

The Working Week

Underdeveloped

Most managers expect to be working elsewhere within two years — and many of those plan to leave within one year — a recent survey found.

A key message from its findings is that employers need to get serious about staff development.

The poll, by Performability, a consultancy that specialises in staff retention, found 51 per cent of respondents planned to leave their jobs within a year and 20 per cent within two years.

The national email survey of leaders and managers from a range of corporations involved almost 1000 participants.

Jayne Marsh managing director of Performability, says many talented people want to develop their careers with their employer “but the system stands in their way”.

The research found that 71 per cent of respondents would stay in their jobs if they were offered a structured development program.

And, Mrs Marsh says, the same number of respondents indicated a strong preference for long-term, personalised coaching as their preferred development strategy.

Mrs Marsh says many employers need to change their ideas about generic development programs that are often costly and do not suit everyone.

She says employers need to consider the needs of individuals if they are to retain top talent and avoid high replacement costs.

When managers and leaders



search for new jobs, she advises them to ask about the career development offered. Many such candidates are technically competent but may lack skills, such as emotional intelligence or how to lead a team, she says, and are interested in improving them.

Performability chairman Chris Miller says: “Rarely do talented people leave a company for financial reasons. They get bored, feel undervalued, they feel unable to express themselves professionally, they are unnecessarily stressed out, they are not being developed or they work for an idiot. These are some of the many avoidable reasons for losing your best people.”

■ And what about the generally dreaded annual performance and

appraisal reviews which, if carried out well could be good development tools?

Of the survey respondents, 45 per cent rated the appraisal and review method as ineffective and Mrs Marsh describes the level of disengagement and cynicism as “shocking”.

She says appraisals are often not taken seriously — by managers and employees — and development plans are not usually revisited during the year. Appraisal systems can be costly in terms of both money and time and, Mrs Marsh, says those who conduct appraisals should be trained to do so effectively.

“People are crying out for career development so let’s take it seriously,” she says.