

## Musical chairs

For many small businesses, systematically preventing employee theft seems like a big company process, with HR departments and complicated procedures.

The Association of Certified Financial Examiners (ACFE) found a simple method that reduced fraud damages by 54 percent and detected eight months sooner: job rotations.

Moving employees into different roles has multiple advantages, with employee theft most likely the last to be thought of. Crosstraining prepares the company for when someone is sick or on vacation. Another employee can pick up the duties without learning the work in a rush.

Expanding a worker's skills can also boost job satisfaction. The boss can assess the employee's suitability for promotion, too.

From a security standpoint, having another person handle a position, even for a few weeks, can offer the opportunity to uncover irregularities that were hidden from the boss. Plus, a fresh perspective may also spot outdated ways of doing things that can be improved.

Job rotations also can serve as a deterrent. If an untrustworthy worker knows that someone else will be going through their files and records, they may be less likely to steal for fear of getting caught by a coworker.

## Repeat retirement

Labor market statistics aside, it's not news that it is harder to find employees than in the past.

Part of the issue is demographics: Boomers are reaching retirement and there are just fewer younger people. Part



of it also is the pandemic changed many workers' views of jobs.

The concept of FIRE ("Financial Independence, Retire Early") has been around for a decade. It comes down to: Work like crazy for 5, 10, 20 years. Be super frugal and save fiendishly. Achieve "financial independence" (whatever that number is for you), and then retire ... at age 30, 35, 40 or 50.

But FIRE advocates have discovered a problem with that goal: what do you do with the rest of your life?

More recently, a Canadian YouTuber has come up with an adaptation, which he calls "Camp FIRE." Instead of retirement as a one-time event, Steve Antonioni sees cyclical work and retirement.

AARP research found 48% of Americans cited everyday living costs or concerns about the economy as the driver to

return to work, while 28% said they retired too early. An Empower survey found that 41% of Americans said personal fulfillment as a reason to keep working.

While older individuals face a brutal job market, they often have judgment and decision-making honed through years of experience, as well as technical skills.

Some companies, suffering from "brain drain" as their experienced staff retire, are adopting "returnships."

These paid, short-term programs are designed for experienced workers reentering the workforce after taking extended career breaks. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) says about 9% of larger companies offer returnship programs.

Among those, more than 8 in 10 say the programs are effective at addressing talent shortages and "de-risks the hiring process for skeptical managers," says iRelaunch, a career reentry company.