

HOW TO CONDUCT AN EXIT INTERVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the single most expensive personnel action in an organization is the replacement of a good employee. Therefore, when a good one chooses to leave the organization, it is important to learn as much as possible about what made them want leave, discover what their observations and opinions are about the organization and its leadership, and what the situation is to which they are going for comparison purposes. Presumably, since they are leaving the organization, they will tell you honestly what they think, but is still important to make it easy for them to do so.

The exit interview should be private, business-like, and friendly. The points listed below should be included as part of an informal conversation, characterized by friendly interest. Even though the points are listed here as one item after another, it is best to avoid proceeding through the interview as if reading from a questionnaire. Keep in mind, the employee, or former employee, is doing you a favor by participating in the interview.

Be sure to discover:

- ◆ Overall impression of the organization or company as a place to work.
- ◆ Problems experienced on the job, with leadership, supervisors, other employees, and with organizational systems, work processes, and equipment and other tools of work.
- ◆ Opinions about all of the organization's leaders that they know including top leaders, department and division managers, supervisors, etc.
- ◆ Opinions regarding **benefits** (e.g. life and health insurance, pension plan, tuition assistance, training opportunities and professional development, etc.) and **paid leave** (e.g. vacation, sick days, personal leave, holidays, etc.)
- ◆ Training and orientation provided while employed (timeliness, relevance and adequacy, etc.)
- ◆ Performance appraisal system (fairness and timeliness of ratings received, helpfulness, next rating due, etc.)
- ◆ Personal impressions of how well the employee was doing their job.

For those employees you wish to remain:

- ◆ Next career steps the employee had or has in mind: with their new employer, with this organization (before they decided to leave), any conditions or changes that would make it attractive for the employee to stay (e.g. transfer, reassignment, new responsibilities, etc.)

Also, if possible, discover:

- Employee's impetus to look elsewhere for employment; beginning date of search; previous searches, reasons.
- Means of finding new employment (advertisement, employment agencies, referral, personal contact, etc.)
- Comparative salary level, hours and days of work; comparative benefits.
- New employer and position (company name, new job title, key responsibilities, etc.)

Document the key points from the interview immediately. Determine what points are to remain confidential and secure them appropriately. Provide the appropriate information from the interview to those who will benefit from its content. Place a copy in the employee's personnel file for future reference.