



Dale Carnegie said “*Life is a boomerang. What you give, you get.*” How can employers use this theory to turn The Great Resignation into an opportunity? One man did just that, and the result were astounding.

“OPERATION BOOMERANG”

Let gracefulness activate good karma to bring them back to you

by Avi Liran

More than 19 million US workers and counting have quit their jobs this year. This is the highest number recorded by the American Bureau of Labor statistics in history. According to Microsoft, 49% of the Singapore workforce plans to leave their job by the end of this year.

Has all of the negativity about The Great Resignation that is flooding

the news and our social media feeds blinded us from the great opportunities that lie within? To answer that, we need to first look at why so many are leaving their jobs.

While it is true that a large percentage of employees are leaving their jobs due to a lack of worker protection, stress, disrespect and dissatisfaction with their

organization’s culture, there are more profound reasons for resignations.

The pandemic ‘pressure cooker’ of lockdowns and work-from-home isolation allowed many the time to reflect and evaluate their career choices. Not only has this pushed people into realizing that they need to seek out opportunities which align with their values, but it has also

encouraged individuals to pursue their desired careers and dreams.

In fact, Aviva, the UK's largest insurance provider, found that around 60% of workers in the UK intend on changing careers. In addition to this, the silo effect of corporate culture, exacerbated by covid, has left many employees feeling disconnected, unrecognized, and unseen. This has created a craving for a sense of belonging.

With so many people globally reshaping their priorities, The Great

Resignation could be seen as an incubator for opportunities. So, what can we, as employers, do as our talent leaves? How can we use this to our advantage? What would a delightful leader do?

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THE DELIGHTFUL LEADER APPROACH

Greg Allan, the former general manager of Marriott in Singapore, the President & COO Aryaduta Hotel

Group in Indonesia, is an accomplished C-level hospitality leader. He taught me a valuable lesson in 2007 how a delightful leader should approach the issue that is pertinent to our current massive employees' resignation.

During that year, many new hotels were recruiting new talent, among them were the two integrated resorts: Marina Bay Sands and Resort World Sentosa who needed more than 15,000 people. Where would they hunt for the best managers? Marriott was at the top of their list because it





is well known to have a great culture that constantly develops their team members.

Greg had to do something to stop the exodus of talent, so he embarked on “Operation Boomerang”: Greg made a choice. With each resigning employee, he would invest time, energy, kindness, and support instead of the expressing the natural disappointment felt when people that you invest in and care for leave. What came back to him was astounding.

Having spent more than 15 years researching the best practices from around the world in Delivering Delight within organisations, I was captivated by his wisdom.

Greg shared that in Singapore (and in many other countries in Asia), when an employee is giving you notice of leaving their job, it is almost always too late to keep them. There is a slim chance that they can

be tempted into staying as they have likely already signed up with their future employer.

LET THE BIRDS FLY

It is natural to feel hurt to see an employee leave after you have invested in them. But if you are confi-

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dent that you are good leader working in a positive and nourishing organisational culture, don’t fall into the ego trap of bitterness toward their ‘ungratefulness’. Instead practice your values and remain graceful and

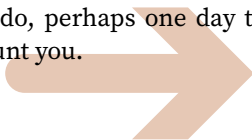
hospitable. Remember your own journey and that the new generation will be unlikely to stay forever. After all, birds eventually fly out of the nest.

INVEST IN THE FAREWELL

Investing in your farewell process is an excellent way to make your ex-employee feel great. Your remaining employees will see another human side of the culture. They will leave feeling respected, well-treated and appreciated to end on a sweet note. Praise them for the great work they have done. Share how you believe they contributed to the company and made an impact. Offer them authentic and unconditional friendship and wish them success in their new journey.

Plant seeds for the future by offering a listening ear in case they need an advice. Your mentorship can be valuable for them as they may face unfamiliar challenges in their new role. Then send them off with your blessings.

By investing in your farewell process, they are likely to become loyal members of your company's alumni. They will become your ambassadors and recommend young talent to you. You never know how well they'll do, perhaps one day they will headhunt you.



WAIT. INVITE. LISTEN.

It's likely you will want to understand their motive for leaving, however, exit interviews are mostly ceremonial. In most cases, especially in Asia, people who just leave do not want to hurt the 'rice bowl' of others and you will get limited information. Be patient.

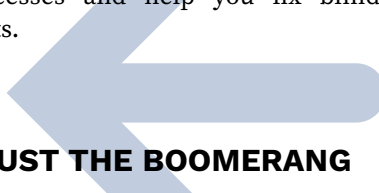
A few weeks after they leave, invite the talent that you would have liked to keep for lunch. Most of them will be

flattered that the GM is interested in them and will show up.

As they are already working for another organisation, they will be more likely to be open with you and tell you if there was an internal reason why they left your organisation.

Now, you have an opportunity to ask them about their experience in their new role and offer your mentorship. If they reveal that they do not have a great boss or peers and if the culture does not match up to yours, you can tell them “I kept this job open for you, come back home. You will thrive here. We value you here.”

The honest feedback you will get with distance is invaluable can be used to improve your culture, your processes and help you fix blind spots.



TRUST THE BOOMERANG

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Greg called this ‘Operation Boomerang’ to be used for the best among those who left. To his great delight, more than one third of the people who were headhunted, came back!

Their return had stopped the mass loss of talent at the company. When they came back with increased loyalty, they were more motivated than ever before. They shared

stories with their peers and employees on why it was better to work for Marriott than for their competitors. Their stories were contagious. When people heard that the grass outside is not greener, it increased also job satisfaction and levels of engagement in their colleagues.

So, what about the two thirds who did not return? We can use their feedback to our advantage and improve on our organisations through a deeper understanding of what employees want from their workplace.

The boomerang has returned in a variety of ways. Use the Boomerang approach to have good business and personal karma. What you give, you get so much more. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Known as the ‘Chief Delighting Officer,’ **Avi Liran** is an author, economist, a TEDx global expert professional speaker. He has been researching, consulting, and implementing positive cultures transformation in 21 countries, helping top leadership teams to create delightful employees and customers experiences that deliver superior business results.