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Exit Interviews

I am a big fan of exit interviews. I have learned more doing exit interviews than most other management techniques. When people are on their way out and have no fear of saying exactly what they think, you can learn a lot.

It is rare for an entrepreneur to do exit interviews. I only do them in situations where there seems to be a significant problem in a company and I want to get to the bottom of it.

But if you are the CEO of a company, you should be doing exit interviews with everyone who leaves your company until your company gets to the point that it is impossible to do that. Once you pass that point, your senior team should be doing them along with you.

Here's what I like to do.

First, get a sense from the exiting employee's manager what the cause of departure was. Get the manager's take on the situation. Context is very helpful in situations like this.

Second, don't make an exit interview a witch-hunt. Make it a conversation about the good and bad things about the company, the job, the people, etc. The less confrontational the exit interview is, the more you can learn.

Finally, don't take everything that is said as gospel. There are always two sides to every situation. I like to understand both sides as well as I can. Everyone has an opinion and an agenda and it's best to understand everything in that context.

Doing exit interviews is a lot like doing references. The patterns that emerge over multiple interviews are the most telling and that is what you want to be listening for. Exit interviews are a great way to get those patterns out on the table where you can see them.

NAME:
JOB TITLE:
DIVISION / UNIT:
START DATE WITH ORGANIZATION:
START DATE IN POSITION:
SEPARATION DATE:
TOTAL LENGTH OF SERVICE:
OTHER POSITIONS HELD WITH ORGANIZATION:

1.	Please describe the primary reason(s) you are leaving your current position.

2.	Did dissatisfaction with any of the following factors influence your decision to leave?	YES	NO
	Type of work		
	Working conditions (setting, schedule, travel, flexibility)		
	Pay		
	Supervisor		
	Location		
	Cost of living in area		
	Commute		

3.	Please rate the following aspects of the job you are vacating. Use the 1 – 5 scale below.					
		1 Poor	2	3 Average	4	5 Excellent
	Type of work performed					
	Fairness of workload					
	Salary					
	Working conditions					
	Tools and equipment provided					
	Training received					
	Co-workers					
	Supervision received					
	Level of input in decisions that affected you					

4. Please rate the following aspects of the organization overall. Use the 1 – 5 scale below.						
		1 Poor	2	3 Average	4	5 Excellent
	Recruitment process					
	New employee orientation					
	Training opportunities					
	Career development opportunities					
	Employee morale					
	Fair treatment of employees					
	Recognition for a job well done					
	Support of work-life balance					
	Cooperation within the agency					
	Communication between management and employees					
	Performance and development planning and evaluation					
	Interest and investment in employees					
	Commitment to customer service					
	Concern with quality and excellence					
	Administrative policies/procedures					

5. Please rate your supervisor on the following factors. Use the 1 – 5 scale below.						
		1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Often	4 Usually	5 Always
	Gave usable performance feedback					
	Recognized accomplishments					
	Clearly communicated expectations					
	Treated you fairly and respectfully					
	Coached, trained, & developed you					
	Provided leadership					
	Encouraged teamwork & cooperation					
	Resolved concerns promptly					
	Listened to suggestions & feedback					
	Kept employees informed					
	Supported work-life balance					
	Provided appropriate & challenging assignments					

6.	If you accepted another job, please complete the following.	
	Name of new employer	
	Location of position	
	Title of position	
	Nature of work of position	
	Salary of position	
	What the new position and/or organization offers that we do not.	

Additional questions you may wish to ask:

What led you to accept your current position with our organization?

Were your expectations of the job and this organization met? If not, why?

What, if anything, do you wish you had known before you took the job?

How well were your talents and skills used in the completion of projects?

Was your career path and future with our organization made clear to you?

What were the positive aspects about your job, manager, and/or the organization that caused you to stay as long as you did?

What do you consider to be the biggest challenge this organization now faces and needs to overcome?

In your opinion, what were the top three barriers to productivity in your job or work unit?

What would you suggest to management to make our organization a better place to work?

What advice would you give your replacement?

Would you recommend this organization to others as a place to work? Why or why not?

Would you consider re-employment?

What, if anything, could have been done to prevent you from leaving?

Do you have any objection to our sharing your comments with management?

Did you find your new job, or were you recruited?

Did you witness any violations of laws or policies?

Were you a victim of any type of harassment?

Were you asked to do anything unethical?

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?