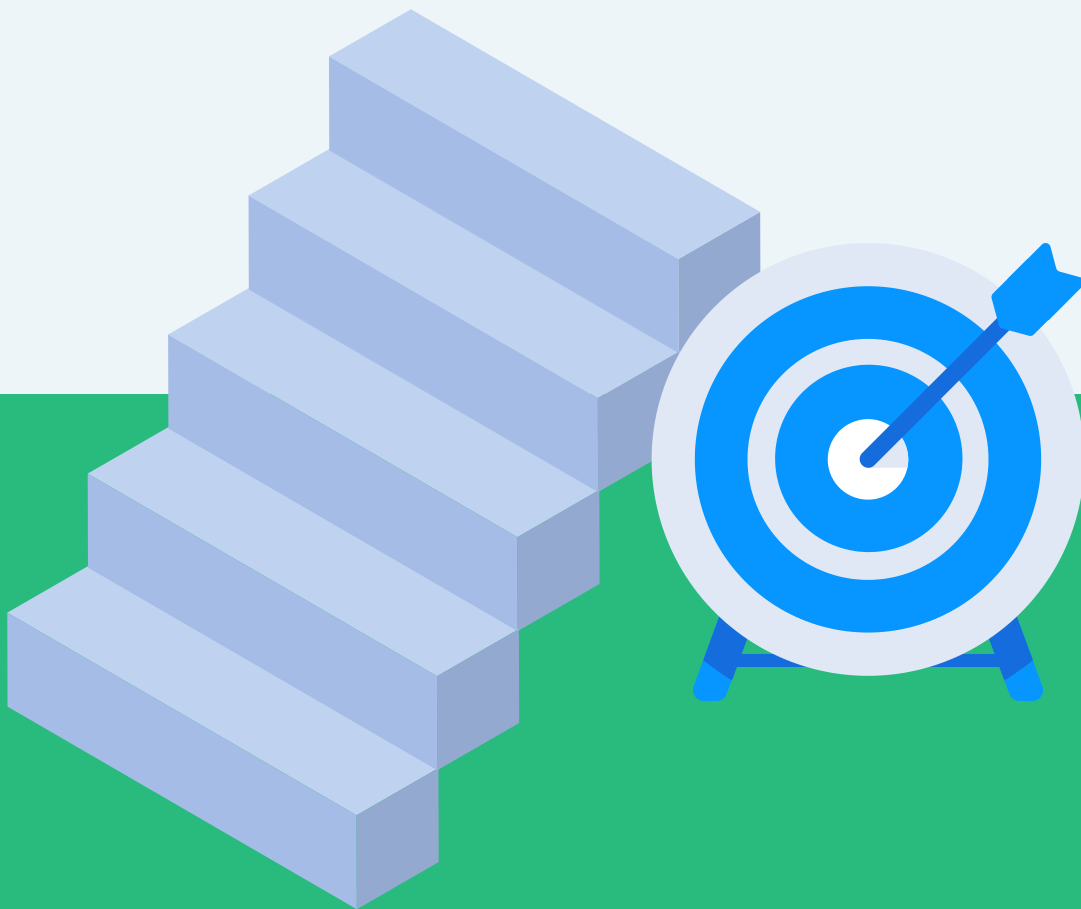


# 4 WAYS TO INCREASE ASSOCIATE RETENTION THROUGH BETTER TRAINING ENGAGEMENT

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**altaclaro**

# THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT RUNNING A LAW FIRM TODAY IS INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT.

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Turnover, especially, is a challenge that law firms too often face. According to JD Match and Right Profile, the top 400 law firms lose about \$9.1 billion every year due to turnover, with an approximate cost to a firm of \$400k to \$800k each time an attorney leaves the firm.<sup>1</sup> But the costs of associate turnover aren't solely financial. High turnover rates damage associate morale and your firm's reputation, as well as divert valuable time and resources to backfilling positions.

Retaining valuable associates, then, is crucial to remaining competitive in this challenging environment. But how do law firms accomplish this? According to a recent survey conducted by Chambers Associate, the quality of training and development at a firm is highly correlated with the associates' desire to stay at a firm.<sup>2</sup> According to another study by BCG Attorney Search, one of the most common explanations why associates leave a firm is because of a lack of training, mentoring, and development opportunities. The study even challenges the idea that money is one of the primary reasons an associate leaves a firm, stating that higher pay is an ineffective 'carrot' to keep associates loyal, and in fact makes it easier for other firms to lure associates away.<sup>3</sup>

**\$9.1B**

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By implementing a smart and effective training strategy, however, law firms can provide associates with the development that they crave. In turn, associates develop deeper relationships with their firms and are more determined to stay. That's why in this guidebook, we're sharing four ways you can improve associate retention by revitalizing your training strategy.

1. <https://www.attorneyatwork.com/confronting-lawyer-turnover-in-law-firms/>

2. <https://www.chambers-associate.com/law-firms/associate-satisfaction-surveys/associate-retention>

3. <https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900044920/What-Causes-Associates-to-Leave-Law-Firms/>

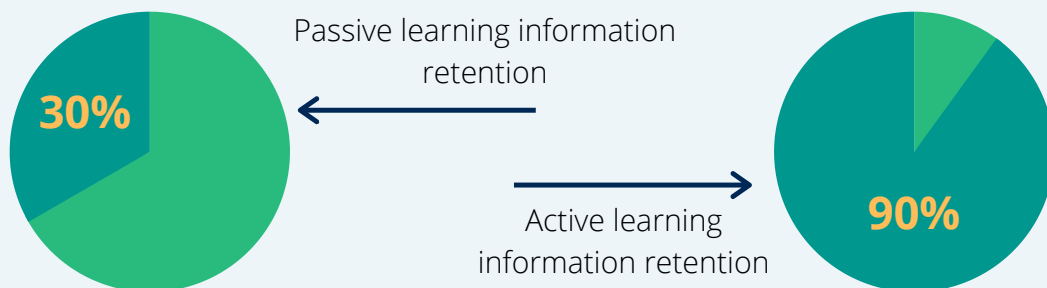
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# THE FOUR WAYS

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## 1 Incorporate microlearning.

Tackling associate retention through better training engagement doesn't mean you need to enforce a strict, rigorous training schedule that takes hours out of each work day. Micro-learning is a training approach that delivers information in digestible, bite-sized chunks. The National Training Laboratories states that long sessions of passive learning—such as sitting through a two-hour PowerPoint training—average less than 30% retention. In contrast, brief micro-sessions that build over time using active and multiple methods of training average up to 90%. These smaller bursts of training not only make retaining information easier but also allow your associates to easily access their training without it disrupting their busy workflows. By giving your associates accessible tools to improve their knowledge and work performance, you'll show that you value them and want to see them grow.



## 2 Ensure real-world learning application.

LexisNexis states that in a recent survey, a staggering 95% of hiring partners and associates whose practice has a transactional focus believed that new graduates are lacking practical transactional skills. The top training programs tackle this challenge by simulating real work experience and allowing associates to apply their new knowledge in a more safe environment. By allowing your associates to learn through firsthand experience, you're ultimately empowering them to feel confident to tackle the real work that follows, as well as nurturing gratitude for the knowledge and tools that you've equipped them with.

Research in education science tells us that our retention levels increase on a sliding scale, from the more abstract/passive—what we read, see, and hear—to the more concrete/active—what we write and do. Specifically, we retain 10% of what we learn from reading, 30-50% from watching lecture/explainer videos, 70% from participating in small interactive workshops, and 90% from doing either real or simulated assignments.

Try using mock transactions from past deals or matters to assess how well your associates apply legal principles and concepts to real-world scenarios. This is where the magic can really happen in the learning process. Break up mock tasks into smaller segments and assign soft time allotments for those tasks so your associates become acquainted with how much time a task typically takes. For the first round, encourage your associates to take their time with those mock tasks so they can fully engage with the material without worrying about time running out.

As an associate, there's nothing more valuable than diving into a real-world scenario and getting feedback on mock work products. This experience will help your associates feel satisfied and enthusiastic about the work they do, ultimately giving them the confidence and purpose to succeed in their day-to-day work.



### 3

## Ask for training feedback.

Surveying your transactional associates is one of the most effective ways to evaluate your training program. Surveys allow you to determine your learners' opinions on the educational material, program delivery, feedback, and more. Most importantly, asking for training feedback improves associate engagement and morale by inspiring self-reflection. Your associates will appreciate that you value their opinions and will incorporate their feedback into even better training for them, as well as that they have the opportunity to shape aspects of the firm.

But creating a successful survey can be tricky. You need to first establish the goals of your evaluation. What do you want to evaluate for, and why? Ideally, the goals of your evaluation should tie to your training objectives. For example, if the focus of your training program was to increase engagement, you may want to evaluate how organized your instructors were. Your survey should also have clearly worded questions that are unbiased and actually ask one question at a time.

You should also try incorporating questions focused on specific learning applications into your follow-up surveys. For instance, conduct a survey immediately after your associates complete a specific training module or lesson (e.g., "Drafting & Negotiating Non-Disclosure Agreements"), then reassess the usefulness of the training module after they complete a real assignment on the same subject. You can also survey your associates' supervisors to gain another perspective on the effectiveness of the training.



## 4 Set clear goals and measure training effectiveness.

Establishing clear goals for your associates is crucial. It allows your associates to have long-term vision and short-term motivation for not only their training but also how they will use that training in their real work. By setting goals, you can empower your employees to sharpen their focus and use their time effectively.

However, setting goals without tracking training effectiveness, the degree to which learning has improved your associates' performances, is useless. As mentioned in the previous section, measuring training effectiveness can involve surveys to collect feedback on the training performance. Other approaches include assessment scores from before, during, and after training, job or key performance indicators, and much more. Whatever your methods, organization is crucial: LexisNexis also shared that only 37% of small/mid-size firms and only 62% of large firms surveyed have an organized training program for new associates with less than 2 years of practice experience. Ultimately, you must be sure to establish clear metrics and consistent ways of measuring those metrics so your data is as accurate as possible.

By staying on top of your training effectiveness, you can ensure that your training is indeed helping your associates work more efficiently, which has myriad performance benefits. Impactful training makes your associates feel that you're investing in them, which in turn motivates them to focus during the day-to-day grind and stay with your firm.

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Abdi Shayesteh, Founder & CEO, AltaClaro.

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# BOOST YOUR ASSOCIATE RETENTION

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Firms such as K&L Gates, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, Barnes & Thornburg, and Husch Blackwell turn to AltaClaro for the most effective training programs on the market.

Our online boot camps help lawyers leverage technology and learn practical legal skills in a hybrid format through mock transactions and live feedback sessions with seasoned practitioners. From Fundamentals of M&A Transactions and Corporate Transactions to Capital Markets, our course catalog spans beginner to intermediate level classes. Our state-of-the-art learning technology platform also helps you measure and track training engagement and performance so you can see exactly how your training is driving better results for your employees as well as your ROI.

Schedule a free 30-minute consultation with one of our experts and learn how you can increase your employee retention through more effective training engagement.

[Schedule a Demo](#)

## About the Author

Abdi Shayesteh is Founder & CEO of AltaClaro, an experiential learning platform that delivers researched-backed practical skills training solutions for lawyers. Leveraging cutting edge technology and the latest in education science, lawyers on AltaClaro's platform learn through a blended approach by engaging in mock transactions, simulations, and live/virtual feedback sessions with seasoned practitioners and mentors. Prior to founding AltaClaro, Abdi was a corporate and banking lawyer for 15 years and worked in a variety of setting from big law (King & Spalding) to in-house (Deputy General Counsel, Mitsubishi-UFJ Financial Group) to government (Federal Reserve Bank of New York).

