Google develops algorithm to stem talent loss

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People sit under a Google logo. Google, concerned by the recent departures of several top executives, has developed an algorithm to try to identify which employees are likely to quit, The Wall Street Journal reported Tuesday.

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The Journal said the Internet search and advertising giant had turned to mathematical formulas because it was "concerned a brain drain could hurt its long-term ability to compete."

The newspaper said Google examined data from employee reviews and promotion and pay histories to try to identify which of its 20,000 employees were most likely to leave the Mountain View, California-based company.

Laszlo Bock, who runs human resources for Google, told the Journal the algorithm helps the company "get inside people's heads even before they know they might leave."

The newspaper said Google officials were reluctant to share details of the formula, which is still being tested, but it had already identified employees "who felt underused, a key complaint among those who contemplate leaving."

Edward Lawler, director of the Center for Effective Organizations at the University of Southern California, told the Journal Google was "clearly ahead of the curve" in taking a more quantitative approach to personnel decisions.

The Journal quoted current and former Google employees as saying the company is losing talent because some employees feel they can't make the same impact as the company matures.

Recent departures from [Google](#) include Tim Armstrong, a senior vice president, who left in March to head AOL, display-advertising chief David Rosenblatt, and Asia-Pacific and Latin America president Sukhinder Singh Cassidy.

Others who have left recently for start-ups such as [Facebook](#) and Twitter include lead designer Doug Bowman, engineering director Steve Horowitz and search-quality chief Santosh Jayaram, the Journal said.

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