



How to have effective “stay” conversations

to retain and motivate your team

face2faceHR

The cost of employee turnover is higher than you may think – around one third of salary, excluding the ‘cost’ of lost time when a new employee is yet to reach optimum productivity. Not to mention the feeling of frustration on losing one of your top performers.



Why retention matters

Most businesses tend to start thinking about employee retention at the point of exit at the Exit Interview...

When you stop and think about this, it really doesn't seem like a great idea does it?

How many people do you know who have changed their mind at this point? And if they do, they never seem to stay long.

Exit interviews tend to focus on “What went wrong” or what more you could have done to keep them. In our experience they don't generally lead to much improving or changing.

Rather than waiting until it's too late, we recommend regular, informal, two-way conversations on what your team member loves about working for you, and what one or two things they might like to change.

By regular, this could be once or twice a year, or more often if they are someone you really want to keep.

An Harvard Business Review paper found that two-thirds of companies carrying out exit interviews could not name a specific action taken as the result of doing them (HBR, 2014)

What is a stay conversation?

A stay conversation is a discussion with a team member with the purpose of understanding what they love about their job, what keeps them there, and what might make them leave. The aim is to uncover actions you could take to improve retention and lower the likelihood of a resignation.

The conversation can occur during a one to ones or in a separate dedicated meeting.

The aim is to gain real-time insights, to help you to identify what meaningful interventions you can make to ensure your business is a great place to work.



What are the benefits?

- Better understanding of what motivates your team
- Identify areas for improvement
- Improved engagement
- Lower turnover
- Increased trust
- Supports psychological safety.



Who leads the meeting?

A stay conversation is a discussion between a manager and an employee.

Occasionally, if the matter is sensitive you may ask for support from HR, but we would strongly recommend for managers to use the stay questions in normal one to one meetings.

Great questions to ask

Select a few questions from those set out below and you're ready to go! We recommend adding including a couple in your regular one to ones. You may find the first time you use the questions they feel awkward, but stick with it and both you and your team member will see the benefits of a more open discussion.

Career Development

- In what way does your job provide you with meaning and purpose?
- What are the most challenging but exciting aspects of your current job? Are there actions that we can take to further challenge you?
- What could we do to more fully make use of your talents and interests?
- Are you currently doing "the best work of your life?" What might be different if you were "doing the best work of your life"?
- What are your short- and long-term career goals? How can we support you to achieve them?

Culture

- Do you have a good work life balance? When do you feel like your work responsibilities interfere with your life outside work?
- Do you feel inspired and motivated by the vision and values of the company?
- Do you feel proud to work here?
- Would you recommend us to a friend?
- How would you describe morale in the team?
- Does the working environment support you to do your best work?

Role

- If you could change something about your job what would that be?
- What would you like to be doing within your role that you aren't currently doing?
- If you were given the opportunity to redesign your current role, what key factors would you include in your "dream job"?



More great questions to ask

Recognition

- Do you feel appropriately recognised for a job well done? What else could we do?
- Do you feel valued at work?
- Are there any additional employee benefits you'd like to see?

Management

- How does the way in which you're managed bring out the best in you / your team?
- What else could we do to support you?
- If you "managed yourself," what would you do differently?

Leaving risk

- How often do you think of leaving to work elsewhere?
- Are there any situations recently that have made you consider resigning?
- What kind of "triggers" or negative factors might cause you to consider leaving?



Keeping records

It's important to draw themes from stay conversations across the business, so do keep notes. These can be in any format to suit you whether physical or online.

We recommend Breathe for holding all your employee information in one secure place and keeping on top of day-to-day HR admin.

Using Breathe improves efficiency and visibility, and includes features such as:

- ✓ Holiday management
- ✓ Sickness & absence tracking
- ✓ Document storage
- ✓ Onboarding
- ✓ Expense management

Your office anywhere

Because Breathe is hosted in the cloud, it's accessible anywhere with an internet connection. All users can access Breathe via smartphones, tablets, laptops and PCs, whether they are working in the office, remotely from home or based in the field.

GDPR and Subject Access Request compliance

By centralising the storage of your employee information, you can more easily achieve GDPR compliance than you would with spreadsheets and filing cabinets.

Ask us for a demo!



How we can help

We love working with growing businesses and helping you to confidently manage your team. We are always happy to chat about your needs, so please do drop us a line!

Here are a few ways in which we help our clients:

- Induction templates to support your new starters and their manager through the onboarding process
- Manager guides
- One to one manager mentoring to support managers through their management journey and the development of their team
- Line management training
- Policies for businesses that cover family friendly situations, disciplinary, grievance, flexible working and wellbeing
- Salary benchmarking
- Employee engagement surveys
- Company branded welcome booklet that offers your employees an insight into all they need to know about your company, how you work and your key policies in an easy to digest manner
- Mental health training for employees and managers
- Annual health checks to proactively support the health of your team
- Occupational Health and Wellness Action Plan support
- A Performance Management system that simplifies and guides you through your performance review process

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