



The Lowly Exit Interview Process: Don't Underestimate Its Potential Value!

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Okay, so Jane Smith is leaving your credit union. Have you scheduled an Exit Interview? Boy, does that sound like a human resource question! But I want you to think about the value this simple process has to your credit union. It might not keep Jane from walking out the door, and you might not even want to keep Jane from walking out the door (but that's a whole other story for another time).

First, let's talk a minute about litigious implications. If this person is resigning, did you get a resignation letter? That little piece of documentation could be invaluable in a wrongful termination action. Did you get a signature that you discussed COBRA? Even for small credit unions with fewer than 20 employees, you can't duck the COBRA requirements. Can you prove you gave her info on unemployment insurance? Did you get a signature that you discussed final paycheck issues? Vacation accrual? Life insurance conversion? And depending on what else you offered Jane, the list goes on.

But this is only the start of why you want to do a good—no, a terrific—exit interview. You really do want to know why Jane is leaving. In this economy, any turnover is surprising. Is Jane leaving for more money? Better benefits? Some flexibility? A better manager (uh, oh)? More interesting work? A more appreciative work environment? Escaping a hostile environment (nightmare!)? Is she going to another credit union with whom you should have been able to compete? Is she leaving the credit union movement for any good reason you should know? Could Jane provide you with information that is truly useful? You bet your credit union she could!

As I said earlier, you might actually want Jane to leave. Sometimes turnover is not a bad thing. In fact, a case could be made that a little turnover is healthy. But you always want to know the real reason why someone is resigning. Leaving aside the potential litigious reasons that you might uncover and hopefully resolve in an exit interview, you want to know what you could do better to improve your credit union, to retain your good employees, or to address an issue you didn't even know about. Go back and read over the last few years of exit interviews and see if there is a pattern that should concern you. It's worth the time. Perhaps you'll just validate that you are indeed on the right track. Or maybe, just maybe, you'll see a pattern worth changing.

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