

10 Sample Exit Interview Questions

PATRICIA LOTICH

One of the most important aspects of managing any business is having a good understanding of **customer expectations**. Business customers are defined into two categories – **internal** and **external**.

External customers are those who purchase products or services, while internal customers are employees of the organization. Some consider employees to be the most important customer of the organization because they ARE the organization – since they are the ones who take care of the customers.

Secondly, internal customers are employees who serve other employees. For example, the receptionist may depend on IT support for their computer and phone system. If their needs are not met, the receptionist may not take adequate care of customers calling into the business.

When Employees Leave

When employees resign from their position, it is important to talk to them and determine why they are leaving the organization. Sometimes it is good news when a problem employee quits. However, when a key employee accepts a position at another organization, they can be expensive to replace. Employers need to understand why employees quit. This valuable information can help identify **improvement opportunities** that could help manage expensive **employee turnover**.

Supervisors Matter

There is a lot of data to suggest that employees leave supervisors, not organizations.

If this is the case, it is important to identify possible issues or developmental opportunities that can be incorporated into manager training programs. For instance, let's say you have a supervisor who micromanages. This manager may need additional training in **delegation skills**.

The goal of an exit interview is to find out what drove the employee's decision to leave. When you can get to the root cause of an employee's resignation, you can learn ways to improve the employee experience.

For example, after you do an exit interview you might learn things like:

1. Are there **compensation or benefits** issues?
2. Has the organization has not kept up with changing technology and social trends?
3. Are there unresolved **employee conflicts** that need to be addressed?
4. Are there employee problem-solving development opportunities that need to take place?
5. Does the reporting **supervisor have the right management skills**?
6. Does the employee have the necessary skills to do the job?
7. Was the employee challenged enough?

The exit interview should be part of an **employee termination checklist** that ensures key information is shared and discussed when an employee leaves an organization.

The Exit Interview

The exit interview should be conducted similar to **interviewing a job candidate** in that the goal is to help the employee feel comfortable and engaged in a conversation. You want to get them to talk. The more relaxed they are, the more likely they will be to open up and share their perspective. The information you learn can be very valuable and can be developed into an improvement plan and incorporated into **departmental goals**.

10 Sample Exit Interview Questions

1. Tell me how you came to work for ABC Organization?

Learning why they came to your organization may shed light on why they are leaving.

2. How long have you been with ABC Organization?

Tenure is important because it speaks to a commitment to the organization. Some employees job hops every few years, which has nothing to do with how well your organization is run.

3. Tell me some things you think we can do to improve our products or services for our customers?

Employees are on the front line. They hear the complaints, they hear the suggestions, and they are closest to the delivery process. This question could glean new ideas for the products and services that you provide.

4. What are some things we can do to better support our employees?

Employees go to work to do a good job. Employers need proactive approaches to supporting employees so that they feel valued and part of the team.

5. Tell me your thoughts on how the organization is managed.

Managing an organization is tied to its benefits, culture (how we do things around here), and work environment.

6. Are there things we can do to improve how we manage employees.

Employees need to feel supported in their role. Thanked and rewarded when they do a good job.

7. If there were one thing, we could change to keep you here what would that be?

This question may expose issues that you may not even be aware of.

8. Can you share with me why you chose the organization you are going to?

Assuming the employee is honest, they may share an increase in pay, location, sought-after business, or leadership model. Anything you can learn will help you find new ways to **retain hard to replace employees**.

9. What types of things are they offering that helped you make your decision?

This question gets into benefits and what perks your competitors may be offering to convince your employee to jump ship.

10. Is there anyone on staff who you think might have the skill set to do your job?

When a valued employee leaves employment, they are often the best person to help you identify if anyone in the ranks could fill their shoes. Employees work side-by-side often and know other employees' skill sets, perhaps even more than you might!

Problem Employees

There are times when it is a good thing for a problem employee to leave on their own. Ridding your organization of a problem employee can result in a sigh of relief for all involved.

However, when **key members of your team jump ship to another organization**, it may be time to evaluate management and employee practices that impact the employee experience.

The **exit interview** is one way to learn how employees perceive the workplace and identify ways to make it better for the employees who remain!

