



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Exit Interviews Help in Retention Efforts

In today's virtual corporate world, companies are turning increasingly toward exit interviews to help retain good workers.

Companies can also learn a ton of information if they conduct the exit interviews correctly. Further, they can also be used as a catalyst for change. A growing number of HR professionals are acting on the information gathered during exit interviews and responding to the feedback from exit interviews.

In general, larger companies tend to do a better job than smaller companies do with exit interviews. This is likely because they have HR departments who take it more seriously. Their HR practitioners are schooled in how to perform exit interviews. In the case of many smaller companies, they already know where problems lie and either don't want to, or can't, fix them.

An exit interview is a very good opportunity to find out how to recruit and retain employees. At some companies, exit interviews are done for two reasons: both to communicate information to an employee about what happens to his/her benefits and checking account and to get information about the experience he or she had working for the company. These companies try to separate on a good note.

To make an exit interview successful, the trick is to make the exiting employee comfortable. An effective exit interview can be facilitated by:

- Making it clear that the information will not be used against exiting workers.
- Explaining that their insight can help improve the organization.
- Considering the use of a third party to conduct the exit interview. Even an employee who is leaving may feel uncomfortable discussing certain topics, such as office politics, with his or her current supervisor.
- Never ignoring an exiting employee's claims of mistreatment or discrimination.
- Asking the right questions – they should be open-ended and general at first, but more specific later.

Studies have found that some companies don't follow through with the information gleaned from exit interviews. The information that the organizations get may never end up as data and they never look for trends. To avoid this, it's important to think systematically with exit interviews. Conduct exit surveys, exit interviews, and in some cases, do follow-up interviews.

There is strategic value in exit interviews - helping companies better understand why employees leave. This helps them to become better employers in the future.