



Question:

Our CEO asked if we should be doing stay interviews. What are they? How do we do them?

Answered by the HR Experts

A **stay interview** is a simple, planned conversation with a current employee that explores why they have chosen to stay at your organization and what might cause them to leave. They often provide the sort of information you'd obtain from an exit interview, but with the benefit of allowing you to address concerns before an employee decides to quit. These conversations are a low-cost way to improve retention and engagement.

For stay interviews to be effective, employees need to feel safe sharing critical feedback. They need to know that they can trust you and that you'll listen to what they have to say and strive to make improvements based on what you learn. Some of this trust building will take time. When first getting started with these interviews, it's helpful to reassure employees that the answers they give won't affect their performance reviews or result in any kind of retaliation.

If you decide to conduct stay interviews, we have a few recommended steps:

- Schedule the interviews in advance, letting your employees know why you're interviewing them.
- Set a tone that helps employees understand they can trust you. Explain the goal is to listen and, when possible, act on feedback. If you can, mention cases in which you've previously made changes based on employee input.
- Decide what questions you want to ask. Use open-ended questions, such as "What keeps you here?" "What would make your job easier?" or "What could cause you to look elsewhere?"
- Let employees know how you plan to share information from the interview, including with whom and how. For example, you might let them know you will be sharing themes and direct quotes with leadership but not identifying who said what.
- Close the meeting by summarizing what you heard and allowing them to make any needed clarifications.
- Share themes and any recommendations with leadership.
- Follow up with employees about changes made in response to their feedback. Also discuss changes that couldn't be made, and why, if appropriate. Transparency is key as you won't be able to fix everything or please everyone.

You can learn more about employee retention on the [platform](#).

*This Q&A does not constitute legal advice and does not address state or local law.*