

**February 2005 – Drake Webinar Series: Volume 5****Exit Interviews Offer the Chance to Make Changes**

Canada's top managers and company leaders know that their success is a direct reflection of the success of their people. They are not only responsible for hiring their employees but also for continued coaching and managing, enabling them to succeed in their roles and grow with the company. Therefore, there is nothing more challenging or upsetting than having one of their valuable team members resign. It is particularly tough if they do not see it coming or do not have a grasp as to why they are leaving.

It seems that the best and most motivated career conscious people are leaving organizations often unnecessarily. According to The Leadership Employment & Direction Survey conducted by LMA & Quantum Market Research in 2003, 80% of employees would like to advance their careers with their current employers - but 51% believe they will have to leave to achieve their career goals. To reduce this percentage, company leaders must implement an effective exit interview process to discover the root causes behind staff turnover.

An effective exit interview is a structured process designed to help management determine the actual reasons behind a person's detachment from the company. The aim for managers is to provide people with the opportunity to give frank and honest answers on topics regarding the company, department, team, manager, corporate culture and career development.

The structure and design of the questions are vital to the interview's success. A template should be created in advance and then further customized towards specific individuals based on voluntary versus involuntary departure, their role, seniority and other relevant factors. To increase the respondents' comfort level, the sequence of questions should move from easy through to more difficult enquiries. This is best achieved through open-ended questions which encourage expression and offer suggestions of improvement.

The fact that companies do not have the answers to the questions asked of departing employees is no doubt an indicator of why the person has chosen to leave in the first place. Yet, how do they know that the feedback their employees are giving is open, honest and impartial? To be truly effective, exit interviews must be conducted impartially, ideally by a third party.

Outsourcing, rather than having an immediate manager conduct the interview, increases the likelihood of capturing unbiased information free of a hidden agenda or organizational filters.

Still, there is little point in conducting exit interviews unless the information gathered is thoroughly tracked, analyzed and used to create recommendations for change. Identifying trends including high turnover in certain positions and divisions, management issues and competitive remuneration will be made clearer when the results are handled with due attention.

Often there are large costs associated with implementing exit interview programs, including time and salaries. Responsible executives need to be certain that their investment is wisely spent and will produce a significant return for them. If conducted effectively, an exit interview program will exceed return on investment expectations through reduced turnover and streamlined costs and efficiencies.

In summary, by managing the process by the right person, at the right time, by asking the right questions, processing and responding to the answers, and using the information to create necessary change you can convert exit interviews into one of the most valuable management tools your company utilizes. If your company does not have an exit interview process or one that is not delivering the impartial results you were hoping for, take steps today to make this a critical process a success.

Register for a complimentary webinar on this topic, hosted Wednesday February 23<sup>rd</sup> from 12 – 1 p.m. EST and learn insightful ways for better understanding the root causes behind staff turnover.

Contact Drake for further information on how you can convert Exit Interviews into a valuable management tool. Call 1 800 GO DRAKE or visit: [www.drakeintl.com](http://www.drakeintl.com)