

Exit Interview Questionnaire

And how it can help retain top talent

The exit interview: a formal or informal discussion with an employee who's leaving your organization voluntarily to find out what their employee experience was like, why they're leaving, and what you can do better for employees in the future.



Many organizations don't see exit interviews worthwhile: they're often uncomfortable, and it's too late to make the changes needed to retain the employee who's on their way out. [Harvard Business Review](#) found that a quarter of companies don't even conduct exit interviews.

But they're a great source of feedback about your company and your employee experience—employees heading out the door are pretty likely to be candid about issues that could be causing your turnover rate to rise. It's also a valuable final connection point with the departing employee so they leave on a positive and constructive note.

This exit interview template will walk you through exactly how to conduct an effective exit interview: what exit interview questions to ask, best practices, and how to use the valuable feedback you've gathered to retain your current staff.



Exit Interview Questionnaire

Note: You don't need to ask all of these questions. You can use just a few of them, or add in ones that more accurately reflect your employee experience. But it's a good practice to use the same questions in all exit interviews so you can compare answers and spot trends easily.

Before diving into the interview, tell the employee:

The goal of this conversation is to get a complete and transparent view of your experience at [redacted] before you leave, so we can identify patterns and opportunities for improvement. This is a confidential conversation: what's said here stays here, and what we learn here will be used to improve the employee experience. Thank you for your feedback and your time; we appreciate all the great work you've done for us, and we'll be sorry to see you go.

Questions about their reasons for leaving:

What prompted you to look for another job?

What are you looking forward to most in your new job?

Why did you accept the offer for your new job instead of another role?

Would you consider returning to this company in the future if a role opened up?

Do you remember the moment when you decided to look for a new role?

Questions about the role:

How would you suggest making this job more challenging, interesting, or exciting?

Were you given the training, tools, and resources to do your job well?

Do you feel your job description changed since you were hired?

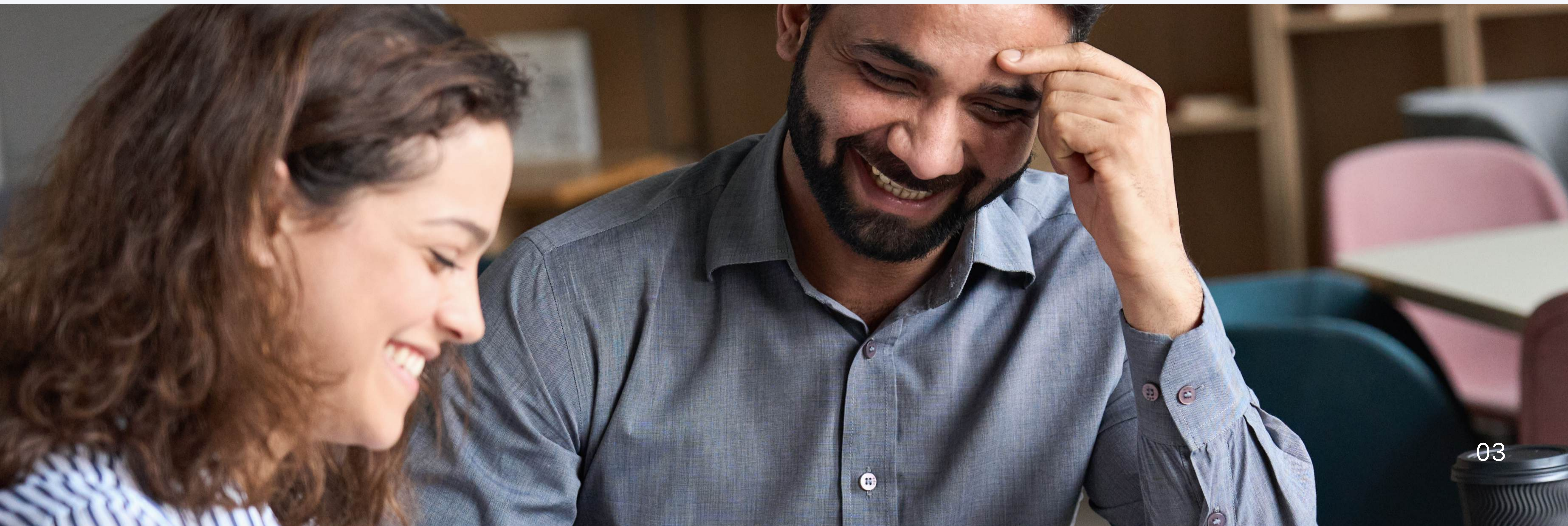
How would you describe the perfect employee to replace you?

Questions around manager feedback:

How would you describe your manager’s leadership style?

What kind of feedback and recognition did your manager give you?
How often was that recognition and feedback given?

How could your manager have helped you more?



Questions around company feedback:

How was your overall experience working for ?

What was your favorite part about working here? Your least favorite?

Would you recommend the company to friends or family as a place to work?

How would you describe the work environment here to a potential employee?

Is there anything we didn't cover that you'd like to add?

Before diving into the interview, tell the employee:

- There's a lot of debate about whether to make exit interviews mandatory, but it's best not to force unwilling employees into the interview as that leaves a bad final impression. If some employees don't want to participate, that's ok.
- But: do invite every employee who leaves voluntarily to participate in an exit interview—don't reserve them for just leaders or high performers. Getting more feedback will provide a fuller picture of what's driving your attrition rate and employee experience.
- An exit interview is one of the last opportunities your organization has to connect with a departing employee, so be sure to leave a good one: be positive, not defensive, and warm (but professional) in the interview. Though the employee is leaving now, they may still discuss your company with their network, and they might even want to come back someday if they're treated with empathy and respect.
- Have a member of your HR team conduct the exit interview instead of the employee's manager. You'll potentially get more honest answers about the manager and the organization if the departing employee is talking to a more neutral party.
- Hold the interview face-to-face (virtually via video, for remote employees) so the interviewer can follow up on questions in the moment. A pause or a silence can offer a chance to (tactfully) dig a little deeper into the employee's experience or ask an open-ended question to follow up.
- Time the interview right: don't hold it the day after the employee has given notice, but don't wait until their last day on the job either. Somewhere in the middle of the typical two-week notice is ideal.

How to use exit interview feedback

Asking all the right questions in an exit interview and thanking the employee genuinely for their contributions is a great start—but then you have to act on all this valuable feedback you've received. And that's where many organizations stumble. Here's how to create a better plan to act on exit interview feedback.

- Not every single piece of feedback needs to be acted on, as sometimes there are one-time or limited incidents that don't offer a learning opportunity. When you see a trend or a pattern though, like multiple comments about a particular leader or a company policy, it's time to start taking action.
- The exit interview data shouldn't stay contained within HR, or even just at the leadership level—it needs to be shared across your organization so everyone can learn and improve.
- Interview findings can be used to improve the employee experience, enhance your strategic planning process, overhaul your performance management plan, or discover toxic elements in the workplace like poor managers.
- Use the information you've gathered in your hiring process as well: with the feedback about the role itself, you can formulate questions to ask candidates to see if they're a good fit and update job descriptions so new employees know exactly what to expect.
- Don't rely solely on exit interviews when you're looking to solve retention issues—it's too late to retain those employees, and they're already out the door. You also should [hold stay interviews](#), conduct regular employee surveys, and use employee focus groups to gather more holistic data about engagement, retention, and satisfaction.
- But exit interviews are a vital look at what issues could be costing your employees, so don't skip them!



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