

Stay Interviews are conducted to help managers understand why employees stay and what might cause them to leave. In an effective stay interview, managers ask standard, structured questions in a casual and conversational manner. Most stay interviews take less than half an hour. They offer you a chance to find out the reasons each employee is, and wants to be, productive within the organization. Having a regular Stay Interview program demonstrates to your employees how much you value them because you're careful to ask and listen to why they are still with your company.

A detailed Stay Interview plan will give you the valuable insight into the goldmine of information available you can use to reduce turnover of your high performing employees and save tens of thousands to millions on internal costs, not to mention helping them stay motivated, stay engaged, and stay productive.

EIGHT SIGNS SOMEONE MAY LEAVE:

- 1 Using up benefits:** They start taking more time off, they're using up medical/dental benefits
- 2 Work hours/breaks change:** They are taking long lunches, their schedule suddenly changes, 9-5 everyday, oddly comes in late, they leave as soon as their shift is over
- 3 Production drops:** They show a drop off in any interest in work, their productivity drops, they're uncomfortable discussing long-term projects and deadlines, less proactive or team oriented
- 4 They become distant:** stay under the communications radar, there's a noted change in attitude, they lack a sense of humor, they approach conflict differently, there's a change in their appearance, emails instead when calling is the expected norm
- 5 Life event impact:** They tell you about major changes on the home front, experiencing a major life event
- 6 Your gut tells you:** You have a bad gut feeling, you inquire about possible issues, but get little feedback, colleagues tell you they think something's up
- 7 Leaving activities start:** They're ultra-efficient, tying up loose ends, suddenly cleans their desk, they're more active on LinkedIn, showing up oddly dressed more professional than normal
- 8 Warning language used:** Employees who comment that they are "overdue" for important things, top performer saying they feel underused, expresses a loss of hope for company or C-level

WHEN TO CONDUCT A STAY INTERVIEW

Conduct a stay interview with new hires during and after their probationary period. Then, conduct stay interviews with all of your employees at least once a year. Avoid the temptation to combine it with your performance reviews. This is a separate kind of conversation and should happen at a different time. For instance if you conduct performance reviews in January, you may want to conduct stay interviews in June.

Stay Interview Script

Ask open ended questions rather than questions that can be answered with a Yes or No, and take the time to acknowledge and explore answers before moving on to the next question.

1 PUT THE EMPLOYEE AT EASE

I wanted to take a moment to let you know how much I and the company appreciate you and the work that you do. I really want great employees like you to have a positive working experience, so I'd like to get a better understanding of what you like most about working here, what motivates you to come in every day and how we can make it an even better experience for you.

2 LEAD IN WITH POSITIVES

- *What was a highlight for you this quarter?*
- *What excites you when you think about coming to work? What is it that you can't wait to do?*
- *If you won the lottery and didn't have to work anymore, what would miss most about your job?*
- *What keeps you working here?*
- *How do you envision your career path with our company?*

3 DETERMINE FRUSTRATIONS

- *What would you like to accomplish in your career that you aren't sure you would be able to accomplish here?*
- *On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being most happy, how happy are you in your job?*
- *What would need to change to make that a 5?*
- *Think back to a time since you started, when you have been at least slightly frustrated or anxious in your job. What were the factors that most contributed to that frustration?*
- *What eventually happened to lower that frustration?*
- *What are the 2-3 primary challenges you are experiencing now?*
- *Have you ever thought about leaving? If you have, what was it that made you consider that, and why did you decide to stay?*

4 END ON A BUILDING NOTE

- *What would allow you to do the best work of your life here?*
- *How do you prefer to be recognized when you do a great job?*
- *What opportunities for self-improvement would you like to have?*
- *What support or feedback can we provide you?*
- *Is there anything else that is important to you that we did not cover during this meeting?*
- *If you were trying to recruit somebody into our company, what would you tell them about why this is a great place to work?*

Thank you for your candid feedback. I want you to be happy here, so it's important that I know how you're feeling. If you're ever feeling frustrated or thinking about leaving, please come to me, and if you think of anything we didn't address here, will you share that with me?