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[Ad Info](#)**Feature: Leverage Exit Interviews to Collect Key Knowledge**

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Tips and Techniques for Effective Exit Interviews

Make it about them, and avoid those 10-page surveys.

By Pamela Holloway

Here are seven Tips & Techniques for Exit Interviews:

- 1. Select carefully and train well the people that are going to be doing the interviews.** Results depend on the skills of the interviewer. If you don't have that expertise in-house, find it externally. (Third-party interviewers often do a better job because they are able to be more objective.)
- 2. Don't ask people to fill out a 10-page questionnaire and mail it to an anonymous mailbox.** This is impersonal, annoying, and highly ineffective. Exit interviews work best live. Face-to-face is preferred, over the phone if you have to.
- 3. Where separations aren't voluntary and/or where the exiting employee is "emotionally charged," delay the interview two-three months.** By this time there's a good chance they will have "chilled" and had an opportunity to reflect on their experience. They're also more likely to have another job and won't need the reference (which means they're more likely to be honest).
- 4. Make it about them.** Most people like talking about themselves. Talking about how one does their job and what they've accomplished can provide key information to the organization and make the person feel good at the same time.

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1. Tips and Techniques for Effective Exit Interviews

5. **Use the exit interview to build a "parting relationship."** Not so much because you don't want to end up in court, but because you never know when you'll cross paths again. You may want to hire this person back some day. Also, it's likely they or someone they know are prospects or customers of your products and services.
6. **Use the information and knowledge collected!** Articulate to the troops the value of these exercises and how the information gets used. Give them a reason/incentive to want to contribute.
7. **Round out the exit interview process by adding the other Two Es -- Entry and Expert.** Entry Interviews enable you to gather information when employees first join the organization -- when they have "fresh eyes" and new and different perspectives. Expert Interviews are conducted as they develop skills and become subject matter experts.

Pam Holloway is a writer and consultant passionately committed to helping organizations make the most of their number one asset -- People! She can be reached at pam@aboutpeople.com

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