genuinely supports them, and a team they are proud to be part of. Flexibility and fair pay will become basic expectations, while training, including how to use AI tools, will be part of conversations about professional development.



Fernando Saffores,
Founder and CEO of Focus Gaming News

Expert comment

I think the companies that retain employees most effectively in 2027 will be the ones that can move quickly while setting clear expectations, trusting their teams, and managing them well. Perks can't compensate for chaotic management.



Valeria Vinchenko,
HR Expert

Expert comment

The biggest trend over the next two years will be transparency and clarity. In the EU, pay transparency requirements are becoming stricter, partly due to the EU Pay Transparency Directive. But it's not just about the directive.

Look at the report's findings together. Almost half of Product and Project Management professionals don't understand what's required for a promotion. Unclear processes are among the reasons employees consider leaving. And some participants don't see a future for themselves at their company or don't plan to stay. This suggests that the issue isn't just salary, but also a lack of clear rules.

Why does a colleague earn more? What does it take to get promoted? When are performance reviews conducted? Where is the company heading?

Companies that answer these questions proactively will be able to improve retention without additional budget. This is exactly why we're building a unified performance review cycle and a job leveling framework within our company.



Roman Petruchuk,
Head of Total Rewards at SOFTSWISS

Expert comment

I think employee retention will increasingly depend on how well companies help their teams adapt to change.

The first factor is reviewing priorities. For example, a team may have been preparing to enter a new market, investing time and money into the project, only for conditions to change. In that situation, it's important to explain what's happening, revisit the plan, and adjust expectations for the team. Continuing to demand the same results when the original conditions no longer apply is a sure way to cause conflict.

The second factor is managing workload after automation. AI makes it possible to complete certain tasks faster, but reviewing the results and switching between different processes also take time. I think companies that learn to account for this additional workload when planning work will have an advantage.

The third factor is the growing importance of regional teams. I expect professionals who understand local markets and know how to facilitate collaboration across cultures to become increasingly valuable.



Yury Makarov,
CCO at Evenbeter

Conclusion

What We've Learned About Employee Retention in iGaming

The study highlights five key findings:

1. Salary matters, but it's not enough on its own.

64.6% of participants would consider moving to another company for a 20% higher salary. But salary isn't the only factor behind employees' decisions to leave. Other common reasons include a lack of career growth, problems with managers, and unclear work processes. This shows that retaining employees takes more than offering competitive compensation.

2. A lack of growth opportunities can push employees to leave.

51.0% of participants cite a lack of career or professional growth as a potential reason for leaving. At the same time, career opportunities are among the key factors that encourage employees to stay. People want not only fair compensation but also a clear understanding of how they can grow within the company.

3. Burnout combined with dissatisfaction with a manager is associated with a lower intention to stay.

Among participants reporting three or more frequent signs of exhaustion, 51.8% plan to stay with their company for at least another year. Among those who are also dissatisfied with their manager, the figure drops to 31.1%. This does not establish a direct cause-and-effect relationship, but it shows why it's important to look at how different factors interact.

4. Retention is shaped by employees' day-to-day experience, not just working conditions.

In their open-ended responses, participants highlight the importance of having their contributions recognized, being trusted, having autonomy, and being able to influence outcomes. Formal working conditions matter, but so does how people feel about their everyday work.

5. Flexibility has become a baseline expectation, not a deciding factor.

Most participants consider flexible working arrangements important. However, when comparing job offers with the same salary, they place greater value on professional development opportunities, career prospects, and interesting work. Flexibility helps companies meet professionals' expectations, but it doesn't necessarily make them choose one company over another.

Retention starts with day-to-day work

The study doesn't offer a one-size-fits-all approach to employee retention. Instead, it shows how important it is to understand employees' actual experiences rather than rely on assumptions about what makes a company an attractive place to work.

For businesses, this means regularly checking whether their decisions reflect the needs of their teams. It also means looking beyond the number of initiatives introduced and assessing how retention practices affect employees' day-to-day experience.

Retention isn't a one-time task or HR's responsibility alone. It's part of how the entire company works every day.



About the companies

HEADSHOT

Headshot is an international recruitment agency specializing in roles from Mid-level to C-level for companies in iGaming, fintech, crypto, Web3, and other high-risk sectors. The agency helps companies find leaders with experience launching projects in their target markets, strengthen existing teams, and build new ones from the ground up. Headshot reaches out directly to qualified candidates and maintains a database of more than 50,000 candidates.

In 2026, Headshot won HR Brand of the Year at the G GATE Awards.



headshothire.com

EVENBETER

Evenbeter (formerly EvenBet Gaming) is an international software company with more than 20 years of experience in iGaming. It develops technology for the industry, including its globally recognized poker platform, a turnkey casino platform, and a high-performance game aggregator.

Evenbeter's solutions are used in more than 200 projects across 40 active markets. Its products serve 48 million players, and its team includes more than 250 iGaming experts.



evenbeter.com