



**He who asks a question
is a fool for a minute; he
who does not remains a
fool forever.**

Chinese Proverb

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**Kammy will be speaking about
*Profiting from a Multi-
Generational Workforce:
Leveraging Age Diversity at
First Annual Diversity Summit
in San Diego on Oct 12. For
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Why Are You Leaving?

As more and more employers focus on retaining critical talent, one often overlooked tool is the [exit interview](#). An exit interview should not be confused with cursory comments that are exchanged between the departing employee and anyone else in the group.

Depending on the nature of the decision to voluntarily terminate one's employment, the accuracy and thoroughness of that informal information is highly suspect. For example, Stan decides to leave because he's fed up with his peers getting all of the promotions and a general lack of support and appreciation from his manager. Rather than sharing these reasons, he may decide to simply say that he "found another position with higher pay."

Many people hearing that message will assume (and state) that Stan left because he was dissatisfied with the pay (and in many cases, he's perfectly content to go along with that misinterpretation). It allows him to leave the organization with everyone's feelings intact.

However, those misinterpretations create problems for the organization since it is unable to take corrective action. Left unchecked, the lack of appreciation and support Stan felt will likely drive others in that department to seek opportunities elsewhere.

That's why exit interviews, conducted by a neutral third party, can elicit more meaningful and actionable information. Whether it's a staff member from HR or an external resource, it's important to collect information about the root causes of the employee's decision to leave so that, whenever possible and feasible, they can be addressed to retain talented personnel.

A small amount of time and effort can yield precious insights into the organization (that may be bubbling just beneath the surface or confirm suspicions). The key is to understand the “whys” behind the decision to leave and solicit suggestions for potential solutions.

Exit interviews may also allow disgruntled employees to express their concerns in a private setting rather than feeling compelled to share their negative perceptions with others outside the organization (which can ultimately damage the company’s reputation). In this age of YouTube and other social networks, make sure you find out what these people are thinking before the rest of the world does.

Please contact [Kammy Haynes](#) if you are interested in learning more about the value and/or process of conducting exit interviews.

But, Is the *Data* Meaningful?

Maybe this is just an analytical viewpoint, but it seems that some projects are driven more by how they look than what goes into them. Or, put another way: The last time you did an [employee](#) or [360 survey](#), what did you spend more time on?

- a) What items would be used and what kind of follow-up would follow the conclusions of the data.
- b) The presentation and look of the reports and data.

It isn’t an issue of one or the other but if you are spending more time on b) than a) (or appearance than substance) you are putting the cart before the horse. Computer technology now allows us to slice-and-dice data anyway we want. But technology will not help us ask the questions which will give us the most meaningful (and actionable) data to improve our organizations. And that will last long after a pretty report on a bookshelf is forgotten.

For more information on gathering, reporting, and implementing [survey data](#), please contact [Warren Bobrow](#).