

How IM Flash Leveraged Their EVP to Decrease Turnover by 50%

IM Flash is a joint venture formed in 2006 by Intel and Micron that manufactures the most technologically advanced flash memory in the world. They are recognized as one of the anchor companies in the fast-growing high-tech industry along the Wasatch Mountains in Utah, better known as the “Silicon Slopes.” The company employs over 1,700 people, mostly engineers and technicians, in a highly competitive industry.



To maintain growth and achieve revenue goals, IM Flash is focused on recruiting and retaining top engineers and technicians in its fabrication department. These highly-skilled and experienced workers are the backbone in the production of the flash memory chips that are found in most of the digital devices we use every day, such as cell phones, tablets, and laptops.

The employee turnover rate at IM Flash hovered around 10 percent annually, already lower than the industry average of 13 percent. Company executives knew they could do better but didn't have clear data on where to start. They needed a better understanding of what would attract, retain, and engage their workforce.

After evaluating multiple providers, IM Flash decided to partner with DecisionWise to conduct an Employee Value Proposition (EVP) study. This project was intended to provide clarity around the value proposition the company offered that was most important to employees in different demographic groups. The company could then make changes to attract and retain the best talent.

DecisionWise conducted interviews with leaders, and focus groups with employees. These meetings provided a long list of current and potential offerings that employees valued. A survey was then administered to the entire employee population to rank-order these offerings and



identify those that were most influential to attract, retain, and engage employees.

DecisionWise analyzed the survey results and created a segmentation report that identified four key groups of employees, most critical to the success of the company. The report identified what initially attracted each group to the company, and what was most important in their decision to stay with IM Flash. For example, one segment indicated that they believed in the future of IM Flash, but did not see themselves as part of that future due to a lack of clear career opportunities.

Using this data, IM Flash implemented four key changes:

1. Flexible Work Arrangements:

A key segment of employees voiced a desire for a flexible work schedule that included options for working from home, working four 10-hour shifts a week, or changing work hours. The company approved these changes, to be implemented by each manager on a case-by-case basis. Surprisingly, not many employees took advantage of these changes, but the result was an overall greater sense of autonomy among all workers. Knowing that more flexibility was available increased the perception that the company cares about employees and their work-life balance.



2. More Flexible PTO:

Even though IM Flash offered a generous PTO program, some employees expressed a desire for a sabbatical leave program, like other companies in the industry offer, that allowed employees to leave for several weeks at a time. Others described how they felt guilty if they took off extended amounts of time because it was frowned upon by management and left their team short-handed. In fact, many employees accrued several weeks of PTO over the years that was not used. In response, two key changes were made to the PTO benefit:



- a. Employees could take up to five weeks of accrued PTO at one time, equivalent to a “sabbatical-type” leave. Accompanying this change was communication with leaders to change the stigma of taking long periods of PTO.
- b. PTO accrual hours were capped at a lower level to encourage employees to use their time off or lose it.



These policy changes shifted attitudes about PTO. No longer was it a badge of honor to maintain the highest number of PTO hours. Employees were encouraged by leaders to use their PTO so they could come back to work recharged, ready to contribute, often with new and innovative ideas.

3.Improved Career Development Opportunities:

Employees frequently mentioned the desire for more learning and advancement opportunities. IM Flash offers training courses, workshops, and regularly posts internal job openings, but some employees wanted direct support, advice, and advocacy from their immediate leader. The company decided to implement a new policy wherein all managers conducted a career development meeting with each of their employees. These one-on-one meetings were held quarterly to discuss career goals, learning opportunities, and progress.

4.Onsite Gym:

The IM Flash facility is located near several other high-tech companies. One of these companies has a nice fitness center with large windows at the front of the building that IM Flash employees see every day on their drive to work. Per the EVP results, IM Flash employees ranked an onsite gym first on their list of potential benefits the company could offer. This idea had already been in the



works for some time, so a new fitness center was built the following year. Even though it is hard to quantify an increase in production due to a fitness center, the company created goodwill with employees when they saw that their number one request was fulfilled.

IM Flash implemented these changes over a one-year period. During the following two years, turnover steadily decreased to an average of five percent, down from the previous average of 10

percent. Not only did turnover decrease, but the company culture improved, with employees iterating on the next survey how much they appreciated the new changes. IM Flash listens to employees and matches what employees value with what the organization can offer, resulting in a culture of openness, collaboration, and feedback. IM Flash continues to strive to be one of the best employers in the world, in addition to making the finest flash memory.



About DecisionWise

DecisionWise, Inc. is a management consulting firm specializing in leadership and organization development using assessments, feedback, coaching and training. DecisionWise services include employee engagement surveys, 360-degree feedback, leadership coaching and organization development. DecisionWise was founded in 1996 and is privately held. With offices in the United States and The Netherlands, DecisionWise operates in over 70 countries and conducts surveys in over 30 languages.

