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7 Common Exit Interview Questions And How To Successfully Answer Them



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So, you have decided to resign and take a big step in changing your career. Congratulations! But before you take your final leave, you will need to prepare for processes that will help you transition into your new job. It is common for employers to reach out and ask a set of exit interview questions to better understand your decision to leave.

Here are a few facts to know about exit interviews and tips to help you prepare and conduct yourself.

What does an exit interview mean?

If your employer calls you for an exit interview, it typically means they want to discuss your reasons for resignation. You might find it awkward to have this conversation with your employer; however, exit interviews are a great way to leave a lasting impression and open opportunities to advance your career. Employers value your feedback and look at it as an opportunity to improve.

Answering exit interview questions helps you assess your goals and be more clear about your expectations in moving forward in your career. Exit interviews are also a great way to practice and demonstrate your soft skills. It allows you to think critically about your experience and what you have learned.

Who conducts exit interviews?

HR professionals or your supervisor usually conducts exit interviews. They may do this through a questionnaire, followed by a face-to-face meeting to discuss your answers. It is not mandatory, but it is a standard practice of employers to measure how they conduct their business.

Employers use your answers to exit interview questions to refine their operations and avoid other employees from leaving. Everything discussed during exit interviews are confidential. HR practitioners are trained to present your feedback to higher management with caution. So, do not be afraid to ask questions too.

How to prepare for exit interviews

Practice your answers

It can be tempting to breeze your way through an exit interview. Since you are already on your way out, what is there to lose, right? However, employers will appreciate your feedback, so communicate professionally.

A great way to prepare yourself for exit interview questions is to compose yourself and practice your answers before going in. You can try venting out to a friend or family member first to free yourself from your frustrations. They can help you to phrase your answers and determine your tone.

Be honest and specific

When answering exit interview questions, giving constructive feedback is crucial. Your honest opinion holds credibility and will likely impact the organisation positively. Provide specific examples of how the company can improve. As you relay your thoughts, remember to be as kind as you can be.

Be aware of your body language

As with all interviews, you have to note how you conduct yourself in exit interviews. Your body language can help you emphasise your talking points and showcase your confidence. Answering exit interview questions with self-awareness can help you avoid making [common body language](#) mistakes that send the wrong message.

Build a good relationship before leaving to have a solid network for your career. Take the cues of your interviewer and try to mirror their movement. This way, you can have an environment of trust and easily communicate your sentiments.

Prepare a list of answers

You want to transition [smoothly to your next career](#), so you need to mentally prepare yourself for the conversation. Make a list of your possible answers to guide you in the process.

When asked for feedback, try to sandwich negative thoughts between positive ones. This way, you can share your balanced opinions and offer solutions.

In your list, take note of possible questions, as well. Doing this will help you self-evaluate through the lens of your employer. Knowing these questions in advance can ensure your reputation and keep a good relationship with your soon to be previous employer. Read on to learn about the most common exit interview questions.

Common exit interview questions

What made you look for a new job?

This is a top of mind question of employers for departing employees. Answering this, you can be as honest as possible. Keep in mind that employers want to prevent employees from resigning. Your answer to this question is important to them.

DON'T: Point fingers and be accusatory. You may have frustrations with your experience in the company, but it is still important to act professionally and composed.

DO: Answer honestly. It is safe to answer these questions with common reasons for leaving a job. May it be for personal development concerns, working conditions, or financial reasons. You can also highlight that you are going for other opportunities like benefits packages or your desire to change career paths.

Did you feel like a valuable part of the company?

This question pertains to your job satisfaction and motivations. Employers want to know if they have met your expectations and supported you in your career path. You can

determine how they value your role through learning opportunities or tools to help you succeed in your position.

DON'T: Complain or be disrespectful. Remember to keep your answers fair. Mention that you understand that your employers also have their limitations.

DO: Enumerate the times you felt valued and suggest how they can better support employees. You can say that you succeeded because of the excellent training you have received from your manager.

What did you like and dislike most about your job?

Exit interview questions sometimes go in-depth with your experiences at work. The interviewee may ask how your day-to-day activities affect your overall experience and satisfaction. Employers can play up those specifics to attract new people to hire.

DON'T: Be vague. Instead, be prepared to justify your dislikes. Remember to air out your grievances with caution.

DO: Be casual in answering this question. You can say that you like working with your colleagues or enjoy the company perks. On a more serious note, you can say that you want how your role impacts the company and your career advancement.

If you were to change anything, what would it be?

With this exit interview question, you can show your passion for your role without disrespecting the work of those who helped build the company.

DON'T: Be overly critical. Instead of complaining, show genuine concern for the company. Provide suggestions on how they can improve their processes.

DO: Use facts and specific illustrations. Present negative situations you experienced with the company; offer solutions on how they could handle them better moving forward.

Would you consider returning to this company?

With this question, do not be afraid to answer it frankly. Either way, your genuine response will help you in the long run. If you say yes, then you will potentially have an opportunity to return.

DON'T: Burn bridges. Avoid sounding smug and ungrateful. If you are sure you do not want to return to the company, then provide thoughtful reasons why.

DO: Be specific in your considerations. Perhaps you can be open to returning if the company addresses certain concerns or improves how they operate. However, also clarify that you are ready to move forward in your career path.

What skills and qualifications do you think we need to look for in your replacement?

Answering this is where you can [showcase the skills and experiences](#) you learned on the job. Consider reflecting on your job description and key performance indicators to help you determine your points.

DON'T: Stretch the truth. Employers want to discover what skills they have overlooked in a particular role.

DO: Focus on [transferable skills](#) that you think your replacement will need to succeed in the role.

Would you recommend the company to a friend looking for a job?

Building relationships and [networking is essential](#) in any type of career. Employers want to know if you would put a good word for them for potential hire. It is the same as you asking for a good recommendation or a good review for your new employer.

DON'T: Commit if you can't commit. You only need to provide your honest feedback, and your employer just needs to listen and try to improve.

DO: Be honest. If you have reservations about recommending your employer, you can say that it will depend on your friend's career objectives.

Answering exit interview questions may be your last hurdle to start your exciting new career. Take it as an opportunity to leave a positive mark and helpful insights to help them move forward. This way, you can exit gracefully and move forward in your career.

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