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UPCOMING EVENTS

March 27
Harassment &
Discrimination Update
Small Business
Resource Network

April 9 & 16
Human Resources
Management Certificate
Program
University of North
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Exit Interviews – Get the Real Reasons for Employee Resignations

Exit interviews are an effective way to ascertain the **REAL** reasons employees change jobs. During the exiting process, the employees may feel a little more comfortable in being frank and forthright in their opinions regarding the recruitment practices, supervision, pay, benefits, treatment, promotional opportunities and other aspects of their work experience.

To be effective, the exit interviews should be conducted by a neutral party such as someone in the human resources department or an outside party. A standard set of questions should be asked with the responses captured in a way that data can be gathered and analyzed to determine specific areas of concern. With a face-to-face or telephone discussion, the interviewer will have the opportunity to probe the employee for additional information and clarification. Simply handing an employee a questionnaire to complete without the benefit of a discussion is not effective.

Some organizations wait for a month or two after the employee leaves the organization and then conduct telephone interviews. The information gathered during this process can prove to be extremely valuable. People in this situation will open up more because they are safely away from the work environment, have been away from the work setting for a long enough period to reflect on the experience and are eager to discuss difficulties they had in their work setting.

Here are a few ways to ensure that you get the most out of exit interviews.

1. Keep them anonymous. You are looking for information. Even though the employee is leaving the company, many do not want their name attached to a written document – especially if they are making negative comments.
2. Only conduct exit interviews on employees who voluntarily resign from the company. People who are fired or laid off from a job are often too emotional to offer any constructive advice.
3. Keep the completed documents in a separate file specifically for exit interviews. Review them periodically to see if there are any trends developing with the responses. Depending on the level of turnover, the exit interviews should be reviewed every three to six months.
4. If there are serious allegations, such as harassment or discrimination aimed at a specific manager or supervisor, an immediate investigation should be conducted and the employee making the allegation should be questioned as to why he/she did not approach the HR department or another management employee earlier.
5. If trends are developing in a specific area or department, corrective action should be taken. If, for example, many employees complain that the pay is too low, it is a good idea to conduct a salary survey. Likewise, if the turnover is high in one department and a majority of those leaving complain about the treatment they received from their supervisor, confront the supervisor with the data and find out what is going on and make the necessary corrections.

Turnover is expensive. Exit interviews have proven to be a very effective way to gather the necessary data to take corrective action at a very low cost.