



# Navigating Staff Vacancies Without Losing Momentum, Morale, or Our Minds

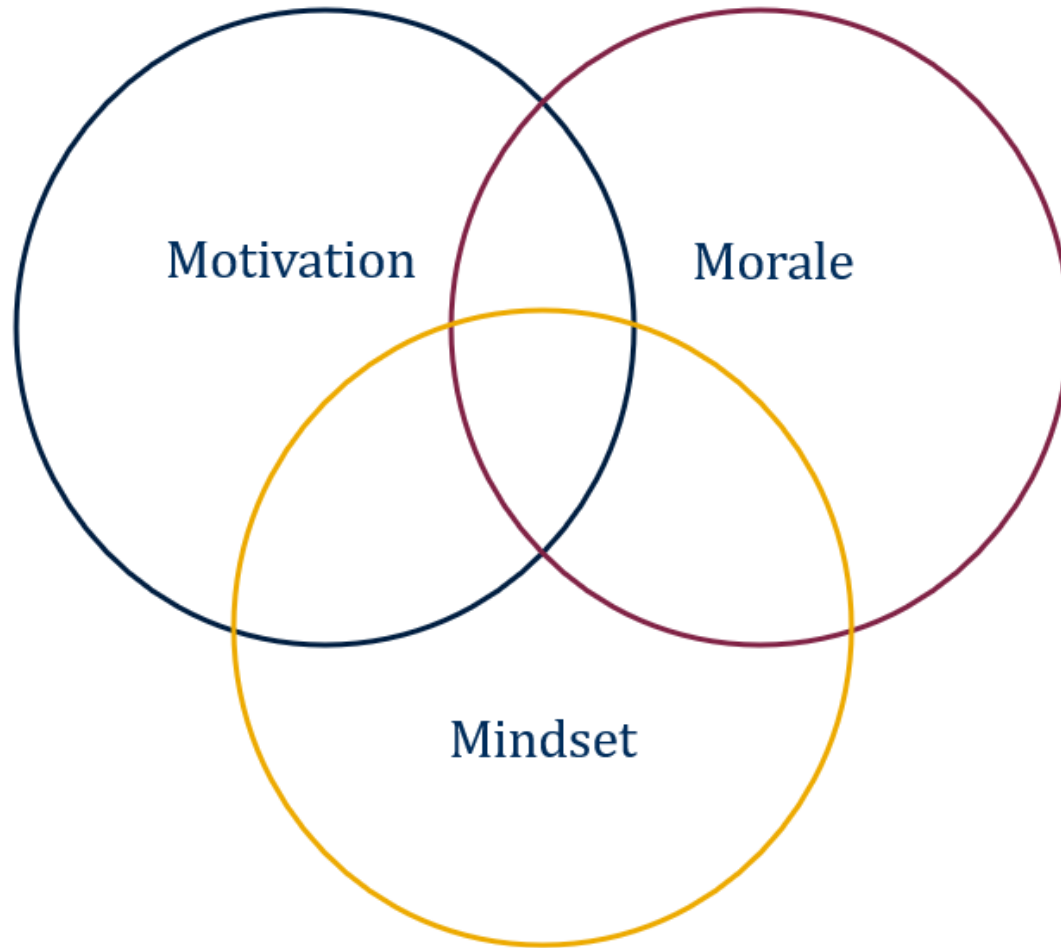
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# Introduction



A blue-tinted photograph of a university courtyard. In the foreground, there are several stone arches supported by columns. In the background, a large, ornate building with a central dome and a spire is visible. The scene is framed by trees and a clear sky.

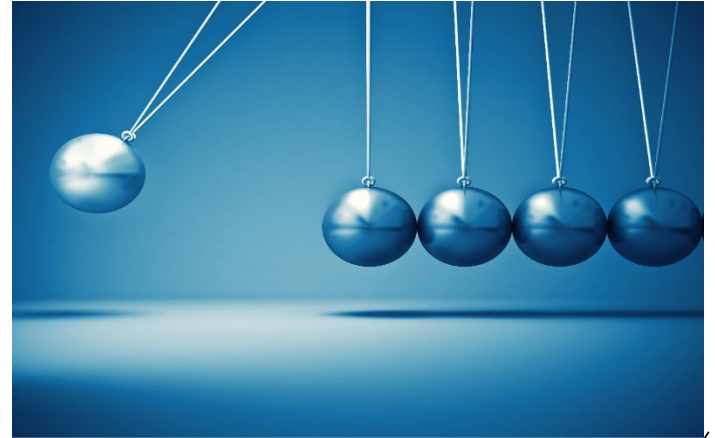
Question: How does staff turnover impact your momentum?



Momentum

# What is Momentum?

- The force of speed of an object in motion
- The ability to go forward
- Increasing the things that move you forward and decreasing those that hold you back
- Taking active steps to reach goals



# Why is momentum important?

- Productivity
- Morale and Engagement
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Adaptability
- Goal Attainment



# Understanding Momentum

## *Management vs. Leadership*

Management:

- *“Management is the coordination and administration of tasks to achieve a goal” (Indeed Editorial Team 2019).*
- *“[M]anagement is a discipline that consists of a set of five general functions: planning, organizing, staffing, leading and controlling” (Davis and Reilly 2021).*



# Understanding Momentum

## *Management vs. Leadership*

Leadership:

- *“A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves” (Bouchard 2018).*
- *“Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality” (Kruse 2013).*

# Management vs. Leadership

## Management Focus and Skills

- **Focus:** Planning, Organizing, Resource Usage, Coordinating, Time Management
- **Skills:** Resolves Problems, Effective Communicator, Takes Control, Executes a Plan, Minimizes Risk, Process Drive, and Embraces Stability

## Leadership Focus and Skills

- **Focus:** Providing Vision/Goal Setting, Providing Motivation, Listening, Mentoring/Coaching/Teaching, Teamwork and Building Relationships, Opportunities (Not Problems)
- **Skills:** Persuasive, Accountable, Challenges the Norm, Proactive, Embraces Change, Creative/Innovative, Takes Risks

Katie Cloud and Aimee Leturmy, AACRAO, <https://www.aacrao.org/research-publications/quarterly-journals/college-university-journal/article/c-u-vol.-98-no.-4-winter-2023/management-vs.-leadership-would-you-rather>.

# Putting Momentum into Action

## *Effective Managers*

- Determine where there are process gaps, what portion of work could fall through the cracks with these open positions, and how to mitigate that.
- Optimize HR processes to ensure the hiring process is efficient and smooth to replace vacant positions.
- Work extended hours to ensure deadlines are met.

# Putting Momentum Into Action

## *Effective Leaders*

- Seek to understand why staff are leaving and explore opportunities for change.
- Pitch in and do the work that needs to be done to support the staff.
- Look for inefficiencies and ways to improve process.

# Momentum

## *Questions to ask?*

- How can we support staff growth and development in times of limited human and budget resources?
- Is work/life balance a reality in times of increased pressure to do more with less?
- What are the must-dos, the should dos, and the nice to-dos?



# Momentum in Motion

- Make a priorities list with your staff on what tasks must be done to meet goals.
- Examine current processes—what can you cut or what can be moved to an every other year project.
- Solicit help from other campus departments to assist with recruitment travel, reading files, meeting with tour groups, responding to emails, etc.
- Explore compensating staff with a stipend or bonus for assuming additional duties.

A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a blue checkered shirt. They are holding a black smartphone in their right hand, positioned over a laptop keyboard. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

Question: What are creative ways that you are impacting your staff morale?



Morale



# Motivation vs. Morale

## *Morale*

- An internal feeling, which depends on the overall environment which surrounds the person
- Based on the attitude, satisfaction level and outlook of the person

## *Motivation*

- The act of encouraging an individual to get the desired results
- Keeps you moving; is a critical element in establishing and achieving the objectives

“

It is a **mental attitude**, an **emotional force** and that **state of being** comfortable, healthy, and happy. It has the capability to influence the output, production, quality, costs, enthusiasm, initiative, and other success components. The moral of an employee is based on the **total satisfaction** derived by an individual from his/her **job, work team, supervisor, organization, and the work environment**.

*Difference Between Motivation and Morale,  
2020*

# Why is staff morale important?

- Motivated employees are more engaged and committed to work
- Increased productivity and improved performance
- Higher job satisfaction and reduced turnover rates
- Enhanced teamwork and collaboration



# Create a Positive Work Environment



Open communication : foster an environment where employees feel comfortable sharing ideas, concerns, and feedback



Supportive Management: Encourage managers to provide regular feedback, coaching, and support to their team



Work-Life Balance: Promote a healthy work-life balance through flexible scheduling, telecommuting options, and wellness initiatives.

# Team Building and Collaboration

- **Team-Building Activities:** organize team-building exercises and off-site events to promote camaraderie and strengthen relationships.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:** encourage collaboration between departments and teams to foster a sense of unity and shared goals (Ex. Admission and Financial Aid, Admission and Athletics).
- **Celebrate Successes:** recognize and celebrate team achievements to boost morale and motivation. What successes are you celebrating?



# Continuous Improvement and Growth

- **Professional Development:** Offer ongoing training and development opportunities to help employees enhance their skills and knowledge
- **Career Advancement:** Establish clear pathways for growth and provide promotional opportunities based on merit and performance
- **Performance Feedback:** Conduct regular performance evaluations and provide constructive feedback to help employees improve and grow



# Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms

*Morale is related to the organization's reward system...how are you offering feedback and rewarding successes?*



Employee Survey: Conduct regular surveys to gather feedback and identify areas for improvement in the workplace



Performance Metrics: Set clear performance metrics and provide regular updates to employees, allowing them to track their progress



Stay Connected: Maintain open lines of communication to address concerns promptly and show employees their feedback is valued

A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a blue checkered shirt. They are holding a smartphone in their right hand and have their left hand on a laptop keyboard. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. In the center, white text asks a question.

Question: Can you change morale by changing your mindset?





Mindset

# Managers Impact Our Mental Health More Than Doctors, Therapists — and Same as Spouses

*The Workforce Institute at UKG surveyed 3,400 across 10 countries*

## Key Insights:

- Managers impact employees' mental health (69%) more than doctors (51%) or therapists (41%) — and even the same as a spouse or partner (69%).
- One in three said their manager fails to recognize the impact they have on their teams' mental well-being.
- More than 80% of employees would rather have good mental health than a high-paying job.
- Two-thirds of employees would take a pay cut for a job that better supports their mental wellness — and 70% of managers would, too.
- Work stress negatively impacts employees' home life (71%), wellbeing (64%), and relationships (62%).
- 40% of the C-suite says they will likely quit within the year because of work-related stress.

# Understanding Mindset Challenges

## *And then there is Enrollment Management*

*“The Eye of Sauron is right in my office.  
You can feel it.”*

*The grind is wearing many others down. A recent NACAC survey revealed that 60 percent of members at private colleges, and 55 percent at public, said burnout was one of the top three challenges for the profession. Among all respondents, the most frequently cited challenge (38 percent) was maintaining an acceptable work/life balance.*

Eric Hoover, The Chronicle, April 5, 2023

*Making “The Number” — the primary focus of our job — requires so many things to go right, even when we know there are so many things that can go wrong.*

Jon Boeckenstedt , The Chronicle, April 28, 2023

# Understanding Mindset Challenges

## *Trends*

Gallup reports:

Employee engagement is on the rise from 2021 to 2022, but stress has also increased and with it, physical and mental health problems and lower productivity.

Having a job they hate is worse than being unemployed.

- The Great Resignation
- Boomerang Employees
- Quiet Firing/Quiet Hiring
- Quiet Quitting - More than half of employees (59%) are quiet quitting (not engaged), and 18% are loud quitting (actively disengaged). Quiet quitting employees cite issues related to employee engagement or culture, pay and benefits, or wellbeing as areas they would change about their workplace to make it better.
- Bare Minimum Mondays

# Achieving the Right Mindset

## *Take the stress out of Mondays with “Bare Minimum Mondays”*

The idea of Bare Minimum Mondays is to start off the workweek slowly by prioritizing self-care over work duties on Monday, putting in only a minimal effort toward your job on that day each week.

*Gen Z’s way of showing and emphasizing how important it is for employers to be an advocate for mental health and well-being.*

Definition of bare minimum – the least amount of something that is allowable.

# “Bare Minimum Mondays”

## *Pros*

- Prevents burnout, boosts workers’ morale
- Tackles the “Sunday scaries”
- Encourages self-care
- Increases productivity
- Helps with talent retention

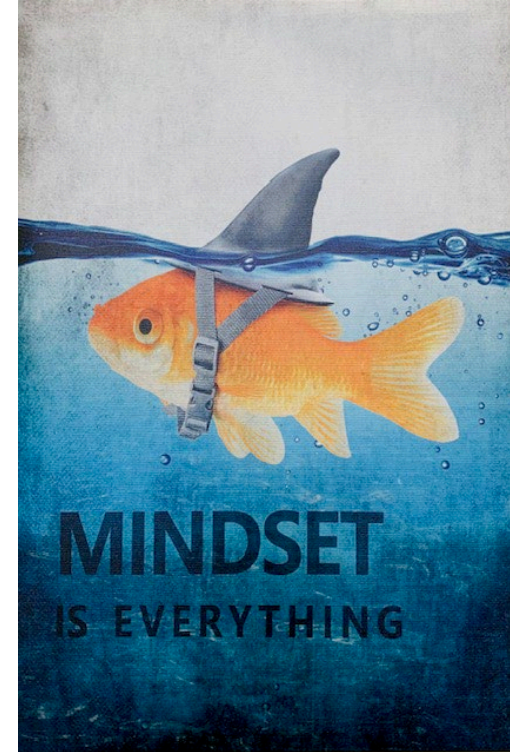
## *Cons*

- Not suitable for all work
- Not suitable for all employees
- Long-term career consequences
- Decreases productivity
  - Tired Tuesday
  - Why are we here Wednesday?
  - I’m thru with Thursday
  - TGIF

# “Bare Minimum Mondays”

## *Alternatives*

- Schedule adjustments
  - Flexible work schedules
  - Meeting-less Fridays
  - WFH options
  - Moratorium on meetings before 9
  - Encourage breaks
- Employee recognition
- Workplace wellness activities
- Play at work



# Achieving the Right Mindset

## *FISH! Philosophy*

- Inspired by Seattle-based Pike Place Fish Market
- Four principles
  - Play
  - Make Their Day
  - Be There
  - Choose Your Attitude



# FISH!

## *Choose your attitude*

- Taking responsibility for one's attitude and mindset.
- Maintaining a positive outlook.
- Benefits:
  - Improved resilience and adaptability.
  - Increased personal accountability.
  - Enhanced overall workplace culture.

# Benefits of FISH! Philosophy

- Increased employee engagement and motivation.
- Improved teamwork and collaboration.
- Enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- Positive impact on workplace culture and morale.
- Higher levels of productivity and performance.

# Ted Lasso = Modern FISH! Philosopher

## *Leadership lessons that impact mindset . . .*

- Be a goldfish – “You know what the happiest animal in the world is? It’s a goldfish. It’s got a 10-second memory. Be a goldfish!”
- Care for the people you work with – “Diamond Dogs, mount up!”
- Take genuine interest – “We can’t really be good partners unless we get to know each other, right?”
- Mentorship – “A good mentor hopes you move on. A great mentor knows you will.”
- Appreciation – “That is a darn fine sports mix young fella.”
- Trust the process – “But believe me, it will all work out, exactly how it’s supposed to.”
- Find joy in work

# Workplace Culture is Critical

## *Benefits to having a fun workplace*

- Healthier employees
- Better communication and teamwork
- More creativity
- Better brand reputation
- More productivity

# Ideas to Positively Impact Mindset

## *Helping your team choose their attitude . . .*

- Understand your role as a leader/manager and employee in affecting your mindset and creating a positive workplace culture
- Dedicate staff position and funds to “play,” “make their day,” “team-build”
- Create ways to “play” or “make their day” or “team-build”
- Celebrate and recognize employees, moments in time knowing simple gestures can go a long way
- What else?

# Ted Lasso

*“I believe in hope. I believe in believe.”*

- Angie Cooksy – Bradley U – “To bring your full, authentic, and best self to your work, I believe you need to make space for the things that bring you joy.”
- As Ted says, "If you care about someone, and you got a little love in your heart, there ain't nothing you can't get through together."



# Conclusion

- Celebrate wins!
- Donate to a team fund and then use those dollars as rewards, celebrations, etc.
- Take Assessments as a team to identify potential areas for growth – StrengthsFinder, Colors, DISC, MyersBriggs
- Professional development – ACAC conferences, ACRAO conferences, RNL, webinars
- Find your Diamond Dogs!

# Thank you!

*Please feel free to contact us.*

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