

*Over the past decade, talent has become more important than capital, strategy, or R&D. Think about the sources of competitive advantage that companies have. Capital is accessible today for good ideas and good projects.*

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## RETAINING THE “BEST AND BRIGHTEST”

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# The most frustrating aspect

The most frustrating aspect of the design business today is recruiting talented individuals, nurturing their growth, and then watching that talent walk out the door. How can the design firm retain its best and brightest talent?

If the firm is people focused, it will do very well in today’s high-speed, competitive environment because it will keep its best and brightest. If the firm pays no attention to its employees’ needs, it will lose its talent base and may not survive. HR should be focused on creating a people-centric firm that is flexible in its compensation and willing to listen to its employees for its wants and needs. To be people-centric, the design firm should measure its ability to offer:

- *Pay and benefit packages*
- *Opportunities*
- *Job security*
- *Pride in work and firm*
- *Openness and fairness*
- *Camaraderie and friendliness*

In order to attract the best talent, the design firm should provide a message of who they are and what they expect from an employee. The best people respond to four kinds of messages:

1. ***Go with a winner.*** This message is for people who want a high-performing firm, one where they will have lots of advancement opportunities.
2. ***Big risk, big reward.*** People who respond to this message want an environment where they will be challenged either to do exceptionally well or to leave—a firm where there is considerable risk but good compensation, and where they can advance their career rapidly.
3. ***Save the world.*** This message attracts people who want a firm with an inspiring mission and an exciting challenge.
4. ***Lifestyles.*** People who respond best to this message are seeking a firm that offers more flexibility and better lifestyle benefits, such as a good location.