

# Conducting 'stay interviews'

Underrepresented individuals, such as women, minorities, LGBT and veterans, particularly need structured platforms to share their experiences and their opinions in the workplace.

A stay interview can provide that platform for an effective conversation where employees provide an understanding of why they stay engaged at your firm and the reasons they might leave to seek other opportunities. While stay interviews are to prevent turnover, exit interviews are still essential for determining the reason an employee has decided to leave your firm. Regularly analyzing the reasons people stay and the reasons that people leave provides valuable information on both the challenges that must be addressed and the opportunities that can be leveraged to foster an inclusive work environment.

Stay interviews can be as short as 30 minutes and up to an hour depending on pace of your specific firm environment. Typically, stay interviews should be conducted by a managing partner or leader, HR professional or someone who is a trusted resource to employees in your firm. Some of the questions may be awkward for an employee to answer honestly without knowing in advance and without a level of trust in the person asking them. Set the expectation by communicating up front that the purpose of the stay interview is to support their current and future success with your firm. It's also important that the person asking the questions is ready to listen objectively and not become defensive. Frame this as a listening session rather than trying to provide answers or rebuttals to concerns.

**Most importantly, after conducting stay interviews be sure to address any concerns raised by the employee and provide regular updates about your efforts to resolve the matter. Follow-up assures employees that they have been heard and that someone is advocating for them.**

## Sample 'stay interview' questions

1. What do you like most about your job and work in our firm?
2. What do you like least about your job and work in our firm?
3. How happy are you working here on a scale of 1–10 with 10 representing the happiest?
4. What would have to happen for that number to become a 10?
5. When you think about employers, how does this firm rate overall on a scale of 1–10 with 10 representing the best possible employer?
6. What would it take for the firm to earn a 10 in your mind?
7. Have you ever thought about leaving the firm? If so, what caused you to consider leaving? Why did you decide to stay?
8. Have you actively job searched in the past year? Why were you considering leaving?
9. Is there anything else that is important to you that we did not cover during this meeting?
10. Do you have suggestions about how we can improve our firm?