

Conducting Exit Interviews

This resource is not all-inclusive on the topic(s) presented and not intended as legal advice. Please note, federal, state, and local laws and regulations may vary regarding the issues presented. We encourage you to review local laws and regulations and seek legal counsel when implementing new HR policies and procedures.

An exit interview is a structured discussion with a departing employee, meant to provide both of you the opportunity to review the relationship, share ideas to benefit the company and come to closure on the employee's tenure with you.

When someone leaves your organization, it gives you an opportunity to gain valuable information about what worked for them while they were with you and what, in their view, might be changed in order to better serve their replacement. It also provides a chance to strengthen your relationship with the person leaving. You always want to end on a positive note if you can.

Exit interviews are best done in person rather than by phone or email. The interview typically take place on the employee's final day, though earlier may be more convenient.

Your goal is to create an open dialog that elicits specific, honest information from the outgoing person. They should be clear that there is no possibility of negative fallout from the discussion—that it is for your information only, and that their statements and concerns will remain confidential.

Here are a few considerations about holding exit interviews:

- Pick a time and location that is convenient to both parties and assures privacy.
- Be clear why you're doing this. What will you do with the information you gather?
- It's usually best if the person conducting the interview is not the employee's direct supervisor.
- Ask open ended questions and allow the person to express themselves fully.
- Recognize that the employee might question the need for the interview. They may wonder why you (or the organization) waited until they left to get their input on important questions about their experience working for you.
- Employees are under no obligation to participate. If they decline, accept that as their right.
- Document the employee's answers but do not ask them to sign your notes.



- Keep the interview to a reasonable length. Select questions that will be relevant to the employee and helpful to you.

As with other discussions, it is best to operate from a script or talking points, so that you remember all your key questions and make the best use of everyone's time. Here are sample questions that may help. Feel free to draft your own as well. Fewer is probably better.

What has been good, enjoyable or satisfying for you in your time with us?

- Were your job responsibilities characterized accurately during the interview process and orientation?
- Did you have clear goals and know what was expected of you in your job?
- Do you feel you had the resources and support necessary to accomplish your job? If not, what was missing, or might have helped?
- Did you receive adequate feedback about your performance day-to-day and in the performance review process?
- Do you have any recommendations regarding our compensation, benefits and other reward and recognition efforts?
- Did the policies and procedures of the organization help to create a well-managed, consistent, and fair workplace? Were there any policies that you found didn't work well or need to be amended?
- What was your experience of employee morale and motivation while working here?
- How can we gather and make better use of the views and experience of the people working here?
- What would you recommend we do to create a better workplace? Any thoughts about how we might reduce stress levels among employees?
- What are the key qualities and skills we should seek in your replacement?
- Would you consider working again for us if the situation were right?
- If you'd like us to be able to contact you in the future, please leave us your contact information.



Links

Any of these resources are worth looking into for more perspective and guidance on exit interviews.

- [WIKIPEDIA: EXIT INTERVIEWS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exit_interview)
([HTTPS://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/EXIT_INTERVIEW](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exit_interview))
- [ABOUT.COM: PERFORM EXIT INTERVIEWS](https://www.thebalance.com/perform-exit-interviews-1919341)
([HTTPS://WWW.THEBALANCE.COM/PERFORM-EXIT-INTERVIEWS-1919341](https://www.thebalance.com/perform-exit-interviews-1919341))
- [BUSINESSBALLS.COM: EXIT INTERVIEWS](http://www.businessballs.com/exitinterviews.htm)
([HTTP://WWW.BUSINESSBALLS.COM/EXITINTERVIEWS.HTM](http://www.businessballs.com/exitinterviews.htm))