MAKING THE MOST OF EXIT INTERVIEWS
(BY ACTUALLY TAKING ACTION)

Exit interviews: Love 'em or hate 'em, you need 'em. That's our stance. We consider them a best practice and find they bring great value to our continuous improvement and retention efforts. And we already know what you're about to say: Nothing good comes from them; people lose their cool and burn bridges; you won't learn anything you don't already know; upper management doesn't place value on ex-employee feedback; and your HR department is already up to its eyeballs dealing with current employees. Blah, blah, blah. Hear us out.

WHY? BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW.
And assuming you do know is a dangerous practice. Other employee pulse-check methods aren't likely to capture the same level of candid feedback as an exit interview. If structured correctly, exit interviews will uncover things like valuable employee perceptions, managerial incompetence, organizational roadblocks, and competitive intelligence.

BUT YOU CAN'T SIT ON YOUR FEEDBACK.
One of the biggest breakdowns following exit interviews is failing to share the data with decision makers. You must create a process that makes skirting data consolidation and dissemination virtually impossible. And equally important is establishing a culture that prioritizes using the feedback to correct issues and minimize future turnover; after all, your remaining employees are watching to see if you make changes. If you don't—and the problem really is a PROBLEM—they're bound to leave once they realize it won't be fixed.

And here's what that process looks like ...

- Make exit interviews a required piece of your offboarding process and communicate the "why" to your management teams.

- Only interview voluntary departures (feedback from others will only skew your data).

- Never have the direct manager conduct the interview. Ideally, have the next highest manager conduct the interview as he or she is most connected to the department and its work and goals. (If you want honest feedback, the interviewer must be perceived as objective.)

- Wait a few days after receiving a resignation notice to request and conduct the exit interview. At that point, emotions won't be as high but you still have the employee's captive attention while they're on your payroll. (Participation rates will drop dramatically after an employee's last day at work.)

- Have a standard set of carefully crafted questions that uncover the "why" behind the employee's feelings to ensure you gather relevant, useful, and easily consolidated feedback.

- Interview methods can vary, but face-to-face is ideal as you can observe body language and other non-verbal cues. Phone interviews or surveys/questionnaires, or a combination of the two, are strong alternatives.

- Minimize emotions and keep things calm by sticking to facts and asking for specific examples when the dialogue strays to stories or emotions.

While exit interviews are great—and we sing their praises—they should not be your only source of employee feedback. Ensure you have a well-rounded feedback system that captures data throughout the entire employment life cycle, so you capture information that can save true talent before both feet are already out the door.

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WHAT SHOULD YOU ASK? WE GOT YOU.

We're aiming for quality, not quantity here. Just a few questions will do the trick. If you're looking for a starting point, here are some of our standard questions (and remember to probe, if possible!):

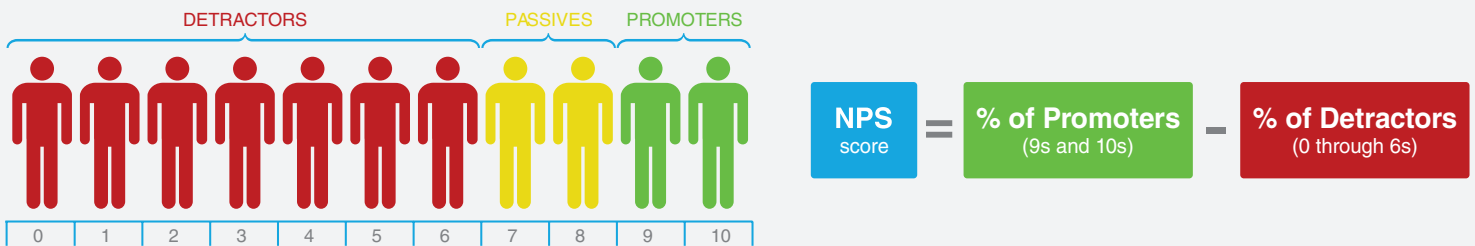**01** WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO LOOK FOR ANOTHER JOB?

02 WHAT DID YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT YOUR POSITION?

03 WHAT DID YOU LIKE LEAST ABOUT YOUR POSITION?

04 HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR MANAGER?

05 WOULD YOU RECOMMEND OUR COMPANY TO A FRIEND OR COLLEAGUE? WHY OR WHY NOT?
Rate your willingness to recommend us on a scale of 0 (unlikely) to 10 (very likely).

To get additional value out of the answers you receive to Question 5, divide the responses into groups of Promoters (rating of 9 or 10), Passives (7 or 8), and Detractors (6 or less), and follow the calculation below. To learn more about this satisfaction rating methodology and the resulting Net Promoter® score, visit **https://www.netpromoter.com/know/**

DETRACTORS | PASSIVES | PROMOTERS

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

$$\text{NPS score} = \%\text{ of Promoters (9s and 10s)} - \%\text{ of Detractors (0 through 6s)}$$

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