



Listening to What Matters

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This problem situation was written by Julio César Borja Medina (julio.cesar.borja@tec.mx), with the purpose of serving as discussion material in classrooms, it is not intended to illustrate good or bad management practices. The story in this document is based on different people's experiences; some data has been modified at the request of the people and institutions involved.

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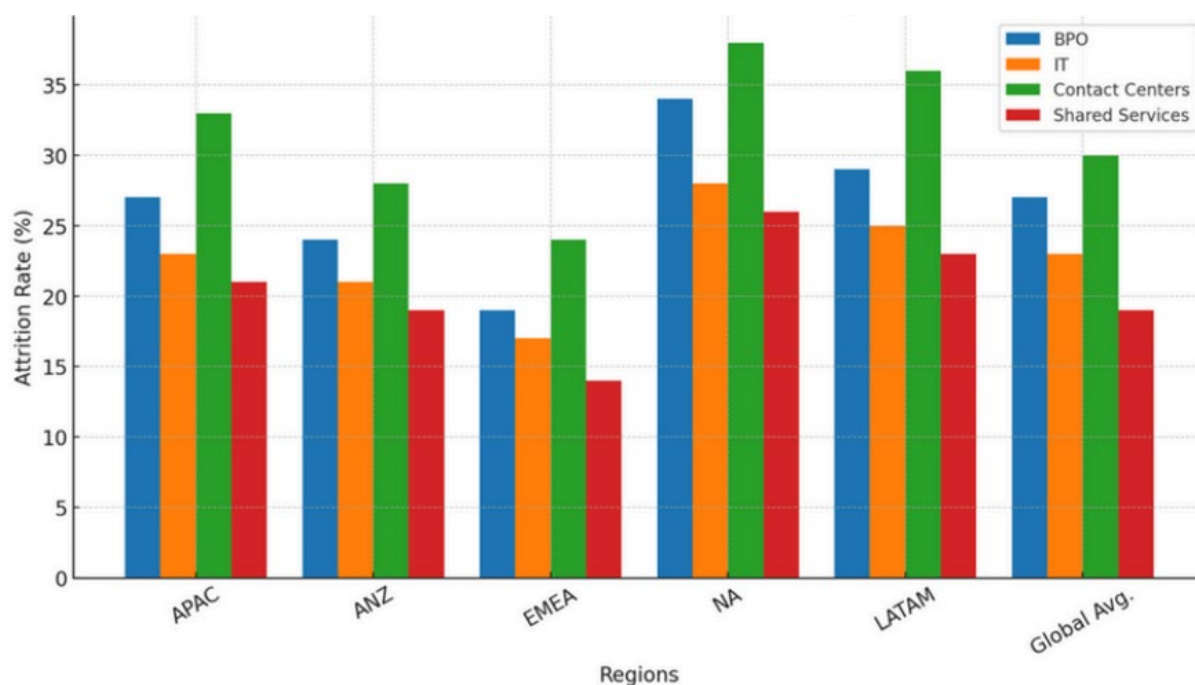
Introduction

In today's labor market, the voices of employees and former employees have become a valuable compass for understanding what is working inside a company and what is falling short. Platforms like Glassdoor give people the space to speak honestly about their experiences - whether it is about culture, leadership, pay, or career growth. If this feedback is carefully analyzed, it can reveal the real reasons why people leave, what keeps them satisfied, and how organizations can build stronger strategies to attract and retain talent (Glassdoor, n/d).

These insights are especially relevant in industries where the pace of change is fast and the competition for skilled professionals is intense. Online education, beauty and personal care, and crowdfunding¹ are good examples as they face the constant challenge of keeping their teams motivated in environments where innovation and agility are not optional but critical for survival. Beyond that, they share some common features: a strong reliance on specialized talent, relatively young corporate cultures, and business models that are still evolving. As Aaron De Smet et al (2022) points out, this has fueled a “war for talent,” in which workers are no longer just chasing salaries but also flexibility, belonging, and purpose.

The Glassdoor Employee Confidence Index, which shows that workplace optimism declined in 2024, reinforces the urgency (Zhao, 2024). This trend echoes findings from Harikumar, Patil, Rashmi, Jain, and Ray (2022), who documented how high turnover in demanding industries creates serious organizational costs. At the same time, other research highlights the promise of machine learning tools to anticipate attrition before it happens and give companies a chance to act early (Asokan et al, 2025). **Figure 1** provides a snapshot of how attrition varied by industry and region in 2024.

Figure 1. Global Attrition Trends by Industry and Region (2024).



Source. GWFM, 2024.

¹ Crowdfunding “is a form of online financing that eliminates financial intermediaries such as banks to obtain economic backing through donations from users whose motivation can be altruistic and/or in exchange for some type of reward related to the project” (Asana, s/f).

The Study

Datará is a Business Intelligence consulting firm based in Mexico City with operations in the U.S. A group of investors recently approached the firm to improve their understanding of the workplace climate across several industries. Their request was clear: focus on three strategic sectors—Online Education (Coursera® and edX®), Beauty and Personal Care (Aesop® and Kiehl's®), and Crowdfunding (Indiegogo® and Kickstarter®).

These industries were not chosen at random. They all operate in hyper-competitive environments, they struggle with high employee turnover, and their success depends heavily on creativity and innovation. Moreover, they represent different business models (B2B, B2C, and marketplace), making it possible to capture both common and industry-specific patterns.

To carry out the analysis, Carlos Herrera, *Datará*'s Director of Business Intelligence, assigned his Analytics Team to work on reviews obtained from (Jaev, 2024). While the dataset contains reviews from a wide range of companies, only those corresponding to the sectors requested by the investors were selected for the study. The team's task was to transform these raw reviews into meaningful insights. To achieve this, they planned to combine traditional statistical methods with advanced natural language processing techniques. Their goal was to understand how current employees describe their everyday lives, how former employees recall their experiences, and what truly explains why some people stay while others leave. The outcome would be a set of actionable recommendations to help strengthen each company's positioning as an employer of choice.

SEE Database [HERE](#)

Expected Outcomes

The Analytics Team structured the project around six practical steps, focusing exclusively on the sectors of interest to the investors.

1. *Data preparation and validation*: Cleaning the dataset, handling missing values through imputation, and standardizing the text fields (pros, cons, and headers) to ensure consistency.
2. *Satisfaction metrics analysis*: Exploring how employees rate aspects such as work-life balance, compensation, leadership, career opportunities, and diversity—comparing results across the selected companies.
3. *Perception analysis*: Applying sentiment analysis (VADER) to contrast the voices of current and former employees, highlighting what drives retention or triggers departures.
4. *Identification of critical topics*: Using topic modeling to uncover the recurrent themes in both positive and negative comments, such as career growth, management style, or organizational culture.
5. *Competitive benchmarking*: Placing results side by side to show how each company performs relative to its direct competitors.
6. *Executive report*: Delivering clear visualizations and actionable recommendations tailored to investors and talent leaders.

The Study recognizes that turnover risks are not slowing down. Heavy workloads, management challenges, and shifting expectations among employees are creating sustained pressure. By combining quantitative measures with language-based analysis, the project aims to give decision-makers the clarity they need to strengthen employer branding and design stronger retention strategies within the industries identified by the investors.

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