

Building a high-retention workforce: Tips for labour hire success

How to keep your best people longer, reduce turnover, and build a stronger site culture.

Why retention matters in labour hire

In high-turnover environments like construction, mining and industrial sites, it's easy to treat labour hire workers as short-term solutions. But high churn costs more than you think, from re-training to lower productivity and site disruptions.

Building a high-retention workforce helps keep operations smooth, reduces safety risks, and protects your reputation in the market.

1. Make a strong first impression

The first day sets the tone. Whether they're with you for three days or three months, temps remember how they were treated at the start.

Checklist:

- Have PPE and site access ready
 - Introduce them to a supervisor/team member
 - Give a quick site tour and run-through of key rules
 - Pair them with a go-to person for questions
-

2. Be clear and consistent with communication

Temps often feel like they're "out of the loop" especially on dynamic sites. Clear, consistent updates build trust.

Do this:

- Confirm start times, locations, and contacts the day before
- Use simple, direct language, especially for changes
- Give feedback early, not just at the end of a contract

3. Treat them like part of the team

Temps are more likely to show up, stay safe, and do good work if they feel included.

Small things that make a big difference:

- Include them in toolbox talks and team briefings
 - Invite them to site BBQs or team events
 - Thank them at the end of the day, especially when they've stepped up
-

4. Work with your recruiter, not around them

High retention starts with the right match. Keeping your recruiter in the loop helps avoid mismatched placements.

Tips:

- Give specific feedback on what's working or not
 - Let recruiters know about future projects so they can line up talent early
 - Share insights on team culture or supervisor style, it helps with fit
-

5. Offer continuity where you can

Where possible, give strong performers repeat work or longer contracts. Temps talk and word spreads fast about which sites are worth returning to.

Retention signals:

- Re-hiring the same people for future projects
 - Offering extension before a contract ends
 - Giving notice about upcoming shifts or downtime
-

6. Make it easy to raise issues

If temps don't feel safe or supported, they'll leave — or worse, stay silent and disengaged.

Best practice:

- Designate a contact person for concerns
 - Ask your recruiter to check in weekly
 - Act quickly on feedback or issues raised
-

Summary: Good workers stay where they're respected

You don't need fancy perks, just fair treatment, clear comms, and solid onboarding. When temps feel like they matter, they'll go the extra mile and be more likely to stick around.