

THE PROGRAM GUIDE



The Action Gap

A leadership guide to building a retention program that actually changes outcomes

An Anchor by Retentio Field Kit resource. Free to read, free to use, no sign-up.

How to read this guide. This is the deep reference, the document a leadership team works from over weeks, not a blog post you skim once. It gives you the full discipline of building and running a retention-intervention program inside your organization. It is written for the people who own the budget and the outcome: the CEO who carries the number, the CFO who funds the risk, the COO who feels every loss in the schedule, and the CHRO who is expected to fix it with tools that were never built for the job.

Everything in here is real, and most of it you can start doing by hand on Monday. We have held nothing back about the method. What we are honest about, in every section, is where doing this by hand or with the tools you already own runs out of road. That edge is not a sales gimmick. It is the single most useful thing a guide like this can tell you, because it is the line your competitors will hit too, and the one most of them will not see coming.

1 Introduction: The Action Gap

Your organization is almost certainly very good at collecting data about your people. You run engagement surveys. You watch attrition reports. You have dashboards that turn red when a number moves. You have invested real money in systems that measure how your workforce feels.

And yet good people still leave, and they almost always leave after a window in which someone could have done something about it.

That window has a name. We call it the Action Gap: the distance between the moment a person begins to disengage and the moment anyone actually acts on it. In most organizations that distance runs six to ten weeks. A manager notices something is off. It gets mentioned in a one-on-one, or it does not. It gets routed to HR, or it sits. A plan gets made, or a meeting gets scheduled to make a plan. By the time anyone moves, the person has already decided. The resignation is not the beginning of the problem. It is the end of one you could have seen coming.

The gap is not a measurement problem. You are not losing people because you cannot see the data. You are losing them because seeing is not the same as acting, and almost every tool on the market is built to help you see. The dashboard tells you that engagement in a department dropped. It does not tell the manager what to do about it on Tuesday, with one specific human being who is quietly checking out.

This is the uncomfortable truth a lot of leadership teams discover only in the exit interview: the signal was there, the data flagged it, and nothing happened anyway. Not because anyone was negligent. Because the distance from a number on a screen to a real conversation with a real person is enormous, and nobody owns it.

This guide is about closing that distance. It walks you through the full discipline, the same arc your best managers already run on instinct, made deliberate and repeatable: spot the signal, read it honestly, plan and hold the conversation, and close the loop to see if it worked. Then it shows you how to turn a handful of good conversations into an actual program with a cadence, owners, and accountability, and how to govern that program from where you sit.

A note on what this guide is not. It will not teach you a piece of software. It teaches you a way of working that does not depend on us. If you read this, apply it, and never speak to Anchor, you will run a better retention practice than most organizations your size. We mean that. The reason companies eventually call us is not that the discipline is wrong. It is that the discipline is hard to sustain

consistently, at scale, across every person and every manager, without something carrying the weight. We will be honest about exactly where that line is as we go.

If you would rather see what this looks like running inside a real organization than read about it, request a conversation. No sales sequence, no demo theater. One honest discussion about your situation.

2 The Cost of Standing Still

Most retention conversations at the leadership level stall on the same objection: we know turnover is bad, but we do not know what it is actually costing us, so it is hard to fund a fix against everything else competing for budget. So let us put real numbers on it, drawn from credible outside research, not from us.

The conservative figure first, because it is the one that is hard to argue with. Compiled industry research puts the cost of replacing a single employee at \$10,000 to \$50,000. That range captures the visible, defensible costs: recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and the ramp time before a replacement is fully productive. It is the floor, and it is already large enough to matter to a CFO.

Now the worse case, because the conservative figure understates what a departure really costs when the person was good at something specialized. For highly skilled or hard-to-replace roles, replacement runs three to four times salary. Apply that to a specialist earning \$75,000 and the cost of losing them climbs to as much as \$225,000 once you account for lost institutional knowledge, the productivity drag while the seat is empty, the load that falls on the people who stay, and the second-order risk of further departures when a team gets stretched.

Hold those two figures side by side. The conservative replacement cost of a single employee starts in the tens of thousands. The cost of losing the wrong specialist climbs into six figures. And these are not one-time events. They are a recurring tax on your operation, paid quietly, line by line, every time the Action Gap closes too late.

There is a reframe in those numbers that matters for how you fund the fix. Turnover is usually carried on the books as an HR cost, which puts it in a category leaders are trained to minimize and tolerate rather than actively prevent. But that is the wrong mental model. A specialist walking out the door is not an HR inconvenience. It is an operational loss with a dollar value, the same kind of risk you would insure against in any other part of the business. You do not treat the possibility of a critical machine failing, or a key supplier going dark, as an HR matter. You manage it as operational risk, and you fund the management of it accordingly.

That is the frame this guide asks you to adopt. Retention intervention is operational insurance. The math is simple and it favors action. If a focused retention practice costs a fraction of one specialist's replacement cost to run, and it prevents even one wrong departure a year, it has paid for itself with room to spare. Everything after that is margin you keep.

A word of honesty on the numbers, because trust is the entire point of a guide like this. The figures above are compiled industry research. They are the industry's reality, not a result we are claiming on your behalf. We have not run your payroll or modeled your specific risk. The point of citing them is to give you a defensible starting frame for the conversation you need to have with your own finance team, using your own salaries and your own loss history. The Cost-of-Turnover Calculator in the Field Tools lets you do exactly that, in your terms.

If you want to pressure-test what your own value-at-risk looks like, request a conversation. We will walk the math with you honestly, against your numbers.

3 What Good Actually Looks Like

Before we get into the discipline, it is worth being concrete about what a leadership team is actually aiming for. "Reduce turnover" is not a target. It is a wish. Here is what a genuinely good retention practice looks like from the top, so you know what you are building toward and can recognize it when you have it.

Good looks like early. In a strong practice, the organization tends to act on disengagement in days or weeks, not in the rear-view mirror of an exit interview. The leading indicator of health is not your attrition rate, which only tells you about people who have already gone. It is the rate at which your managers are catching and addressing slippage before it becomes a resignation. If your only retention metric is attrition, you are managing by looking backward.

Good looks like specific. A weak practice produces general intentions: we should really focus on engagement this quarter. A strong one produces specific moves: this person, this concern, this conversation, this follow-up, by this date. Retention is not won in the aggregate. It is won one person at a time, and a good program is built to operate at that resolution without drowning the people running it.

Good looks like consistent. This is the one that separates real programs from good intentions, and it is the hardest to achieve. In most organizations, retention effort spikes after a painful loss and fades within a quarter. A good practice runs at a steady cadence whether or not anything has gone wrong recently, because the whole point is to catch the quiet cases before they become loud ones. Consistency is not a virtue here. It is the mechanism. An inconsistent retention practice is, functionally, no practice at all, because the people you miss are exactly the ones who do not announce themselves.

Good looks like owned. In a weak practice, retention belongs to everyone and therefore to no one. HR assumes the managers are handling the human part. The managers assume HR owns the program. Leadership assumes the survey vendor is covering it. A good practice has named owners at each layer: who watches, who acts, who follows up, and who reports the whole thing up to leadership on a regular rhythm.

Good looks like trusted. Here is a truth that is easy to miss from the top. Whether your retention practice works depends almost entirely on whether your people believe it is safe to be honest inside it. If employees suspect that what they say will be used to evaluate them, or will travel up the chain and follow them around, they will tell you what is safe rather than what is true, and your whole practice will run on bad data. A good practice is built so that candor is safe by design, not just by promise. We will return to this, because it is both a discipline and, in our view, a non-negotiable design principle.

Hold these five against your organization as you read the rest of this guide: early, specific, consistent, owned, trusted. They are the scorecard. Most leadership teams find they are decent at one or two and quietly absent on the rest. That is not a failing. It is the normal state of an organization that has bought tools to measure people and never built a discipline to act on what the measurement reveals.

If you want an outside read on where your practice sits against these five, request a conversation.

4 Spot: Seeing Who Is Slipping

Every retention save starts the same way: someone notices, early, that a person is beginning to check out. Everything downstream depends on this first step, and it is the one most organizations are quietly worst at, because the signals are human and easy to miss.

Disengagement is not a performance problem, and confusing the two is the most expensive mistake managers make. A performance problem shows up in the work. A disengagement signal shows up in the person, often while the work is still perfectly fine. The trap, the reason good people slip through, is the assumption that as long as the output holds, there is nothing to address. By the time the output drops, the person has usually been gone in spirit for weeks, and the window to act with care has closed. Train your managers to treat "the work is still good" as the beginning of the question, not the end of it.

The signals are behavioral and relational, not numeric. A person who is checking out tends to go quiet in settings where they used to contribute. They stop volunteering for the harder or more visible work. They pull back from the people around them. They do the job and nothing more, where before they brought ideas, energy, or initiative. None of these will trigger a dashboard. All of them are visible to a manager who is paying the right kind of attention. The skill you are building in your managers is not data analysis. It is noticing a change in a human being.

The discipline that makes spotting repeatable is a watch list. Not a surveillance file, and the distinction matters. A watch list is a simple, honest, manager-kept record: who feels off, since when, and what specifically changed. The act of writing it down does two things. It converts a vague gut feeling into something a manager can actually act on, and it creates a memory that survives the chaos of a busy week, so the quiet case does not get forgotten the moment a louder fire starts. The Watch List template in the Field Tools gives you a clean, ready-to-use structure for this.

Now the honest limit, because this is the first place the discipline meets its ceiling. A manager can watch the people they see and interact with regularly. They cannot watch everyone, everywhere, every week, by memory and attention alone. The wider the organization, the more people fall outside any one manager's line of sight: the teams a manager does not interact with daily, the people on other schedules or locations, the quiet performer who never shows up in anyone's field of view until the resignation lands. By hand, spotting is only ever as wide as a given manager's personal attention, and human attention does not scale. It is also uneven. Your most attentive managers will catch a great deal. Your stretched or less perceptive ones will catch almost nothing, and you will have no way to know the difference until people start leaving from the blind spots.

This is the structural problem with hand-spotting at any real scale. It is not that managers do not care. It is that you are relying on dozens of individual humans to each, independently, notice subtle changes in everyone around them, consistently, forever, with no help and no backstop. Some will. Many will not. And the cost of the misses lands on you.

Widening the field of view past what any one manager can hold in memory is one of the first places software earns its keep. If that blind-spot problem sounds familiar, request a conversation.

5 Read: Turning a Signal Into Understanding

Spotting a signal is not the same as understanding it, and acting on a misread signal can do more damage than not acting at all. The second discipline is reading: turning a raw observation into an honest, useful understanding of what is actually going on with the person, before you decide what to do.

A signal is a question, not a verdict. The instinct, especially in an action-oriented leadership culture, is to jump from "this person seems off" straight to "here is what we will do about it." Resist it. The same observable behavior, someone going quiet and pulling back, can come from a workload that has quietly become unsustainable, a sense that good work is going unrecognized, a feeling of being stuck with nowhere to grow, or something happening entirely outside of work. Each of those calls for a completely different response. Acting before you understand means you are likely solving the wrong problem, which the person experiences as proof that no one actually gets it, which accelerates exactly the departure you were trying to prevent.

Separate cause from symptom. The behavior you noticed is the symptom. The thing you are trying to understand is the cause underneath it. The discipline here is to hold the symptom lightly and stay genuinely curious about the cause, rather than reaching for the first explanation that fits your existing assumptions about the person. Train managers to write down what they think is going on and, just as importantly, what they are not sure of. The honesty about uncertainty is what keeps a read from hardening into a wrong conclusion.

Reckon with the manager blind spot. Here is a truth that is hard to teach because it is uncomfortable: a manager's read of a person is one perspective, and it is the manager's. It is shaped by their own assumptions, their relationship with that person, and what they happen to have noticed. The gap between how a manager sees a situation and how the employee actually experiences it is not a minor wrinkle. It is, very often, the exact place where good people are lost. The person is leaving over something the manager never registered as a problem, or misread entirely, and a single perspective, by its nature, cannot see its own blind spot.

We want to be precise about what we are and are not claiming here, because honesty is the spine of this guide. We are naming a real and serious limitation: one person's view of another is incomplete, and the most dangerous misreads are invisible to the person making them. We are not, in this guide, handing you a method for closing that gap. Bringing a second, structured perspective to bear on a person's situation, in a way that surfaces what one manager cannot see on their own, is genuinely hard to do well by hand, and it is core to what we have built. For now, the discipline you can practice is humility: treat your read as a strong hypothesis, not a fact, and stay open to being wrong about why someone is slipping.

If the blind-spot problem resonates, the question of how to see what one perspective cannot is exactly where we focus. Request a conversation.

6 Plan and Act: The Retention Conversation

Understanding has to become a conversation, or it changes nothing. This is the heart of the discipline: planning and then holding the one conversation that can change a person's trajectory.

Plan before you walk in. A retention conversation that happens off the cuff usually wanders, gets defensive, or quietly avoids the real issue. A planned one has a goal, an opener, and a single most important ask. The discipline is to decide, in advance, the one move that matters most for this specific person given what you understand about them, rather than walking in with ten generic intentions and landing none. Write it down. The Stay Conversation Planner in the Field Tools is built for exactly this: a one-page structure that turns your understanding into a conversation you are actually ready to have.

Honor the red line. There is one rule that overrides everything else in a retention conversation, and it is worth establishing as policy across your organization: never ask a person, directly, whether they are thinking about leaving. It feels like the honest question. It is actually the one that ends candor. The moment you ask it, you have made the conversation about the exit, you have put the person on the defensive, and you have signaled that you see them as a flight risk to be managed rather than a person to be understood. Always reframe forward instead. Ask about what would make the work better, what they want more of, what is getting in their way. You learn far more, and you build trust instead of triggering an exit.

Lead with care, not with the agenda. The best retention conversations are not interrogations and they are not pitches. They open with genuine interest in the person and they spend more time listening than talking. A useful rule of thumb is that the manager should be talking far less than the employee. The goal is for the person to feel understood, which is both the humane thing and the effective thing, because a person who feels understood will tell you what is actually going on, and a person who feels handled will not.

Close with a commitment, and protect what was said. A good conversation ends with one specific, time-bound next step, theirs and yours, not a vague "let us keep talking." And then the trust gets protected: what was shared stays between the people in the room. This last point is not a courtesy. It is the foundation the entire practice rests on. The instant employees believe their candor will be used to evaluate them, or will travel up the chain, they stop being candid, and every conversation after that runs on managed answers instead of truth. We hold this as a hard principle, not a soft preference: in a retention practice worth running, what a person shares in confidence is never turned into a performance judgment and never surfaced to leadership as an individual record. Build that guarantee into your practice explicitly, and make sure your people know it is real.

The honest ceiling here is one of preparation, not of the conversation itself. The conversation is human, and no tool should ever replace it. What no manager can sustainably do by hand is keep the right approach ready for every person who needs one, tailored to who that person actually is, time after time, while running everything else their role demands. Planning one good conversation is doable. Planning a genuinely tailored one for every person who needs it, with the right words for that specific human being, consistently, is where even your strongest managers run out of hours.

Preparing the right conversation for the right person, every time, without burning out your best managers, is squarely the lift we provide. Request a conversation.

7 Close the Loop: Did It Work?

This is the discipline almost everyone skips, and it is the one that separates a retention practice from a series of well-meaning chats. The intervention is not finished when the conversation ends. The follow-through is the actual work.

Check whether the move worked. A retention conversation produces a commitment and a hypothesis: if we address this, the person should re-engage. Closing the loop means going back, on a deliberate timeline, to see whether the commitment was kept

and whether the signal you originally spotted actually improved. Did the workload change as promised? Did the person come back into the conversations they had withdrawn from? The follow-up is where you find out if you understood the situation correctly or just thought you did.

Treat a failed move as data, not failure. Sometimes you read it right, made a fair move, and the person still leaves. That is not a wasted effort. It is information, both about that person and about a pattern you may be seeing across several. Honest accounting of what worked and what did not is how a retention practice gets smarter over time instead of repeating the same misses. The teams that improve are the ones willing to write down "we tried this and it did not land," not just the wins.

Keep a light record so the organization learns. Across many interventions, patterns emerge: certain causes recur, certain moves tend to work, certain managers consistently save people and others consistently lose them. None of that is visible from a single conversation. It only appears when there is a record, kept lightly and consistently, that lets you learn what actually works in your organization rather than relying on anecdote and gut feel. The Follow-Up Tracker in the Field Tools gives you a simple structure for this.

Now the most honest sentence in this guide, and the one a leadership team most needs to hear: closing the loop by hand is where nearly every organization falls down. Not because people do not care. Because remembering to follow up on every person, on the right timeline, tracking what worked, and learning from it across an entire organization, is a record-keeping and discipline job that no busy manager can sustain on top of their real role. The spotting fades, the conversations happen unevenly, and the follow-through, the part that actually compounds into a smarter practice over time, is the first thing to die when the next fire starts. This is the clearest place where hand-work hits its ceiling, and it is precisely the place where the long-term value of a retention practice either accrues or evaporates.

Carrying the follow-through and turning scattered interventions into a record your organization actually learns from is core to what we do. If the loop is where your effort breaks down, request a conversation.

8 Run It as a Program, Not a Project

Everything to this point describes how to help an individual. A leadership team is not in the business of individual saves. It is in the business of building something that catches the people you would otherwise have missed, reliably, across the whole organization. That is the leap from good intentions to a program, and it is a leadership decision, not a manager one.

The defining shift is from "the people I notice" to "the people we would have missed." An ad-hoc practice saves the people who happen to fall within an attentive manager's view. A program is designed to catch the quiet ones outside anyone's natural line of sight, which is the entire population that matters most, because those are the people no one is currently helping. If your retention effort only reaches the people someone already happened to be worried about, it is not yet a program. It is a collection of individual instincts, unevenly distributed and impossible to count on.

A program runs on a cadence. The single most important design choice is how often you check the whole population, not just the squeaky wheels. Ad-hoc effort is reactive by nature: it responds to whoever surfaces. A program is proactive: it deliberately, on a set rhythm, looks across everyone, because the cases you most need to catch are the ones that never surface on their own. Decide the cadence and hold it whether or not anything has recently gone wrong. The discipline of looking when nothing appears to be on fire is the whole point.

A program has named owners at every layer. Who is responsible for spotting, and across which people? Who holds the conversations? Who ensures the follow-through actually happens? Who rolls the whole thing up to leadership? In most organizations these questions have no clear answer, which is exactly why retention quietly belongs to no one. A real program assigns each of these explicitly, so that no layer can assume another is covering it.

A program is governed with leading indicators, not just attrition. We made this point earlier and it bears repeating as a program-design principle: if the only number you watch is attrition, you are governing by looking backward, measuring the failures after they have left the building. A real program tracks leading indicators, how many people are being spotted, how many

conversations are happening, how the follow-through is landing, so that leadership can see the practice working before the attrition number ever moves. Section 9 goes deeper on what to actually watch from the top.

And then the honest truth, stated plainly because you are the people who will have to decide what to do about it. Everything in this kit is real and worth doing by hand. But doing it consistently, across every person, every team, every location, week after week, without it falling through the cracks, is more than hands and memory can carry past a certain size. A program demands consistency, coverage, and follow-through at a scale that human attention alone cannot sustain. That is not a knock on your people. It is a structural fact about the job. Every organization that takes retention seriously eventually arrives at the same decision point: keep asking already-stretched managers to carry a program in their heads, accept that the coverage will be uneven and the follow-through will erode, or put something underneath the practice to carry the weight.

Running the discipline as a consistent, organization-wide program, instead of asking your managers to hold it together by force of will, is exactly the job Anchor was built to do. When you reach that decision point, request a conversation.

9 Governing It From the Top

A retention program is only as strong as the attention leadership gives it, and most leadership teams have never been shown how to govern one, because the tools they were sold report on the wrong things. This section is about how you, specifically, oversee this from where you sit.

Govern leading indicators, not just the lagging one. Attrition is a lagging indicator. It tells you about people who are already gone, which means by the time it moves, the decisions that caused it were made weeks or months earlier. If attrition is the only number on your dashboard, you are steering by the wake. The indicators worth governing are leading ones: the rate at which slippage is being spotted, the rate at which conversations are actually happening, and the quality of follow-through. These tell you whether the practice is alive this week, not whether it failed last quarter.

Watch for the silence that looks like success. This is the subtle governance trap, and it catches sophisticated teams. A program that is quietly not working looks identical, on an attrition dashboard, to one that is working, right up until the losses arrive. Low reported activity is not evidence that all is well. It is very often evidence that the practice has gone dormant and no one has noticed. Govern the inputs, not just the absence of bad outcomes, or you will mistake a fading program for a healthy one until it is too late to course-correct.

Make trust a governed principle, not an aspiration. We have said throughout that candor is the fuel of the whole practice, and that the moment employees believe their honesty will be used against them, the practice runs on bad data. At the governance level, this means a deliberate decision: leadership commits, in writing and in practice, that what people share in retention conversations is never used for evaluation and never surfaced as individual records up the chain. This is uncomfortable for some leadership teams, because it means voluntarily giving up access to information. Give it up anyway. The information you would gain by breaking confidence is worth far less than the candor you would destroy. A retention practice that doubles as a surveillance channel is a retention practice that no longer works, because your people are not stupid and they will adjust what they tell you accordingly.

Fund it as operational risk, not as an HR line. Return to the frame from Section 2. The reason retention programs get underfunded is that they sit in a budget category leaders are trained to minimize. Move it. Fund the management of departure risk the way you fund the management of any other operational risk, against the value at risk, not against the HR overhead line. The math, as we showed, favors the investment heavily: preventing even one wrong departure typically returns more than the entire practice costs to run. The job at the governance level is to make sure the funding decision is made against the real number, the value at risk, rather than against the misleadingly small "cost of a retention program" line.

Hold a regular rhythm of review. Put the program on your leadership agenda on a set cadence, the same way you review safety, finance, or operations. What gets reviewed by leadership gets sustained. What gets delegated and forgotten quietly dies. The single highest-leverage governance act available to you is simply to ask about this program, by name, on a regular rhythm, and to be seen asking. It signals that retention is real work the organization takes seriously, which is more than half the battle.

Giving leadership a true, leading-indicator view of whether the practice is actually working, without compromising the confidentiality that makes it work, is something we have thought hard about. Request a conversation.

10 The Honest Ceiling of Doing This by Hand

We have flagged the ceiling section by section. Here it is gathered in one place, candidly, because a leadership team deserves to make this decision with clear eyes rather than discover the limits the expensive way.

Everything in this guide works. None of it requires us. A disciplined organization can spot, read, plan, act, and close the loop by hand, and will be the better for it. We are not going to pretend otherwise, because the discipline is genuinely the foundation and any tool that ignores it is selling a dashboard, not an outcome.

But the discipline has a ceiling, and it is structural, not a matter of effort or care. Here is exactly where it sits.

Coverage outgrows attention. Spotting depends on individual managers noticing subtle human changes in everyone around them. Human attention does not scale, and it is uneven across managers. The larger the organization, the larger the population that falls outside anyone's line of sight, and those blind spots are where your quietest, most preventable losses come from. By hand, you will catch the people someone happened to be watching and miss the people no one was.

A single perspective cannot see its own blind spot. A manager's read of a person is one view, and the most dangerous misreads are the ones invisible to the person making them. The gap between how a manager sees a situation and how the employee actually experiences it is where good people are most often lost, and one perspective, by its nature, cannot close a gap it cannot see.

Tailoring at scale exceeds the hours available. Planning one good, person-specific conversation is doable. Planning a genuinely tailored one for every person who needs it, with the right approach for who they actually are, consistently, week after week, is more than even your strongest managers can carry on top of their real jobs.

Follow-through is the first thing to die. Closing the loop, the part that compounds into a smarter practice over time, is a record-keeping and consistency job that no busy manager sustains under pressure. When the next fire starts, the follow-up is what gets dropped, and with it goes the learning that would have made the whole practice better.

Consistency at scale is the wall. A program demands coverage, cadence, and follow-through across every person, every team, every location, indefinitely. That level of consistency is exactly what human attention and memory cannot maintain. Effort spikes after a loss and fades within a quarter, which means the practice is weakest precisely during the quiet stretches when the quiet cases are slipping away unnoticed.

None of these is a failure of the people involved. Every one of them is a structural limit of doing a scale problem with unscaled tools. This is the decision every organization that takes retention seriously eventually faces: keep asking stretched managers to hold a program together by force of will and accept uneven coverage and eroding follow-through, or put something underneath the practice to carry the weight that hands cannot.

We built Anchor for exactly that line. Not to replace the discipline in this guide, the discipline is the foundation and it stays human, but to carry the parts of it that human attention and memory structurally cannot: widening the field of view past any one manager, surfacing what a single perspective cannot see, preparing the right move for the right person without burning out your people, and sustaining the follow-through and the learning that otherwise die in the chaos of a busy week.

If you have read this far, you likely recognize the ceiling because you have felt it. Request a conversation, and we will show you honestly what the lift past it looks like inside an organization like yours.

11 The Field Tools

The discipline in this guide is supported by a small set of practical templates, free to read and free to use on-site. Each is a by-hand working tool, built to make a part of the practice repeatable. None of them requires anything from us to be useful.

The Cost-of-Turnover Calculator. An interactive tool that lets you put your own salaries and your own loss history into the replacement-cost math from Section 2, so you can see your value at risk in your own terms rather than against industry averages. This is the fastest way to turn the abstract case into a number your finance team will engage with.

The Watch List Template. The structure from Section 4. A simple, honest format for managers to record who feels off, since when, and what changed, so a gut feeling becomes something actionable and a quiet case does not get forgotten in a busy week.

The Stay Conversation Planner. The one-page structure from Section 6. It walks a manager through setting the goal, the opener, and the single most important ask for one specific person, and it builds in the red-line rule so the conversation stays forward-looking.

The Follow-Up Tracker. The structure from Section 7. A light, consistent record of what was committed, whether the signal improved, and what worked, so individual interventions compound into a practice that actually learns over time.

Additional one-page references, including a field guide to the early signals and a starter checklist for standing up the program, round out the kit. The editable versions of these templates are available if you want to adapt them to your own organization. The read-only versions are free and ungated, always.

A note on what these tools are and are not. Every one of them supports the human discipline. None of them reproduces or hints at the engine inside Anchor's product. They are the by-hand working tools, offered freely, exactly as described. The lift past what these templates can carry is the product, and that is a separate, honest conversation whenever you want to have it.

Request a conversation.

12 Where Anchor Picks Up

If you have read this guide and put it to work, you will run a stronger retention practice than most organizations your size. We mean that without qualification. The discipline is the foundation, it is genuinely yours to own, and nothing in here depends on buying anything from us.

The reason organizations eventually call us is not that the discipline is wrong. It is that the discipline is hard to sustain consistently, at scale, across every person and every manager, without something carrying the weight. That is the ceiling this guide has been honest about from the first page, and it is the line your best competitors will hit too.

Here is where we pick up, in plain terms. Anchor exists to carry the parts of this practice that human attention and memory structurally cannot. We widen the field of view past what any single manager can hold, so the quiet cases outside anyone's line of sight stop slipping through. We bring more than one perspective to bear on a person's situation, so the blind spot that loses good people gets seen. We put the right, person-specific move in a manager's hands, prepared, so tailoring at scale stops being a thing your best people burn out trying to do by hand. And we sustain the follow-through and the learning, the part that dies first under pressure, so your practice gets smarter over time instead of starting over after every fire.

We are deliberate about what we do not do. We do not replace the human conversation, that stays yours, and it should. We do not turn candor into a surveillance channel, because the moment a retention practice doubles as an evaluation tool, it stops working, and we have built around that principle rather than against it. And we do not sell you a dashboard and call it an outcome. The market is full of tools that help you see. The whole point of this guide, and of our product, is the distance between seeing and acting, the Action Gap, and closing it.

There is no sales sequence on the other side of this. No demo theater, no pressure. By design, we work by request: one honest conversation about your situation, your numbers, and whether what we have built actually fits the problem you have. If it does not,

we will tell you. If it does, you will leave the conversation knowing exactly what the lift past the ceiling looks like for an organization like yours.

You have the discipline now. The question every leadership team eventually answers is whether to keep carrying it by hand, or to put something underneath it that can hold the weight your people cannot.

Request a conversation. One operator to another, honestly.

Anchor by Retentio. The retention execution layer for operations. Free from anchorbyretentio.com/field-kit