

# Stay Interviews

## Successfully Increasing Employee Retention One Question At A Time



### What is a Stay Interview? Isn't It The Same As An Engagement Survey?

Although the two do measure engagement to a certain degree, an engagement survey tells the story of employees passion for the company.

It points out which employees are truly interested in driving the company towards its long-term goals and gets to what drives and motivation.

In addition, engagement surveys show the truth about disengaged employees and their effect on customer service, morale and of course, the bottom line.

Although it is a useful tool, it may be much more effective when combined with another, more direct approach to seeing what makes employees tick.

Stay interviews are effective means of determining just why an employee chooses to stay with the company. But, perhaps more importantly, it also tells you what you -need to do to keep them longer.

In the simplest terms possible, a *stay interview* is an occasional, informal meeting between management and employees that focuses on the factors that drive employees to stay with the company.

Highly valued, members of the team that may be at risk of being lured away by another company are a good target for such interviews. In today's competitive talent market, key employees are more valuable than ever and employers need to take any action necessary to keep them.

### “Why Do Your Key Employees Continue Working With The Company?”

For far too long, employers have been waiting until key employees decide to leave the company to find out what they could do better next time. This is reactive – not proactive. The problem with this kind of thinking is that right now, that key employee is leaving your organization and you can't fix that. Many a manager has kicked himself for not seeing that one of his star people was unhappy and looking for another position. Only at the exit interview was the problem revealed, and of course, it was too late.

Exit interviews focus on the negative and talks about what went wrong. A more positive and proactive approach is to find out what makes people want to stay, thus avoiding the “I wish I would have...” syndrome. Stay interviews can cover a variety of topics directly related to the particular person including job satisfaction, experiences with supervisors, staffing concerns, advancement and educational opportunities and more.

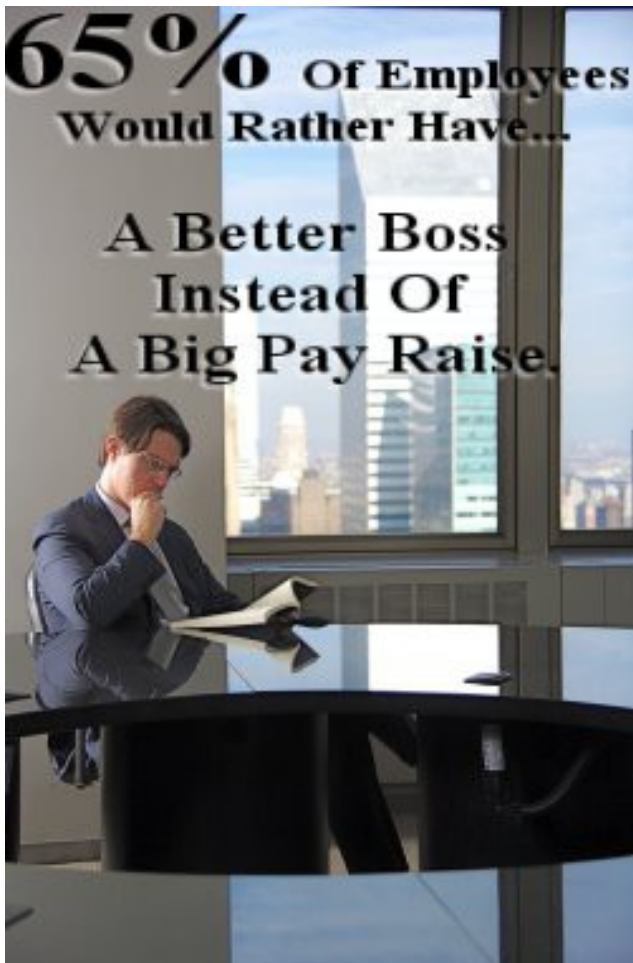
**The important thing for all companies to remember is that stay surveys are designed with one single objective in mind.... to make the workplace more appealing to more talented individuals for the long term.**

**By listening to what employees want and need now, employers can create an atmosphere of mutual benefit that attracts and retains far more devoted long-term employees.**

## Regularly Conducted Stay Interviews Reduce Employee Turnover

For most managers, high turnover is a mystery that is difficult to solve. The pay and benefits are on par with the competition, a shiny new building houses the workforce and we do pizza party Friday every week. Heck, we even instituted employee appreciation week and we gave them special awards and treats. Isn't that what employees want? Well, yes, in part they do want good pay, a decent building to work in and some fun times... but if that's all it took to keep employees, we wouldn't be concerned with the subject at all.

People don't stay at a job just because of employee appreciation activities, special treats and silly activities. These are grown people with life goals – no, they stay at a job because they are engaged, because they are satisfied and they can see room for growth and expansion. The fact is that employees want to know that they matter, and that management cares about their experience as an employee and is interested in making it better. When this happens, turnover reduces and engagement increases – bringing profits and morale up with them.



### Managers Are Missing The Boat And Key Employees Are Jumping Ship

Most managers only conduct meetings with employees a few times during their employment. It's usually the initial interview during the hiring process, then the annual performance reviews and the worst of all – an exit interview when the employee decides to move on.

All they know about even the most key employees under their care is what they obtain in those brief meetings – it's no wonder employees get frustrated with their bosses. Managers may not want to hear employees complaints and concerns, it's just too much to handle and they stop listening to employees altogether.

That's when the real issues arise because what employees want from a boss is.... leadership and communication. When those things are missing, it's a recipe for dissatisfaction.

A recent survey said that 65% of employees would choose a better boss over a raise. That's pretty profound, especially when bosses generally believe that employees leave for more pay or better benefits.

In this respect, most managers are completely missing the boat by not conducting a Stay Interview with employees..

### When Should Stay Interviews Be Conducted and How Often?

Although it is really at the discretion of the manager when and how often to conduct stay interviews, you should be doing them at least once a year. Most managers conduct annual employee performance reviews, evaluating the employee and their job performance. The same should be true for stay interviews which, in essence, are manager and company performance reviews from the employee.

New hires are the exception to this generalized rule... stay interviews can be a very effective gauge of an employees intent to stay with the company when done within the first 60 and 90 days of employment and then again on the anniversary of the hire-in. Anytime a key employee seems to be at risk, an interview should be scheduled.

## Employees Will Ask For Raises And Other Perks We Can't Give - Won't They?

The most common fear that managers have when it comes to employee surveys and interviews is that their employees will ask for raises that the company just cannot afford.

The truth is, most employees don't ask for more money... it's rarely an issue – in fact, in most cases, pay isn't the highest priority as far as what makes employees want to stay or leave.

It's more likely that employees will ask for things that are well within the limits of managers to accommodate them.

Generally speaking, employees ask for things like better management, and better information about chances to educational and employment advancement.

It's true that sometimes these interviews will uncover unpleasant truths about employees perception of executive management, an or the lack of career advancement opportunities, or any number of issues. The key is to listen, get to the root of the issue and manage for change.

### So How Do I Implement And Conduct A Stay Interview Process?

There are different schools of thought on this subject, from one on one meetings between managers and employees to anonymous surveys implemented by third parties. There are pros and cons to every method. So which is the best?

**Internal Face-To-Face Stay Interviews:** The good thing is that they allow management to connect with employees on a more personal level. It gives them an opportunity to show the workforce that they are willing to listen. There is an inherent problem with this though...Employees tend to be less willing to give their true opinion to a supervisor in a meeting.

**Often there is a fear of some form of punishment or retribution for saying anything out of line with the expectations of the bosses. They may not mention the fact that their immediate supervisor is ineffective or that they don't have all the necessary tools to do their job well. They may never mention anything negative at all, and conversely, won't mention what they like either.**

**Third Party Stay Interviews:** Outside, third party stay interviews avoid this kind of situation by allowing employees to relax and answer questions honestly without fear of manager retaliation. They tend to be more open and share more of their feelings about every aspect of their job and what makes them want to stay – or what would change their mind and make them want to leave.

One survey, from the folks at Proactive Insights offers a truly unique method of conducting stay interviews. Called the Keep Me survey, also known as a Stay Survey, it is conducted online, giving instant, anonymous results to management. It allows employers to take a proactive approach to retaining talent from a positive point of view. It is based on ten proven engagement drivers for success that are both timeless and universal. Narrative comments give management the pulse of the company – a wake up call. A call to action that must be headed before it's too late and key employees leave.



## What Makes This Keep Me Survey So Unique?

It is based on extensive research that has defined 10 clear and precise engagement drivers.



**Clarity** – Employees want to know what their organization stands for and what goals it wants to accomplish. Knowing what direction the company is headed gives employees the opportunity to help steer toward that goal.



**Communication** – Communication is critical to employee engagement ideas and opinions not only must be heard but also acted upon when appropriate. Nothing is worse than feeling like you haven't been listened to and employees want to know that their opinions and thoughts matter.



**Proper Tools and Resources** – You have to start by asking employees if they have the proper tools, material, equipment and resources to do the best job they can. Actually acting on employees requests for new materials and resources in a timely manner is the rest of the job.



**Workplace Wellness** - Research proves that employee engagement accelerates in an organization when it demonstrates authentic concern for the wellness and development of every employee. Ask employees for comments, suggestions and ideas about improving the wellness and balance of their workplace – encourage involvement.



**Recognition and Appreciation** - Recognition reinforces accomplishments, shows the person in a positive light and helps to ensure there will be more achievements. Everyone needs a pat on the back sometimes, be the back patter.



**Make Work Fun** - Workplace fun has been shown to boost employee morale, lower absenteeism and increase creativity. That doesn't mean it's all fun and games, but it does mean that there is enjoyment and laughter in the workplace.



**Opportunities to Learn and Grow** – Employees don't want to feel like they are stuck in a dead end job with no opportunities to learn. Focusing on educational opportunities that offer maximum benefit to employees maximizes the ROI for employers.



**Freedom to Be Passionate and Creative** - People want to work with an organization that taps into their talents, passion, energy and drive. Encouraging employees to express their passion will open up avenues for more creativity and higher engagement.



**High-trust Environment** - Employees must trust the company and vice versa. Trust is the basis for all good relationships – business and personal. Nothing kills a relationship quicker than being untruthful or purposefully misleading.



**Making Progress in One's Work** - When employees are making measurable progress in their job they are much more satisfied. When little or no progress can be made, it tends to create disengagement and other serious problems.

**KEEP ME SURVEY**  
Before Talent Walks Out the Door



## **Be Proactive, Not Reactive And Retention Levels Will Increase.**

Reacting to a key employees resignation letter with an exit interview only tells you what you did wrong with this employee. It's a look into the past, at things that have already happened and that cannot be undone. Perhaps the employee felt the supervisor was ineffective or that the number of meetings per week was excessive and took away from her time. At best, you can only take note and try to change it for future employees, or wait until they leave too.

**Being reactive to an employee leaving does nothing. You're not going to be able to go back and change anything – the deal's been done and they are already out the door.**

**Being proactive means that you take the time to figure out what it takes to keep your employees happily working for you. It's about asking the questions that matter most to them and then acting on it. It is ALL about ACTION. When you are conducting regular stay interviews, you'll keep your finger on the pulse of the company in a way no exit interview could do.**

This revolutionary new Keep Me Survey is not about employee entitlement – it is a **positive** approach that asks in advance about **aspirations** and issues – Uncovering how to increase the length of **stay** of your employees. The Keep Me Survey is about being proactive – gaining insight on employee aspirations, expectations and problems being faced at work.

Keep Me Survey's are only for employers that are truly interested in finding out how to keep employees motivated, informed, passionate, appreciated, engaged and of course, wanting to stay.

**Be proactive and take the steps to increase your employee retention rate today – you'll thank yourself tomorrow.**



For more information visit [www.KEEPMESURVEY.com](http://www.KEEPMESURVEY.com). Find out how our exclusive process can benefit you!