2025 Employee Engagement Risk Report

Swift Bunny

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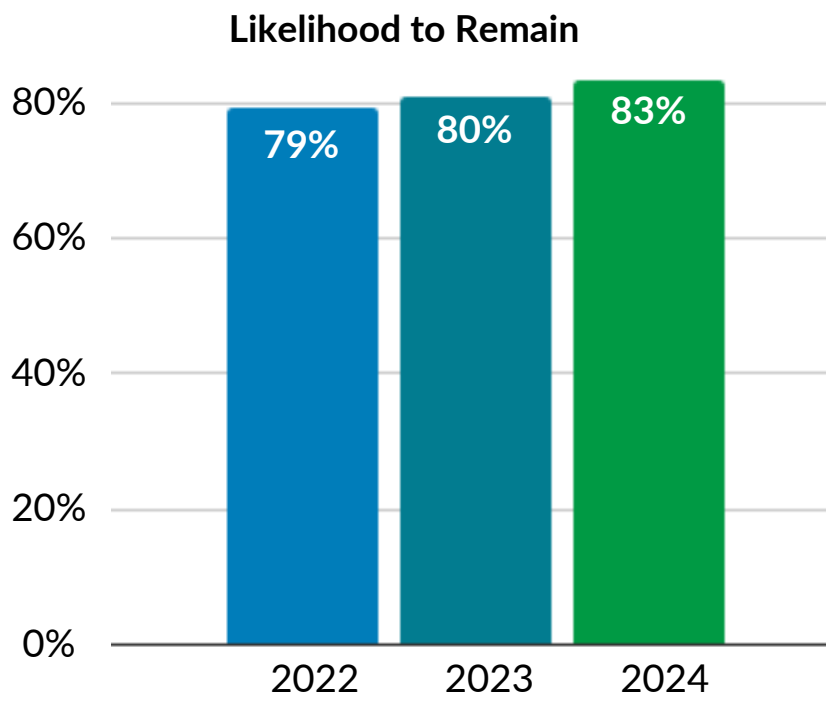
Introduction

The rental housing industry has placed a significant focus on employee engagement and retention throughout the last three years during a continually challenging labor market. This focus is paying off. Employee engagement scores in the areas of Satisfaction, Workplace, Integrity, Future, and Teamwork have increased year-over year, which has positively impacted employee loyalty. The overall average likelihood of employees to remain at their company for the next year has increased two points each year since 2022. This is impactful to organizations' bottom lines because greater employee tenure leads to reduced recruitment and hiring costs, less disruption to existing teams, and greater customer satisfaction.

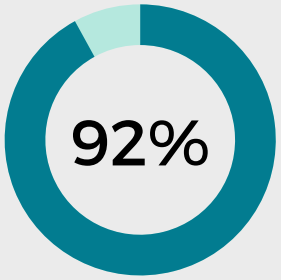


Swift Bunny has identified the strengths that organizations can continue to nurture and topics that employees cite as "most important" in their workplace, as well as obstacles to employee recruitment and retention. In addition, we spot a growing concern that affects both productivity and employee retention but can be influenced by leaders at every level. Read on to discover key focus areas for enhancing the overall employee experience, improving staff retention, and strengthening team performance.

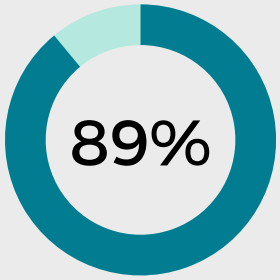
Key Takeaways: The Highs and Lows

What Employees Find Rewarding

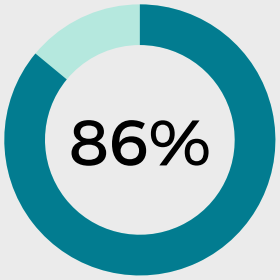
Success in this industry is based on relationships, and rental housing employees continue to express their appreciation for the positive relationships they experience in their workplace. In fact, while other areas of the multifamily work experience may fluctuate, these topics have maintained high scores over the last three years compared to any other employee engagement indicators.



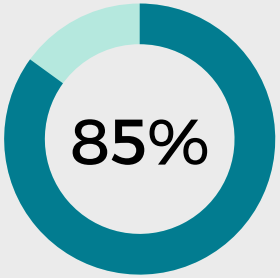
have a good working relationship with their co-workers



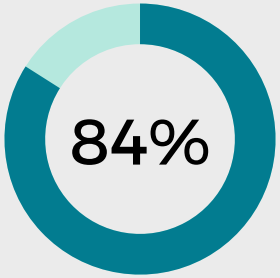
respect executive leadership



agree their supervisor shows faith in their judgment



agree they are treated with respect



enjoy their job

What You Can Do

Leaders can sustain these trends by prioritizing clear and consistent communication. This means being visible and accessible, regularly sharing relevant updates, and ensuring that key messages are understood across the organization. Encouraging open dialogue, actively listening to team members, and reinforcing a culture of trust drives engagement and success.

What Employees Indicate is Most Important

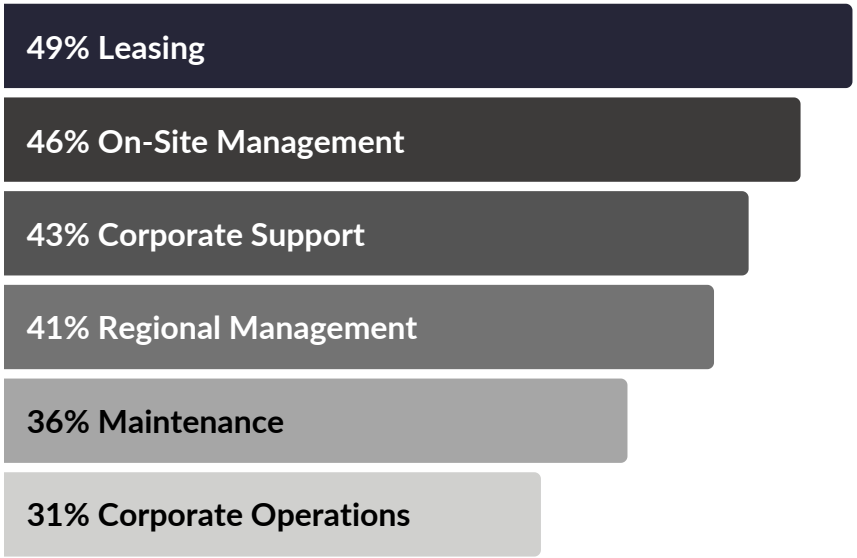
In addition to understanding what employees appreciate most about their work environment, it's also imperative for leaders to be mindful of what employees consider to be most important when evaluating their jobs. Top employers nurture environments where employees can emphatically agree with the following statements:

- I am treated with respect
- My supervisor shows faith in my judgment
- I enjoy my current job
- I have a good working relationship with my co-workers
- The company values its employees

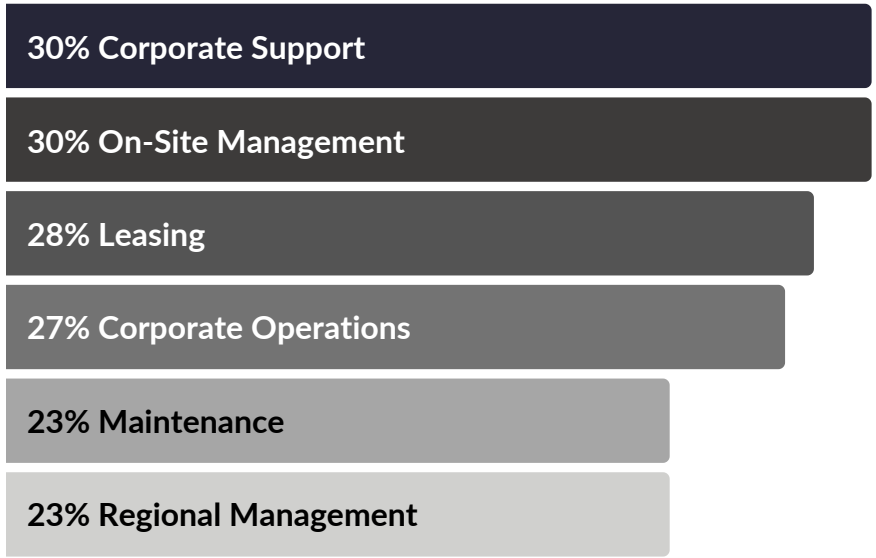
Compensation Frustration

While compensation packages continue to be a source of dissatisfaction, employee sentiments have improved over the previous year for all position categories except for On-Site Leasing. Multifamily leaders should continue to ensure both compensation and benefits are competitive in their markets.

42% Don't agree compensation for their job is fair

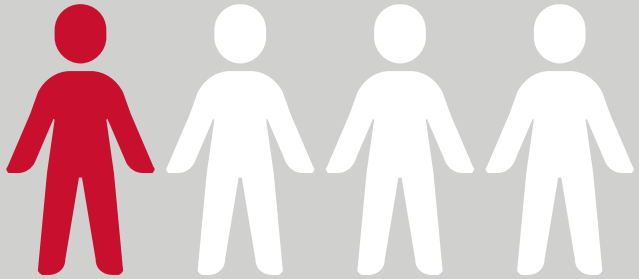


27% Don't agree the benefits package matches their needs



Emerging Risk: Confidence Gap

Whether this is an employee's first job, or they are a seasoned professional with decades of experience, the desire for more and better communication with their supervisor and company leadership is consistent. Team members want to know if they are on the right track. 25% of the current workforce is asking for increased direction, feedback, and recognition. A contributing factor is a significant gap in employees' need for training and the allocation of development opportunities, as well as adequate time to complete training. When educational opportunities are insufficient, team members are more likely to seek reinforcement of how to do their jobs. Lack of confidence can be demotivating and lead to employee turnover.

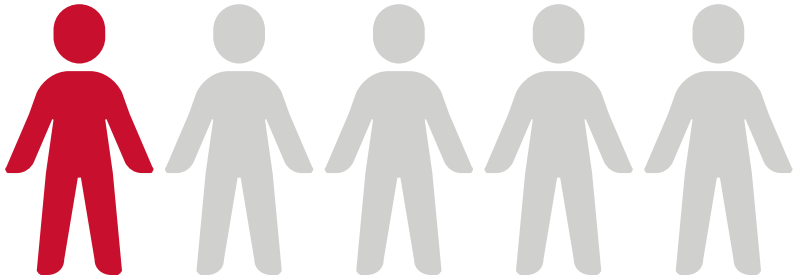


1 in 4
rental housing employees

- Do not receive timely feedback on their performance
- Feels their efforts are not recognized or appreciated
- Is not encouraged to suggest better ways of doing things
- Doesn't have someone at work who encourages their development

1 in 5
rental housing employees

Does not agree that training and development enables them to be to be successful in their role



What You Can Do

Employees need to feel competent in their work to feel confident and be successful. Competency is a result of ongoing training, feedback, and positive reinforcement. Some employers have success with minimizing office hours to the public for one morning each week to provide protected time and space for team members to complete training, have one-on-one check-ins with their supervisor, and catch up on administrative tasks. While a few hours may seem like a lot to take away from the residents each week, the resulting productivity and improved performance across the team will elevate the resident experience.

Opportunities for Improvement by Position

MANY EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SUCCESSES AND THREATS ARE UNIVERSAL, REGARDLESS OF ROLE IN THE WORKPLACE, BUT THERE ARE ALSO UNIQUE THREATS FOR EACH JOB CATEGORY THAT SUPERVISORS AND LEADERS CAN INFLUENCE IN A POSITIVE WAY.

On-Site Leasing

29% don't have a clear understanding of their career and / or promotion path

28% are not satisfied with the amount of internal company communication

26% do not feel the company values or appreciates them

What You Can Do

The leasing team members are the face of their community, both with current residents and prospects exploring their living possibilities. Their role is an important one. The ability to represent the community well often hinges on how supported a team member feels by their community. Supervisors can help reinforce that support by prioritizing communication with the leasing team, both individually and collectively. Discuss career and development aspirations. Share company news, even if it has nothing to do with their role. Catch them doing something great each day and thank them specifically for doing it. The more personal and team interactions and input received by the individuals, the greater ambassador they will be for the community and organization.

On-Site Maintenance

26% are not satisfied with the amount of internal company communication

22% don't agree that the company provides what they need to do their job well

22% don't have someone at work who encourages their development

What You Can Do

The maintenance team provides a critical function for the success of any community. Resolving service requests in a timely manner has a direct impact on renewals, as well as online reviews, which attract prospective residents. However, these team members continue to be at a disadvantage when it comes to communication and support. Nearly one-third of maintenance team members are not assigned a unique company email address, and only 38% of property management companies provide all hand tools for their maintenance teams. Providing these basic resources for all maintenance team members improves their ability to do their best work and will increase their overall satisfaction and loyalty.

On-Site Management

31% are not satisfied with the amount of internal company communication

29% are not encouraged to suggest better ways of doing things

28% do not agree their work can typically be completed in the time allowed

What You Can Do

On-Site Managers have a lot to do, but many of them are struggling to connect with the appropriate levels of leadership not only to gain access to the information they want and need, but to provide insight and solutions to potential systemic problems. Consider forming a managers' forum where company-wide challenges can be identified and managers are encouraged to offer suggestions and solutions. Facilitating these group discussions among peers can create a common language and big-picture solutions, which leads to higher performance and increased employee engagement.

Regional Operations

37% are not able to complete their work in the time allowed

34% do not agree that policies and procedures are consistently enforced

33% are not satisfied with the amount of internal company communication

What You Can Do

Regional Managers walk the delicate tightrope of ensuring operations are running smoothly and consistently on the front lines, reporting the successes and challenges to executive leadership, and rolling out initiatives and directives to the community teams, often without having much input on the wisdom or timing of said initiatives. It's a challenging role, but historically these team members have been the most committed to their employers. That dedication has wavered in recent years, however, with one in five Regional Managers indicating they may not remain with their companies in the next year. No organization can afford to lose 20% of their Regional Managers! Consider introducing an annual review of key policies and procedures to ensure that the right policies are in place, and they are being enforced consistently portfolio-wide. Clear expectations coupled with company-wide reinforcement makes a Regional Manager's job more predictable and provides steadfast support.

Corporate Support

42% don't agree that policies and procedures are consistently enforced

42% are not satisfied with the amount of internal company communication

42% do not have a clear understanding of their career and / or promotion path

What You Can Do

42% seems to be the number of the year for Corporate Support team members, and it's on a dangerous pathway towards 50%. Like Regional Managers, these team members have historically been extremely loyal and dedicated but recent trends indicate a rising level of frustration about basic operations and opportunities. One new and rising concern is the lack of clarity regarding career development and a promotion path. By providing corporate-based supervisors with training on how to have conversations about career development, such as Stay Interview training, internal team members can feel more confident to discuss aspirations, collaborate with other departments, learn new skills, and be a part of succession planning.

Corporate Operations

37% do not agree that policies and procedures are consistently enforced

33% are not satisfied with the amount of internal company communication

28% are not able to complete their work in the time allowed

What You Can Do

A common enemy of productivity is a lack of clarity. This enemy is rearing its head in the form of inadequate communication and inconsistent adherence to company-defined policies and procedures. There are two approaches to gaining specific insight into what communication is needed and which policies are causing the most aggravation. The first approach is to conduct a brief survey asking what information contributors need, and which policies are most often ignored. The second approach is to form an internal, cross-functional team to candidly discuss the issues. Choose the approach that best suits your company's culture. Once the information is gathered and the specific issues have been identified, leaders can commit to finding and implementing solutions. The key is to act. These are not impossible problems to solve, but they do require attention and willingness to take clear action.

Conclusion

THE RENTAL HOUSING INDUSTRY IS MAKING POSITIVE GAINS IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION. BY CONTINUING TO SEEK FEEDBACK FROM ASSOCIATES TO IDENTIFY WHAT IS WORKING WELL, WHAT MATTERS MOST, AND WHAT CAUSES FRUSTRATION IN THE WORKPLACE, LEADERS CAN MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE, PRODUCTIVITY, TENURE, AND THE BOTTOM LINE.

Swift Bunny
It's About Your People

How We Can Help

Swift Bunny offers a suite of multifamily-specific talent management solutions. Ingage by Swift Bunny™ is the apartment industry's first employee lifecycle feedback system. The solution pairs meaningful data with personalized insights and planning, empowering multifamily leaders to take specific action to solve their greatest workplace challenges. Inquire by Swift Bunny™ is a flexible and user-friendly custom survey solution for collecting opinions and feedback from both employees and residents. Intouch by Swift Bunny™ is a multifamily-specific customer survey solution. And, Introduce by Swift Bunny™ is a hire-to-retire workflow manager. Uncovering honest feedback from both employees and customers can help organizations identify priorities, reduce employee and resident turnover, and improve the bottom line.

Learn more:

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