

The “Stay” Interview

Why wait until your people are leaving to find out *what you could have done* to convince them to stay! By that point...it's too late!

What is it?

A 'Stay' Interview is a one-on-one interview where an employee is asked a series of questions designed to elicit:

- the reasons he/she stays with an organisation, and
- the factors that may cause he/she to leave.

Why would I use it?

You may use it to elicit general feedback about how the business is tracking in terms of their people management. This may mean using the Stay Interview as the basis for an Engagement Strategy or using it as a means of pulse checking the culture of your business.

Or you may have a more specific purpose for using it. For instance, if a business was looking at reviewing their recruitment strategy, a targeted stay interview may ask a series of questions specifically related to the way a cross-section of employees was recruited.

The opportunities are endless but one thing is certain – the aim is to use the 'Stay' Interview so you don't have to do the 'Exit' Interview!

How do I conduct it?

Here are some 'rules of engagement' when conducting a 'Stay' Interview.

- Set the context by telling your employee how critical they are to you and your team and how important it is to you that they stay
- Listen carefully to their responses
- Do something about their responses!
- Communicate back to them what you *plan to do* or what you *have done* about their responses

And **MOST IMPORTANTLY**, be honest that not every item raised during these interviews will be acted upon for any number of reasons – financial, operational, regulatory or otherwise.

When do I conduct it?

You can conduct a stay interview any time. Many find it useful to incorporate it into the annual review process. Others keep it completely separate.

Common times a 'Stay' Interview may be useful are at Orientation, as part of Annual Review, as part of annual Engagement Survey, ad-hoc but regular enough so people expect it.



Why would we conduct a 'Stay' Interview at Orientation?

The purpose of conducting a 'Stay' Interview at orientation is to:

- find out from new employees what motivates them and what will make them stay on the job;
- begin getting to know them as individuals;
- find out what is important to them and what made them accept the job;
- find out about the work they feel they are best at, what they most enjoy doing, what they value, what they need to learn to work at their best; and
- show respect for their previous experiences and encourage them to provide insight and suggestions from their fresh perspective.

Why would we conduct a 'Stay' Interview during a Performance Review?

The 'Stay' Interview can be handy during the Performance Review process to:

- combat existing negative perceptions of the 'appraisal' process by inviting the employee to share positives from their perspective;
- discover potential contributors to inadequate performance – such as a mismatch between job and strengths / interests.

Sample Questions

Here is a list of sample questions. Some of them seem repetitive and we've done that to provide you with options that suit your personal style.

*Make a list of your favorite questions. We suggest keeping it to a maximum of **six (6)** per interview.*

1. What is it about your job that makes you jump out of bed in the morning?
2. What makes you hit the snooze button?
3. If you were to win the lottery and resign, what would you miss the most?
4. What would be the one thing that, if it changed in your current job, would make you consider moving on?
5. If you had a magic wand, what would be the one thing you would change about this department?
6. If you had to go back to a position in your past and stay for an extended period of time, which one would it be and why?
7. What makes for a great day?
8. What can we do to make your job more satisfying?
9. What can we do to support your career goals?
10. What can we do to keep you here?
11. What talents or skills do you have to contribute, that I'm not aware of or haven't recognized?
12. Are you recognized for your accomplishments?
13. Do you feel challenged in your work?
14. Are you getting enough feedback?
15. What aspects of your job do you like best / least?
16. How can we help you develop on-the-job?
17. What are your current job and career goals?
18. What can I do to support them?
19. What are you struggling with? What would make your life easier?

