

Fight the Cyber Security Talent Shortage with a Strong Retention Strategy

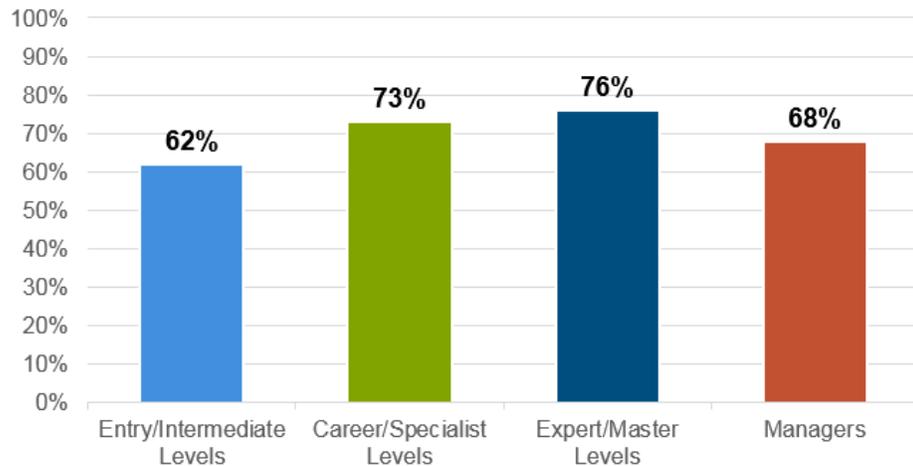
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Having trouble retaining cyber security employees? Chances are you are not alone. Pearl Meyer's 2019 Cyber Security Salary Survey reveals that over two-thirds of firms experience difficulty retaining these high demand employees.

Firms Reporting Difficulty Retaining Cyber Security Talent



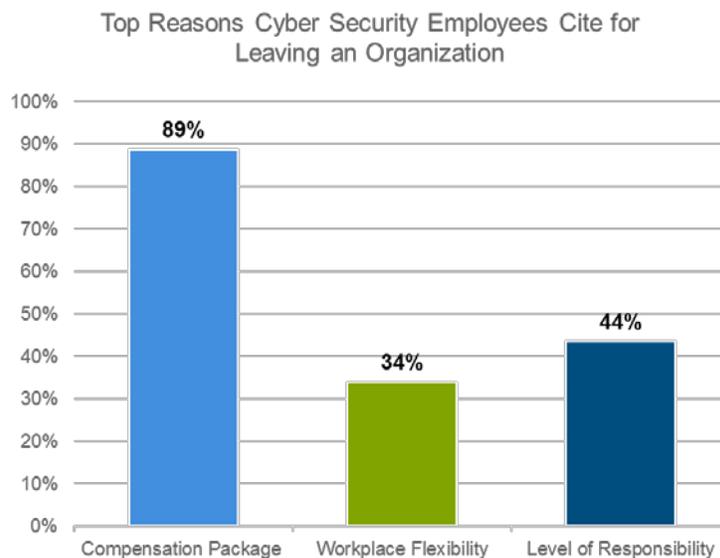
Retaining staff proves to be a shared struggle in the rapidly emerging cyber security field and the availability of qualified talent is not expected to catch up with market demands anytime soon. In fact, the US Department of Commerce projects a global shortage of 1.8 million cyber security employees by 2022¹.

¹ [Supporting the Growth and Sustainment of the Nation's Cybersecurity Workforce](#)



What Causes Cyber Employees to Leave?

Understanding what motivates employees to leave positions is necessary when devising plans to combat turnover. While cash is not necessarily king in attracting cyber employees, the compensation package is by far the most common reason employees cite for leaving an organization.



The 2019 Cyber Security Salary Survey asked participating companies to rank the top three reasons cyber employees cite for both joining and leaving the organization. Respondents reported that technology, innovation, and interesting project work were the top reasons cited for joining the organization, however the results reveal that the compensation package is paramount in preventing cyber security turnover. It is crucial for human resource professionals to understand what elements of compensation cyber employees expect and desire in order to successfully hire and retain talent. Compensation surveys are one way to gain access to this valuable information and to understand how the market is rewarding critical talent.

What Can Organizations Offer to Retain Cyber Security Employees?

1. Annual Short-Term Incentives

Offering employees an annual bonus opportunity is a best-practice approach. Clearly defined and communicated performance metrics and potential incentive payouts can entice employees to both perform at a high level and remain at the organization in order to receive the award. The 2019 Cyber Security Salary Survey reported that over 75% of individual contributors were eligible for short-term incentives, with around half of them receiving an award in the last year. The survey also reveals that average annual short-term incentive awards are approximately 10% of base salary for these individuals.

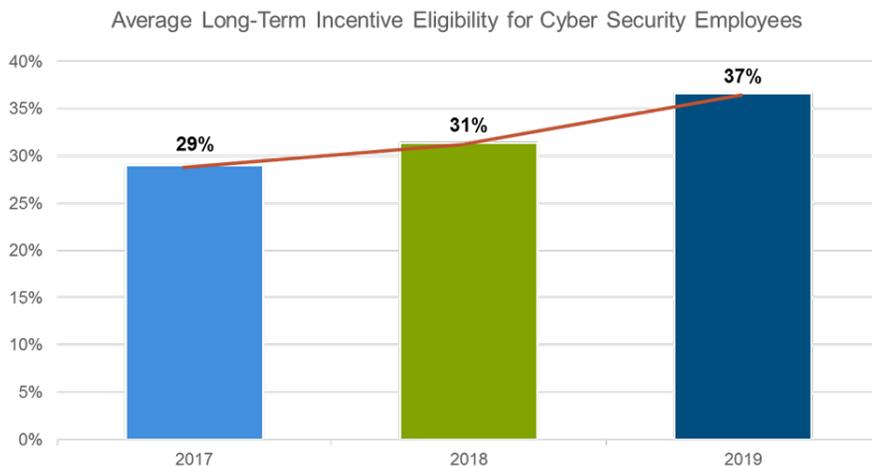


2. Retention Bonuses

Another way that companies can reward employees is through retention bonuses. In general, this type of bonus payout is used with the goal of keeping key talent in the organization. Retention bonuses may also be paid out when there is a need to keep certain employees in crucial times, such as during a merger, company reorganization, or major project. As reported in the 2019 Cyber Security Survey, retention bonuses can be substantial and range from approximately \$8,000 for entry-level employees, to more than \$30,000 for top-level managers.

3. Long-Term Incentive Awards

Survey data reports that long-term incentives are being made available to an increasing number of cyber security employees. These plans are typically equity-based and can encourage employees to remain at the organization for several years until their equity awards vest. As shown in the chart below, eligibility in long-term incentive programs has increased nearly 10% over the past three years. This trend may suggest that more organizations are considering using long-term incentives to reward employees in a different way, or to supplement to the annual bonus payout that many employees have come to expect.



Conclusion

Moving forward, cyber security talent will continue to be crucial for organizations across the globe to fulfill their business objectives. Retaining employees will also be an ongoing challenge as top talent in the industry will remain in high demand. Detailed market data covering base pay, incentives, and perquisites is a useful tool in structuring an attractive compensation package.

To purchase Pearl Meyer’s 2019 Cyber Security Salary Survey or for additional information please contact survey@pearlmeyer.com.

Juliana Rich, Cornell University student and 2019 Intern at Pearl Meyer, co-authored this post.

About the Author

Daniel Besser is a Survey Account Manager in the Boston Office. Dan joined the Pearl Meyer survey team in the summer of 2017 and manages a portfolio of compensation and benefits surveys, in addition to handling client accounts.

About Pearl Meyer

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