



The Context Group

For Clients Who Value Results... More Than Advice

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"Everything ends badly, or else it wouldn't end."

Heywood Gould

The Context Group

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Leaving So Soon?

While the heated talk about a "war for talent" has cooled down some, retaining people (good, bad and indifferent) can be a struggle. In analyzing your turnover situation, it is critical to look at 3 factors for people leaving:

- **External.** These include things that are out of your company's control, such as a change in a person's family situation. Outside of moving your business to an area where these things don't happen (for instance, not locating near a military installation where transfers are frequent), there isn't much you can do about these external factors.
- **Involuntary Turnover.** Involuntary means that you are firing people for poor performance or other job related reasons. If this is a big driver of your turnover you should take a closer look at your recruiting and [selection practices](#) so you can improve the quality of your hires.
- **Voluntary Turnover.** This occurs when employees are choosing to leave you. Voluntary turnover is much more damaging to your business because, unlike involuntary turnover, you are losing talented people.

Reducing voluntary turnover (VT) takes some work and there are many proposed methods of doing it. One train of thought is to use exit interviews to find out the reasons why people are leaving. A good thing about conducting exit interviews is that some of those who sit for them are likely to give you a treasure trove of information. If you do exit interviews,

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consider ways to administer them anonymously to improve response rates and reliability. Be sure to track information by work groups, departments, etc.

Others think that exit interviews are a waste of time because it is hard to get information from most of the people who leave (afterall, what's in it for them?). For those willing to be interviewed or fill out a form, there are also questions as to whether the information is reliable (some people may want to be nice just to avoid a confrontation, others may have an ax to grind). Those opposed to exit interviews suggest that if you have open communications with your employees and/or pay close attention to your [employee survey](#) results you can proactively address VT (hint...if you have high VT, look at the survey ratings of satisfaction with supervisors/managers first).

If you go the communication/survey route, establish which issues are truly related to turnover. Just because people are dissatisfied with the food in the cafeteria doesn't mean that are going to quit over it.

If you would like to discuss issues regarding reducing turnover, please contact [Warren Bobrow](#).