

Resigning from your job? Should you attend an Exit Interview?

Meeting a supervisor to discuss your reasons for moving on from a job may be a productive thing to do in some circumstances; however, when your resignation is fueled by negative issues, there may not be any tangible benefits and lots of drawbacks in attending an exit interview.

Your last few days in a job should be spent juggling farewell lunches and sharing out the spoils of your stationery hoard; (we don't recommend that!) however, for increasing numbers of employees, there is an extra step to get through – the exit interview.

Rapidly becoming a common feature of modern corporate life, the exit interview has the potential to be either a slightly awkward ritual, which is most likely if you enjoyed the job, or an uncomfortable, non-productive, possibly even career-damaging waste of time, which is especially likely if your resignation was prompted by serious workplace issues and complaints.

HR departments often push for exit interviews as they are looking to improve the staff experience; it may feel slightly disloyal to the colleagues you liked and are leaving behind to avoid the opportunity to be honest with management about the issues and problems they will still face; however, here are a few of the key reasons why you may not want to attend an exit interview:

The Pawn Effect:

Being championed as the person free to complain on behalf of all staff may feel flattering; in reality, the colleagues and supervisors who ask you to be their voice are equally capable of speaking up. By taking on this role, you risk being demonised as the root of all issues and losing a valuable reference.

The Office Radar:

How likely is it that HR, management or pretty much anyone is in the dark when it comes to the problems within a company? It seems unlikely that one departing employee can make a difference if those who have authority are aware of these issues already and yet have not made inroads into change.

A Paper Trail:

Exit interviews tend to have a set format and are more about collecting data than dealing with specific complaints and requests. There is generally no provision for deviating from this.

No Outcomes:

If previous exit interviews had any worth, policies for change and growth would have emerged from them. When meetings produce nothing visible, they are probably only paying lip service to the agenda.

It Is History:

You are leaving so you may be better to focus on the next step and do not get caught up looking backwards. Completing all the tasks you have been paid to do is all that should be expected and the 'cleaning out my desk' line is a great reason to give if you receive a call to arrange that exit interview!

You have already made the decision to leave and move on to a company culture where you hope that meeting to discuss problems as you leave is unnecessary, largely because communication between all levels of staff is encouraged.

DSA Comment:

Communication is key in all stages of recruitment and employee engagement and whether you attend an Exit Interview or not, is a decision you must make at the time and feel comfortable with. If you feel that you will benefit from bringing certain points to the attention of management and it is going to help, then voice your concerns. Of course, there may also be some very positive points you want to mention!

Whatever you decide, remember you are leaving for a reason and stay focused. If you can help other members of staff along the way, then great. If not, consider your options carefully.

[Contact us today](#) if you would like to discuss your Recruitment Strategy and how we can help you improve your retention rates and Employee Engagement.

Do you provide Exit Interviews for all leavers? Have you attended an Exit Interview? Do you have any particular thoughts or experiences you would like to share for discussion?

Send them to: <mailto:diane@dsaexecutive.com?subject=Exit Interview>