



Monthly Strategies

HR Strategies, LLC

Volume 21, Issue 10
October 1, 2024

Stay Interviews

Avoid Exit Interviews by taking the time to conduct "Stay Interviews." Most leaders ask the question, "What can I do to keep you," only when a talented employee has given notice, like at the exit interview. Typically, that is too late. But have you ever wondered why we ask questions in those exit interviews, but neglect to ask the same questions early enough to really make a difference? Well, over two decades ago the term "stay interview" came about to describe the type of conversation that leaders must have with the people they cannot afford to lose.

When asking many people "What might entice them away," nearly all responded they would leave if their next assignment in the company was less engaging or meaningful than the one, they had now.

With that said, our task is clear: learn what each person meant by "engaging" or "meaningful," and then help them find the ideal next position inside their organization. When I suggest asking employees why they stay or what would keep them, managers often say to us, "you've got to be kidding. What if they give me an answer that I don't want to hear?" Managers dance around this topic and usually for one of three reasons.

One, some managers fear putting people on the spot or putting ideas in their heads.

Number two, some managers are afraid they won't be able to do anything with the answer, so why ask. And they fear that the question will raise more dust that they can settle and may cause employees to expect answers and solutions that are out of the manager's hands.

Three, some managers say they don't have the time to have these critical one-on-one discussions with their talented people. There's now an urgency to produce, leaving little time to listen, let alone ask. Asking these questions

with your employees has positive side effects. The person you ask will feel cared about and valued and important.

Many times, just asking the question leads to stronger loyalty and commitment to you and the organization. If you don't have time for these discussions with the people who contribute to your success, where will you find the time to interview, select, orient and train their replacements?

Engage Your Employee

Employee engagement is very important to me, and it stems from my involvement at the Honeywell company on lean principles, lean plus, lean Six Sigma, doing more with less, eliminating waste, and really involving the people who are closest to the work in making decisions about how to do the work.

So, if you think about that on a factory floor it's almost intuitive, but if you broaden that across the organization, you let people have a voice—they may not make all the decisions, but they can certainly help you as a leader, inform your decisions. They have always delighted me, surprised me, come up with things I'd have never thought about. Understanding what their cares are, what their concerns are, certainly the further you get from the day-to-day work, the harder it is to remember what's important, so let them make decisions as much as you can and push those decisions as low in the organization as possible.

Increasing Engagement in Your Organization

Successful employee engagement has hard metrics associated with it. For instance, the Gallup Employee Engagement Index says that fully engaged employees are up to 43% more productive towards revenue generation. So how can you help, as a leader, increase engagement in your organization?

