

Retention Rx

Reviewed by
John-Paul Morgante

GOOD PEOPLE are hard to find, and when you've got them, you want to do all you can to keep them. Consequently, managing retention is a critical element of organizational success.

TalentKeepers provides a variety of solutions, including consulting, aimed at helping companies keep retention rates high. The company has developed web-based resources that include workplace diagnostic assessments and other support tools for ongoing tracking of progress and performance. Their specialty is more retention system than a simple online learning course. Still, at the core of the TalentKeepers offering is RetentionWorks, a series of 10 e-learning modules designed to develop retention competencies among managers and leaders. This review focuses on the online learning component.

In determining the effectiveness of any online learning program, two dimensions are key: design and content. RetentionWorks does well on both.

Excellent design

The course design is intuitive, straightforward, and well conceived. Simple navigation instructions are offered but

not forced—you always have the option of moving past a help screen. That's especially useful after you have completed several modules and no longer need the assistance.

Another great design feature is the ability to choose between three learning paths: "teach me," "guide me," and "let me try." The "teach me" path offers detailed interaction with the course content. As with other online learning courses, audio and text components are offered concurrently. The "guide me" path provides bullet-point outlines to facilitate the learning. The "let me try" path jumps straight to the progress check in each section, which respects previous experience while still validating content transfer.

Before proceeding from one section to another, learners need to complete an online simulation in which their knowledge is put to the test. While the simulations feature cartoon-like drawings of workplace situations, I found them to be realistic and effective in assessing content transfer. A final 27-question mastery assessment rounds out each module.

A complete learning management system with multiple reporting and tracking capabilities is bundled with the modules. Reference articles, book suggestions, and best practices are provided for further learning.

Comprehensive content

On the content side, program modules include information about a full range of topics from sourcing and selecting qualified people to identifying retention problems and taking preemptive action. Although all of the modules focus on retention, content also is included on such topics as communication, climate, flexibility, and esteem.

The information is well balanced between theory and actionable advice. While the program clearly proposes a best path to follow, it doesn't dictate a one-way approach, and it enables some flexibility in implementation that allows customization to workplace policies and practices.

One warning: This program's subject matter may not easily fit all workplace

cultures. If command-and-control is the operating paradigm where you work, TalentKeepers may be too big a leap. The approach may not work at all, or more gradual steps may be required. If your culture, however, is sufficiently open, flexible, and synergistic, RetentionWorks will be a valuable tool. The process will require a significant investment not only of money but time. It's not a quick fix, but it will help produce lasting results.

RetentionWorks product rating

Ease of navigation	***.5
Holds user interest	***.5
Production quality	** .5
Value of content	***.5
Instructional value	***
Value for the money	***
Overall rating	***

John-Paul Morgante is the director of human resources and administration for Talla-Com Industries, a leading edge defense manufacturing firm in Tallahassee, Florida; jpmorgante@annimar.com.

Think Success

Reviewed by Lynn M. Monaco

START RIGHT...STAY RIGHT begins with the following statement: "Let's face it: Your organization will be only as successful as your employees, and successful employees are those for whom success is a mindset. It's a contagious mindset. Even so, you'd be surprised how many employees don't have it!"

The topic of success as a mindset is a unique one I haven't seen covered elsewhere. CRM Learning recommends the program as part of new-hire orientation, and I agree that that's where it would be

We liked...

- the ability to choose between three learning paths with varying degrees of support
- the included LMS
- the flexibility of approaches that allow for customization for individual workplaces.

Could be better...

- The subject matter may not fit a command-and-control workplace culture.

RetentionWorks

Online

TalentKeepers

www.talentkeepers.com

407.660.6041

\$695 and up

Online demo at

<http://tkas4.com/demo/start.htm>

Recommendation

RetentionWorks provides intuitive, straightforward, and well-conceived online training. The content is best suited for a workplace where a serious program to improve or maintain retention will be supported.

We liked...

- the nonlinear nature of the program, its fast pace, and the lack of superfluous information
- the Measurement Kit that provides information on evaluating the program's effectiveness.

Could be better...

- The program lacks bookmarking.
- Participants aren't able to see test results; they're emailed directly to managers.

most useful.

The training is broken into four modules: You and Your Mindset, You and Your Co-workers, You and Your Supervisor or Manager, and You and the Organization. The video covers everything from taking responsibility for your actions to dressing for success. Even though more-experienced workers might take offense at the basic nature of the training, there are many tidbits that can make even seasoned professionals stop and think about their attitudes.

The program can be presented in a group setting by a facilitator or taken by individuals as self-study. I found it easy to use because of its multiple menu bars. The program is nonlinear, which is important for adult learners who want to focus on specific topics. The presentations are brief and to the point, including bulleted learning objectives and video clips to drive the points home. And the content moves quickly without a lot of superfluous information.

My only complaints about the program are 1) there was no bookmarking (I had

to remember where I had left off) and 2) the tests at the end of each unit don't provide the results to the learner. They are emailed to his or her manager instead. I would have preferred instant feedback, as I think most learners would.

Support

The program comes with a comprehensive facilitator's guide that covers every aspect of the training, including room set-up and questions to generate discussion. The participant's guide can be used for classroom delivery or self-study. If a learner does take the program as self-study, the manager's guide can help ensure that the learning gets applied on the job.

The program also comes with a CD, called the Measurement Kit, which provides the facilitator with ways to measure Levels 1 through 5 learning. It's unusual for a training program to provide guidelines for evaluating its effectiveness, and I really appreciated the tool. Also provided is a 45-page booklet that highlights the learning points and can act as a memory aid for learners.

Holds viewer interest ***.5

Diversity ****

Value of content ***

Value for the money ***

Lynn M. Monaco is currently a consultant; monacol@aol.com.

Real Diversity

Reviewed by Valerie L. Smith

A REAL WORLD *Guide to Diversity in the Workplace* grabs the viewer's attention immediately. The music is upbeat, as are the personalities of the narrators.

The video begins by discussing the fact that today's market is encouraging more and more employers to create an inclusive environment in which each

A Real World Guide to Diversity in the Workplace

Video, 15 minutes, 2004

Learncom

www.learncom.com

800.622.3610

\$695 VHS, \$895 DVD

Included materials: leader guide, PowerPoint slides, certificates

Online demo:

[www.learncom.com/shop/index.cfm?](http://www.learncom.com/shop/index.cfm?fuseaction=store.viewProduct&ID=1501)

[fuseaction=store.viewProduct&ID=1501](http://www.learncom.com/shop/index.cfm?fuseaction=store.viewProduct&ID=1501)

Recommendation

I recommend this program for any organization looking to increase awareness of diversity. The video's production quality is outstanding and the use of text and graphics gives it an interactive flavor. There is little chance viewers will be bored by this training.

employee can do his or her best work. Achieving that goal involves understanding and valuing diversity. By embracing diversity, employees can foster new lines of communication and collaboration.

The hosts state that the video covers definitions, legal and demographic trends, and information on creating an inclusive workplace. All topics are covered well. The program defines diversity in three dimensions: primary, secondary, and functional. Examples of each are given using commonsense terminology. We're told that a diverse workforce can also enhance an organization's ability to recruit and retain the best talent.

I was impressed with the hosts' abilities to explain concepts in easy-to-understand language. The learning is fast-paced yet enjoyable. Quizzes are interspersed throughout the program to test understanding. A thorough discussion of stereotypes covers definitions and workplace impact.

One part of the discussion centers

We liked...

- the upbeat music and personalities of the narrators
- the easy-to-understand language
- the focus on knowledge and experience rather than on placing blame.

Start Right...Stay Right

Video, 2005, 32 minutes

CRM Learning

www.crmlearning.com

800.421.0833

\$1,295

Included materials: leader guide, participant workbook (10 copies), Measurement Kit, PowerPoint slides
Online demo: www.crmlearning.com/start-right-stay-right-on-dvd

Recommendation

This is a great program to incorporate into new hire orientation. The video may be too off-putting for experienced employees, however.

on the fact that generalizations about groups of people can lead to unfair and inaccurate judgments about individuals and situations. We are also told that stereotypes can create barriers to relationships and that individuals should become aware of their stereotypes and expand their knowledge of other groups and cultures. I was pleased with the program's focus on knowledge and experience, rather than on placing blame.

Real World product rating	
Holds viewer interest	*****
Acting/presenting	*****
Diversity	*****
Production quality	*****
Value of content	*****
Instructional value	*****
Value for the money	*****
Overall rating	*****

Valerie L. Smith is managing partner of the Organizational Development Group, an instructional designer, consultant, and facilitator; vsmith@verizon.net.