



EXIT INTERVIEWS

What is an Exit Interview?

Simply put an exit interview is the meeting you have after you have resigned. Officially known as the last formal interview you will have with a representative of the Company. There are two main reasons for your Company wanting an interview:

1. To identify the reasons you are leaving.
2. To have a transfer of knowledge and experience from you to a successor or replacement. (This is usually discussed during the interview and then implemented during the final week/s of employment.)

From your point of view an exit interview is an opportunity to provide feedback about every aspect of your working life.

From the Company's perspective good exit interviews have the potential to provide useful information about the terms and conditions you worked under, whether there are any systems or procedures that need to be redefined or added, and your experience within the workplace culture.

Until recently, employers didn't choose to use exit interviews – mainly because this was not a standard method of practise and therefore implementing them was perceived as challenging to undertake. Possible reasons for this were the outcomes if staff were unhappy, the time involved, and perhaps the unspoken Managerial desire to deny there is anything but successful/happy staff on the premises.

From your point of view an exit interview is a chance to give your views, so that you can finish this employment on a brighter note with both parties feeling respected. Being calm, clear and non-blaming is crucial to your credibility and professionalism. In the future you may need to become part of the Company again, or quite simply with New Zealand the size it is, the possibility is you will run into ex-colleagues and managers.

You are legally under no obligation to be part of this interview, unless you have chosen to do so - or it was agreed upon in your written contract (at the commencement of your employment).

The most important thing to remember about an exit interview is the timing of it. It will be of little or no value otherwise. For instance - If it happens too soon, say, before you received that written reference you were promised – you may not be able to be as frank as you would have liked or - If it happens too late; you may have moved on in your head to the next exciting career prospect – and can't be bothered going over old ground. Quite simply put valuable information may be lost!

Some Companies consider the interview to be of more value if it is conducted outside of the Company and with an external Consultant who specialises in this field.

As with anything involving people, there are many variables within the framework of exit interviewing:

The interview itself can be conducted verbally or in written form - most Company's tend to use both.

- Many Companies dictate who will conduct the interview, some however, offer the following choices - conducted by Management, an outside Consultant or a person of your choosing – within the Company
- Your interview may be kept confidential to the interviewer, yourself and a member of the Management team – or may be given to the HR Department to manage.
- The Company's policy may be to interview you the week you are leaving, the week after you leave or when you are re-employed by another Firm.
- Some of the questionnaire forms are standardised and allow yes/no responses with no record of your actual words being used - varying to - pages of script on your exact feelings about every aspect of the Company you worked with/for.

Some positive consequences as a result of your exit interview may include the Company's implementation of strategies designed to motivate their employees to stay with them as well as improving their recruitment and induction techniques

The benefit to you is that you were able to divulge the things that you felt could be improved on and needed changing. That in turn has the potential to be positive and freeing for you. Hopefully this will allow you to move onto your next job without carrying any resentment/ill feelings.

If run appropriately, I believe exit interviews can be a win/win for all concerned.

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