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Exit Interviews Questions, Answers and Checklist: A Mini Survival Guide

There are 101 reasons why we change jobs, and these sample exit interview questions and answers will guide you through the moral and emotional trials and tribulations.

“Jobs for life” have gone the way of the dodo - a recent [report](#) by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated “baby boomers” held on average 10.2 jobs between the ages of 18 and 38 – so we’ll all experience a few exit interviews before retirement! The accepted practice is for an “exit interview” to be held between the voluntarily departing employee and a representative of the company, usually from human resources, to understand more fully the reasons for leaving.

Who Benefits From An Exit Interview?

Responsible employers will use this information to improve their recruitment and retention policies. However, cynics may believe this information is solely captured in case of future litigation from the ex-employee. It’s for this reason that advice differs on how to handle an exit interview well.

Sample Exit Interview Questions

Exit interview forms vary widely, but here are some core questions you can expect.

- What is your main reason for leaving?
- Would you work for this employer again?
- Would you recommend this employer to friends or family?
- What did you enjoy/dislike about your job?
- What improvements would you suggest about your job/working conditions/management support?
- What do you think it takes to succeed at this company?
- What does your new employer offer different to this company?
- Any other comments?

How you handle these questions and how honestly you answer is entirely your decision.

If your main reason for leaving is to escape a tyrannical boss, carefully consider how you put this into words, particularly if you want to keep your options open for returning at a later date. Remember the HR person’s notes will be on your file, for all to see. Although you may feel that reporting your boss is the “right thing to do” in an exit interview, consider whether this may be better conveyed in a private conversation with his or her superior.

Beware open-ended questions asking for improvement suggestions or generalisations. Keep your answers short and simple, and above all, remain calm if you've had less than ideal treatment. If you have any points to make, present your ideas constructively – your interviewer will appreciate this approach enormously.

Exit Interview Checklist

Here's a mental checklist to run through to remind you how to behave in the exit interview

- Have I chosen to attend this interview? It's not compulsory, so if you've decided to attend, do so with grace and dignity.
- Will anything change based on my comments? If so, let the feedback flow.
- Who will benefit from my honesty? Constructive feedback is useful to a company, even if it takes time to take action.
- Who will be harmed by my honesty? Remember that bland answers are an option if you're likely to get upset during the interview.
- Do I want to work for this employer again? Burnt bridges are difficult to repair!

The relationship with your employer can be more intense than with your romantic partner, because so many big emotions are involved – status, achievement, security etc. When this relationship ends, for good or bad, it's better to handle the final good bye in your exit interview calmly. These sample exit interview questions, answers and checklist can help you maintain that focus.

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