

EXIT INTERVIEWS

When an employee leaves your organisation, the feelings you experience can range from fear and disappointment through to relief and elation. As managers, we often focus on what the effect of an employee leaving is on us - inconvenience or difficulty in replacing them, preventing any decline in business as a result of their leaving or being able to spend time on more productive activities rather than managing them. But what does their leaving mean to the company? Not just the effect of their absence - *but what it may be about the company that prompted their decision to leave.*

There are few better opportunities to get an honest appraisal of the company from an employee as when they're about to walk out the door. Whilst people are careful not to burn any bridges on the way out, if an exit interview is conducted in a safe, open and professional way, valuable information can be gained that will help manage the company into the future. A person leaving a job is also the best source of information for conducting a job analysis and exploring possible ways of structuring the job for effective recruitment of a replacement.

The most fundamentally important thing about exit interviews is that they are not conducted merely for the sake of conducting them. Decide what you are trying to find out and structure questions around that. Exit interviews are littered with pitfalls and dangers as the information provided by an exiting employee will inevitably involve personal bias and opinion. The interviewer may not agree with what the exiting employee is saying but it is imperative that they remain objective and do not get into an argument. Issues will be raised, often involving other employees and managers that are difficult to address – even if they are true. The effective use of that information will depend on the skills of the interviewer and the commitment of senior management to act on issues raised or have good reason for disregarding them.

Exit interviews can take many forms and in larger organisations, the process often involves a chance to gather quantitative information that can be easily measured and compared across the organisation. However, in small to medium sized companies, the exit interview can be a chance to sit down and talk about experiences and learn something in the process. They can be an opportunity to say thank you for a job well done, to wish the exiting employee well or to establish the possibilities for any future relationship with the company – and where appropriate, an opportunity to keep the door open!

There is a great deal of information available on the benefits or otherwise of exit interviews and we have provided a basic format for exit interviews that gathers the fundamental information that is useful to obtain from exiting employees. For the sake of objectivity, exit interviews should be conducted by a senior member or the company who is not a direct manager of the person leaving. Some companies prefer to engage consultants from outside the organisation to conduct and report on exit interviews and Linked Consulting has professionally qualified consultants who can assist in gathering relevant, objective information from departing employees. Speak with your consultant about how we can help.

EXIT INTERVIEW

Name	Position
Last day of employment	Direct Manager/Supervisor

On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being very happy, 1 being very unhappy) how would you rate your enjoyment of working with us? _____

Decision to Leave

<i>How did you feel about the salary and benefits paid to you by our company?</i>
<i>What occurred to make you decide to start looking for, or become open to the offer of another job?</i>
<i>What made you accept your new offer of employment?</i>
<i>What will you miss about working with our company?</i>

Operations of the company

Was the training you received sufficient to be able to do the job?

Were there any processes or policies that you think made your job more difficult?

If you could change anything about the way the company operates, what would it be?

Career

Did you think you had a chance to advance within this company?

Do you think you received adequate feedback about your performance?

How do you think we could have developed your career better?

Manager/Supervisor

Did you feel your direct manager/supervisor knew how to get the best performance from you?

What did they do right:

What could they improve on:

During your time with us, did you ever work with anyone who made it unpleasant for you to come to work? (explore)

Replacement

Are there any ways you think we could change or restructure your job to make it more effective?

Are there any things about the working environment you think we need to change to help the person replacing you to settle in?

Would you recommend our company to friends or family as a good place to work? Why/why not?