

# STAY INTERVIEW GUIDE

## WHAT IS A “STAY” INTERVIEW?

A "stay interview" is an informal one-on-one structured discussion between a supervisor and an employee. It is a conversation meant to identify the factors that drive an individual employee's retention and engagement.

## WHY ARE STAY INTERVIEWS IMPORTANT?

Stay interviews show that you recognize and appreciate the loyalty and contributions of valued employees and that you care about their job satisfaction. These types of interviews help you to understand specifically what will influence the retention of key employees—those employees in which you've invested the most time and resources—and identify low-cost changes that could increase their commitment and engagement.

By the time you receive a resignation letter from one of your valued employees and you conduct an exit interview, it is too late to effect any meaningful changes to retain that individual.

## TIPS FOR CONDUCTING STAY INTERVIEWS

- **Schedule the interview in advance** so that employees know they are important and have some time to prepare their thoughts.
- Tell the employee why you're having the meeting and what you are going to be talking about. **Share the questions in advance.**
- **Meet in a location where they will feel comfortable**; if they are comfortable, they are more likely to express their true feelings about the organization and their experiences in the workplace.
- Listen carefully and monitor your responses. **Keep an open mind**; explore the employee's underlying interests that lead to his or her specific requests.
- Don't hesitate to conduct stay interviews for fear that you won't be able to deliver on the employee's suggestions. **It is an exploratory conversation**; it is important to set that tone up front in order to manage expectations. For example, if you already know that compensation is a significant issue for the employee, but you have limited ability to influence this, have an open conversation about other possibilities that may increase their job satisfaction, or discuss opportunities for advancement in the longer term.
- Stay interviews are different than performance reviews: **you do not need to conduct them with all employees.** The focus should be on retaining key members of your team.

# STAY INTERVIEW GUIDE

## SAMPLE STAY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These questions are provided to help you begin preparing for a stay interview. Use only those that you think will provide the opportunity for an informative and productive conversation. Feel free to adjust them as you see fit.

- What are you passionate about?
- Do you think that your talents, interests and skills are being fully utilized?
- If you could change one thing about your position, your team, or how this department functions, what would it be?
- Do you think you are “in the know” when it comes to organizational direction and departmental changes?
- If you took a completely different position, what would you miss the most?
- What about your position makes you want to “hit the snooze button”?
- Do you have any ideas that you have not had the opportunity to share?
- Are there any constraints that are limiting your contributions?
- In your position, do you feel that you are trusted and treated with respect?
- What have you always been naturally good at?
- What tasks are the most interesting to you?
- Which tasks bring you joy and which ones always get pushed to the bottom of your to-do list?
- How might your strengths work against you?
- Under what settings or conditions do you make your best contribution?

*Adapted from the Conference Board of Canada, Insights from Succession Management Conference, 2015*