# NICOLE BENSEN

SIMPLE TOOLS, POWERFUL RESULTS

BOOST MORALE, REDUCE BURNOUT, AND INCREASE RETENTION

What if you could invest in fun, interactive workshops that not only **support your employees' mental wellbeing**, but also **create a culture of ownership** that can pay dividends in the form of **increased productivity and reduced turnover**?

(Spoiler: it's possible, and they're going to love you for it!)

WHY THIS MATTERS*

JOB SUCCESS

75%
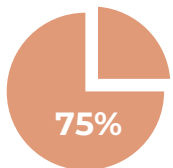
Only 25% of long term job success is predicted by intelligence and technical skills (which most companies prioritize) —in reality, optimism, social connection, and stress perception predict 75% of long term success.

RETENTION & REPLACEMENT

4X as many people left their job due to "Engagement and Culture" or "Wellbeing and Work-Life Balance" compared to those who primarily left for better "Pay/Benefits."
The cost of turnover averages 50–200% of annual salary, per employee.

PROFIT & ENGAGEMENT

90% of workgroups that "implemented a strengths intervention of any magnitude" saw performance increases in sales, profit, and employee engagement.

INNOVATION

Organizations that have a strong learning culture are 92% more likely to develop novel processes and products.

*View sources and additional info: nicolebensen.com/workshops

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WHY DO EMPLOYEES LEAVE COMPANIES?

"

Dissatisfaction in "Engagement and Culture" (41%) and "Wellbeing and Work-Life Balance" (28%) made up **69% of the total reasons employees left in 2023**.

That means **four times as many people left their job due to "Engagement and Culture" or "Wellbeing and Work-Life Balance"** reasons, compared with the number of people who primarily left for better "Pay/Benefits" (16%).

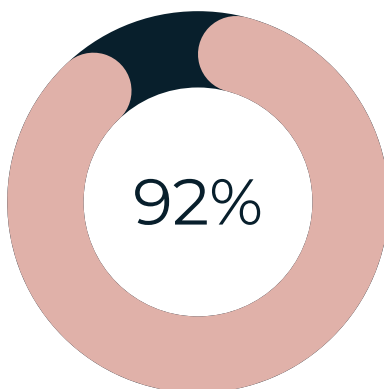*Gallup Indicator: 2023 Employee Retention and Attraction*

# HOW CAN LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES HELP?

SUPPORTS RETENTION

34%
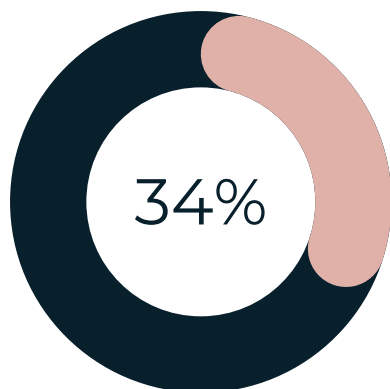
Employers offering professional development opportunities have 34% higher retention.

YIELDS MORE CREATIVE PRODUCTS AND PROCESSES

92%

According to Deloitte research, organizations that have a strong learning culture are 92% more likely to develop novel processes and products.

INCREASES JOB SATISFACTION

32%
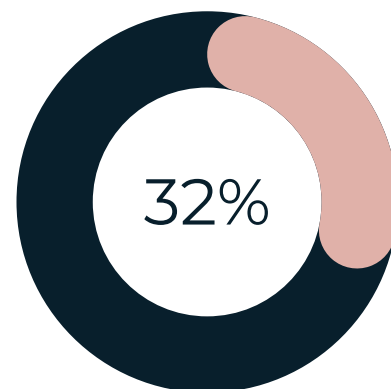
32% of tech workers said self-improvement, either through employee development or via tuition reimbursement, was the most-valued characteristic of their job. That benefit beat out health and wellness programs and in-office perks.

Wharton Online: 5 Reasons to Offer Employees Learning & Development Opportunities

WHAT KIND OF DEVELOPMENT IS BEST?

90% of the workgroups that implemented a Strengths Intervention of any magnitude saw performance increases at or above the ranges shown below.

- 10%-19% increase in sales
- 14%-29% increase in profit
- 3%-7% increase in customer engagement
- 9%-15% increase in engaged employees
- 6- to 16-point decrease in turnover (in low-turnover organizations)
- 26- to 72-point decrease in turnover (in high-turnover organizations)

HBR: Developing Employees' Strengths Boosts Sales, Profit, and Engagement

People who use their strengths every day are 3x times more likely to report having an excellent quality of life, 6x more likely to be engaged at work, 8% more productive and 15% less likely to quit their jobs.

Gallup: Employees Who Use Their Strengths Outperform Those Who Don't

MORE ENGAGED

MORE PRODUCTIVE

LESS LIKELY TO QUIT

"In our extensive research, Gallup has found that **building employees' strengths is a far more effective approach to improving performance than trying to improve weaknesses**.

When employees know and use their strengths, they are **more engaged, perform better, and are less likely to leave their company.**

Gallup: How Employees' Strengths Make Your Company Stronger

WHAT DETERMINES JOB SUCCESS?

25%
Intelligence and Skills

75%
Optimism, Social Connection,
and Stress Perception
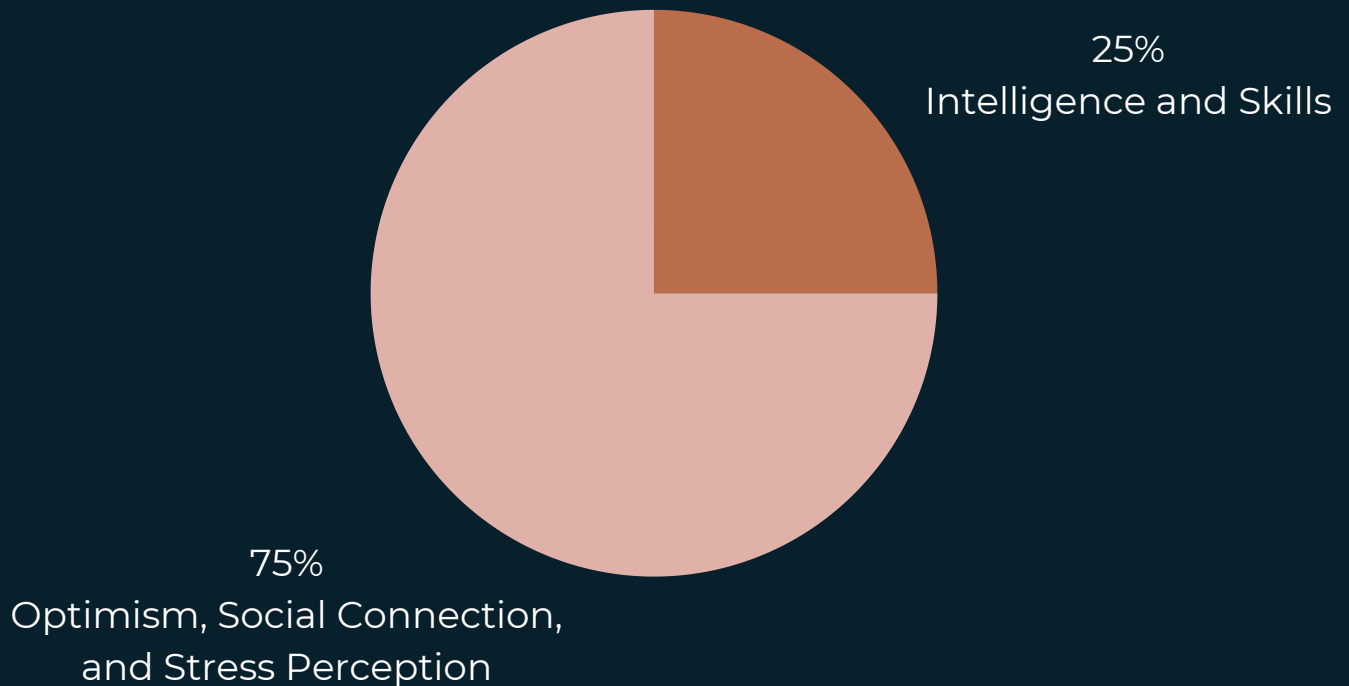
"75% of long term job success is predicted **not by intelligence and technical skills,** which is normally how we hire, educate and train, but it's predicted by three other umbrella categories."

—*Shawn Achor, Harvard Psychologist, speaker, and best-selling author*

1
OPTIMISM
THE BELIEF YOUR BEHAVIOR MATTERS IN THE MIDST OF CHALLENGE

2
SOCIAL CONNECTION
WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE DEPTH AND BREADTH IN YOUR SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

3
STRESS PERCEPTION
VIEWING STRESS AS A CHALLENGE TO OVERCOME INSTEAD OF A THREAT

CORPORATE & TEAM WORKSHOPS TO BOOST MORALE, REDUCE BURNOUT, AND INCREASE RETENTION

While each workshop packs a punch, a single session is just the starting point. A true cultural shift takes root through ongoing learning and reinforcement.

Recommended programming starts with an in-person kick-off, then moves to 2-hour online sessions monthly. See workshop descriptions below.

EXAMPLE OF LUXE + IMMERSIVE LAUNCH

O1
1) Increasing Happiness: 5 Experiments to Boost Wellbeing and Success
2) Building Connections and Psychological Safety
1-day intensive or 2 half-day sessions

The Ultimate Vision Board Workshop
O2

O3
Effective Goal-Setting

Crafting Your Strengths-Based Personal Brand
O4

O5
The Art and Science of Self-Promotion

Not Today, Imposter Syndrome
O6

O7
Authentic Networking

Failing Forward
O8

O9
Deconstructing Biased Thinking

The Power of Gratitude
10

11
Final Workshop: Review Top Hits + Q&A

WHO ARE THESE WORKSHOPS FOR?

THESE ARE FOR YOU IF…

- You want tools to achieve big goals and avoid burnout.
- You're a manager/decision-maker who supports both the company's goals *and* your team's hopes and dreams (even if they're not role-related).
- You want your team to feel valued and empowered.
- You're tired of losing your people, not to mention your time and energy when having to rehire and train.
- You want to equip your people with strategies to build optimism, social connection, stress management, and personal and professional growth.
- You welcome the opportunity for play and levity during meaningful, sometimes vulnerable, conversations.

THESE ARE NOT FOR YOU IF…

- You want a generic HR training to tick the box of "offers support" to your people.
- You want a corporate robot in a suit to talk about the "5:00AM club," productivity hacks, and hustling.
- You want a spiritual leader to talk about green smoothies and ascending to a higher plane.

"Truly transformative. Seeing our brilliant, accomplished women get so vulnerable and raw was one of the most meaningful experiences." — Emily Mikailli, VP of People Operations, Signifyd

WORKSHOPS MENU

(Click each title to jump to the description.)

- <u>Increasing Happiness, Resilience, and Success</u>
- <u>Not Today, Imposter Syndrome</u>
- <u>The Ultimate Vision Board Workshop</u>
- <u>The Art and Science of Self-Promotion</u>
- <u>Authentic Networking</u>
- <u>Effective Goal-Setting</u>
- <u>Building Connections and Psychological Safety</u>
- <u>Crafting Your Strengths-Based Personal Brand</u>
- <u>The Power of Gratitude</u>
- Failing Forward: How to Stop Overthinking and Embrace Experimentation for Innovation
- Deconstructing Biased Thinking for Breakthrough Conversations
- Want something you don't see? Let's chat.

Myth: Learning and development opportunities are a perk.

Fact: They're a strategic investment. By upskilling your workforce and fostering a culture of learning, you'll see a direct impact on employee retention, job satisfaction, and ultimately, your bottom line through increased creativity and innovation.

- **93%** of employees will remain at a company that invests in their careers. (*LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report, 2018*)
- The typical **cost of turnover** ranges from 50% to 200% of the employee's annual salary (*Gallup Workplace 2019*)...those at the senior or executive levels tend to have disproportionately high turnover costs, **up to 213%**. (*The Center for American Progress, 2012*)
- Soft skills training generated a **256% net return on investment**. (*University of Michigan, 2017*)

Increasing Happiness: 5 Experiments to Boost Wellbeing and Success

Benefits to your organization:
Happy employees are more productive and have higher job satisfaction. (*The Happiness Advantage, Shawn Achor*) Employees who are resilient can bounce back from setbacks and manage stress effectively. When employees feel valued and supported, it fosters a more positive and collaborative work environment, contributing to reduced turnover and higher engagement.

Why is this important?
Research shows the happier you are, the more successful you are, and not the other way around, like most of us think.

Description:
A light-hearted, researched-backed workshop where you'll learn 5 simple, actionable tools to increase wellbeing immediately. We'll debunk happiness myths and explore what truly contributes to lasting happiness. You'll learn how to make mindset shifts for more wins—while benefiting the greater good!

At Netflix we are a culture of individuals who are high performing and results driven. Often we ask so much of ourselves that we forget what makes us happy and what truly quantifies 'success.' In Nicole's workshop, Increasing Happiness, Resilience & Success, I was able to let go of my expectations and instead enjoy the success I have in this very moment."

NETFLIX

Not Today, Imposter Syndrome

Benefits to your organization:
The constant fear of being exposed as a "fraud" can be incredibly draining. Teaching employees about Imposter Syndrome allows them to understand these feelings and develop coping mechanisms. This can lead to a more positive work experience, reduced stress, and a greater sense of belonging, all of which contribute to employee retention.

Why is this important?
Imposter Syndrome impacts anywhere from 56-82% of the population, according to recent studies. While this is can occur across gender, age, and career, those from socially-marginalized and underrecognized groups may be more likely to experience it due to microaggressions and systemic structures. (*Imposter Syndrome: A Universal Struggle: Jazmyn Bess, M.S.*)

Description:
Provides 3 straightforward recommendations for overcoming Imposter Syndrome with 1 hands-on activity. This workshop is significantly more effective with time for sharing and break-outs.

The Ultimate Vision Board Workshop

Benefits to your organization:
A focus on goal-setting (personal and professional) fosters a supportive culture where employees feel seen and valued. This leads to a boost in morale, higher engagement, and stronger psychological safety, building a stronger team.

Why is this important?
Vision boards help you visualize your goals and aspirations. Our brains pay closer attention to images than written words, so when we create visuals of our goals, subconsciously our brain starts searching for opportunities to help us achieve them.

Description:
You'll be guided every step of the way from planning to creation, and will walk out with your beautiful, powerful vision board. The best part? You don't need to bring magazines or glue; just show up with your biggest dreams, an open mind, and a device that allows you to use Google Slides, Powerpoint, or Canva (recommended), because we'll be creating a digital vision board you can take with you everywhere. Desktop background? Phone background? Printed out and kept on your nightstand? Yep, all doable.

"We cannot thank you enough for your incredible facilitation...and for helping MIT's female business leaders with confidence and self-promotion!"

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

The Art and Science of Self-Promotion

Benefits to your organization:
Employees who can effectively showcase their skills and contributions are more likely to be recognized for their strengths; this boosts morale and increases retention. Learning effective methods to self-advocate builds confidence and communication skills. Sharing authentically promotes a positive culture where recognition and appreciation are valued, which reduces turnover. Providing this training supports diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging as many from underserved communities face additional barriers to self-promotion.

Why is this important?
Many people, especially those from underrepresented groups, face negative consequences from not sharing their accomplishments. The benefits of self-promotion include increased confidence, visibility, personal and professional development opportunities, and an active opportunity to share your strengths and build your brand.

Description:
Participants will practice using the STAR framework to ground their self-promotion practice. They'll analyze a work contribution and learn how to tie it to business impact. They'll be guided to use facts and objective statements, and in breakouts they'll practice sharing out loud.

Authentic Networking

Benefits to your organization:
Employees who actively network become brand ambassadors for their company. When they connect with others and share positive experiences about the organization, they contribute to building brand awareness and a strong reputation in the industry. This can be a powerful lead generation tool for both sales and talent acquisition.

Internally, effective networking allows employees to connect with colleagues across various departments which fosters knowledge sharing and collaboration. Bringing together diverse perspectives from different orgs cans spark creativity and lead to innovative solutions. This cross-functional collaboration creates a more supportive work culture.

Why is this important?
Many of us "network" when we need something—a new job or a favor. But the best networkers are building relationships all the time. Sounds exhausting, right? So, let's talk about ways to have an attitude of "giving" and ways to make networking less cringey.

Description:
Participants will choose a networking goal, identify their audience, ideate strategies to build genuine connections, and practice in breakouts. We'll talk about how networking isn't asking for something from someone else, but instead is an exchange.

Effective Goal-Setting

Benefits to your organization:
Empowering employees to take ownership of their roles and careers reduces stress for both managers and employees. Getting everyone on the same page reduces friction and ambiguity. Clear goals translate to actionable plans and focused efforts, leading to higher productivity and more accurate performance metrics.

Why is this important?
Studies show we are significantly more likely to reach a desired outcome when we identify that outcome, aka, set a goal. We all know this, right? But do you know ways to increase the likelihood of reaching the goal, beyond identifying it? That's what we'll break down.

Description:
Participants will each choose a goal, then will be given step-by-step instructions on how to break the goal into smaller milestones to create a "goal map" with explicit actions. We'll talk about pausing to analyze and reassess, as well as celebrating achievements. Employees will walk out with a progressive plan forward including clear next steps.

Building Connections and Psychological Safety

Benefits to your organization:
In 2012, Google led a study to find what makes a team successful. They found 5 key elements to a high-performing team, and #1 was psychological safety. (Before you ask, the others were dependability, structure and clarity, meaning, and impact. You can Google "Project Aristotle" to learn more.)

In a psychologically-safe environment, employees are more likely to experiment, take calculated risks, and learn from mistakes. This encourages a culture of continuous learning and development, leading to better solutions and a flexible workforce. When employees feel safe, they'll voice concerns sooner, addressing issues before they escalate. A manager with empathy can create a more supportive environment leading to reduced turnover, and thus hiring costs.

Why is this important?
We spend a lot of time at work. Although our colleagues don't have to be our best friends, we'd like to be part of an organization where we feel safe and valued, am I right? You'd experience less anxiety and be proud to share your creative ideas because you know they'd be met with open minds.

Description:
This interactive workshop provides a safe space to connect with gently-guided conversations in order to build psychological safety. We'll encourage turn-taking and empathetic listening. Exercises include self-reflection, as well as small and large group discussions. We'll talk about "belonging," learn a compassion practice to remember similarities, and spend time with a guided visualization that prompts us to consider what truly matters.

Crafting Your Strengths-Based Personal Brand

Benefits to your organization:
Employees who understand their strengths are more successful. They'll be better equipped to teach those around them and learn to advocate effectively.

- People who use their strengths every day are three times more likely to report having an excellent quality of life, six times more likely to be engaged at work, 8% more productive and 15% less likely to quit their jobs.
- Building employees' strengths is a far more effective approach to improving performance than trying to improve weaknesses.
- The more hours each day that Americans can use their strengths to do what they do best, the less likely they are to report experiencing worry, stress, anger, sadness, or physical pain during the previous day.
- The more hours per day adults use their strengths, the more likely they are to report having ample energy, feeling well-rested, being happy, smiling or laughing a lot, learning something interesting, and being treated with respect.
- These well-being advantages benefit employers through higher productivity, fewer sick days, lower incidence of chronic disease, and fewer health-related expenses from their employees. Engagement and strengths orientation together create a culture that fosters high performance.

Why is this important?
Having a strong personal brand maximizes your strengths and builds credibility. It gives you choices in future opportunities.

Description:
Participants will walk out with a powerful branding statement and a deeper understanding of their strengths, skills, passions, values, and goals. They'll practice and refine their "elevator pitch" in breakouts. Importantly, we'll talk about how everyone has a personal brand already, whether you've worked on it or not. What does your brand say about you now?

Gallup: How Employees' Strengths Make Your Company Stronger and *Gallup: Employees Who Use Their Strengths Outperform Those Who Don't*

"I struggle with personal branding and your session really helped me boil it down to the essentials and get started on my personal branding journey."

Google

The Power of Gratitude

Benefits to your organization:
Leaders who show gratitude to their teams can make them feel more motivated. Feelings of gratitude are associated with less frequent negative emotions, and more frequent positive emotions such as feeling energetic, alert, and enthusiastic.

Why is this important?
Practicing gratitude improves coping skills toward stressful and traumatic events. Gratitude may also lower the symptoms of anxiety and depression, lower blood pressure, improve your sleep quality, and improve your immunity.

Description:
After laying the foundation of the benefits of practicing gratitude, we go step-by-step through three, hands-on activities.

"Our team said the workshop was the best part of the summit - leaving them with a sense of calm and realistic methods to increase their happiness."

▶ YouTube

THINK WE COULD BE A MATCH?

GRAB TIME TO CHAT

SEND ME AN EMAIL

nicole@tentaclesandtea.com

EXAMPLE "MENU" FOR TEAM OFFSITE:

STARTER

Increasing Happiness: 5 Experiments to Boost Wellbeing and Success

This workshop is light-hearted and researched-backed, and you'll learn 5 simple, actionable tools to increase wellbeing immediately. We'll talk about happiness myths, what really makes us happy (according to science), and accessible ways to boost resilience and make mindset shifts for more wins.

MAIN COURSE

Building Connections and Psychological Safety

This interactive workshop provides a safe space to connect with gently-guided conversations in order to build psychological safety. Exercises include self-reflection, as well as small and large group discussions. We'll talk about "belonging," learn a compassion practice to remember similarities, and spend time with a guided visualization that prompts us to consider what truly matters.

DESSERT

The Ultimate Vision Board Workshop

We begin with individual exercises to get clear on goals and desires, followed by hands-on (digital) vision board creation. You'll walk out with a vision board that reflects aspirations and goals from your 10 "Life Pillars."

DRINK

Crafting Your Strengths-Based Personal Brand

This workshop is very interactive with several short breakouts. We reflect on strengths, passions, values, skills, and goals, so participants walk out with a foundation for their personal brand statement. We break down ways to identify strengths (an optional 15-minute strengths survey is encouraged to complete prior to the session), craft a statement that includes strengths and goals, and practice sharing it aloud with partners.

WHO IS NICOLE BENSEN?

Recognized as a "Woman of Influence" by the Silicon Valley Business Journal, Nicole Bensen leads team building workshops and delivers keynotes to help companies create a culture where people feel seen, supported, and inspired.

She spent nearly a decade at Google where she managed Executive Learning and Development programs before experiencing burnout. This propelled her to pursue her Positive Psychology Coaching certification and to found her company, Tentacles and Tea, where she translates research studies into unpretentious, fun, wellbeing activities.

After spending ~40 years in Silicon Valley, she relocated to the Seattle-area for more space and more trees. She lives with her three kids, two cats, and one husband. She loves red lipstick, luxury hotels, and dresses with pockets.

Nicole is trusted by leaders at Fortune 500 companies, including Google, YouTube, Netflix, and ebay, to lead interactive, team building workshops that provide concrete methods to boost morale, reduce burnout, and increase retention.