

# Empowering supervisors to proactively retain their best talent: Predicting employee flight risk at a U.S. call center

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## Business Problem

A U.S. call center was used to operating in a high turnover environment. They had scaled several aspects of their people management practices, including training, performance management, and compensation schemes, which enabled them to maintain profitable operations despite high employee turnover.

But retention efforts remained a manual process, completely dependent on manager’s personalized interventions within small teams. When a tightening labor market drove attrition even higher, managers started to feel overwhelmed. They were taken by surprise when team members quit – oftentimes, workers simply ceased to show up for their shifts. Some managers felt they were constantly playing catch-up with their retention efforts; others felt paralyzed in the face of a team of high flight-risk employees, unsure of who to focus on.

Managers needed a way to proactively manage turnover in order for the center to stay profitable.

## TalenTeck Solution

To take back control of their retention efforts, managers needed to be able to identify their highest flight-risk team members – before they quit. TalenTeck’s Employee Flight Risk Scores would enable them to do just that.

The idea is to identify employee characteristics and career events (e.g. tenure, base wages, performance ratings, absenteeism, bonus payouts, travel time to work, or prior call center experience) that affect an employee’s likelihood of quitting in the next 30 days. It’s difficult for human brains to keep track of all these pieces of information, or to consider an employee’s entire history when guessing what will happen next. But predictive statistical models are designed to take in multiple dimensions and map them into a single, useful piece of intelligence about flight risk.

Using historical employee data from the call center, we built and validated such a predictive model. In addition to flight-risk scores, we also identified the key factors driving high risk for the most vulnerable individuals. Whether it was compensation misalignment, a delayed performance evaluation, or a cluster of missed shifts, identifying the key factors would give managers valuable information about the type of intervention that would be the most effective: pay adjustment, scheduling change, or simply a one-on-one meeting to check in.

We then set up real-time data exchange protocols with the company’s HRMS, so the flight-risk scores could be updated as events occurred throughout the employee lifecycle. How frequently the scores should be updated – daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly – depends on the type of work and company context. For this call center, monthly scores made the most sense, so as employees crossed their 30-day, 60-day, 90-day, etc. tenure mark, we would update their score.

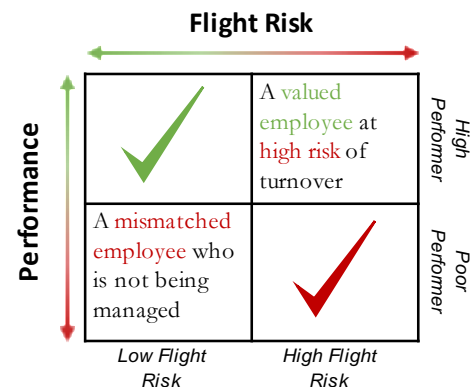


Figure 1: Interventions depend on both flight risk and future performance



An important point to remember is that not all attrition is bad. Depending on an employee’s performance, and more importantly their future potential performance, the company may or may not benefit from retaining them (Figure 1). Thus, to make strategic talent management decisions, a crucial piece of intelligence along with an employee’s future flight risk is their future performance. In this particular context, the immediate supervisors felt they had a good sense of who was a valued team member, and who might be a mismatch. They said that if they knew who was at high risk of quitting, they would know who to retain and who to let go.

We gave managers access to a daily-updating report on the TalenTeck client webpage, showing the latest flight-risk score for their team members, as well as the key risk factors (Figure 2). In this way, the report acted as a proactive alert system, giving managers an extra heads up about who might be at-risk and why. This ability to “see around the corner” would prove invaluable as the managers fought to stay ahead of attrition.

Search:

Risk	Employee ID	Tenure	Date	Title	Weekly Hours	Effective Wage	Bonus	Rating	Number of Ratings
Yellow	510112	300	2017/12/03	Sr. Agent	35	\$15.25	\$270.64	2+	6
Red	525183	90	2017/12/05	Jr. Agent	27	\$10.00	\$0.00	NA	0
Green	510728	270	2017/12/05	Agent	38	\$13.10	\$150.00	1	4
Orange	517021	210	2017/12/06	Jr. Agent	31	\$11.50	\$0.00	2	4
Red	519035	180	2017/12/06	Agent	22	\$13.01	\$62.50	2-	3
Yellow	540723	60	2017/12/07	Jr. Agent	36	\$10.00	\$0.00	NA	0
Yellow	556231	30	2017/12/08	Trainee	33	\$9.50	\$0.00	NA	0
Green	525183	90	2017/12/08	Agent	45	\$12.54	\$75.00	2+	1

Figure 2: A daily report shows flight-risk scores and key drivers of high and low risk, updated for each employee every time they cross 30-days of tenure.

## Results

TalenTeck Flight Risk Scores helped to transform retention from a reactive, confused effort to a strategic, scalable talent management practice. Providing managers with a targeted, actionable piece of information about their employees freed them from the never-ending catch-up game and empowered them to do what they do best – manage their people.

For more information about TalenTeck’s suite of human capital analytics tools contact us at [info@talenteck.com](mailto:info@talenteck.com).

