

The Importance of Exit Interviews

Civil Service Training
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The State of Exit Interviews

- Fail to produce useful information
- Not Done (25% of businesses)
- Not done in a timely fashion
- Information is not different from what Directors already know
- Respondents are not forthcoming
- Failure to analyze data

Separation Notices (LDOL 77) vs. Exit Interviews

All Louisiana employers are required to complete a separation notice for a former employee within three days after the date on which the separation from service occurs, or three days after the worker's separation from employment.

Separation Notice Alleging Disqualification and Instructions (LDOL 77)

Reasons for Separation: (Check One)

- Voluntary Leaving (Quit)
- Discharged (Fired)
- Lack of Work (Reduction in Force)
- Leave of Absence
- Not Physically Able to Work
- School Employee Contract
- Refused Other Suitable Work
- Labor Dispute/Union Strike
- Retirement
- Work Part Time

Explain the reason for separation

Who performs Exit Interviews ?

A study of 210 organizations in 33 industries, headquartered in more than 35 countries indicated:

- 70.9% had their HR departments handle the process;
- 19% had the departing employees' direct supervisors do it;
- 8.9% delegated the job to the direct supervisor's manager;
- 1% turned to external consultants.

Should exit interviews be required?

- 77% of large companies mandate exit interviews
- 87% of midsize companies mandate exit interviews
- 66% of small companies mandate exit interviews

Exit Interview Methodologies

- Paper and pencil method. This is the default method .
- In-person exit interview method – this gives a personal touch. Some issues with this method are that people may be too afraid to speak their minds honestly, they are time consuming, and it can be difficult to efficiently track results.
- Telephone method –it's hard to get high participation rates.
- Technology-based exit interviews (Survey Monkey)

Goals of Conducting Exit Interviews

1. Uncover issues relating to HR

- Pay doesn't always drive employees out the door.
- Plenty of other HR practices can play into an employee's decision to leave.
- Take corrective actions.

Goals of Conducting Exit Interviews

2. Understand employees' perceptions of the work itself

- This includes job design, working conditions, culture, and peers.
- This can help managers improve employee motivation, efficiency, coordination, and effectiveness.

Goals of Conducting Exit Interviews

3. Gain insight into managers' leadership styles and effectiveness.

- This equips the organization to reinforce positive managers and identify toxic ones.
- Potential training and development initiatives to create better managers.

Goals of Conducting Exit Interviews

4. Learn about HR benchmarks (salary, benefits) at competing organizations.
 - Different benefits, and pay packages
 - Who is poaching our people (e.g., training ground for Entergy).

Goals of Conducting Exit Interviews

5. Foster innovation by soliciting ideas for improving the organization.
 - One emerging best practice is to ask every departing employee something along the lines of “Please complete the sentence ‘I don’t know why the company doesn’t just ____.’” This approach may reveal trends (Harvard Business Review)

What information do you need to gather from the exit interview?

- a) Inquire if basic employment conditions met their expectations and needs.
- b) Probe into the specifics of what made the job satisfying or unsatisfying.
- c) Ascertain the real motive for leaving.

What information do you need to gather from the exit interview?

- d) Gather input about how other employees could be retained.
- e) Gain insights about the employee's manager and co-workers.
- f) Learn more about the skill sets and personal attributes required to perform the job.
- g) Ask the employee if they have any further suggestions or additional comments.

Factors and Techniques of Exit Interviews

1. The interviewer.

- Research found that interviews conducted by second- or third-line managers are most likely to lead to action.
- Second-line managers (direct supervisors' managers) typically receive more honest feedback precisely because they're one step removed from the employee.
- These managers are in a position to follow up immediately and effectively.
- Participation signals that the company cares about the opinions of departing employees.

Factors and Techniques of Exit Interviews

2. The interviewee.

- Research says focus on high potentials and high performers.
- Harder to replace.
- High potentials are generally knowledgeable about your organization.

Factors and Techniques of Exit Interviews

3. Timing.

- Some experts argue that the most productive moment to conduct the Exit Interview is halfway between the announcement of an intention to leave and the actual departure.
- Unfortunately, most exit interviews are conducted during the last days of an employee's tenure, which is probably long after he or she has disengaged.

Factors and Techniques of Exit Interviews

- Topics should be general, and should include things the employee liked about their job, management practices, benefits, interactions in his or her department, and job difficulties.
- The interviewer must remain neutral and avoid giving opinions, making personal comments or defending the company.
- The interviewer conducting the interview should be aware of the employee's emotional reactions and be sensitive to them.

Factors and Techniques of Exit Interviews

- Take clear and accurate notes of the interview.
- Review notes with the employee to ensure an accurate interpretation of his or her responses as well as to give the employee confidence that a fair report will be given.
- End the interview on a friendly note.
- The employee should always be thanked for their contribution to the organization as well as for the information provided in the interview.

Exit Interview Questions

- Why is the employee leaving?
- What did the employee like most/least about his or her position?
- How did the employee feel he or she was supervised ?
- How did the employee feel the department was run?
- Would the employee like to use the employer for a recommendation?
- Under what conditions would the employee have stayed?
- What would the employee have changed?

Exit Interview Questions

- Ask about supervision-whether the employee felt she or he had what was needed from the supervisors and managers to do the job.
- Ask about hours of work/physical work environment
- Did the employee have the impression he or she was hired for one position, but ended up doing something else?
- Was the employee given an opportunity to advance?

Best Practices of Exit Interviews

- The department should have a formal policy regarding exit interviewing (in addition to the city's exit interview forms),
- Exit interviews differ somewhat from voluntary separations, because issues raised by layoffs and terminations for cause will require a special approach.
- Exit interviews should be extended to all departing employees—not just key performers or long-timers.

Best Practices of Exit Interviews

- These responses should be gathered in such a way that they transform from anecdotal stories—often attributed to a few disgruntled employees—into information that shines the light on specific, objective trends.
- “Move your data from the anecdotal, which can be forgotten, to being aggregated and tracked. e.g., notice that an issue is not just coming from one person but three or four, and then seven people, as your data build up over time.”

CAO Policy Memorandum No. 49(R)

- All City Employees, upon hire, shall be asked to provide a written notice, whenever possible, two weeks prior to any voluntary separation from City service.
- Remember to enter the most appropriate reason codes into ADP.
- Over 200 to choose from.

Why Do Employees Leave the Public Sector? (5 Top Reasons Governing Magazine Survey)

Reason # 5 Bad bosses

- "Many of the managers, supervisors and directors do not know how to lead. They are often entrenched in doing the task, and not the leading, advocating, running interference when needed."
- "A significant contributing factor to my departure was the absolute lack of mentoring I received from my boss, the city manager."

Why Do Employees Leave the Public Sector? (5 Top Reasons Governing Magazine Survey)

Reason # 4 No respect

- "Many more people view government as bad, evil, a fiscal drain, an obstacle to development, etc., rather than a provider of infrastructure, amenities, culture, protection and other basic services. This disrespect for government as a whole, then, is borne by the governmental entity's employees."
- "The news media are quick to blast government for 'failures' that 'waste' money. That's front page. But hundreds of projects, processes and innovations go unnoticed and unreported."

Why Do Employees Leave the Public Sector? (5 Top Reasons/Governing Magazine Survey)

Reason # 3 Inexperienced political appointees as supervisors

- "Political appointees, who you have to train on the job and make lousy decisions based on irrational factors not in the agency's interest nor the public interest, but to advance themselves politically, not embarrass their political patron, etc."
- "Many administrators and executives are political appointees with little or no management training about either staff or projects. They got the position because of who they know, not what they know, and it shows."

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Reason # 2 Frustration with bureaucracy/inability to get things done

- "Safeguards often make simple tasks very complicated and unnecessarily difficult."
- "There's a perception (often correct) that it is nearly impossible to get things moving, to innovate, to do things differently."

Why Do Employees Leave the Public Sector? (5 Top Reasons Governing Magazine Survey)

Reason # 1 Money

"Some of my friends who have been with the state have gone five years without a pay raise. I can tell you that rent, food, fuel and every other thing we need to survive comfortably has gone up every year at its own rate."

Why Do Employees Leave the Private Sector? (Fortune Magazine)

Reason 3: Don't enjoy the work

Reason 2: Want More Money

Reason 1: Don't Like Boss

FINAL TAKEAWAY

- The exit interview only offers the departing employee's perspective.
- The interviewer should review the information with the supervisor and management, who then together decide how to evaluate and act in turn.
- Watch for trends and patterns that emerge from the data; these help pinpoint problem areas so they can be corrected.
- According to HR consultants, when the exit interview process is carefully and thoughtfully structured and conducted, and the results are evaluated and acted upon, its value is immeasurable.

COMING UP!

- **New Section Rule VII, Section 2.8**

When a working test period, for employees who are probationary with no other permanent status, is interrupted for more than twelve weeks due to the employee's inability to perform the essential functions(s) of a position as a result of a medical condition, injury, or light duty assignment shall be completed upon the employee's return to duty. The employee's inability to perform the essential functions of a position must be certified by a physician. In such cases, the appointing authority shall request a temporary appointment in keeping with Rule VI, Section 5.3 as an interim measure until the employee is able to resume their regular duties and serve the remaining portion of the probationary period.