

# Use These 10 Tips to Conduct Better, More Valuable Exit Interviews

Conducting exit interviews with departing employees is a smart and beneficial move. Exit interviews provide employers with valuable information, allowing them to make continuous improvements throughout the organization. Additionally, exit interviews are helpful for employees, allowing them to have their thoughts and opinions heard before they leave.

To maximize the value of an exit interview - and to successfully gather key information from departing employees - follow these 10 tips:



1. **Ask generic questions.** Asking "why are you leaving" and "was there a specific event that led to your decision to leave," can help you better understand the employee's choice to move on. Their answers can help steer strategic decisions around employee retention and recruiting in the future.
2. **Ask more specific questions, too.** Question the employee about their role, department or manager, as well as any relevant initiatives and projects.
3. **Take away relevant information.** "Focus on general themes – what you're hearing pretty consistently – and discuss both good and bad issues with senior management. Of course, if you hear something specific that's concerning, follow up immediately," said [Susannah Chance](#), Vice President of Human Resources at Leddy Group.
4. **Don't use this venue to discuss training transfer.** "Knowledge transfer should be a separate issue - with separate conversations around it - rather than part of an exit interview. Although it's appropriate to use the exit interview to ask how the transition was handled, if that's a concern for your company," Chance explained.
5. **Emphasize the positive.** Be clear that exit interviews are part of your company's positive corporate culture, helping the organization's continuous improvement. Make it known that it's not meant as an opportunity to air every petty grievance.
6. **Reassure employees that they should speak honestly.** Promise to keep information anonymous, if appropriate, and keep that promise.
7. **Offer multiple options for feedback.** Some people prefer to talk in person, others would rather provide information by phone or in a written survey. "Many people withhold information when interviewed face to face, but might write their thoughts or speak by phone," Chance said.
8. **Spend extra time investigating particular concerns or situations.** Move the conversation along quickly if it isn't productive, for instance if the employee is just ranting about the lack of candy in the snack machine. However, spend more time with a credible employee who is providing helpful information that could lead to positive changes.

9. **Build an environment of trust.** It may be difficult to get candid information if you haven't established an environment of trust. Make honesty and communication bedrocks of your company's culture. Recognize that you might not get the full story because the employee is hesitant to be honest – either because of their own conflict avoidance or as a result of the organization's culture.
10. **Conduct an exit interview with anyone leaving - regardless of the reason.** Whether the employee was terminated, resigned or is retiring, never make assumptions about their perceptions or the feedback they may provide. A happy employee and a disgruntled one have had different experiences working at your company, and you can glean important insights from both perspectives.

"Exit interviews are an opportunity to learn and to give the exiting employee a voice," Chance added.

"That's generally what people want – to know someone's listening."