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The Data Already Knew

How a Flight Risk Score finds the people who need a conversation in the next 90 days

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The short version

The warning signs are already in your data. Tenure, manager changes, pay history and absence patterns are in the HR file you export today. Nobody is reading them together.

Most people decide fast, and quietly. Gallup found 77% of people who quit left within three months of starting to look, or never actively looked at all.

A Flight Risk Score is a cue to talk, not a verdict. It tells you who needs a conversation now and what to raise. It never makes a decision about anyone.

The manager matters most. Of the four things the score reads, the manager relationship usually carries the most weight.

"Daniel quit last week"

We built a Flight Risk Score for an oil and gas company, from the real data of about 600 people. Some still worked there. Some had already left.

When we presented it to their leadership team, we took every name off the list on purpose. We wanted to show how the score works, not who was on it.

The person at the top of the list scored 82, the highest in the company. All we showed was his region.

Without being asked, the executives started guessing who the top names were. Someone from HR looked at the first row and asked, "Is that Daniel?"

We said yes.

She said, "Daniel quit last week."

The data already knew. The people in that room knew him. They had worked with him for years. The signs were sitting in their own HR file. Nobody had put them together in time.

The resignation is the receipt, not the event

By the time a resignation letter lands, the decision is already made. The letter is the receipt. The event happened earlier, quietly, while everyone was busy.

77%

of people who quit left within 3 months of starting to look, or never looked (Gallup)

45%

had no conversation about their future in the 3 months before quitting (Gallup)

Gallup's 2024 study of people who quit found that most did not run long, visible job searches. 77% either left within three months of starting to look or never actively looked at all. And 45% said no manager or leader talked with them about their satisfaction, performance or future in the three months before they left.

That is the window. It is short, and most companies miss it. Waiting for someone to tell you they are unhappy does not work, because most people never say it out loud.

The signs are already in your data

Every experienced manager has watched someone leave and thought: the signs were there. They usually were. They were just spread across different reports, owned by different people, and never read together.

A Flight Risk Score reads them together. It looks at four areas.

- 1. Manager relationship.** Has their manager changed recently? How often do they actually meet? Are teammates leaving? This area usually carries the most weight, because it is the one a company controls most.
- 2. Career and tenure.** How long they have been in the company and in the role, time since their last promotion, and whether they are near a point where people often decide to stay or go.
- 3. Pay.** Whether pay has kept up with raises, inflation and peers in the same role. Pay rarely causes a departure on its own, but it speeds up every other reason.
- 4. Job friction.** Patterns that show up before people quit: rising unplanned absences, PTO used in small pieces, overtime climbing, training dropping off, and internal job applications.

The original, patent-pending Flight Risk Score uses 19 variables across those four areas. These 19 are the ones most directly tied to resignations in any industry. Most companies already export them.

From there, we tailor it. Across all the sources a company might have, there are about 80 data points from 15 different systems. You do not need all of them. You need the ones that matter for your people.

- 1. We weight the four areas for each company.** A frontline warehouse role and a regional sales leader leave for different reasons, so the weights change.
- 2. We add a few targeted variables.** Usually these come from what we learn in Honest Read™ interviews and listening sessions, and from watching who actually leaves over time.
- 3. We test it against the people who already left your company** before anyone acts on it.

What the bands mean

Score	Band	What to do
0 to 40	Low risk	No immediate action needed.
41 to 60	Worth watching	Flag for a check-in conversation.
61 to 80	Intervention needed	Have a direct conversation now.
81 to 99	Critical	This person is likely already looking. Talk this week.

What the score is, and what it is not

A score of 82 does not mean someone is leaving. It means a conversation is overdue.

- 1. It is a cue to talk.** The score ranks who needs attention in the next 90 days. The conversation tells you why.
- 2. It is not a decision.** The score never makes an employment decision about anyone. People do, and the right response to a high score is attention, not action against the employee.
- 3. Supervisors never see the number.** They see who to talk to and what to raise. A score on a screen turns a person into a label. A short list with a reason turns a manager into a better manager.
- 4. It is a calculation, not a black box.** The model is a documented, weighted calculation built by our team. It does not use machine learning or generative AI, and it does not learn from client data.

What to raise, in order

When the score flags someone, the report suggests what to talk about. We list the manager relationship first, then career, then how they feel about the work and their workload, then pay. Pay is real, but it is rarely the first thing to fix, and leading with money teaches people that the way to get attention is to threaten to leave.

Your best people are your biggest risk

It is tempting to assume turnover is a problem with your weakest people. It usually is not.

In my 20 years in operations at a Fortune 10 company, I learned that a high performer is the biggest flight risk you have. High performers have options. Recruiters find them. Competitors know their names. And they rarely complain before they go. They just start answering the calls.

High performers also hide their signals well. They stay professional. Their output holds up longer. What moves first is quieter: a manager who stopped checking in, a promotion that went to someone else, a raise that did not keep pace. Those are exactly the things a Flight Risk Score reads.

What to do when someone is flagged

- 1. Talk within a week.** For anyone in the Critical band, the manager reaches out within a few days. Speed matters more than a perfect script.
- 2. Make it a real conversation, not an intervention.** Do not mention the score. Get coffee. Ask what makes them come back every day, what would make the job better, what is frustrating them, and what it would take for them to still be here a year from now.

3. **The manager owns it.** HR can support. HR cannot substitute. The relationship being repaired is with the manager.
4. **Do not lead with a counteroffer.** A high score does not mean they have an offer. Leading with money tells them that threatening to leave is how to get noticed.
5. **Do one thing within two weeks, and tell them.** Fix something specific they raised. Then close the loop in person. That is what moves the score back down.

Take action this week

CEO: Pull your last 12 months of voluntary departures by manager. If one manager accounts for an outsized share, you already know where the score will point.

Manager: For each person on your team, ask yourself which of the four areas is most likely to push them out right now. If you do not know for more than two people, you need better signal.

Supervisor: Name the one person you would least want to lose. When did you last have a real conversation with them, not a status update? Have it this week.

How EIP helps

Flight Risk Score™ (patent pending) scores each employee from 0 to 99 for the next 90 days, using HR data you already have. No surveys, no integration and no system access. Names are replaced with codes before analysis.

You get a short list of who needs a conversation and what to raise, reviewed by our Council of current and former executives before anything is recommended. Then we stay with you through the fix.

Try it free. Send one spreadsheet for one role and a small group of employees. See your first numbers in about 7 days. No contract.

Start with a conversation: eip360.com | hello@eip360.com

Sources

Tatel, C. and Wigert, B. "42% of Employee Turnover Is Preventable but Often Ignored." Gallup, July 9, 2024, updated February 16, 2026. gallup.com/workplace/646538

The opening story is from EIP's own work. The company is not named and the employee's name has been changed. Other stories are from the author's career at a Fortune 10 company.