

Keeping the Right People

Exit Interviews

When an employee leaves your organization, an exit interview is a helpful tool to:

- Identify what your organization is doing well
- Pinpoint areas where you can improve in your organization
- Confirm the skill sets, experience, and attributes needed for the job
- Capture useful knowledge, contacts, tips, etc. from the exiting employee
- Understand why the employee is leaving
- Say good-bye on good terms

If your organization is large enough to have an HR staff person, he/she would typically hold the exit interview. Otherwise, the supervisor of the exiting employee would conduct the interview.

Exit interviews can be conducted face-to-face, be in the form of a written survey (hard-copy or electronic), or held over the phone. Only face-to-face and telephone interviews allow you to explore responses and gain even more insight. You can help the exiting employee feel more comfortable by starting with friendly discussion and then easing into the more probing questions. Always start by explaining the purpose of the exit interview. However, some exiting employees may be more forthcoming with information if they can write, rather than say, their feelings.

Important! Exit interviews are an important HR tool and the option should be available to all exiting employees; however, participation in an exit interview must be voluntary.

Potential exit interview questions

Reason for leaving

Why have you decided to leave the organization?

- Did anything trigger your decision to leave?
- Was a single event responsible for your decision to leave?
- Have you shared your concerns with anyone in the company prior to deciding to leave?
- Did anyone in this organization discriminate against you, harass you, or cause hostile working conditions? (important to follow up if they say yes)

Job Satisfaction

- What was most satisfying about your job? What was least satisfying about your job?
- What would you change about your job?
- What did you like most about this organization? What did you like least about this organization?



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- What would you improve to make our workplace better?
- Did your job duties turn out to be as you expected?
- Were your job responsibilities characterized correctly during the interview process and orientation?
- Did this organization help you to fulfill your career goals?
- Were you happy with your pay, benefits and other incentives?
- Did any organization policies or procedures (or any other obstacles) make your job more difficult?

Supervision and Support

- Do you feel you had the resources and support necessary to accomplish your job? If not, what was missing?
- The quality of supervision is important to most people at work. How was your relationship with your manager? What could your supervisor do to improve his or her management style and skill?
- Did you have clear goals and know what was expected of you in your job?
- Did you receive enough training to do your job effectively?
- Did you receive adequate support to do your job?
- Did you receive adequate feedback about your performance day-to-day and in the performance development planning process?

Other

Do you have any tips to help us find your replacement?

- Based on your experience with us, what do you think it takes to succeed at this organization?
- Would you consider working again for this organization in the future?
- Would you recommend working for this organization to your family and friends?
- What is your experience of employee morale and motivation in the company?
- What does your new company offer that encouraged you to accept their offer and leave this company?
- Can this organization do anything to encourage you to stay?
- Any other comments?

Good Practice

An in-person exit interview can be a good time to collect keys, identification badges, equipment, etc. from the exiting employee.

End the meeting on a positive note. Thank the exiting employee for their service to your organization. Let them know that the exit interview information is helpful and wish them the best in their new venture.

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pmfo@ecetta.info • <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations> • Tel: 888 874-5469