

WE KNOW

HUMAN RESOURCES

CONDUCTING AN EXIT INTERVIEW

QUICK GUIDE

This Quick Guide provides assistance to your organisation to collect and utilise valuable information following an employee's exit from your business.

WHY CONDUCT EXIT INTERVIEWS?

A common reaction to an employee leaving an organisation is to accept it and then move quickly on to recruiting their replacement in order to minimise disruption to the business as much as possible.

However, the reasons for an exit may not always be what they seem and an exiting employee, if handled in the right way, could provide you with invaluable feedback and ideas of ways that you could improve not only your staff satisfaction levels, but also your business.

Employees who have made the decision to leave often feel empowered to give honest feedback either formally or informally to their colleagues. An exit interview may raise your awareness to issues that have not yet been brought to the attention of management.

This feedback, if harnessed in the right environment may well prove beneficial to your organisation. This could help you to avoid the costs associated with a high turnover rate. These costs do not stop at merely recruitment and selection, but extend into morale and therefore productivity.

THE EXIT INTERVIEW

Thought should be given as to who conducts this interview and also when it is conducted within the notice period. An interview conducted by the employee's line manager may be slightly prohibitive in that the employee may not feel comfortable with giving feedback on management issues, particularly if it involves their own line manager. Another manager or suitability qualified person may be more appropriate.

The timing of such an interview is also worth considering. Is an employee in the right state of mind to conduct this interview on their last day, with all the different emotions that people experience on this day or could an employee be asked to prepare for this at some other time approaching their last day? An organisation may ask an employee to prepare for an exit interview and attend it as a final task towards the end of their notice period. Giving someone advance notice will allow them to really give it some thought beforehand.

An exit interview should encompass questions on the following:

- Reason for termination
- Areas that the employee liked about your organisation and why
- Areas they disliked and why
- Your recruitment process
- Training and development
- Promotion and remuneration
- Management / supervision
- External Relationships

INTERPRETING FEEDBACK

The interview will give you lots of varied information. Care should be exercised when acting upon this. Over time, if you carry out a sample of interviews then common trends may materialise which may then require your attention.

However, if you rarely have the opportunity to carry out this type of interview then you may use the data to talk to other members of your team to see how they may feel about some of the areas highlighted. This way you can involve others in the process and seek to improve things together.

Of course, the exit interview may not just highlight areas for improvement, but may instead provide you with feedback on the things that your organisation is doing well. This is then a great opportunity to feed this back to individuals and to use this data to reinforce the benefits of working for your organisation!

From the perspective of remaining employees, a constructive exit interview process helps build confidence in an organisation and its integrity. It also provides an opportunity to reaffirm a positive relationship with the departing employee who may be moving into a position with an organisation which may be a client or prospective client of your business.

For further information regarding Conducting an Exit Interview or other aspects of Employment Relations, please contact The Chamber, email Keith Woodroof; keithw@cecc.org.nz or phone 03 366 5096.