

Preface

High-performing employees are great people to have around. They hit targets, add value, contribute to the organization overall, and inspire others.

For those same reasons, your top employees are also those most likely to be pursued or at least actively welcomed by other organizations.

Top performers also tend to have an inconveniently realistic idea of their own worth and an uncanny knack of knowing what other career options are available to them at any time.

They can also (sometimes) be cranky, independent-minded mavericks who can be distinctly hard to manage.

All of this taken together makes the manager's job of retaining the best employees a delicate amalgam of motivation, support, diplomatic chastising, and inspiration.



Between providing resources and setting challenges, agreeing to compensation and coaching for higher performance, rewarding achievement and encouraging teamwork, the top performer's manager is increasingly expected to be some sort of corporate Superman or Wonder Woman.

While this book won't turn you into a superhero, it will provide you with the tips, tools, and techniques you need to not only manage your key employees, but also inspire, motivate, and—above all—*keep* them.

I've personally been benefiting from, managing, developing, challenging, retaining (and occasionally firing) key employees in organizations large and small, for-profit and not-for-profit, for over 20 years. The lessons I've learned (sometimes painfully) from many cultures and countries are in this book. I know you will benefit from them.

Special Features

The idea behind the books in the Briefcase Series is to give you practical information written in a friendly person-to-person style. The chapters are short, deal with tactical issues, and include lots of examples. They also feature numerous sidebars designed to give you different types of specific information. Here's a description of these sidebars and how they're used in this book.

 <p>Smart Managing</p>	<p>Boxes with this icon are designed to give you tips and tactics that will help you more effectively implement the methods described in this book.</p>
	<p>These boxes provide warnings for where things could go wrong in planning and implementing employee retention initiatives.</p>
	<p>These boxes highlight insider tips for taking advantage of the practices described in this book.</p>
	<p>Every subject has some special jargon and terms. These boxes provide definitions of these concepts.</p>
	<p>It's always important to have examples of what others have done, either well or not so well. Find these stories in these boxes.</p>
	<p>This identifies boxes where you'll find specific procedures you can follow to take advantage of the book's advice.</p>
	<p>How can you make sure you won't make a mistake when managing? You can't, but these boxes will give you practical advice on how to minimize the possibility.</p>

x Preface

Acknowledgments

Most of all, I owe a debt greater than an acknowledgement to my partner in this book (and in all things), Julie Wilson. As well as managing our business, Julie is responsible for motivating, chastising, and inspiring me, every day. She does an incredible job and is the only real superhero I've met.

I am indebted to Hank Karp and Danilo Sirias, whose foundational and insightful paper "Retaining Generation X" has influenced my thinking for some time now and the structure of which is used (with their permission) in Chapter 4. You can read more from Hank and Danilo in their latest book, *Bridging the Boomer-Xer Gap: Creating Authentic Teams for High Performance at Work* (Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc., 2002).

Finally, my thanks also to John Woods and Robert Magnan at CWL Publishing Enterprises, who are responsible for the original idea and for lifting the manuscript to the level of excellence required for inclusion in this series. For Bob in particular, my thanks for wrangling the first draft into manageable size.

Of course, any errors of fact or interpretation are entirely my own.