

The #1 Talent Retention Book in the World—
Over 750,000 Copies Sold

LOVE 'EM or LOSE 'EM

**GETTING GOOD
PEOPLE TO STAY**

26 Engagement Strategies for Busy Managers

SIXTH EDITION

*Updated with New
Content Linking Inclusion
and Engagement*

Beverly Kaye and **Sharon Jordan-Evans**

More Praise for *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em*, Sixth Edition

"A passionate book about how to deal with the most vexing problem organizations now confront—attracting and retaining the best talent. With knowing wit and practical intelligence, Kaye and Jordan-Evans give us elegant solutions and engaging examples. Based on a solid foundation of broad-based research, *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em* will give you a sense of urgency, a renewed faith in your own leadership abilities, and delight that you took the time to read and use it."

—**Jim Kouzes, coauthor of *The Leadership Challenge* and Dean's Executive Fellow of Leadership, Leavey School of Business, Santa Clara University**

"This sixth edition is a strong shout out to the importance of using a diversity and inclusion lens as leaders practice effective engagement and retention strategies. Bev and Sharon say, 'Love 'em practices support engagement *and* inclusion.' Inclusion must be practiced in parallel with love 'em efforts or you risk losing key members of your diverse workforce. Read this book if you want tips for how to include, engage, and retain your talent."

—**Julie O'Mara, Board Chair, The Centre for Global Inclusion**

"It's no wonder this book has had a twenty-year life. The twenty-six practices that Bev and Sharon describe continue to give any leader at any level the how-tos of engagement and retention."

—**Marshall Goldsmith, New York Times bestselling author of *Triggers*, *Mojo*, and *What Got You Here Won't Get You There***

"Our global strategy is based on recruiting and developing the best talent. Retaining and engaging that talent globally is crucial to every manager's business goals. *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em* is their playbook."

—**J. Craig Mundy, Senior Vice President, Ingersoll Rand**

"I'm a big fan of the 'stay interview' and its power; nothing speaks louder than a manager who genuinely cares. That's just one great idea from this latest edition of *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em*, which should be at every manager's fingertips!"

—**Rebecca Ray, Executive Vice President, Human Capital, The Conference Board**

"The biggest challenge facing organizations today is keeping their good people. *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em* can help you build a productive and healthy organization that people will not want to leave."

—**Ken Blanchard, coauthor of *The One Minute Manager* and *The 3 Keys to Empowerment***

“Talent matters. Few dispute this truth. But keeping great talent continues to challenge many companies. This marvelous book offers specific tools and hundreds of examples of how to care for people. *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em* is the best treatise available on retaining talent.”

—**Dave Ulrich, Professor, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, and coauthor of *HR from the Outside In***

“The principles laid out in *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em* offer opportunity for all those committed to advancing true equity and inclusion in their businesses. The future of inclusive organizations lies in mitigating bias across talent management practices, and this book provides key practices to consider. Kudos to Bev Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans for timeless wisdom on retaining and engaging talent!”

—**Liji Thomas, Head of Diversity and Inclusion, Southern California Edison**

“You just have to love *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em*. This charming, clever, practical, and user-friendly book is a great desk-side coach for anyone who manages people.”

—**Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Professor, Harvard Business School, and author of *Think outside the Building***

“Kaye and Jordan-Evans offer a user-friendly, practical guide that reflects the realities of diversity. *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em* challenges managers not to simply accept the loss of employees but rather embrace responsibility for the critical tasks of developing and retaining talent.”

—**The late Dr. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., author of *Redefining Diversity and Beyond Race and Gender***

LOVE 'EM

or LOSE 'EM

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LOVE 'EM **or LOSE 'EM**

GETTING GOOD PEOPLE TO STAY

SIXTH EDITION

Beverly Kaye and
Sharon Jordan-Evans



Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Love ‘Em or Lose ‘Em, Sixth Edition

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*To Barry and our newlywed daughters. Lindsey and Jill,
may you always do what you love and love what you do.*

—Bev

*To Mike, our four wonderful kids,
and six amazing grandkids.
Thank you for continually reminding me
that life is really all about lovin' 'em.*

—Sharon

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Introduction

A Proven Approach to Managing and Leading

Admit it, you *love* them—even if you don’t use that word. They are your stars: your high-fliers and solid citizens alike. You cannot afford to lose them. They work remotely or on-site and they show up every day to do the work you need them to do. They are critical to your success, and they are the heart and soul of your organization.

So how will you keep them engaged? How will you get them to stay (both psychologically and physically) while others try to entice them away?

This book will help you do just that. We wrote it for you—a busy manager who is doing more with less and finding your talent to be your most prized commodity.

This book is for you if you manage people in a small company (less than 500 employees). Today those organizations employ nearly 50 percent of the US workforce.¹ And this book is for you if you manage in a large company. Why? Because we focus on what *you*, the individual manager, can do to engage and retain the talent on your team, not on what your company should be doing. (And we agree, senior leaders and HR professionals have important roles to play, as they create policies and practices that help build inclusive, engaging environments.)

Are You a Manager or a Leader?

We use the terms *manager* and *leader* interchangeably throughout the book. We count on you being both. Your talented people do too.

Anyone can be a leader and a manager. You will have to be both a leader and a manager in your work; choosing when to switch roles is the trick. Managers optimize the organization and its people to meet strategic goals. Leaders drag the organization and its people kicking and screaming into a strategic future.²

What You'll Find Here

Research-supported and full of easy-to-do recommendations, this book offers four key truths.

Truth 1: Engaging and Keeping Good People Is a Perennial Issue

Never before have companies relied so heavily on their human assets for their competitive advantage. You need your best people to stay, regardless of economic ups and downs. By *stay*, we mean that your talented people have not just checked in but are tuned in and turned on as well. They are engaged in the business of the business. Engagement and retention are two sides of the same coin. This book is about both.

Truth 2: The Manager Has Influence

Many managers claim no responsibility for employee engagement and retention. They believe retention is largely about money, perks, and benefits—areas where they have little control. We know that is not true. In addition to fair pay, people want challenging and meaningful work, recognition, and respect. And they want to be included, to feel part of the team. You can influence these factors. Senior leadership and organizational policies matter, but you have more power and influence than anyone else in the engagement and retention challenge.

Truth 3: Love 'Em Practices Support Engagement *and* Inclusion

The truth is your talented people cannot feel included if they are not engaged. And they can't be engaged without feeling like they belong. They feel included and are engaged when you show you care about their *growth and development*, demonstrate a *style* that breeds loyalty, and continue to build a *culture* that attracts and keeps talent. When your talented people feel a sense of belonging, they can truly bring their whole selves to work. Notice, respect, celebrate, and leverage the differences among them. Why? Because when they bring their unique perspectives

and skills, your diverse workforce helps you and your organization survive and thrive in a highly competitive business environment.

Truth 4: Leadership Development 101 Demands Love 'Em Practices

Love 'em practices (A–Z) must become second nature to anyone who has direct reports. Most remember the oft-repeated quote from the McKinsey War for Talent research, “People don’t leave companies, they leave managers.”³ Although all the 26 practices are common sense, they are not yet common practice. Organizations that hold managers accountable for turning knowledge about engagement and retention into action will come out ahead.

Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: The Message in the Title

Readers of our book (this is our sixth edition) have loved the title **Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting *Good* People to *Stay***. But it’s not just a catchy title. The words drive to the heart of our message. Here’s what we mean:

Love. Some said the word *love* would not be accepted in the business world, but we couldn’t find an alternative that stood for so much. Love 'em leaders genuinely care about their people. They appreciate, nurture, grow, recognize, challenge, understand, and respect them. And they believe this is the job of being a leader.

Lose. You can lose people physically or psychologically. Loss is just as serious when talented people retire on the job as when they leave to join a competitor.

Good. Consider your solid citizens, not just your high-potentials. Stars are people at any level who bring value to the organization.

Stay. Encourage talented employees to stay with the enterprise (if not your own department)—for at least a little while longer. Talent will be the key differentiating factor in the competitive battle ahead.

You have more power and influence in the employee engagement and retention equation than anyone else. For your employees, you are the *face* of the organization. Engaged, highly productive employees help you, your team, and your organization excel.

Research Base

We delivered the love 'em message to managers worldwide, and we learned—*directly from them and from their employees*—what works and what doesn't. Over the past 20 years, we've asked over 18,000 people the question "What kept you—or what keeps you—in an organization for a while?" Our analysis of that data helped us form the original 26 practices and chapters A–Z.

We've built on that original research, meeting with managers from large and small companies around the world. With our team of facilitators, we've listened, consulted, provided training, and learned. We've also used data from exit interviews, focus groups, articles, journals, and books to update and ensure that every new edition includes the latest thinking about employee engagement.

Love 'Em or Lose 'Em Is . . .

Timely. Things change and every new edition reflects that change. We've updated stories, which came from colleagues, good friends, and leaders who read the book or attended one of the learning opportunities we offered. We also bring you the latest statistics and workplace views. In every previous edition of *Love 'Em*, we've highlighted tips for recognizing unconscious bias and becoming a more inclusive manager. This time we've expanded on that important topic. We look through an inclusion lens in some way in every chapter, and we offer countless practices, insights, and tips to help you better manage a diverse workforce.

Timeless. This book is evergreen. The love 'em practice will work as well in 2030 (we plan to be around!) as it did in 1999 (first edition). Through 20 years of workplace changes, *Love 'Em's* engagement strategies hold true. Why? Because despite booms and busts, technology advances, increasing diversity, terrorist attacks, talent wars, layoffs, and a global pandemic, people want what they've always wanted. *Employees* want—and now expect—meaningful work, good bosses, recognition, and a chance to learn and grow. And *managers* want their amazing people to stay—for at least a little while longer.

Universal. The suggestions throughout the book should work equally well for large and small businesses, in India or in Idaho, with appropriate customization for cultural, language, generational, ethnic, or individual differences.

But What If Everything Changes?

You: We dealt with COVID-19 and its aftermath, and it felt like everything changed.

Us: It's true. Both immediately and long term, it seems that the coronavirus altered everything: aspects of how we live, work, raise our kids, care for our parents, travel, educate, celebrate, collaborate, and connect.

You: So then how does this book help me be a better manager in a dramatically altered situation?

Us: We've written six editions of this book amid economic booms and busts, talent shortages, and massive layoffs—and then, a global pandemic. How could the lessons be relevant in every one of these times? The lessons work because people basically want the same things, no matter the era or circumstances. This book tells you what those things are and how to deliver in your own creative, authentic way.

You: I'm a good manager. So should I just keep doing what I do?

Us: That depends. Are you listening more these days? Thinking more creatively about how your people can get what they really want and need? Especially in tough times, are you asking questions like "Are you okay?" "What can I do? What can we do to help?" If you say, "Yes," then keep doing what you're doing. If you say, "Not really," then take stock, care more, ask more, and really listen to your talented people. Collaborate with them to find solutions to their unique challenges.

Close the Gap between Knowing and Doing

As you read this book, you'll think, "I already knew this" or "I meant to do this." People say that knowledge is power. But not until knowledge turns into action is it power. Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert Sutton

literally wrote the book on this topic. They say, “Managers who turn knowledge into action avoid the ‘smart talk trap.’ Managers must use plans, analysis, meetings, and presentations to *inspire deeds*—not as substitutes for action.”⁴ This book helps you close the knowing-doing gap. We challenge you to do just that.

Get What You Need from This Book

We wrote *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em* to serve as a user's manual—a guide to help make your life easier, in the moment, every time. We wrote it because you make such an impact on the lives of your workforce. That's an awesome responsibility that deserves all the help and support it can get. Here are some tips on how to use this book:

- ★ Create and implement your own unique version of the love 'em practice.
- ★ Use this as your guide—as you would use Siri or Google Maps.
- ★ Return to it again and again.
- ★ Highlight what matters most to you.
- ★ Personally commit to implementing the key message of just one chapter. Start by reading Ask and Buck—then go anywhere you want.

The *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em* mindset and its 26 practices for engaging and retaining talent are not something you turn on and off, syncing to the latest economic blip and the corresponding concern about keeping talent. The approach works best when it's authentic and personal, when you clearly believe in it and demonstrate it daily in your actions with the people you want on your team.

Start with a Self-Test

We suggest you check out your beliefs about managing, engaging, and retaining others by completing a manager self-test called the